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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*

Part 2

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4. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

It is axiomatic that the development of any material such as this for inservice and induction of teachers draws on the work, ideas, and philosophies of many people over a considerable period of time. If it has any success in achieving desirable results it must be appreciated that the recent developers "stand on the shoulders of those who went before." Paul Mort (1964, p.324) reinforces this by stating -

...not all important innovations spring fully armed from the brow of Jove. Some of them are old strands in new patterns. The question then as to when an innovation had its beginning is a difficult one.

How far back one needs to look for the foundations, or the 'old strands' to be woven into 'new patterns' for this Kit is not easily determined. Many Church and Government teachers working in schools located on Aboriginal Church Missions or Government Reserves or on Torres Strait Islands since before the turn of the century, did put much effort into providing education for Queensland's Aboriginal and Islander students. The approaches developed by these teachers, although they were in many cases individual and often unco-ordinated with others' efforts, were often surprisingly successful.

One only example, of the many successful initiatives which were developed, is given to illustrate the effort made and the standard of individual and group endeavours.

At Aurukun, on Cape York south of Weipa, Mrs Geraldine MacKenzie, B.A., Dip.Ed., the Presbyterian missionary's wife, was the honorary principal of the Aurukun school for the twenty years before 1965. She records (MacKenzie, 1981, pp. 147-49) that in 1942, based on her reading from the Victorian Council of Education dealing with the teaching of migrants in America, and from her reading of Hogben's *Loom of Language*, covering language differences, she decided to pioneer a series of reading primers especially

* Part 1, together with complete references, appeared in Vol.16 No.4, August/September 1988 pp 29-46.

produced for the Aboriginal children in the Aurukun school. She produced a set of reading primers with illustrations depicting Aboriginal people and reflecting Aboriginal experience and the environment they knew and lived in. These primers were most successful when they were printed by the Queensland Government and used in the school, and this resulted in the books being published by Cheshire and then used more widely, including use in New Guinea. Mrs MacKenzie extended the reading program in her school further by obtaining more advanced readers from England. These were called the *Caribbean Readers*, and they had been prepared for use with West Indies children.

Such examples of initiatives which were based on an appreciation of cultural differences are to be found in many such schools in the first half of the twentieth century, but this single example must suffice to bring this background to a time when the Queensland Department of Education began to become directly involved in the education of Aboriginal and Islander children. This direct (rather than through the Government department responsible for Aboriginal and Islander matters) involvement came with responsibility for primary schools on the reserves or settlements in Queensland.

On July 1st 1962, the Queensland Department of Education assumed control of the primary schools situated on the Cherbourg, Palm Island, Woorabinda and Yarrabah reserves. Some of these schools had originally been church mission schools, but most educational endeavour in Aboriginal and Islander reserves in the early 1960s was a function of the then Department of Native Affairs (later to become Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs/ Advancement and then Department of Community Services). The move of these four schools to the Department of Education was to mark the beginning of a continuing program by which all Aboriginal reserve (now community) schools came under Department of Education control by 1978, followed later by the Torres Strait Island schools in 1985.

Soon after Cherbourg, in the south of the State near Murgon, came under Department of Education control (June 1965), officers from the Special Education section conducted a pilot series of reading tests with the students and discovered that their performances were well below expectations. The response to these findings was the conventional remedial response of more reading books, and such, to assist the staff in their efforts to provide education. There was, however, a growing impression in the Department that the response to the challenge was not entirely appropriate (Alford, 1986)

At about the same time Department officers received a copy of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability (ITPA)

from the Illinois University, and testing using this was begun with handicapped children in Brisbane (Department of Education, 1968, p.2). This work was done by Dr N.W.M. Hart, in collaboration with the Research and Curriculum Branch, in Queensland special and primary schools (not Aboriginal schools), and it involved children who were cerebral palsied, hearing or visually handicapped. A result of this research and other research in the area was the development of various remedial language programs to improve oral language use. These oral programs were also found to improve reading ability (Department of Education, 1968, p.48).

