



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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* WRITINGS OF ABORIGINAL TEACHING STAFF

These descriptions of Outstation Schools were produced during a training course for senior Aboriginal teaching staff from Aboriginal schools which was held at Bathurst Island in early August, 1982. A major aim of the training course was to assist Aboriginal assistant teachers to encourage and develop children's writing skills. As a means of achieving this all participants spent a significant portion of each day writing. The Aboriginal Child at School has published the article on Outstation Schools at Yirrkala previously, but it is thought appropriate that it appear in context here.

The course teachers describe how the writing exercise was undertaken:

The choice of topic was open; a poem, a story, a letter, an autobiographical sketch, or whatever participants felt like writing.

The writing exercise was done in several stages. After first drafts were written, they were edited by the "conferencing method" by the course leaders Stephen Harris, Beth Graham and Gwen Bucknall. During this editing stage corrections, expansions and other improvements were discussed with the authors. Then a final draft was written. In a few cases, a second and third editing process was invited by authors. Five sessions of about 45 minutes each were devoted to this writing activity. The following writings represent the end result of this exercise. Headings have been supplied for some of the contributions.

The writing exercise proved itself an effective teaching strategy in developing writing skills in adults. Have other teachers developed activities which have helped to develop writing skills in children or adults that they would be willing to share with our readers? ... Editor

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