



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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The parents want their children to know the Aboriginal way so that when they die their children will be able to look after their father's land. These children will grow up facing the future. The outstation people are interested for their children to learn their own language and English as well. They want the outstation schools to continue and the visiting teacher to visit each week if there is enough money available to help Aboriginal children in this way.

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## SCHOOL AT MANINGRIDA AND ITS OUTSTATIONS

Rita Djitmu

Maningrida is in coastal Arnhemland, and it is two hundred miles east of Darwin. Maningrida is an Aboriginal settlement. There are two hundred people living at the settlement now, because some Aboriginal people have moved into outstations.

There are one hundred children going to school at the settlement now. In school we have eight classes, and each class has one balanda teacher and one Aboriginal teacher. We have two pre-schools. One is a Kunividji class, the other one is for Aboriginal children who don't speak Kunividji, and the white children go there too.

Well, we have three Kunividji classes altogether. Pre-school, transition and year one. There are four Aboriginal teachers teaching in Aboriginal languages. One class is where Nancy Gununwanga, an Aboriginal teacher and Brett Westblade, a balanda teacher, both teach in Kunividji. Laurie Magaldagi and Mellanie Mamariyi and myself,

we three Aboriginal teachers, teach with little children from pre-school and infants. We three Aboriginal girls are working together with Peter Jones. He is a balanda teacher. Nancy Gununwanga takes her own class, 11 or 12 year olds.

We also have two other Aboriginal girls working with the linguist, Kim Djibama and Lena Djabiba. They take a tape and record the children's stories about what they had been doing during the holidays and weekends. After each class has been recorded, they listen to the tape and then write the story down. Later they print it in a book, and it is used for children to read, or sometimes they go around the camp and sit with old people and get a story from them about olden times of their life.

In this way we Aboriginal people are really happy, the way they learn in our language. And also the Aboriginal parents are really happy, the way our children learn in the Aboriginal language.

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*Continued from page 52*

Films hold a position as the major source of information on the outside world and on Western European society generally. In combination with the preferred categories evidenced by Aborigines at isolated settlements, their unsophisticated knowledge of English and their relative lack of understanding of film as a medium, a position is created in which the community as a whole, but especially the children, are susceptible to its influence. While it can be argued that the influence may be only transitory, the lack of sufficiently varied models of alternative behaviours provided in films generally and the inappropriate behaviours learned from these films is cause for concern.

#### REFERENCES

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