It would appear likely that the departmental personnel of the time, aware of both the Cherbourg test results and the success of the remedial oral language program, both in oral language use and reading, with handicapped children, could have considered the possibility of some similar research and program development with Aboriginal students (Department of Education, 1968, p.52).

Then a further factor was introduced into this changing environment. This factor was the Bernard Van Leer Foundation of The Hague, Holland. Bernard Van Leer, the founder of the Van Leer manufacturing organization, had begun his manufacturing career by successfully designing and then producing one of the original forms of the 44 gallon or 200 litre fuel drum. The manufacturing concern which resulted had spread world-wide and branched out into many other areas of packaging. The Van Leer Foundation was established by the founder of the organization to return some of the profits earned in a particular country to that country to be used to assist socially or culturally disadvantaged groups (Alford, 1986). This aim is recorded in a later letter from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation to the Queensland Department of Education (Department of Education, 1973-79, Van Leer files) stating that the statutory aim was that of -

...enabling children and youth through school going age who are impeded by the social and cultural inadequacy of their background and/or environment... to achieve the greatest possible realisation of their innate potential.

Due to its manufacturing involvement in Australia the Van Leer Foundation sent circulars to many areas in Australia providing information and inviting indications of interest. The Queensland Department of Education responded to this, and forwarded a proposal early in 1968, which was named "Proposed Compensatory Educational Program for Queensland Aboriginal Children". This proposal was,

in due course, accepted by the Van Leer Foundation and agreement was reached to fund the project.

The literature and the practice of the time appears to have been based on early childhood compensatory education programs in language use, for example the 'Headstart' kindergartens, and that would appear to be the philosophy, or at least the language used in the early development project (Department of Education, 1970). The project was to cover years one to three in primary school, and it became generally known as the 'Van Leer Language Development Project'. As the project developed, it clearly became based on a philosophy of cultural and language 'difference' rather than 'deficit' (Department of Education, 1972, p.35). The project also developed into a complete educational program, of language across the curriculum based on language development in the widest sense. This included: development of the Standard English dialect, but not to the disadvantage of the dialect of Aboriginal English; development of self concept; cognitive development; and development of creativity in the students (Teasdale and Whitelaw, 1981, p.118-9). Thus, when the Van Leer Language Development program began in Cherbourg and Palm Island, near Townsville in north Queensland, in 1970 it was firmly based on research into the existing oral language of the children in these Communities. This language was a dialect of English termed Aboriginal English, and not an Australian Aboriginal language.

As early as the end of 1972 (Department of Education, 1972, p. vi) researchers were able to report that most of the children made significant progress in the first year of school although still lower than that attained by non-Aboriginal students. This result appears to have had the effect of reinforcing an approach to Aboriginal education within the Department which was built on research into difference in both the language and the cultural features of the students. Programs and strategies used such research as a starting point, and Community consultation became a necessary feature of both the research and the program application to ensure that Community members were aware of, and had input into all developments.

The Van Leer program, together with its associated philosophies, including respect for language and cultural difference in students and their families, was expanded to other Aboriginal Community schools. Indigenous classroom assistants who interacted with students in the classroom, and also had a school/home/community liaison role were appointed in all Communities, following a pilot project in the establishment of their role as part of the Van Leer

project, at Cherbourg in 1972 (Department of Education, 1974). This represented a rediscovery of the indigenous 'monitors' or 'teachers' used in earlier times in Mission and Government schools, and it established the concept which was to grow, of the Aboriginal or Islander para-professional in the Queensland Department.

Thus it can be appreciated that there had been a long history of effort in Aboriginal education, but the Van Leer project was the focus which established an approach to Aboriginal education within the Queensland Department of Education. If the Van Leer project had not given this focus, the situation in Queensland may not have developed in the manner it has.

As will be seen, the approach which was focused by the Van Leer Foundation funding and project, continued into upper primary school and secondary schools on Communities, and in due course permeated all areas across the State - primary, secondary, TAFE, universities and colleges of advanced education, and similar areas.

