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AN ABORIGINAL STUDIES RESOURCE CENTRE FOR THE A.C.T.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to provide a framework, background material and argument for the A.C.T. Aboriginal community and other Aboriginal educational and cultural groups to develop submissions seeking funds for Aboriginal Studies Resource Centres. The ACT Aboriginal Education Consultative Group has given the thesis a definite focus and underlined the importance of gaining Aboriginal, systemic and political support.

The study includes both theoretical and empirical components and practical suggestions as to the organisation and activities of such a centre. The early part of the study is devoted to providing background to an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre, it also covers the formation and development of the A.C.T. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Following the outlining of the aims and objectives of such a centre, theoretical issues concerned with selection and organisation of centre materials, the need for interpretation of objectives and the understanding of values together with curriculum implications and learning activities of an Aboriginal studies resource centre are discussed. Two major thrusts in these discussions are that Aboriginal people must be involved and the question of values must be considered because human behaviour depends on values, and behavioural change is regarded as one of the main measures of success.

It is intended that while an Aboriginal Studies resource centre should concentrate on its local area, it should draw materials from other parts of Australia and the world, so that the local area can be placed in context. It is envisaged that the materials would come from a wide range of disciplines.

The A.C.T. Centre will endeavour to increase the comprehension of A.C.T. Aborigines and non-Aborigines in matters Aboriginal, and will follow a philosophy which holds that learning is the discovery of meaning or understanding. A range of learning activities, including hands on experiences are outlined. The functions of the Centre are described and the involvement of Aborigines and non-Aborigines at all levels is discussed. Evaluation of the Centre's success or otherwise will take cognisance of its objectives and involve a range of outcomes. It is acknowledged that success will be difficult to measure because of different amounts of student time spent at the Centre and teacher and student expectations.

The thesis concludes that Aboriginal studies has not achieved its rightful place in Australian education and that an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre would provide the material and human resources required for Aboriginal studies to take its proper place in Australian education.

PREFACE

This thesis resulted from a desire within the ACT Aboriginal community to have a detailed submission supporting the need to have an ACT Aboriginal Studies Centre to assist in promoting Aboriginal Studies programs. I am grateful for the support and contributions made by the members of the ACT Aboriginal Education consultative Group and parents who took part in seminars and workshops.

I wish to record my thanks to my wife, Eleanor Bourke, and Margo Weir who read drafts of this field study and made pertinent comments. Margo also provided invaluable assistance with advice regarding a library for the Centre. Alex Barlow and Kevin Keefe, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, also contributed through discussions regarding Aboriginal studies in school systems.

My thanks also to Ms Barbara Chambers, who provided advice throughout the planning, execution and writing of this thesis. Her encouragement and confidence in my being able to complete this work are much appreciated.

In the initial stages Dr. Don Williams provided valuable assistance in the planning and formation of this study. I also acknowledge the work of the members of the Aboriginal Consultative Group to the Schools Commission who in 1975 opened up a whole new range of possibilities regarding Aboriginal education. They and members of the National Aboriginal Education Committee, State Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and Aboriginal parents and children have assisted in clarifying my concepts on Aboriginal education, in general, and Aboriginal studies, in particular.

My thanks also to Marcelle Drinkwater, Pat Ware and Marilyn Wilson who have turned a hand written, cut and paste collection of loose leaf pages into something legible and orderly. Their skill, efficiency and good humour in difficult circumstances are appreciated.

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I. BACKGROUND

Recent archaeological evidence indicates that Aborigines have been living in the continent now known as Australia for at least 40,000 years before the arrival of European settlers in 1788. Some evidence, as yet not fully accepted in archaeological circles, suggests Aboriginal occupation of Australia may exceed 100,000 years.

During their occupation of this continent Aboriginal people had to adapt to many profound changes in the climate, vegetation and landscape. Some 18,000 years ago the last ice age ended and the seas began to rise. The rising of the waters eventually reduced the land surface area by one seventh. Tasmania and New Guinea were separated from mainland Australia and the continent assumed the shape it has today.

Some 7,000 - 10,000 years ago Aborigines living in south western Victoria witnessed many volcanic disturbances. They would probably have been audible within a radius of some two hundred miles. Aborigines in other parts of Australia also witnessed profound geophysical changes. Life in pre-European Australia was not static.

In 1788, it is generally accepted that some 300,000 Aborigines were living in Australia. They were organised into about 800 different groups each having their own language, culture and social mores. Each group developed a way of life to meet their needs and to cope with the physical environment of the territory/area which they occupied. Each was sufficiently diverse in practices and customs as to be recognised as different even by the untrained European colonists. In 1788, some 500 languages were spoken in Australia.

Aborigines had therefore maintained a civilization for a very long period of time despite vast physical changes. This suggests that they must have evolved a system of education which enabled them to perpetuate their society indefinitely. The basic aim of Aboriginal education was to turn out adults who were comprehensively educated in all aspects of tribal life. Aborigines developed a great deal of assurance as individuals because they received a complete education through their culture. Each individual knew what he/she had to know and what he/she had to do. A hunter gatherer society is dependent upon each individual acting responsibly and exercising informed judgements.

Prior to 1788, the Aboriginal people had an economic system in which everyone was profitably employed. It was similar to the present socialist models but differed in that the sharing of the products of economic activity was based on kinship rules which ensured all were entitled to a share.

