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THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSERVICE AND INDUCTION PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW*

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1. THE ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER POPULATION AND ITS DISTRIBUTION

The Aboriginal/Islander population of Queensland was calculated by the 1981 census to be greater than 44,000 (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1984, p.11). However, for a slightly later estimate, the Annual Report of the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement records a figure of 60,000 (Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement, 1984, p.1). Both of these figures could be substantially correct given a possibility that some Aboriginal people may not identify themselves as such on census returns. Whatever the reason for the difference in the figures, a total of some 50,000 is most likely conservative for the present time. This figure converts to a percentage of slightly over 2% of the Queensland population being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Of the 50,000 Aboriginal/Islander population some 24% are Torres Strait Islanders (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1984, p.11).

The 1981 census figures reveal that the distribution of the Aboriginal/Islander population covers the following percentages in Queensland: 14.6% reside in major urban areas, 41% in other urban areas, and 44.4% in rural areas (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1984, p.4). Thus the major proportion of the Aboriginal/Islander population, over 55%, live in the State's urban areas. The trend towards urban residence continues to show a steady increase. In 1947 Queensland urban dwellers were 10.6% of the total; in 1966, 41.15% (Broom and Lancaster, 1973, p.49) and, in 1981, 55.6% as shown by Table 1. From past experience it appears likely that the trend will continue in the future.

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TABLE 1: The percentage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in metropolitan and other urban residence, 1947-1981.

Year	Queensland	Australia %
1947	10.6	11.9
1961	26.4	22.3
1971	54.9	45.0
1981	55.5	59.8

Adapted from: Broom, L. and Lancaster Jones, F. (1973): A Blanket a Year. Canberra: A.N.U.

: Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1984): Aboriginal Social Indicators 1984. Canberra: AGPS.

The urbanisation trend is not a Queensland phenomenon only, as the total Australian population figures parallel those of Queensland as Table 1 indicates. The 1981 Aboriginal/Islander population of Brisbane was 4,341 (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1984, p.79) which was approaching 10% of the State's Aboriginal and Islander population. Eagleson (1982, p.113) points out that Sydney now holds some 10% of Australia's Aboriginal and Islander population (15,000 of the approximate 150,000 total) and that it - "...possibly has the densest concentration of Aborigines within the Australian continent."

Table 2 and Figure 1 (pp.31-32) illustrate how the total Aboriginal and Islander population was distributed in Queensland at 30 June 1981.

When the figures for the populations of the major Aboriginal and Islander Communities are allowed for in the various statistical areas, it can be clearly appreciated that the remaining Aboriginal and Islander population, the major proportion, in the urban and rural areas, is well spread across the entire State. It should be noted that the Aboriginal and Islander towns, which have developed on reserve land or former reserve land, are referred to as 'Communities' in Queensland. As noted in Figure 1 and Table 2, included would be :

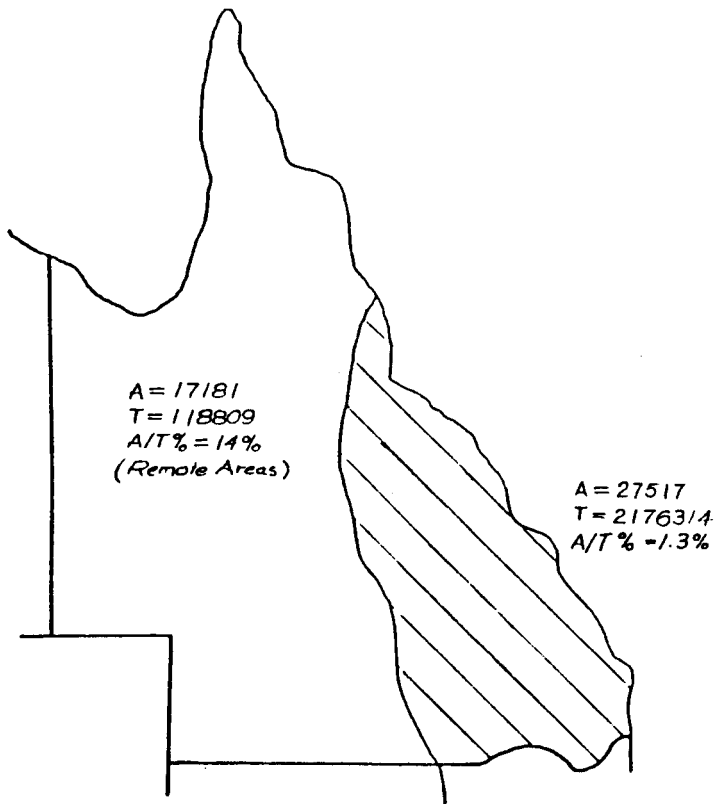
Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Palm Island, Yarrabah, Wujal Wujal, Hope Vale, Lockhart River, Bamaga, the various Torres Strait Islands, Weipa South, Aurukun, Edward River, Kowanyama, Gununa and Doomadgee.