To follow the development of the inservice and induction material it is necessary to return to the introduction of Van Leer at Cherbourg and Palm Island. Teachers who were to be involved with this new program needed some introduction to the actual program and the underlying concepts, so both schools were closed for one week during 1969 and seminars were held for all teachers at Tallebudgera from April 28th to May 2nd. Funding for such necessary preparation and for the special equipment used in the schools was also available from Van Leer sources.

This induction of new teachers approach, begun with the Van Leer funded project, has continued as a Department of Education initiative often supported by Commonwealth Department of Education funding, in various forms. The most long lasting and concentrated induction for teachers of Aboriginal and Islander students is the "Jumbunna" Seminar, held at Lawes Agricultural College at the end of each school year, for teachers going to Aboriginal and Islander Community schools the following year.

Personnel within the Department who were either associated with the Van Leer project, or readily able to adopt and apply the associated philosophies which developed, continued to have influence in the wider field of Aboriginal and Islander education. The principal of the Cherbourg Primary School from 1970, Mr. L.J.Dwyer, became the first Primary Inspector for Indigenous Students in 1974. The deputy principal of Murgon Secondary School from 1969, where Cherbourg students received their secondary education, was Mr F. Young. Although he was not directly involved with the Van Leer

project, Young became the first principal of Bamaga High School on Cape York in 1973, and then the first Secondary Inspector for Indigenous Students, in 1975. Other Departmental officers continued to diffuse the philosophies which had been basic to the Van Leer project and had proved successful, throughout the area. They included Departmental personnel such as Mr N. Alford, who was director of the original Van Leer Project Committee and is, at the time of writing, Assistant Director General in the Department of Education, and Mr W.L. Hamilton who, as Deputy Director General of the Department (he is now Chairman of the Board of Advanced Education) developed many initiatives, including the appointment of the Inspectors for Indigenous Students. Many others, such as Professor B. Watts, formerly Professor of Special Education at the University of Queensland and a foundation member of the Van Leer Project Committee, made significant contributions. Of particular note is one of the field officers with the original Van Leer Project, Ms J. Koppe who, reportedly, primarily devised the experimental first year program (Department of Education 1972, foreword) and then continued to work with the Van Leer Project for six years, after which she moved to Townsville College of Advanced Education (now amalgamated with and part of James Cook University of North Queensland) as a lecturer in the newly formed Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Education, where she continued to influence graduate teachers and others with the philosophies of Aboriginal and Islander education in Queensland.

The Inspectors of Indigenous Education moved for the appointment of Advisory Teachers, Aboriginal and Islander Education, to work with teachers in schools both on Communities and other schools with a significant proportion of Aboriginal and Islander students. Mr G. Coombs, who had been an original Van Leer Program teacher on Palm Island was one of the first three appointed in the primary area in 1947. He is now a lecturer in the Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal and Islander Education (GDAIE) at James Cook University. Two of the earliest appointments as secondary advisory teachers in Aboriginal and Islander education were Miss E. Murray, who had taught at Murgon and in Papua New Guinea, and who is now principal of the Far Northern Schools Development Unit on Thursday Island, concerned with the Torres Strait Island schools; and Mr R. Wilson, who had taught at Bamaga State High School. Such advisory staff took the concepts which had been developed and adapted them to the particular school population and level they were concerned with. Such personnel, who were experienced and successful practitioners in the developing approach to Aboriginal and Islander education in the Queensland Department, now were available to complement the theoretical content at the annual induction seminars at 'Jumbunna'.

