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AN EVALUATION OF AN INTERCULTURAL  
STUDIES INNOVATION IN AN A.C.T.  
PRIMARY SCHOOL.

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fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree  
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M.B. WILKINSON.

## ABSTRACT

This field study is based upon research by a teacher into the initiation, planning and implementation of an Intercultural Studies Project in an A.C.T. Primary School. The innovation was funded by the A.C.T. Schools Authority under the Curriculum Projects Scheme.

The project's evaluation was undertaken from September 1978 until December 1980. The writer was one of the innovators, the co-ordinator of the course and the evaluator. The evaluation occurred mainly through the techniques of direct involvement, observation, questionnaire and interviews. As such this report is an acknowledged insider's view of the innovation and its impact upon the children, the teachers and the school generally. A picture of the perceptions of pupils and teachers towards the process of this particular curriculum innovation has evolved. It is hoped that other teachers may be able to glean information from this case study for specific application to similar types of innovations.

This field study report is therefore an evaluation of the process of development and implementation of an Intercultural Studies innovation.

Initially, a description of the background and early development of the programme is presented, followed by the rationale upon which the innovation is based.

A literature review section studies various general themes and specific concepts. Multiculturalism, intercultural learning and teaching strategies are examined. Also, the characteristics of an innovation are examined within the context of the project's implementation process.

Aspects of the curriculum design involving innovation implementation processes and the gradual development of the curriculum framework are discussed, including a description of a model of evaluation that the study utilises.

Finally, the process of the Intercultural Studies Project innovation is examined in some detail. Data presentation with data analysis and interpretation occurs accompanied by general comments from the perspective of the evaluator.

Some major elements that have evolved during the process of this curriculum change in an A.C.T. Primary School are as follows:

1. It was easier to change curriculum objectives than to facilitate change in methods of instruction.
2. Both internal and external sources influenced the curriculum process from inception to evaluation stages.
3. Teachers needed extensive inservice training in I.C.S. theory and practice in order to facilitate change of approach, outlook and methods of teaching.
4. I.C.S. partial success as an innovation was due in small degree to the nature of its aims and objectives and most of its intrinsic nature being synonymous with that of the school's Social Science Curriculum.

5. Staff changes affected curriculum continuity and implementation according to original aims.

6. The complexity of the project in the area of new materials and audio visual equipment produced an obstacle to its implementation.

7. Energy dissipation by teachers which was massive in relation to compilation of units of work, meetings, class teaching, and gathering resources was a constraint as teachers have limited time for curriculum development in the primary school context.

8. A plan of change, an implementation framework, resources linkage system, trouble-shooting interventionist approaches to difficulties as these arose and evaluative feedback mechanisms all existed, but much more needed to be done to make all these elements contribute to the innovation's successful implementation.

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