The groups lived within their own defined area and enjoyed close dependent relationships which were maintained through a kinship system. Every member of a group had an affiliation with every other person in his or her own group although not all were close blood relatives. Being related involved using the correct term to address people. It also meant following a prescribed form of behaviour or protocol. In every kinship relationship there existed obligations and responsibilities.

Aboriginal people lived in the area now known as the Australian Capital Territory for thousands of years (possibly 100,000 according to the Lake George core samples) before colonisation. During this time, they, like other Aborigines, established a unique culture based on an understanding of the land and its resources. This, according to

Josephine Flood⁽¹⁾ enabled them to have a diet which contained over fifty different foods. The traditional owners of this area were educated people who had a detailed knowledge of their cultural heritage.

With the arrival of the European colonists in the Canberra region and the establishment of their farms and settlements, Aboriginal people of the area were subjected in varying degrees to a system which dispossessed them of their land.

There are descendants of the original inhabitants of the A.C.T. living in Canberra and the surrounding areas but the majority of Aborigines in Canberra today come from other areas. Irrespective of their origins, A.C.T. Aborigines need to understand their own past and have an appreciation of the people on whose land they now live. They also need programmes for their future education and cultural development.

The Aboriginal Consultative Group to the Schools Commission summed up the situation in 1975 when they concluded:

That the Aboriginal people should be involved in their own education at all levels, and they should be responsible for and have some realistic control of this process.(2)

Since the coming of the Europeans, the educational policy for Aborigines has generally reflected overall Government policy, which has ranged from initially ignoring Aborigines through protection,

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- (1) Flood, Josephine: "The Moth Hunters", Aboriginal Prehistory of the Australian Alps, AIAS, Canberra, 1980.
(2) Aboriginal Consultative Group: Interim Report to the Schools Commission, Canberra, February 1975.

"smoothing the dying pillow", assimilation, integration, self management and self determination. All policies were implemented without any meaningful consultation with Aboriginal people.

Today in the A.C.T., despite the very recent appointment of an Aborigine as Chief Education Officer for the A.C.T. Schools Authority, the funding and final decision making is in the hands of non-Aborigines. A.C.T. Aborigines have to accept the education system and work within its confines. The system includes unions, teachers, principals, educationists and interest groups. All have vested interests in maintaining the status quo. The recent decision to place A.C.T. education under the Department of Territories has further exacerbated an unsatisfactory situation. The Department of Education was at least recognising that Aboriginal education was a priority.

The establishment of an A.C.T. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group has allowed Aboriginal people to have some voice in, and limited influence upon the decisions being made in relation to Aboriginal education in this region. The Aboriginal Education Consultative Group has created a more positive climate of opinion. The Consultative Group endeavours to have more relevant educational programmes and practices for Aboriginal people in the A.C.T. (Appendix 1). It also recognises that an Aboriginal Studies Centre is an integral part of an Aboriginal education programme. The Group sees the Centre as an important factor in non-Aboriginal people gaining an understanding of, and empathy with, Aboriginal cultures.

When considering Aboriginal education within the A.C.T., it is important to realize that at this time the term is misleading. The main thrust is to educate Aborigines within the general education system, a system which holds middle class Australian views, values and beliefs. The Schools Authority is not yet educating Aboriginal pupils within an Aboriginal context.

As the Aboriginal Consultative Group (1975) noted in its Report to the Schools Commission⁽³⁾ a successful education system must produce enlightened Aborigines with intellectual skills developed to their full potential but in harmony with Aboriginal cultural mores. The advancement of Aboriginal people must be one of the greatest challenges before Australia today. Education is of vital importance to Aboriginal advancement socially, economically and culturally.

Aborigines recognise that education is the key to their gaining realistic self-management and pride. Education programs for Aborigines will only be successful if the education system changes to meet some of the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people.

(3) Aboriginal Consultative Group to the Schools' Commission:
Education for Aborigines. Schools Commission, Canberra, 1975.

2. INTRODUCTION

In 1974 the Schools Commission appointed the Aboriginal Consultative Group to provide it with informed views on the educational needs of Aborigines.

The Group had many meetings and met with the State Superintendents of Aboriginal Education during May 1975. I was at that time responsible for Aboriginal Education in Victoria. The Consultative Group made it quite clear during discussions that they saw a need for education of non-Aborigines as well as Aborigines.

In their report they expressed concern at the general lack of understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Islander culture in the wider Australian society. They were also concerned with the incompatibility of the education systems with many aspects of Aboriginal culture. This report was a watershed in Aboriginal education and led to the establishment of the National Aboriginal Education Committee in 1977.

Despite the acceptance of the Consultative Group's report by the School's Commission in 1976 very little changed in the curriculum offered to children in the various education systems in Australia.

Aboriginal studies programs which did develop were hesitant and suffered from lack of materials. While teaching materials were not plentiful most of those available were not sensitive, or responsive, to Aboriginal perceptions. At that time Aboriginal studies teaching

materials had been prepared by non-Aborigines who in many cases had little knowledge of Aboriginal societies and their activities.

Following the Consultative Group's report teachers became more aware that Aboriginal studies needed to be incorporated into the curriculum but invariably failed to do so due to lack of training and suitable materials.