TABLE 2: Distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, Queensland. Census 30 June 1981. Estimates of Aboriginal Community populations are added in brackets.

Local Government Area	Number	% of Total
Brisbane Statistical Division: includes Ipswich, Redcliffe	6,585	14.7
Moreton Statistical Division: includes Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast	1,140	2.5
Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division: includes Bundaberg, Maryborough, Cherbourg (1000)	2,458	5.5
Darling Downs Statistical Division: includes Toowoomba, Goondiwindi	1,086	2.5
South-West Statistical Division: includes Roma, Cunnamulla	1,468	3.3
Fitzroy Statistical Division: Includes Rockhampton, Gladstone, Woorabinda (600)	3,150	7.0
Central-West Statistical Division: includes Longreach	621	1.4
Mackay Statistical Division: includes Mackay, Proserpine	1,373	3.1
Northern Statistical Division: includes Townsville, Bowen and Palm Island (2000)	5,418	12.1
Far North Statistical Division: includes Cairns, Weipa, many Aboriginal Communities (8000)	15,656	35.0
North-Western Statistical Division: includes Mt Isa, Normanton, some Aboriginal Communities (2000)	5,704	12.8
Migratory	59	0.1
TOTALS	44,718	100.0

Adapted from: Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal Social Indicators 1984, AGPS, Canberra, pp.79-86.

FIGURE 2: Population distribution, Queensland



A = Aboriginal and Islander, T = Total Population

Adapted from: Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1984): Out of the Silent Land: Report of the Task Force on Aboriginal and Island Broadcasting and Communication. Canberra: AGPS.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the Aboriginal and Islander population in both the densely populated coastal region on the east coast, and also in the remote areas. Although the percentage of Aboriginal and Islander numbers to the total population figure (T) is higher in the remote areas, the actual numbers (A) are almost twice as great in the coastal areas.

Thus it can be appreciated that the Aboriginal and Islander population distribution in Queensland shows an increasing tendency to conform with the overall population distribution.

2. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER STUDENTS

It is becoming increasingly more likely that all teachers in Queensland schools will be teaching in schools which have a proportion of Aboriginal and Islander students in the school population.

The Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs (now Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training) records that 6,108 Aboriginal and Islander students received Aboriginal Secondary Grants in 1984 (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1985, p.36). State secondary schools and secondary departments located on Communities cater for approximately 1,000 students. Thus 84% of the State's secondary Aboriginal and Islander students are attending secondary schools which are not located on Aboriginal and Islander Communities. However, as the total number of secondary students within the State in 1985 was 192,654 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1985, p.4) the *average* percentage of Aboriginal and Islander students in non-Community secondary schools would be 2.5% only in Queensland.

Investigating the socio-geographic distribution of the indigenous school population in 1984, the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the National Aboriginal Education Committee (1984, p.5) determined that the Queensland school population was 26% traditional, 19% rural with a non-traditional orientation, 19% urban and 36% dispersed urban. It can be seen that the urban component figure of 55% reflects the population figure above. This urban component has implications for the delivery of educational services to Aboriginal and Islander students, and for the preparation and inservice of all Queensland teachers in matters relating to their education.

