

UTILIZING A RESEARCH PROJECT AS A TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGY : THE JOYS AND FEARS OF CHILDHOOD

*Alison Searle

Abstract:

In Semester 2, 1986, a group of 2nd year Aboriginal and Islander Diploma of Teaching (AITEP-ECE) students embarked on a research project, designed to be a learning experience, which could generate further understandings of concepts within Child Development, Child Learning and Sociology. The project focused on the child within the five to eight year age bracket.

The steps involved in the project were:-

1. Students approach, question and record responses of children to four questions.
2. Responses transcribed and collated with regard to age and cultural background.
3. Literature on the topic reviewed and collated.
4. Comparisons of research findings and literature reviews.
5. Findings to be presented in two ways:
(a) a collection of children's responses
(b) a statistical summary of trends.
6. Discussion of trends and raw data, and the relationship of the 'new knowledge' to 'conventional wisdom' about the joys and fears of the child 5 to 8 years.

This paper presents the research findings of a group of 2nd year Aboriginal and Islander students in the Diploma of Teaching (AITEP-ECE) course at James Cook University conducted in Semester 2, 1986. It also reflects on the outcomes of utilizing a research project as a teaching/learning strategy with Aboriginal and Islander students. The research strategy was selected initially by the lecturer as an alternative to the formal lecture regime. The concept of a research project was presented to the students in the previous semester and was eagerly endorsed.

*Lecturer - Early Childhood Education, Dept of Social and Cultural Studies in Education, James Cook Uni. of N.Q., Townsville, assisted by Gata Alfred, Gayle Andrew, Lela Ara, Jo Bethel, Noela Butler, Shelly Butterworth, Veronica Coutts, Cynthia Edwards, Trisha Geise, Tracey Hill, Paula Hocke, Lanora Johnson, Mette Morrison, Dalassa Pau, Dorisena Quakawoot

The objectives of the project were:-

1. To reinforce knowledge gained through lectures, in the first half of the semester, about the nature of the five to eight year old child. The significant aspects of which were -
 - the "5-7" cognitive shift from centred to decentred problem solving (described in Shaffer, 1985);
 - the influence of context and social experience on emotional development;
 - the effects of maturation and experience on the child's concept of fact and fiction;
 - the import of family and friendships in early childhood.
2. To encourage students to talk with and to listen to young children, thus encouraging an appreciation of uniqueness of each child's view of life events.
3. To expand students' appreciation of the cultural experiences of children from Aboriginal, European and Islander descent in urban Townsville.
4. To make learning and assessment meaningful by facing a high standard challenge which results in a positive contribution to our knowledge base. (How often do students write essays just to put them in a drawer - never to be seen again?)
5. To give Aboriginal and Islander students an opportunity to have input into their assessment, and to foster the concept of the teacher-researcher through action research.

THE TOPIC

The topic *Joys and Fears of Childhood* was selected because of its interest, and because it best encapsulates the significant behavioural and developmental features of the child (5-8 years). Also, as a substantial amount of research has already been conducted in the area, the strategy acted to reinforce some knowledge, whilst giving the opportunity to challenge and test information in popular literature and out-of-date texts.

THE PROCESS

1. Each student collected audiotapes and transcriptions of child responses to four questions -

What makes you happy?	)	JOYS
What makes you laugh?	)	
What makes you frightened?)	)	FEARS
What makes you scared?	)	
2. Reading in the area of emotional/social development, specifically related to Joys and Fears in 5-8 year olds. A reference list was given. Preparation of a literature review with a detailed bibliography.
3. Small group and whole group discussions to collate information, categorise it, compare and contrast ideas and list significant trends.
4. Reflect on the research project as a learning strategy and consider the benefits/problems of action research as teachers. It was hoped that this last phase would result in a rough draft ultimately for publication in *The Aboriginal Child at School*.

THE SAMPLE

Considerable time was spent selecting the descent categories of Aboriginal, Islander and European, and students took great pains to clarify what was meant by these categories within the group. The students initially wanted to interview *community* children, because they expressed concern that urban children would not show 'significant cultural differences'. But this proved practically impossible, so it was decided to sample children in a variety of places - outside schools, on buses, at church, in parks, homes of friends and neighbours, at shopping centres, in the street, and in a day care centre.