Since 1977 teachers seem to have become more sensitive to, and aware of, the particular social and cultural content of schools and the communities they serve. Some have expressed the need to identify and empathise with the needs of their pupils, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

During meetings of the National Aboriginal Education Committee (N.A.E.C.), State Consultative Groups and Aboriginal parents there has been a great deal of concern expressed regarding the way in which schools were presenting Aboriginal societies and cultures. Some Aborigines have argued that Aboriginal studies should be taught exclusively by Aborigines. However, the diversity of modern Aboriginal Australia especially in the eastern and southern states does not support this argument on factual grounds. It may on empathic or sensitivity grounds.

At every National Aboriginal Education conference since 1978 the issue of Aboriginal Studies and the curriculum has been raised. Despite this very little has changed in the vast majority of schools. Change will only be brought about when teachers make the effort to achieve change.

This requires a positive administrative climate and support, both human and material.

Aboriginal studies has a dual rationale. It has specific purposes and complementary but differing outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. It should develop comprehension of Aboriginal culture in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and the role of Aborigines in past, present and future Australia.

Longstreet⁽¹⁾ asserts that it is important for members of the dominant group to search out and reflect upon its own cultural ambiguities otherwise they will be blended together into one thick soup. For Aborigines who do not want to be blended into Australian society it is vital that they know their cultural heritage so it can be maintained and passed onto future generations.

Marsh⁽²⁾ believes the dominant group must be exposed to the needs and interest of other ethnic groups so they can empathise with them and develop appropriate levels of communication.

During the decade since the Consultative Group report no education system has developed an Aboriginal Studies Centre which will meet the needs of teachers, by supplying them with human and physical resources, and pupils by giving them the opportunity to have first hand experience with aspects of Aboriginal culture.

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1. Longstreet W.S. Aspects of Ethnicity. Teacher's College Press. New York. 1978.
 2. Marsh C. & Stafford K. Curriculum: Australian Practices and Issues: McGrath-Hill. Sydney. 1984.

Various education systems have centres for Mathematics and English and other aspects of the curriculum but not Aboriginal studies. Here in Canberra there is Questacon which has been established to provide a centre for presentation of scientific and technological concepts to school children of all ages.

Questacon is an innovative centre in that it presents its material in such a way that it brings students into contact with various concepts using an approach which requires their active participation. In so doing it has acted as a focal point for teachers and pupils engaged in teaching or learning about scientific and technological subjects. It has established, in a single place, a presentation of scientific phenomena and concepts the scope of which no individual school could achieve.

The Questacon innovative 'hands on' approach where students handle scientific experiments is most interesting and provides a possible model for an Aboriginal Studies Centre. Instead of using only print and visual materials to teach Aboriginal studies a "hands on" approach to at least part of the Centre would give children a whole new perspective to aspects of Aboriginal culture.

Statistics from the Commonwealth Department of Education have shown that Aborigines are steadily increasing their school retention rates and levels of achievement. Though still far below non-Aborigines their levels are improving but the level of knowledge about Aborigines being gained by Aborigines and non-Aborigines is not keeping pace. Hence the need for greater effort and a new approach to Aboriginal studies. A

new focus, a centre with expertise, resources and a fresh approach would seem to be necessary to bolster the efforts of teachers of Aboriginal studies.

Tertiary institutions have moved to develop Aboriginal studies courses of differing importance. Monash University has a one year course in Aboriginal studies as part of its Bachelor of Arts degree. Other institutions are making or have made similar moves. But the school systems seem to have been left behind. Materials for Aboriginal studies such as the A.C.T. Aboriginal Studies Kit have been produced, but their usage appears to be limited either in breadth or depth.

Teachers can take their students to a museum or if in Canberra to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) but these places were not designed for children. The A.I.A.S. was established to promote Aboriginal studies and research at a tertiary level and is not really suitable for primary or lower secondary pupils. Museums although educational mainly cater for adults and concentrate on collecting and conserving rather than teaching.

The Consultative Group to the Schools Commission reported some twelve years ago and though they identified the needs to teach aspects of Aboriginal culture they never outlined how it was to be done. Nor was it their charter to do so. Its successor the N.A.E.C. has concentrated on policy and has largely ignored practice.

As Senator Susan Ryan, Minister for Education said when launching "Windows onto Worlds", a review of Australian studies in tertiary education, "Australian education has failed to educate students about Australia. It has also failed to develop Aboriginal studies courses in

schools".⁽³⁾ An Aboriginal Studies Centre should be the catalyst necessary to redress the imbalance.

For the past decade I have been heavily involved in Aboriginal education from professional, parental and community perspectives. I have lectured at Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education on Aboriginal matters and have also been involved with many teacher in-service programs promoting Aboriginal studies. But despite the efforts that have been made the lack of development of meaningful Aboriginal studies programs has been disappointing. Something has been missing. After much discussion with classroom practitioners I have been struck by their uncertainty in handling Aboriginal studies and the lack of support available to them on a practical basis.

It seems obvious that some positive support systems need to be developed to ensure that teachers are motivated and supported by suitable materials and highly developed expertise. When the initial discussions regarding an A.C.T. Education Consultative Group were being held by A.C.T. Aborigines the concept of an Aboriginal Studies Centre was put forward and I saw this as an opportunity to try and supply the support that teachers needed.

The A.C.T. education system also has an advantage in that it is comparatively small and change is more easily measured. Also the A.C.T. school system has a history of being open to new suggestions and ideas. It was also thought that success for an Aboriginal Studies Centre in Canberra would serve as a pilot study for other Aboriginal groups and a case study would give them a guide to develop their own submissions for such centres.