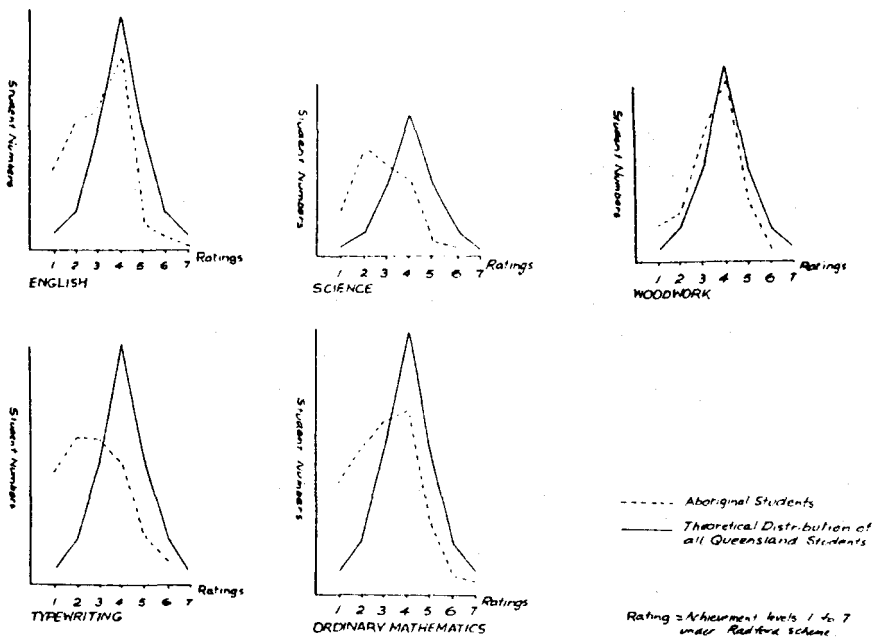
After having had two centuries of experimentation with education for Aboriginal Australians, and given that their numbers are comparatively small, the fact that success in education has been so limited is grounds for serious concern. This concern covers the students in the Community schools and all other Queensland schools, and it is felt professionally by all educators who have a full realisation of the current situation.

Miller (1985, p.198) presents the retention rates in all Australian states by expressing it as the percentage of the Year 8 cohort which is retained to Year 12. The overall average

retention for Aboriginal and Islander students in all States is 13.2%. Queensland has by far the highest individual State retention at 21.6%. This figure, however, is still well behind the retention for the entire population, including non-Aboriginal/Islander students, which even in 1981 was 35% (Miller, 1985, p.198) and rising steadily. Thus it can be seen that there is a need to improve the retention rate if the Aboriginal and Islander students are to attain comparable representation in senior secondary years.

Important as retention is, an equally important factor is the level of achievement attained. Analysis of the achievement of Aboriginal and Islander students at the end of Year 10 in 1981 was recorded in a series of graphs (Department of Education, 1982, p.3). The levels of achievement shown in these graphs in Figure 3 illustrate that, although these students are being retained in the school, their results do not conform with the theoretical distribution of all students' achievement ratings. There is a strong tendency for achievement levels awarded to be biased towards the lower levels.

FIGURE 3: Student rating distribution : Year 10, 1981



Adapted from: Department of Education (1982): *Impact No.59 : The Urban Aborigine at School*. Brisbane: Dept of Education.

There has been a large adjustment since 1975, when various estimates of a retention rate of 1.5% or thereabouts were made. Certainly Queensland schools and teachers have developed a much better working relationship with Aboriginal and Islander students, however, it furthermore needs to be acknowledged that the teachers and the educational system do not possess the required knowledge and skills to ensure that educational outcomes for these students are equitable and a commensurate reflection of their ability. The developing knowledge in this field needs to be made readily accessible for all teachers.