Male and female children within the age range, 5, 6, 7, 8 years were selected for the project. A total of 203 children were interviewed, but a total of 183 responses were used. Those not used were inaudible, or responses which were not appropriate, e.g., 'daddy's at work'. Many of the children gave very full answers which yielded a wealth of interesting ideas, but for the statistical part of the project the child's first sentence was used as the response.

Initially, the sampling appeared to have uneven numbers of children in the descent groups as the Aboriginal students tended to collect a large number of responses from Aboriginal students. However, when all the responses were tallied, these numbers were balanced by the high number of responses from Islander children gained by the Islander students.

THE FINDINGS

All the children's responses were collated into sex, age and descent categories. For example:

BOYS			
	Ab	E	Is
5			
6			
7			
8			

GIRLS			
	Ab	E	Is
5			
6			
7			
8			

Then, from the responses, the students placed the comments into categories based on topics. It was fascinating to see trends emerging from the massive amount of raw data. Many students recalled individual children's manner and attitude as the child's responses were read.

The responses were placed in ten categories for Fears and nine for Joys. The responses for 'Fears' show how the categories emerged:-

Fear of the dark

"When it is dark..." "At night when I have to go to the toilet in the dark." "Walking into a dark - dark room." "When the light goes out."

Bedtime fears

"When I dream terrible dreams." "Nightmares." "When there are scary things in my bedroom." "Weird sounds at night." "When I hear sounds at night and noises." "When I'm in bed at night I dream there is someone there who is going to kill me." "Sleeping by myself."

Imaginary creatures (monsters)

"Monsters." "Monsters and ghosts - especially the screaming ones." "Monsters with ugly faces."

Supernatural (ghosts - devils)

"Ghosts." "A devil dog." "Devils." "Toads and snakes." "When I am a bad girl and mum sends the devil to me." "Bushes that rattle when the wind is not blowing." "The devil with the red eyes." "The boogey man when I am out on my own." "The devil man in the dark." "When mummy says the devil man is in the corner."

Personal physical harm (including punishment)

"When daddy hits me." "If I hurt myself." "Someone with an axe who is going to kill me." "When dad hits me when I muck up." "Getting a beating from mum and dad." "Getting into trouble."

TV and mass media

"Scary movies." "Creature feature called Spiders." "When I watch movies where people are killed." "Sharks and vampire movies." "When there were wolves come out and there is a full moon."

Separation from family

"When mummy and daddy talk loud and daddy goes away from me." "When my grandma dies." "When mummy forgets me at school." "I'm scared when I'm by myself." "When I'm left by myself." "When my daddy leaves us for a week." "Being alone."

Factual fantasy, e.g. man-made fantasy

"When I wake up and see my dress hanging on the wall." "The big scary house at the Show" (the ghost train at Townsville Show). "When I see myself in the mirror and think it is someone else." "When my uncle scared me with a scary mask." "Frights and tricks."

Practical fears

"If I lost my watch - I'd be in strife." "When the big plane flies over my house." "When I crash on my bike." "Feeling sick." "If a stranger took me away." "Fire and fire works." "Drunken people." "Drunken men fighting each other." "Running out of petrol with our car." "A big dog barking."

Nothing

"Nothing." "I'm not scared of anything." "Nothing - I'm tough."

The children's responses to the questions - "What makes you happy?" "What makes you laugh?", fell within nine categories, with a few exceptions, which gave students great opportunities for discussion and debate. For example, "When people say good things about me", from a mature eight year old, and simply, "Being happy."

CATEGORIES FOR 'JOYS'

Funny actions

"Tickles." "When people do funny things." "Fun things." "When mummy tickles me." "When people say funny jokes." "Reading funny stories." "Clowns."

Celebrations

"Father Christmas and people that are happy." "Birthdays." "When mum gives me a surprise birthday." "Singing church choruses." "When mummy baked me a big birthday cake." "When I'm invited to a party."

Toys

"A dolly, a book and a pencil." "When my mum buys me stuff like shoes and toys." "Playing colouring ins." "Dressing up in mum's clothes." "My cabbage patch doll." "My bike." "My cars." "A toy gun for a present from my dad." "A remote-controlled car."

School

"When I get a medal or something at school." "When I get all my tests right." "Making things and doing puzzles at school." "When I go to a new school." "When I get my homework and tables right."

Friends

"Playing with other people who are happy." "When I play with my friends." "Playing, having fun and messing around with my friends." "Sleeping over at Sharon's place." "Going to Jerry's place - Jerry makes me laugh."