3. Ryan Senator Susan: Windows Onto the World. Press Release. June 1987

2.1. A.C.T. ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE GROUP

In October 1982, the Annual Aboriginal Education Conference organised by the National Aboriginal Education Committee was held at Goulburn in New South Wales. During the course of the conference, delegates broke into discussion groups based on their state of residence, but no provision was made for an A.C.T. group. It was suggested by the organisers that each person from the A.C.T. could be involved with the group from their State of origin. Conference delegates from the A.C.T. met briefly and decided to develop their own group on the grounds that Aboriginal children and parents in the A.C.T. had different needs to their counterparts in other areas of Australia and therefore were entitled to their own input into the discussions.

The organisers acceded to the demand for an A.C.T. group to discuss the issues highlighted by the conference. The group was formed and made a contribution to the issues identified and also discussed the need for an Aboriginal Education Consultative Group in the A.C.T.

During March, April and May 1983, an interim working group of interested Aborigines met and discussed the following major topics:

- . the need for an Aboriginal Education Consultative Group in the A.C.T.
- . an Aboriginal Studies Centre
- . Aboriginal studies courses and curriculum

- . possible sources of funding for a consultative group
- . securing suitable office accommodation
- . the group's rationale, terms of reference, constitution, and aims and objectives

The discussions resulted in a number of draft documents being prepared for the first Annual General Meeting of the A.C.T. Education Consultative Group held at Woden Library on Saturday, 16 June 1983. Some seventeen people were in attendance and after discussion it was decided to:

- . leave the discussions re. an Aboriginal Studies Centre and Aboriginal studies courses in abeyance until parents and interested parties in Canberra and Wreck Bay had a chance to contribute;
- . make an application for funding to the Commonwealth Schools Commission;
- . negotiate with the A.C.T. Schools Authority for office space at the Yarralumla School Counsellor's Centre, Yarralumla Primary School;
- . accept as working drafts the amended draft Rationale, Terms of Reference, Constitution, and Aims and Objectives as submitted by the Interim Working Group;

The working drafts were later accepted by the Group. The Constitution stipulated who could be members of the Group and the relationship with education authorities (Appendix 2).

The aims and objectives of the Group clearly spelled out the importance the Group attached to Aboriginal studies and an Aboriginal Studies Centre.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To develop programs which will recognise and strengthen a common feeling of oneness among the descendants of the indigenous people living in the A.C.T. (including Wreck Bay and Jervis Bay).
2. To develop a sense of community among Aborigines and Torres Strait islanders living in the A.C.T. region.
3. To have the A.C.T. education authorities undertake changes within the school system so that the natural potential and cultural heritage of the descendants of the indigenous people will be developed.
4. To develop an interchange of ideas, support and cultural programs between the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Canberra district and Jervis and Wreck Bays.
5. To maintain Aboriginal Studies Centres in Canberra and Wreck Bay.
6. Aboriginal Studies Programs to be introduced into all A.C.T. schools and tertiary institutions after discussion with the Consultative Group.
7. To assist in developing formal and informal Community Education Programs to promote cross-cultural understanding.
8. To have all A.C.T. education authorities recognise that while Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders require academic and technological skills for twentieth-century Australia these must be gained in harmony with the needs of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to be Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.
9. The A.C.T. A.E.C.G to have a major decision making role in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island education programs. Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to have a major role in delivering these programs.

10. To have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island pre-school centres and playgroups established/maintained in Canberra and Wreck Bay.
11. To survey the educational needs of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the A.C.T. and establish working parties where appropriate.
12. To undertake periodical research to ensure that the A.E.C.G is aware of the educational needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community.
13. That the A.C.T. A.E.C.G. participate in issues being pursued by other organisations. ⁽¹⁾

During the last half of 1983, two meetings were held in Canberra to discuss the Aboriginal Studies Centre. These meetings were of an exploratory nature and led the Consultative Group into organising a parents' seminar at Wreck Bay on 17 March 1984 and two workshops in Canberra (on 18 April and 3 August 1984).

On 5 April 1984, the Schools Authority published its policy statement on Aboriginal Studies after discussions with the Consultative Group (Appendix 3).

At Wreck Bay, the participants were split into three working groups. All groups noted that more Aboriginal studies should be taught in schools to develop pride in Aboriginal pupils through knowledge of their culture.

(1) A.C.T. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Canberra, 1983.

The April and August workshops were more specific and task oriented. In April, the participants grappled with the following questions prepared by the A.C.T. A.E.C.G.:

1. What are we creating?
2. Why should there be an Aboriginal Studies Centre in the A.C.T.?
3. What focus should the Centre have?
4. What materials/resources are required for the Centre?
5. What role should the Centre undertake?
6. What should be the roles of Aborigines and non-Aborigines in the Centre?
7. What should children gain from the Centre?
8. What staffing levels are required?
9. What school/teacher activities could provide the initial focus?

The results of this workshop were distributed as a paper at the second A.G.M. of the Group on 17 July 1984. The concepts and suggestions that were developed by the first workshop were expanded and refined at the second workshop in August. The results of these workshops have strongly influenced this thesis.

4. NEED FOR ABORIGINAL STUDIES

Aboriginal studies must become an integral part of the education of every Australian. It must be taught with a high degree of respect and understanding to develop an accurate knowledge of Australian history, Aboriginal cultures, and lifestyles.(1)

This is not the first statement by a group of Aboriginal people calling for Aboriginal studies to achieve its rightful place in the Australian curriculum.