In 1975 secondary teachers were first involved with 'Jumbunna' and induction but because Bamaga, established in 1973, was then the sole Community secondary school, teachers from urban schools with significant proportions of Aboriginal and Islander students were included - for example, Cairns and Mackay. However, in 1977 there was an expansion of secondary departments attached to primary schools on many of the Communities, and the urban schools were then no longer included because of number limitations. This arrangement continued until 1980 when, with the development of common specific programs for the secondary school subject areas in Community schools, there was a need for more induction time with secondary teachers, separate from primary, for introduction to these new programs. Induction at the Bardon Professional Development Centre in Brisbane was instituted, with one day at Jumbunna to meet the school principals (who were primary, in all secondary departments). The induction program drew on the newly developed common programs, as well as such Department publications as: the 1978 *Handbook for Teachers of Aboriginal and Islander Secondary Students in Community Schools*; the *Weemala* book (Department of Education, 1980) which had provided teachers with information on remote schools with a significant proportion of indigenous children, and which was supplemented in 1982 with *An Introduction to Teaching in the Cape and Gulf Schools*, specifically for schools with secondary students; and subject specific material, for example, E.Murray's *Teaching Aboriginal and Islander Students English in Secondary Schools in Queensland* (1977).

The 1980 school year developed, in the comparatively regular teacher turnover, a disturbing feature in the appointment of over 75% of the new secondary teachers to Community schools directly from their teacher education institutions. This caused difficulties for both the teachers themselves and the schools concerned, so some change was needed, especially to relieve the Northern Region, based in Townsville, of the responsibility for finding staff for nearly all the expanding Community schools. A formula was developed for 1981 whereby particular educational regions in all areas of Queensland were given responsibility for recruiting teachers for particular schools. Consequently, in 1981, the induction of secondary teachers was conducted on a regional centre basis to complement this scheme. Although the regional responsibility for recruiting staff has since been modified, this regional arrangement for secondary teacher induction has continued, while the induction of primary teachers has continued at 'Jumbunna'.

To summarize: *Difference* in the Aboriginal and Islander student is officially recognized by the Queensland Department of Education.

Specific programs for Community schools have been developed which recognise the differences in language, learning styles and other features. Teachers on appointment to Community schools attend induction programs to develop their sensitivity to such differences and the strategies which flow from them.

If such preparation is required for teachers in Community schools, what of the teachers of Aboriginal/Islander students in non-Community schools.

5. CURRENT PROVISIONS - THE NON-COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Parallel to the development sketched above, which has concentrated on the preparation of teachers for the Community schools, there has been a growing emphasis on assistance to teachers of Aboriginal and Islander students in the non-Community urban and rural schools.

The increasing work done with the non-Community students may have sprung from the fact that the Department of Education in Queensland moved to appoint both a primary and a secondary inspector for Aboriginal and Islander education, rather than a primary based person alone with primary and secondary responsibilities, as in some other States. This gave the Queensland Secondary Division a serious interest in secondary education for Aboriginal and Islander children, aided by the Commonwealth Education Department. An example of many initiatives achieved co-operatively in this area would be the Inala Family Education Centre which was established in 1975. This centre was primarily established for the benefit of Aboriginal and Islander students attending Inala and Richlands State High Schools. It was a joint project involving Primary, Secondary, and Guidance and Special Education, with Commonwealth Education support, which operated from a non-school location in Inala (a Brisbane suburb). From this centre, supervised originally by Mr R. Clark (Guidance Officer, and at the time of writing, District Guidance Officer, Cairns) developed programs to assist teachers of Aboriginal and Islander students, their parents, and community. Initiatives which developed included: the urban Aboriginal or Islander aide, with a home visiting role in school/home liaison (later, in 1980, this role was classified as "Community Education Counsellor"); the conducting of camps for Aboriginal and Islander children for academic direction or career guidance at various year levels, or generally for all students in the area of self concept and self-esteem development - culture camps. Co-operation between State Education and Commonwealth Education saw the Inala concept and its initiatives expanded to areas outside Brisbane.

with the main thrust being in Townsville, where the Aboriginal and Islander Education Centre was established in 1977 by Ms C. Ling, and continued by Mr D. Nutley and Mrs L. Murgha. Aboriginal school visitors were also appointed to visit schools, and other institutions, to talk about traditional and contemporary aspects of Aboriginal life and culture. The late Mr J. Hamilton filled this role for many years from 1974, as did the late Mrs C. Archer.