Physical activity

"Swimming." "Singing." "Playing with my dog." "Fishing." "Swings and playing in the park."

TV

"It's a Knockout, and cartoons." "Funny things on television." "Watching Inspector Gadget." "Fat Cat when he dances."

Being with family

"When mummy comes home." "Visiting grandma." "When my mummy helps me look at and bath my baby sister." "When daddy takes me to the pool." "Going with Grampy." "Going fishing at Magnetic Island with dad." "Seeing all my cousins at Christmas at Yorke Island." "Mum and dad when they play with me."

Food and money

"Lollies." "Biscuits." "Eating ice cream, Weet Bix, cake." "Money." "Money and chocolates and presents."

THE STATISTICAL RESULTS

In order to clarify the obvious trends which seemed to be emerging as students presented the children's comments, numerical tables were assembled showing :- Boys' Fears and Joys - age trends, culture trends and sex differences; Girls' Fears and Joys - age trends, cultural trends.

The age trend and sex difference tables are assembled with the categories listed in order of frequency of the children's responses; whereas the cultural trends indicate the percentage of responses in each descent group which fell within each category.

The trends which are listed under the tables emerged from student discussion as we assembled the tables. Although these trends are specific to our findings, it may provide some interesting research areas for others. The tables show:-

- I Cultural trends - Girls' Joys
- II Cultural trends - Boys' Joys
- III Age trends - Girls' Joys
- IV Age trends - Boys' Joys
- V Sex differences - Joys
- VI Cultural trends - Girls' Fears
- VII Cultural trends - Boys' Fears
- VIII Age trends - Girls' Fears
- IX Age trends - Boys' Fears
- X Sex differences - Fears

TABLE I - CULTURAL TRENDS GIRLS - JOYS

	<u>European</u>	<u>Aboriginal</u>	<u>Islander</u>
Toys	24	4	32
Funny Actions	16	27	4
Celebrations	13	14	14
School	5	9	0
Friends	13	9	14
Physical Activity	13	9	4
TV	0	4	0
Family	13	24	32
Food	3	0	0
Money	0	0	0

These figures indicate the percentage of responses which fell into each category for the three descent groups. As these responses were recorded and tallied several trends seemed to emerge. The Aboriginal descent groups did not register a high response in the 'toy' category.

The 'family' figures are very high for Islander and Aboriginal girls and when combined with 'friends' and 'celebrations' indicates a very strong sense of happiness generated from close personal networks.

TABLE II - CULTURAL TRENDS BOYS - JOYS

	European	Aboriginal	Islander
Funny Actions	12	11	5
Celebrations	12	7	5
Toys	32	15	43
School	2	11	0
Friends	5	7	9
Physical Activity	7	7	9
TV	13	7	0
Family	15	29	24
Food	2	3	0
Money	0	3	5

When tallying responses in the Cultural trends categories, it appeared that TV figures are higher for European children. In discussions with students it was decided that socioeconomic factors were not significant in this, as all the children came from urban Townsville and shared similar material standards across the cultural groups. Significant for the students was the revelation that "family" figures were high, as it reinforced their own feelings of 'oneness' within their family experience. Toys were high for all groups.

TABLE III - AGE TRENDS GIRLS - JOYS

5 Years	6 Years	7 Years	8 Years
Actions	Family	Family	Toys
Family	Toys	Toys	Friends
Toys	Actions	Friends	Celebrations
Celebrations	Celebrations	Celebrations	Actions
Physical	School	Physical	Family
School	Physical	Actions	School
Friends	Friends	Food	Physical
TV	TV	School	TV
Food	Food	TV	Food
Money	Money	Money	Money

This table represents the priority ordering of children's responses in categories according to age. For example, the most frequent response to the question "what makes you happy?" of five year old girls was "funny actions ('tricks, jokes and tickles')". Whilst eight year old girls responded that 'Toys' were a source of happiness. Overall, 'Funny Actions', 'Toys', 'Family' and 'Celebrations' increases with age, as does the eight year olds' investment in friendships. It is significant that 'TV', 'Food' and 'Money' were not frequent initial responses.