In 1975 the Schools Commission's Aboriginal Consultative Group reported on the present needs and future provisions for the education of Aboriginal people in Australia. Among its thirty-seven recommendations to the Schools Commission, three were specifically directed at Aboriginal Studies. Firstly,

We recommend to each appropriate authority that all teacher trainees in Australia should study courses relating to Aboriginal social organisation, traditional and contemporary culture, and where possible, trainee teachers should be able to gain experience in teaching Aboriginal children.(2)

and secondly,

We recommend to the Schools Commission that it convene meetings of teacher training authorities in Australia to negotiate with them about the basis on which they would be prepared to be involved in such a program, and to discuss with them methods of involving Aborigines in the conduct of the courses, and in reviewing course content.(3)

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- (1) National Aboriginal Education Committee Aims and Objectives in Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 1, Canberra 1982 .
 - (2) Aboriginal Consultative Group: Education for Aborigines. Report to the Schools Commission, Canberra 1975, pp.26.
 - (3) Ibid p.26.

The Consultative Group also expressed concern at the general lack of understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Islander culture in the wider Australian society, and the incompatibility of present education systems and curricula with many aspects of Aboriginal culture.

It believed Aboriginal studies could be promoted in a variety of ways such as:

The provision of useful and accurate resource materials such as textbooks, instruction manuals, films, video tapes, etc.(4)

and,

The fostering of Aboriginality as an active part of the cultural activities of schools, for example: the dramatisation of Aboriginal legends and dances in school plays and speech nights; the encouragement of Aboriginal art such as bark painting in school art displays; the development and use of Aboriginal dances for football teams, as the Haka is used by New Zealand teams.(5)

The provision of funds to enable schools to obtain special resource materials was also given a high priority by the Consultative Group.

The Group believed there was an urgent need to provide suitable textbooks on Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to present balanced and accurate historical accounts and that all textbooks should display non-racist attitudes.

(4) Aboriginal Consultative Group Op. Cit. p.26.

(5) Ibid. p.26.

The teaching of the basic economic, social and political structures of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures should also be encouraged according to the Group, especially those aspects such as the dreamtime concept, skin groupings, and kin-relationships.

Their report also stressed that Aboriginals and Islanders should be the authority for all matters relating to the preparation and implementation of study programs and the development of curricula. A National Aboriginal Education Commission performing this function was the Group's vision. This led to the third recommendation regarding the need for Aboriginal studies:

We recommend to the Schools Commission and appropriate authorities that they provide funds for supporting teaching programs within schools designed to interest and inform both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children about the history and culture of Aborigines.(6)

Since 1788 the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Australia have been subjected, in varying degrees, to an education system which has until recently rationalised the dispossession of Aborigines from their land and deprecated their culture. Dispossession from their land took from the indigenous people the very source of their rich cultural background and uniqueness. It placed them in an environment festering with problems. In 1975 the National Poverty Inquiry Report stated that in every conceivable comparison the Aboriginal and Islanders.

.... stand in stark contrast to the general Australian society, and also to other ethnic groups whether defined on the basis of race, nationality, birthplace, language, or religion. They probably have the highest death rate, the worst legal status of any identifiable section of the Australian population.(7)

This observation clearly showed the situation of Aboriginal people.

(6) Aboriginal Consultative Group Op. Cit. p.27.

(7) Fitzgerald, R. Commission of Inquiry into Poverty:Poverty and Education Series A.G.P.S. 1975.

The School Commission report in 1975 added: "They have the worst schooling." (8)

In 1980 the National Aboriginal Education Committee in "Rationale Aims and Objectives in Aboriginal Education" had as one of eight aims that:

Aboriginal studies must become an integral part of the education of every Australian. It must be taught with a high degree of respect and understanding to develop an accurate knowledge of Australian history, Aboriginal cultures, and lifestyles. (9)

These suggested a change in the approach to Aboriginal education was required and this would include a greater emphasis on Aboriginal studies.

In 1981 in a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, the National Aboriginal Education Committee again stressed the importance of Aboriginal studies in schools and they also further developed their thinking on this issue:

ABORIGINAL STUDIES IN SCHOOLS

- . The concept of education in the Aboriginal context involves the education of non-Aborigines as well as Aborigines. Such an education should increase tolerance, understanding and appreciation of the Aboriginal heritage.
- . The effective teaching of Aboriginal Studies requires consultation and co-operation between Commonwealth, State and Territory education departments/authorities and Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.
- . Aboriginal studies should become an integral part of the education of every Australian. It must be taught with a high degree of respect and understanding in order to develop an accurate knowledge of cultures and lifestyles and thus Australian history.

(8) Australian Schools Commission. Annual Report. A.G.P.S. Canberra, 1975

(9) National Aboriginal Education Committee: Rationale Aims and Objectives in Aboriginal Education. N.A.E.C. Canberra 1980

In view of the sensitivity and understanding required the N.A.E.C. believes that Aborigines should be involved in the planning and teaching of Aboriginal Studies.(10)

The N.A.E.C. submission did not seek to justify the view that Aborigines have to be involved in the planning and teaching of Aboriginal Studies. However in 1981 a "Working Party of Aboriginal Historians" for the bicentennial history 1788-1988 asserted that Aboriginal history should be written by Aboriginal people, because it is by nature a particular and valid cultural form.