Aboriginal aides had been established in Brisbane primary schools since 1974, carrying out the accepted teacher aide duties, and their role had also spread to other areas of the State.

The Townsville College of Advanced Education (now amalgamated with and part of James Cook University of North Queensland) had, in 1975, in consultation with the Department of Education, established the Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Education (GDAE) (now Aboriginal and Islander - GDAIE) and in 1977 this course included secondary teachers in addition to primary and pre-school. In the same time period of 1976/77 secondary advisory teacher, R. Wilson spent a major part of his time in the urban secondary schools with Aboriginal and Islander students and their teachers, preparing profiles of the schools, the children and their parents, as primary advisory teacher, G. Coombs had done in northern primary schools some years earlier.

Another significant initiative of the period was the appointment in 1976 of an Aboriginal secondary teacher, Mr J. Budby, as an advisory teacher attached to Head Office and also to perform the duties of executive officer of QATSIICC (the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee to the Director-General of Education). In 1979 this position became that of education officer, and from the original appointment has now grown the Aboriginal and Islander Education Branch (AIEB) in Brisbane Head Office.

Parallel to this development the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) division of the Queensland Department of Education had appointed Mr R. Delaforce as officer-in-charge of the TAFE Aboriginal and Islander education section. This appointment was followed by the appointment of Aboriginal field officers in TAFE colleges by 1977. The number of field officers in colleges across the State grew to twelve in 1983 with four ex-field officers having commenced or completed teacher preparation training. ACCESS courses to enable Aboriginal and Islander students to gain the prerequisite skills for further education were also introduced in TAFE colleges, including Cairns, Rockhampton and Kangaroo Point, Brisbane.

With this continuing development of the advisory service and the AIEB, all under the guidance of the inspectors of indigenous students, there existed, by the late 1970s, a developing structure for schools, teachers, administrators and others to appeal to for assistance. In this climate significant educational initiatives developed in many of the State's schools. As one example, Cairns High School teacher, Mr R. Thomas, a GDAE graduate, developed *A Handbook for Teachers of Cairns State High School: the Aboriginal and Islander Student*, to introduce teachers at that school to differences in Aboriginal and Islander students and the suitable strategies and procedures to cater for those differences. Homework classes began in many secondary schools and the services of Commonwealth Education tutors were sought by parents, schools and counsellors, to assist students.

From the experience of those involved with Aboriginal and Islander education in the urban scene, grew the realisation that materials which had been developed for the Community schools were not directly applicable to the urban and rural scene, and with the growing demand for assistance in this area some material needed to be developed to fill this need. Perhaps the first such publication was the October 1982 *Impact - The Urban Aborigine at School*, which was distributed to all schools. This edition of *Impact* was developed into the *Source Book: Teaching Aborigines and Islanders in Urban/Rural Areas, Queensland*, published in 1983.

The main thrust of the work in the secondary area in urban/rural Aboriginal and Islander education was taken up by secondary advisory teachers R. MacIver and N. McGarvie, working under the direction of F. Young, Secondary Inspector Indigenous, during the early 1980s. This built on the foundation of some teacher inservice which had been conducted at various schools across the State in earlier years. Teachers in schools with large number of Aboriginal and Islander students wanted to learn of, and implement, the methods which had been developed to ensure that Aboriginal and Islander students were not disadvantaged in their education, so that their results could more closely approach a level which reflected their ability.

Vists were made to as many schools as possible, on request, and they covered the State from Bamaga in the north to Cunamulla in the south-west.

The publication of *Strategies: Teaching Aborigines and Islanders in Urban/Rural Areas, Queensland*, 1984, was specifically developed to be used as material which could be left with teachers after a visit or seminar (it is a small booklet of 18 pages). The

preparation of this book followed a suggestion from Mrs R. Haig, Secondary Advisory Teacher Aboriginal and Islander Education, in 1982, that some such material be prepared to complement the visit of an advisory teacher to schools.