TABLE IV - AGE TRENDS - BOYS JOYS

5 Years	6 Years	7 Years	8 Years
Toys	Toys	Toys	Family
Family	Family	Friends	Celebrations
Actions	Actions	Family	Toys
Physical	TV	Celebrations	Actions
TV	Physical	School	School
School	Celebrations	Physical	Physical
Friends	School	Food	TV
Celebrations	Friends	Actions	Money
Food	Food	TV	Food
Money	Money	Money	Friends

This table lists priority of responses for boys. It revealed that 'toys' were high for 5, 6, 7, and drops off at 8's. The 'family' was a high category in all ages, which increases for 8's perhaps in conjunction with that 'celebrations' are also high for 8 year olds. It is interesting that 'money' is an interest in 8 year olds. The students were surprised that 'physical activity' was not high at any age. It could have been that the nature of the question 'what makes you happy?' spontaneously elicited an object or emotion type of response or a genuine lack of pleasure in physical activity. This would be an area for future research arising from this project.

TABLE V - PRIORITY OF FREQUENCY OF COMMENT
SEX DIFFERENCES - JOYS

<u>Boys</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>%</u>
Toys	30	Family	21
Family	21	Toys	21
Funny actions	10	Funny actions	16
Celebrations	9	Celebrations	14
Physical activity	8	Friends	12
TV	8	Physical activity	9
Friends	6	School	5
School	4	TV	1
Food	2	Food	1
Money	2	Money	0

This table represents a priority listing based on percentages of responses in each category. The students working on this table highlighted some trends which they felt were significant. The boys mentioned playing with toys more frequently than girls, whilst being with the family was significant for both. The boys were higher on 'TV' and the boys scored more for 'money'! The girls tallied high on 'funny actions' and on 'celebrations'.

'Friends' were higher for girls than boys but both were high in 'family', 'toys', 'actions', 'celebrations', whilst both were low in 'school', 'food', 'money', 'TV' and 'physical activity'.

TABLE VI - CULTURAL TRENDS - GIRLS - FEARS - %

	European	Islander	Aboriginal
Fear of dark	8	18	12
Bedtime fears	30	18	12
Imaginary creatures	6	4	0
Supernatural	2	27	38
Personal physical harm	2	4	8
TV mass media	24	17	4
Separation	8	4	14
Factual fantasy	4	0	4
Practical fears	12	8	4
Nothing	4	0	4

The students discussed the frequency of responses in this table and drew these conclusions:-

European children appear to be much more afraid of bedtime fears, noises and nightmares and much more likely to be scared by TV and media images. They were concerned with practical fears in all ages more frequently than Aboriginal and Islander children. Of significant cultural interest for the students was the trend among Aboriginal and Islander children showing a high frequency of fear of the supernatural. (This is expanded in a later section of this paper).

TABLE VII - CULTURAL TRENDS - BOYS - FEARS - %

	European	Islander	Aboriginal
Fear of dark	15	0	4
Bedtime fears	10	13	14
Imaginary creatures	8	4	4
Supernatural	15	41	25
Personal physical harm	5	4	13
TV and media	2	4	0
Separation	15	9	4
Factual fantasy	13	9	4
Practical fears	7	8	20
Nothing	10	8	13

This table ranks the percentages of total responses and shows some trends, for example:

European children appear *much* more likely to be afraid of the dark than Aboriginal and Islander children, whilst Aboriginal

and Islander children are *much* more likely to be afraid of the supernatural than European children, e.g. devils. The European children are more often scared by the idea of separation from the family than are Aboriginal and Islander children, but all children have bedtime fears/nightmares and are scared by the supernatural.

TABLE VIII - AGE TRENDS - GIRLS - FEARS

<u>5 yrs</u>	<u>6 yrs</u>	<u>7 yrs</u>	<u>8 yrs</u>
Dark	Supernatural	Bedtime	Bedtime
Bedtime	Separation	TV	TV
Imaginary creatures	Dark	Supernatural	Supernatural
Supernatural	Bedtime	Practical	Practical
Physical harm	TV	Dark	Separation
TV	Physical harm	Separation	Nothing
Practical	Factual	Factual	Dark
Separation	Imaginary creatures	Imaginary creatures	Imaginary creatures
Factual	Practical	Physical harm	Physical harm
Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Factual

Trends in this table are age-based and reflect the '5-7' cognitive shift in the move from fantasy to factual fears. 'dark' and 'bedtime fears' highest source of fear for girls overall, and 'supernatural - ghosts/spirits' were high also. In the girls table 'TV' becomes increasingly a source of fear, whereas this is not so for boys. The 'nothing' category reveals that bravado develops at 8 years in girls, whilst boys demonstrated bravado much earlier. It is interesting that 'practical fears' increase as a child matures and is less concerned with fantasy; for example, 'dark' decreases but 'bedtime fears' increase.