Our tradition is an oral one and the recital of our past takes place within a linguistic and cultural structure as yet largely misunderstood by white historians.(11)

The lack of understanding of the cultural role of Aboriginal oral history has resulted in non-Aboriginal interpretations which altered the structure and form of Aboriginal stories. Non-Aboriginal historians, authors and editors have invariably lost the essential Aboriginality of the material when they have tried to make it comprehensible to non-Aborigines. Subtle aspects such as expression, role of humour in verbal and non-verbal language, the use of sign and body language and the importance of spatial relationships have been treated with little sensitivity by non-Aboriginal authors.

The involvement of Aborigines in the planning preparation and teaching of Aboriginal studies gives Aboriginal people, through their role as

(10) House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (Reference: Aboriginal Education) Submissions Authorised for Publication: Volume 1. Canberra, Thursday 9 June 1981 (Official Hansard Report) p.159.

(11) Australia 1939-1988: A Bicentennial History Bulletin, No. 3, May 1981.

cultural custodians, the opportunity to pass on to future generations the Aboriginal story. Meaningful Aboriginal involvement in Aboriginal studies programs will help counteract the assumption and particular perceptions commonly held by educators.

Richard Glover, in a BA Hons Thesis,⁽¹²⁾ has argued that the disciplines of history and anthropology have not been objective and apolitical in respect to Aborigines. Glover stated that while historians and anthropologists influenced race relations and Government policy they themselves were not distanced from the society from which they had received funding, assistance and a set of values. He claimed that science bolstered Australian racism by giving it a respectability through the anthropologists' own beliefs that Aborigines were inferior even though there was plenty of data to the contrary. This information was either misused, ignored or gathered with an inbuilt bias.

In the Report of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education (1985) there is unqualified support for the introduction and development of Aboriginal studies courses in Australian schools. The Committee found that:

An increasing number of Australians, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, is coming to see that the accepted white views of Australian history and the position of Aborigines within Australian society are often culturally biased and inaccurate. Support for various forms of Aboriginal studies has, consequently, developed in line with the appreciation of the multicultural nature of Australian society and the

(12) Richard Glover "Scientific Racism and the Australian Aboriginal 1865-1915: The Logic of Evolutionary Anthropology" B.A. Hons Thesis, Department of History, University of Sydney, 1982.

general awareness of Australia's Aboriginal population.(13)

The Select Committee had received numerous submissions which indicated that much of the information in Australian schools is stereotyped, inadequate and even racist. The Committee expressed the view that:

The study of Aboriginal culture and society is one means of presenting a more accurate view of contemporary Aboriginal society and its context within the broader Australian community. This may be achieved through the study of the history, culture, languages and lifestyle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples before and after European settlement.(14)

The Committee stated that Aboriginal studies courses provided an effective means of fostering greater understanding and tolerance of Aboriginal society and culture, and were an important means of aiding self esteem in Aboriginal students.

This notion was supported by the explanation of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, to the Committee:

The lack of Aboriginal studies curricula in schools to date, has helped perpetuate an inferior status for Aboriginal values and lifestyle, increasing the pressure to conform to European values, and contributing to low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence.(15)

In July 1980 the Australian Education Council, (Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for Education) requested the Commonwealth to establish a Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group. The Group was established and requested to ascertain the nature of Aboriginal studies programs in Australia and identify particular areas of need.

(13) Report of House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education. A.G.P.S., Canberra, 1975.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Ibid.

The Working Group found that the provision of Aboriginal studies in Australian schools fell far short of the level specified by the Australian Education Council. The report concluded that Aboriginal studies programs of high quality were not widely available in Australian schools.

The Australian Capital Territory Schools Authority in its Aboriginal Studies Supplement to the Schools Bulletin No. 160 of April 1984 strongly rationalised its perception of the need for Aboriginal Studies in A.C.T. schools.

The Authority stated that:

The introduction of Aboriginal Studies courses in schools should help to overcome racist attitudes that prevail in some sections of the Australian community. Through the involvement of large numbers of students in such courses, negative attitudes towards multi-racialism and multi-culturalism could be countered.(16)

and also that:

In order to foster the view that Aboriginal culture and present-day societies of all kinds are a vital part of Australian history and contemporary life, Aboriginal Studies should be coherent within the curriculum. It should exist across the curriculum rather than being regarded as a purely historical, sociological or anthropological study. The botanical expertise of Aborigines, their skills in dancing, art and craft together with their view of spiritual life and the important and central role of the land in their lives provide examples of the broad scope to which Aboriginal Studies can be widened. In this way many aspects of a school curriculum may be enhanced in studying one or

(16) A.C.T. Schools Authority, Aboriginal Studies Supplement: Schools Bulletin No. 61, Canberra, April 1985.

more of these fields and showing how Aboriginal culture has contributed to and enriched contemporary Australian society.(17)

In its policy statement in regard to Aboriginal studies the Authority agreed in principle, dependent on the priority accorded and the resources available to:

- "(a) assist with the establishment of programs in Aboriginal Studies;
- (b) assist with the development of co-ordinated programs which are integrated into the total school curriculum at all levels, from pre-school to Year 12, so that the study of Aboriginal people and their heritage becomes a part of the education of every child in the Australian Capital Territory;
- (c) collect and produce a range of resource materials for all grade levels, that will provide both an historic and a contemporary coverage of issues in Aboriginal Studies;
- (d) establish evaluation procedures for Schools Authority initiatives in Aboriginal Studies, the evaluation programs to be conducted by a team comprised of representatives from the Authority and interested Aboriginal groups and organisations;
- (e) establish an Aboriginal Studies Centre.(18)

(17) A.C.T. Schools Authority Op. Cit.