Various strategies have been delineated as being of importance in the teaching and learning environment for Aboriginal and Islander students and their teachers. Such strategies and their underlying assumptions have been developed and isolated by practitioner teachers and academics over the years who have achieved success with these students, either as individuals or in a group. (Department of Education, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1984; Dwyer, 1977; Harris, 1980, 1982, 1984; Murray, 1977; Osborne and Coombs, 1982; Thomas, n.d.). Some of the factors of importance include:

1. *Recognition of 'difference' in students and in their culture.* This difference is not to be identified as a deficit in the person but a difference needing recognition in the teaching/learning interaction.

Factors to be considered would be: a different history, different cultural imperatives (such as strong 'person' orientation, with less emphasis on material objects) and, perhaps most important for teachers of all Aboriginal and Islander students, a different language. Few teachers in the majority culture urban and rural schools recognise in their students the existence of a dialect of English known as Aboriginal English, which is spoken as a first language. It is a distinct dialect and not 'bad' English. Eagleson, Kalder and Malcolm (1982, pp. 75-162) discuss Aboriginal English in remote, country and urban settings, and describe its features.

Further reference to Figure 3 will show that achievements in English tend towards the lower ratings. This factor must influence achievement in all curriculum areas where English comprehension is basic to understanding and achievement. As noted in Figure 3, the graph for Woodwork may reinforce the importance of the need for recognition of the language difference factor. The student achievement in this subject shows a closer conformity to that predicted, and this could be because Woodwork is a more language-free subject.

Teacher demonstration and graphical communication could be important factors in lessening the language difference factor, as well as generally suiting Aboriginal and Islander learning styles.

A further area of possible difference is that Aboriginal and Islander children tend towards particular cognitive styles which have an effect on the teaching/learning interaction. Teachers need to be aware of these possible differences. Many students will tend towards an external locus of control characteristic, where factors external-to-self have most influence on outcomes. For successful upper secondary and tertiary studies an internal locus of control is needed. De Jong (Department of Education, 1982, pp.57-59) looks at locus of control and some possible strategies.

Another cognitive style difference which may occur is developed by Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) and it is of a field sensitive style as opposed to a field independent style. Students with field sensitive styles tend to have global perceptions and to have some difficulties in differentiating parts from the whole. They are, in fact, sensitive to the surrounding background elements of the 'field'. Students who are able to overcome the influence of the 'field', and can thus readily remove an element from one context to be applied in a different 'field', are field independent, and analytical in perception style. It appears that Aboriginal and Islander students are more likely to be 'field sensitive'. Osborne and Coombs (1982) have outlined teaching strategies which suit pupils who are field sensitive.

Such differences in cognitive styles are not to be taken as indicators of possible educational outcomes in a particular student, because they do occur in all students to a greater or lesser degree. However, if educators are unaware of their more likely occurrence, and also unaware of language differences, the sum of the effect of these unacknowledged differences can be influential in student educational outcomes.

As professional educators all teachers need to become aware of the factors of difference in their students which can influence the teaching/learning interaction. They also need knowledge of strategies which have been identified to assist teachers of students with both individual and group differences.

Another important area of difference needing consideration is the difference in possible teacher style.

2. *Recognition that 'difference' in the teacher can have a significant effect on Aboriginal and Islander student involvement and achievement.* Kleinfeld (1975) in her work with Eskimo and Indian students drew up a typology of teachers. Because of a similarity between the characteristics of these students and Aboriginal and Islander students, this work has been adopted and adapted in Australia. Kleinfeld identified the teacher who is a 'warm demander' - that is, personal warmth combined with active demandingness - as most effective with all students but particularly so with students like the Eskimos and North American Indians (1975 pp. 328-340). It has been the experience in Queensland with Aboriginal and Islander students that the teachers with 'warm demander' characteristics are most successful. Kleinfeld suggests that such teachers would:

- i) establish rapport with students before introducing academic demands,
- ii) be 'real' people to their pupils,
- iii) structure lessons carefully,
- iv) emphasise salient cues,
- v) be warm and not critical towards their pupils.