TABLE IX AGE TRENDS - BOYS - FEARS

<u>5 yrs</u>	<u>6 yrs</u>	<u>7 yrs</u>	<u>8 yrs</u>
Supernatural	Dark	Bedtime	Supernatural
Dark	Supernatural	Nothing	Separation
Imaginary creatures	Bedtime	Supernatural	Physical harm
Bedtime	Nothing	Practical	Practical
Physical harm	Separation	Imaginary creatures	Factual
Separation	Factual	Factual	Bedtime
Factual	Practical	Separation	TV
Practical	Imaginary cr's	Physical harm	Dark
Nothing	Physical harm	Dark	Imaginary cr's
TV	TV	TV	Nothing

Table IX again reinforces the concern about fear of the supernatural in all ages, for example, 'bedtime/dark' high for 5, 6, 7's. Drops for 8's. As trainee teachers the students gained strong insights into the still fragile sense of security in young children. 'TV' did not register at all until 8's in boys, but was a high source of fear for girls. All ages of boys claim 'nothing', indicating bravado at all levels. Once again, imaginary fears (dark, bedtime, monsters) decreases with age and practical fears increase. This finding confirms our current theories of cognitive development for this age group.

TABLE X - SEX DIFFERENCES - FEARS

BOYS	%	GIRLS	%
Supernatural	23	Bedtime	23
Bedtime	12	Supernatural	18
Practical fears	12	TV	16
Separation	10	Dark	11
Nothing	10	Separation	9
Factual fantasy	9	Practical fears	9
Dark	8	Physical harm	4
Physical harm	7	Imaginary creatures	4
Imaginary creatures	6	Factual fantasy	3
TV	3	Nothing	3

This table records the percentage of total responses to the question 'What makes you frightened?', 'What makes you scared?'. The trends show high frequency of supernatural fears and bedtime fears for both boys and girls. 'Nothing' is much higher for boys than girls. Of great import for teachers and parents is the finding that, even at the 5, 6, 7 and 8 year old stage, 'separation' is a concern for 10% of *all* children. The consistent concern about separation, e.g., 'when mummy forgets me at school', 'being alone', 'I'm scared when I'm by myself', highlights the need for the teacher to provide secure, reassuring learning environments which foster emotional security.

REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS

The last phase of the research strategy was to reflect on the project, as a group. Through this process five concepts emerged.

1. The students expressed a sense of genuine delight and achievement in creating new knowledge. There was a great feeling of power in the group as they surveyed the results of their efforts because they had created knowledge about

urban Islander, Aboriginal, and European children in Townsville that was unpublished, fresh and genuine.

2. It reinforced understandings of children 5-8 years in Early Childhood Education. The educational objectives (see page 1) had been achieved as efficiently as lecturing and, in some cases, more so.

3. The students discovered text book fallibility. One student, after comparing her literature review with transcripts, said - "my research must be wrong". It was a discovery of great proportions for this student to realize that her data was more up-to-date, fresh and accurate than the 'conventional wisdom'. The wide literature review, conducted as a group task, also revealed contradictions, generalizations and, in some cases, 'out of context' information, as well as a variety of interesting views and theories. For example:

"From all the texts we have read we have concluded that studies of children aged 5 to 8 do not take into account the cultural differences relating to 'Joys and Fears' of childhood. Only Ausubel (1980) makes generalizations regarding fears. He believes that fear is moulded by cultural stereotyping, social expectations, traditional views and largely by what the parents or other adults believe." And -

"We disagree with the article by Author (No.8) that 5 year old girls were concerned for parent safety at sea...in comparison to our findings, there is no evidence of this among 5 year olds".

4. Of great significance for the Aboriginal and Islander students were the cultural trends for urban children. At the beginning of the project most students felt that urban Aboriginal and Islander children would have lost most of their cultural differences, as they appeared to have adopted European type lifestyles. However, a wealth of cultural training was evident, especially in the supernatural categories. Some of the students enjoyed explaining the children's answers to the lecturer and to others in the group. There were frequent exchanges of stories about beliefs, fears, child rearing patterns which students were able to identify in the children's responses, for example, when discussing the high rate of response in the 'separation from family' category, a student wrote...