(18) Ibid.

4. RATIONALE FOR AN ABORIGINAL STUDIES RESOURCE CENTRE

In the submissions to the House of Representatives Inquiry into Aboriginal Education it was clear that Aborigines, educators, and education authorities support the need for Aboriginal studies to be given a greater emphasis in the education of all Australians. The need for Aboriginal involvement, teacher training (in-service and pre-service), development of new materials, introduction of Aboriginal cultural activities into schools, and teaching about the basic structures of traditional life were stressed.

The deleterious effects of a very westernised curriculum on Aborigines and the lack of appreciation of Aboriginal cultures by non-Aboriginal Australians leading them to have a background which lacks an appreciation of the Australian environment were also highlighted.

There were many possible benefits outlined which could be gained from Aboriginal studies including racial tolerance and more positive attitudes toward multi-racialism and multi-culturalism.

In all of the discussion in Australia surrounding the need for Aboriginal studies only the A.C.T. Schools Authority and the A.C.T. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group have articulated the need for an Aboriginal Studies Centre. This poses the question that the A.C.T. Aboriginal people grappled with during their workshops during 1983 and 1984: "Why should there be an Aboriginal Studies Centre in the A.C.T.?"

Until recent years the study of Aboriginal Australians did not receive a priority within the mainstream school system. Teacher training institutions and universities ignored the basic ethnographic research carried out during the first half of the twentieth century. Most primary and secondary teachers relied on poorly researched textbooks, inadequate experience and biased information to 'do' the Aborigines in a small segment of their Australian history or social studies course; usually at the beginning of the course.

During the last ten years great changes have taken place in all aspects of Aboriginal affairs. There has been an explosion in the amount of information written about Aborigines. Much of this has been written by Aborigines themselves. In addition to the advances made in pre-history linguistics and understanding of traditional Aboriginal cultures there has been a large increase in research and literature about contemporary Aboriginal life.

Greater involvement of Aboriginal people in the development of school curriculum is also necessary according to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education (1985)

At present there is insufficient involvement of Aborigines in the development of curriculum material and the teaching of Aboriginal studies.

Teachers should not overlook the background and first hand knowledge that Aboriginal parents can bring to the classroom. Such personal contact with the students is one means of promoting more positive racial attitudes toward Aborigines and a greater sensitivity to their problems.(1)

(1) Report of House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education A.G.P.S. Canberra 1985.

The introduction of an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre should help to overcome negative attitudes towards Aborigines that prevail in some sections of the A.C.T. community. Through the involvement of non-Aboriginal students, negative attitudes towards multi-racialism and multi-culturalism should be countered.

The Centre would provide a focus for Aboriginal studies in the A.C.T. and as the House of Representatives Select Committee found:

Aboriginal studies courses provide an effective means of fostering a greater understanding and tolerance of Aboriginal society and culture and of overcoming the problems of racism and prejudice which were raised with the Committee by teachers in a variety of schools. The Committee believes that by teaching about Aboriginal culture, history and languages, positive racial attitudes towards Aborigines will be developed in Australian schools. Specific knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history will also promote a broader community awareness of the problems faced by many Aborigines and an understanding of programs currently being mounted by governments to assist them.(2)

In addition, the Committee saw:

"Aboriginal studies as an important means of aiding the self-esteem of individual Aboriginal students in schools. The alienation that many Aboriginal students encounter at school has been discussed earlier in this report. For these students, Aboriginal studies can provide positive reinforcement of values learnt in the home and can help to create a more familiar learning environment."(3)

Meeting these objectives would be assisted by the employment of Aborigines in the Centre. Such people would need to be well informed and highly motivated in dealing with aspects of Aboriginal culture and

(2) Report of House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education Op.Cit.

(3) Ibid.

would thus produce beneficial effects in their relationships with students. In this way, positive attitudes could be developed in all students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and through them, in their parents. The Consultative Group noted that Aboriginal people must be directly involved in the development of an Aboriginal Studies Centre for such a Centre to retain its Aboriginality and the support of the Aboriginal community.

In order to support the view that Aboriginal culture and present day societies of all kinds are a vital part of Australian history and contemporary life, the Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre should be in harmony with the general curricula. The expertise of Aborigines in the sciences and skills in the arts and crafts, together with views of moral and spiritual life and the important and central role of the land, should form the basis of the activities of the Aboriginal Studies Centre. In this way, many aspects of a school's curriculum may be enhanced by studying one or more of these fields showing how Aboriginal culture has contributed to and enriched contemporary Australian society.

The House of Representatives Select Committee noted the debate as to the place of Aboriginal studies in the curriculum:

One of the much debated issues is whether Aboriginal studies should be taught as a discrete entity in the syllabus or whether it should be incorporated into the broader curriculum as far as possible. At the primary level, of course, it is easier to incorporate Aboriginal studies components throughout the curriculum in a range of daily classes, e.g. English, social studies, music. In secondary school it is possible to both offer Aboriginal studies as a separate unit of study or subject, or to integrate elements of

Aboriginal studies into other subjects such as history, geography, music, economics, political science, etc. The importance of this approach was expressed to the Committee by Professor Colin Tatz as follows:

"My view of Aboriginal Studies is that it is the education of both black and white pupils and as an education it must mean a willingness to enter into a meaningful dialogue through history, literature, politics, sociology, art, theatre, geography, music, anthropology and languages.(4)

The Committee believed that there was merit in both having Aboriginal Studies as a separate unit or subject or having Aboriginal aspects integrated into all subjects.