(1975, pp.335-339)

Fanshawe (1976, pp.3-23) writes further on this subject, relating it to the Australian context and delineating the characteristics which, in his view, make a teacher most effective with Aboriginal and Islander students who are 'non-tradition-oriented adolescents'.

3. The factors which have been covered above are directed mainly at the teachers of the largest numbers of Aboriginal and Islander students in Queensland, the teachers in the urban and rural schools which are not located on Aboriginal or Islander Communities. However, they also apply to teachers in the Community schools. In addition these teachers need to know more of the traditional factors which have a strong influence on the teaching/learning interaction.

The work of Harris (1980, 1982, 1984) has examined traditional Aboriginal education and he suggests that there is a need to introduce some elements of this into the classroom. In particular, the proportion of formal to informal education is a necessary concern in schools with tradition-oriented students.

As well as the specific educational environment, teachers in Community schools find that they are a minority group living in an Aboriginal or Islander Community with greatly different language, manners and social interaction features from their own. These have to be acknowledged and learned for both teaching and personal day-to-day interaction within the Community. Von Sturmer (1981, pp. 13-30) presents a useful guide to assist with the learning of details of such differences.

Another area of difference is that specific programs have been developed for use in the Community schools. This has been necessary to maintain continuity with regular high teacher turnover, maintain continuity for students who move from school to school, specifically suit the learning styles and life experience of the student, lessen the preparation required of new teachers, and ensure that the most effective content was included by involving experienced Community school teachers in program development.

The first such program developed within the Department of Education specifically for the Aboriginal and Islander Community schools was the Bernard Van Leer Foundation Language Development Program. For information on this program see Department of Education (1970, 1972 and 1979), Dwyer (1976), and Teasdale and Whitelaw (1981). The Language Development Program, Years 1 to 10, (flowing from the Van Leer Program, Years 1 to 3), the Mathematics program Years 1 to 10, and the secondary subject area ROSBA programs are the most recent development of specific programs for the Community schools.

The three sections above have introduced some of the areas of difference with which teachers should become acquainted.

The steady improvement in some areas of education for Aboriginal and Islanders in Queensland schools, although still well below an optimum level, led those charged with the oversight of Aboriginal and Islander education within the State to extend the influence of the philosophies and strategies which had achieved some success. The instruction of students in programs of teacher education in the matters concerned with Aboriginal and Islander education is one particular method of informing the profession. The development of the Aboriginal and Islander Education Branch within the Planning and Special Programs Division in the Department of Education in Brisbane is developing expertise and resources which are closely aligned to the important contribution of QATSICC (the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee to the Director General of Education) to increase the

knowledge base. Further contributions are being made with the education of Aboriginal and Islander teachers in Townsville, Cairns and Brisbane, together with the education of Aboriginal and Islander people at all levels of education, for example, Community education counsellors in secondary schools, administrators at Aboriginal and Islander education centres, and such.

The specific role of intervention in the extension of the knowledge base in Aboriginal and Islander education addressed in this paper is the inservice of teachers in both the urban and rural schools, and the Community schools. This inservice includes and is complemented by the induction of teachers on appointment to the Community schools.

The Inservice/Induction Kit for Teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Queensland Schools (McGarvie, 1985) is a distillation of the material which has been used in such inservice and induction programs across the State in recent years.

3. UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS FOR ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION

The material used in Queensland's induction and inservice for teachers of Aboriginal and Islander students is directly aimed at changing within the teacher, the knowledge regarding the student which has educational significance. It is assumed that, armed with this knowledge, the professional educator will experience a change in attitude towards the difficulties which these students experience within the system. When this educator, who has already been seeking to improve the performance of all the students being educated, experiences some changes of knowledge and attitude, the material presents specific strategies which may assist in modifying teacher behaviour in this area of education. Hersey and Blanchard (1969, p.3) maintain that the implementation of this behaviour change is the most difficult task, as it is preceded by knowledge and attitude changes. However, the extended knowledge and strategies, when diffused into an educational environment already aware of difficulties and seeking their solution, has achieved apparent behaviour change in some educational environments in recent years.