During the work in the urban/rural schools by MacIver and McGarvie, materials were developed in a suitable format to suit the inservice of teachers in the majority culture urban/rural schools. These materials were based on the same philosophies which had been applied to good effect over the years in induction programs for the Community schools, together with philosophical input from the GDAE course, as both teachers had completed this training. Thus the materials consider:

- respect for the Aboriginal and Islander students' culture and dialect difference
- respect for a different historical background
- respect for different learning styles
- relevance in curriculum items
- building of self-concept and self-esteem
- consultation with the Aboriginal and Islander community and parents
- teacher characteristics

and many other factors.

The revising of these materials, which have now been used for many years in numerous Queensland schools, coincided with a growing move within the State towards regionalisation and a growing regional control of induction and inservice for teachers. With this move away from the former centralised system, the existing Aboriginal and Islander education personnel considered that there would be value in collecting all the various relevant Department publications together to be updated and reprinted, typing the notes and OHP transparencies which MacIver/McGarvie had used in seminars and workshops for both Community school induction and urban/rural school inservice, and then assembling all of this material into a kit. This kit would then be distributed to holding points located within the various educational regions, such as regional offices and education centres, so as to be available to appropriate personnel including regional office staff, AIEB advisory teachers and others, to conduct induction or inservice activities.

The AIEB, through the acting co-ordinator, Ms J. Schmider, forwarded a submission to QINSEC (Queensland Secondary Inservice Section) and the necessary funding was obtained from the Schools Commission professional development funds. N. McGarvie prepared the updating of publications and other kit materials and the kits were printed during 1985 in Townsville. Many people assisted in checking the materials before and after typing, but those most closely involved included Ms J. Schmider, Acting Co-ordinator AIEB; Mr F. Young, Secondary Inspector Aboriginal/Islander Education; Mr R. MacIver, formerly Secondary Advisory Teacher Aboriginal/Islander Education, now Teacher, Hearing Impaired, Cairns State High School; Mr L. Wilson, Advisory Teacher, Cairns Special Education; and Mr G. Coombs, Lecturer, GDAIE, James Cook University.

6. CONTENTS OF THE INSERVICE/INDUCTION KIT

The contents consist entirely of printed material to enable a presenter, in a seminar format, to speak to the overhead transparencies which are the basis of the kit. The transparencies are located in envelopes inside the back covers of the four Section books. These books consist of brief, practical notes to explain the headings and materials on the transparencies.

The 'target' schools for teacher seminars, those having Aboriginal and Islander students, have been classified into different groups:

A. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS - situated on an Aboriginal or Islander Community, or with a major proportion of the school population Aboriginal or Islander Community based students.

B. URBAN AND RURAL SCHOOLS with a small proportion of students who normally reside on an Aboriginal or Islander Community.

C. URBAN AND RURAL SCHOOLS with Aboriginal and Islander students who live locally and are not Community based. This classification is the largest.

Section Books 1 and 2 are concerned with classification A, Book 3 with classification C, while Book 4 has portions which apply to all schools. Classification B uses portions from all books except 2.

A Handbook is included as an introduction to the kit and to assist possible presenters in seminar presentation. Practical and philosophical considerations are addressed. The second half of the

Handbook consists of articles and extracts to be photocopied and distributed as 'hand-out' material for participants. Similarly, 50 copies of the booklet, *Strategies: Teaching Aborigines and Islanders in Urban/Rural Areas, Queensland* (1984), are included for distribution.

The balance of the material consists of support and reference publications of the Queensland Department of Education:

- *The Education of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders: Queensland Programs and Provisions* (1984).
- *An introduction to Teaching in Cape and Gulf Schools* (1985).
- *A Handbook for Teachers of Aboriginal and Islander Secondary Students in Community Schools* (1982).
- *Source Book: Teaching Aborigines and Islanders in Urban/Rural Areas, Queensland* (1983),
- Two Videos: *Aboriginal and Islander Involvement in Education*, and *QATSICC* have been added to the kit since 1986.

The materials are contained in an easily portable cardboard box measuring approximately 350 mm x 230 mm x 190 mm, which weighs slightly over 6 kg in its complete form.

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