"I've experienced that two years ago when I left my daughter up in Cairns, with my sister, so that I could do this course. She was 5 years. When talking to her on the phone the very first thing she would question, "Why you have to leave me up here, Mumma?" Always followed by a very soft crying voice of just a whisper, "I miss you, Mumma". I never knew until I went through this research course and learnt what separation from a mother means to a child."

When discussing the supernatural category:

"In our Islander culture very young children are scared of ghosts (spirits). It was told by our ancestors that when a person died his spirit would attack people. They suggested that on the third day his spirit would walk through the villages.

To overcome this situation all the relations would stay in one particular house. The men would build a big long shed with plaited palm leaves for men to sleep at night. The children are sleeping close to their mother. The barking of a dog at midnight was a sign of the spirit passing by.

Also about the witchcraft, people would travel very fast by using magic words. As for our traditional laws, the young children are not allowed to be left alone in the house unless with older members of the family. Even at night at their own house, they will sleep together with their parents, to avoid the presence of the sorcerers."

5. A significant discussion for the students as trainee teachers focused on the implications of the research on teaching. At this stage conclusions are conjecture but they provide some ideas for future solid research, for example:

Boys of European descent appear to be very 'object orientated' whereas Aboriginal and Islander children frequently mentioned interpersonal relationships. The students felt that the Early Childhood teacher would need to allow children to work together with other children and with objects to maximise the benefits.

VALIDITY

This was the first research experience for the majority of students and none have had formal training in research methodology. The project's primary function was as a teaching/learning strategy.

The trends in the children's responses, however, were very strong in many cases and the information gathering was very carefully carried out. The information is interesting, to say the least, and of real value as an exercise in revealing views of Townsville urban Aboriginal, Islander and European children.

THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON STUDENTS

Students enjoyed the learning experience. Student comments on the research project were gathered from course evaluation forms which were completed in the last week of the semester. Comments were very positive, for example:

"The research study was something that was new to all of us, and a challenge."

"I feel that the research was very beneficial as you learn a lot, i.e., through reading books and sharing ideas with others."

"The strongest feature of this subject was the research of children - how we collected materials."

"The research program was very interesting, it should be done again."

The students felt strongly that they had produced valuable data.

The students realised the need to be aware of the changes in teaching style and expectation that must be made for children of different ages within the early childhood area whilst still ensuring continuity. The project reinforced that the teacher must not underestimate the role of the parents and wider family in the experience of children, and should try to incorporate the family into the life of the school. The knowledge from lectures became relevant and practical when the students applied it to the children's comments. Some students broadened their abilities to talk with young children. Another benefit of the Project was that the students had the experience of action research and of working as a team.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

• Timing was a problem in that some students became really involved in collecting information and an extension of the time frame was made to allow this to happen. However, it minimised the impact of the reflection session at the end of the semester. Obviously, a more rigorous time schedule must be adhered to in future projects.

• The press of other commitments is an ever present problem with students in the Dip.Teach (AITEP-ECE). In addition to Development and Learning IV, the students had five other subjects plus School Experience within the semester. This placed restrictions on the time, effort and, in some cases, interest that could be invested in the project. The pressure of work involved in the project could be alleviated through the appointment of a part-time research assistant to collaborate with the collating, transcribing and referencing aspects of the task.

• The ongoing nature of the project made attendance and participation at lecture sessions a necessity. Several students had unavoidable crises (e.g. mother ill, birth of child) which interrupted their involvement. Also, the assessment of each individual's input was a complex process, as students varied in the depth and scope of contribution in each stage. Some enjoyed the interviews, others enjoyed the collating aspects, whilst a few spent considerable energy comparing the literature reviews and the project findings. These contributions could not be planned for in advance and required a complicated assessment criteria to be constructed which involved a peer assessment component. Some students stood out in terms of effort, interest and input, but all students contributed significantly to the success of the project.

CONCLUSION

Utilizing a research project as a teaching/learning strategy with Aboriginal and Islander students appears to be an effective and highly productive way to reinforce learning of curriculum content, and has the added benefits of utilizing a diverse range of skills, attitudes and knowledge.

Literature reviews were made of an extensive range of books, as this list demonstrates:-

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Education Departments throughout the country are now moving towards increased community participation and maybe the Balga Venture has unlocked a few of the doors that will lead to more understanding of the needs and desires of Aboriginal students and parents. When I left at the end of 1985 the structure of the program was changed somewhat, but even now the school is still mindful of its obligation to Aboriginal students and still runs a very supportive Aboriginal student support program.

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