A basic assumption associated with this approach has been that Aboriginal and Islander students are not achieving to the limits of their ability. A further assumption is that professional educators have the interests of all their students placed centrally before them, they have the basic accepted principles and practices of

teaching firmly in place, and they have a professional need to ensure that the Aboriginal and Islander students, along with all others, do achieve to a level commensurate with their ability. To accommodate these assumptions the material which is presented to teachers shows a strong compatibility to the existing principles of effective teaching practices. It is "...consistent with existing values and past experiences of the adopters" (Rogers, 1962, p.126). However, unless teachers are introduced to the knowledge base of 'difference' in the Aboriginal and Islander students they are constantly frustrated in their attempts to assist them. It can be stated quite clearly though, that the information provided is in no way a "Ten Tips for Teachers" type of presentation which will magically cause difficulties to disappear. The information gives the teacher the basis to begin to weave consideration for the areas of difference into the normal approach in the classroom.

This information is aimed primarily at a teacher audience but it is assumed that it is also addressing change across the entire educational organization. The objective of this change is to produce consistent improvement in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Islander students. Owens and Sternhoff (1976, p.3) have identified change in education as comprising two general areas: firstly, *political problems*, involving the establishment of education goals or public policy and secondly, *knowledge problems*, involving the knowledge of how to achieve an established goal. Equality of educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Islander students has been accepted by both the Australian and Queensland Governments and has been enunciated in public policy. Thus it is the knowledge problem which must be addressed - the knowledge of how to achieve equal educational outcomes. The suggested strategies and approaches being diffused will influence school personnel in their choice of teaching methods, lesson content, and their accommodation of the reality of the cultural mix in their school's population. This would further be reflected in the school environment and in such things as the content of posters, libraries, set books and such. Thus the change sought is in people and technology. No change in the organization's task or its structure is sought.

A further assumption is that the knowledge base presented will be absorbed by those within the Department of Education who are, amongst many other things, concerned with the direction, reinforcement, and appraisal of teachers. Thus, the school administration should be able to understand the teacher's strategies and reinforce them actively in the area of Aboriginal and Islander students' education. Similarly, departmental officers involved in promotional appraisements should be sufficiently informed to have

developed an acceptable philosophy to be exercised in judging the merit or otherwise of the teacher's interaction with Aboriginal and Islander students. Sergiovanni (1969, P.251) reports on research which shows that amongst the most powerful satisfiers for teachers are those found in the work itself, and include achievement and recognition. Senior Departmental officers will need to provide this recognition, firmly based on the knowledge of student differences and their teaching implications, in the interests of teacher reinforcement and satisfaction, and in the interests of student achievement.

For the assembled information to achieve its potential effect within the profession it is assumed that the Aboriginal and Islander Education Branch, which instigated its publication and which will be concerned with its diffusion and management, will receive adequate support. Such support will come from the Departmental personnel charged with the Branch's supervision and development.

To assist the Branch in its management of the various kits located at secondary centres such as Regional Offices of Education, and Education Centres, there will be a need for:

1. Effective original launching of the inservice/induction package by a senior officer of the Department, followed by effective internal and external publicity to community, regional and school levels.
2. Competent training of personnel to act as presenters at seminars and workshops originating from the secondary centres.
3. Adequate communications regarding resources, personnel, information and materials from the primary centre (Aboriginal and Islander Education Branch) to the secondary centres.
4. Freedom from constraints on resources, or independent decision making at the centre, which could involve such factors as bureaucratic or system delays. These could be caused and complicated by the primary centre taking on additional administrative responsibilities.
5. Motivation to succeed in the secondary centre areas - this would include confidence and positive attitudes in regional and school Departmental officers.
6. Establishment and maintenance of a 'feed-back' loop from the secondary centres to the primary centre. A stable message from a

stable centre with stable effective leadership and adequate communication is vital (Points modified from Schon, 1971, pp.91-114).

(The historical development of the material which is included in the inservice and induction package, together with the various factors which led to its formal production, will appear in the next issue...Ed)

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