An Aboriginal Studies Centre could be the resource base, in both human and material terms, for teachers wishing to teach Aboriginal studies either as a single subject or incorporate it into other subjects in the curriculum.

The Aboriginal Studies Centre could also provide a valuable contribution in the area of scientific method through investigation of the manner in which Aborigines used the processes of assessing evidence, making judgements and using objective reasoning. Issues such as the cruel and inhumane treatment of Aborigines by some Europeans, or arguments over land rights, are examples of topics which should be examined from different points of view to develop wider perspectives and allow more balanced judgements.

(4) Report of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education. Op.Cit

An Aboriginal Studies Centre in the A.C.T. would be a resource for teachers and pupils at senior primary levels and junior secondary levels. It would have information about historical and contemporary Aboriginal situations at a level which is usable by school students. It is envisaged that the collection of materials would be used in a practical and realistic manner.

5. ABORIGINAL STUDIES CENTRE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

From the very beginning of the A.C.T. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group its members recognised the need for an Aboriginal Studies Centre in the A.C.T. Two exploratory meetings were held in Canberra early in 1983 to discuss possible aims and objectives. The Consultative Group then organised a parent's seminar at Wreck Bay and two workshops of Consultative Group members, parents and teachers in Canberra to develop the Aboriginal Studies Centre concept. From this long consultative process the following aims and objectives for an A.C.T. Aboriginal Studies Centre were adopted by the Consultative Group.

5.1 AIMS

- (a) To provide a focus for the Aboriginal community in the A.C.T.
- (b) To increase understanding of Aboriginal culture in the community through fostering an appreciation and understanding of the value and richness of Aboriginal culture.
- (c) To promote a positive concept of Aboriginality among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.
- (d) To study local Aboriginal culture.
- (e) To show Aboriginal culture is not static and that it continues to develop.

- (f) To co-ordinate access to existing A.C.T. resources on Aboriginal culture.
- (g) To raise with schools and other organisations the provision of support and resources to assist the development of Aboriginal Studies Courses.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

- (a) To provide, develop and equip a suitable venue for Aboriginal Studies in the A.C.T.
- (b) To provide a place where students can study and investigate a selection of Aboriginal cultural materials and concepts with an opportunity for hands-on experience with selected elements of Aboriginal culture.
- (c) To provide resources to increase the knowledge of teachers and pupils to develop positive attitudes which will lead to behavioural change.
- (d) To provide a venue and resources to conduct in-service and cultural awareness programmes for teachers and others.
- (e) To provide functional areas which would enable an integrated approach to be made to Aboriginal studies.

(f) To provide a source of expertise in Aboriginal studies for schools and other educational institutions wishing to develop Aboriginal Studies Courses.

(g) To provide suitable accommodation at the Centre for the Consultative Group to ensure a close relationship between the Group and the Centre.

The major objective of the Aboriginal Studies Centre is undoubtedly to achieve change in student and teacher behaviour. One can only be certain that a child has learned something if behaviour is changed in an observable manner. Verbalization is not an adequate indication of learning on its own. It is hoped that experience with the materials in the Centre will change the behaviour of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students: the former by gaining knowledge and pride; the latter by gaining sensitivity and comprehension.

Teacher style, personality, ability and experience are the major determinants of how much and how well a student learns. Teachers differ markedly in such characteristics. However, according to one school of thought, experience shows that teachers can modify these characteristics sufficiently to help students attain more objectives than those considered obtainable previously.

Bloom et.al concluded:

... it is our considered judgment that most teachers can learn new ways of teaching students and that most can, if they make the appropriate effort, help their students attain a great variety of educational

objectives. The teacher does not, in our thinking, represent the major factor in determining the objectives which are possible. It is the teaching which determines the objectives which are possible. If teachers are convinced of the need and are provided with the necessary training and experience, they can become effective for teaching of most of the important objectives in the field.(1)

Teachers must determine in each particular situation which objectives can be attained by their students. Educators such as Bloom, however, would hold that generally, the objectives that are obtained in a given situation depend on what the teacher considers worth learning, the characteristics of the learners and the teacher's skill in interacting with them during instruction.

Desirable objectives for students in the A.C.T. in respect to Aboriginal studies can be determined by analysing the nature of Australian culture and society. Such an analysis will show that Australians generally know little about Aborigines and that they and Aborigines would benefit from their having increased knowledge which would lead to increased communication.

Much effort has been expended by educators in developing objectives or goals for curriculum. Yet as Bloom poses:

Do they really help improve the education process, or is their formulation merely a rite of passage for the novice and a ritualistic exercise for the more experienced educator.(2)

(1) Bloom, B., Hastings, T. and Madows, G.F. Handbook on Formulative and Summulative Evaluation of Student Learning. (New York: McGraw & Hill 1971/p.11

(2) Ibid. p.11

Bloom and others suggest that as goals are broader and more long range than objectives it is probably a better approach to set a goal rather than an objective. A goal being "something presently out of reach; it is something to strive for, to move towards, or to become."⁽³⁾

Viewed this way goals are important. They provide a focus for curriculum planning and development within an education purpose, and suggest the emphasis by which to design an educational program.

For teachers, goals need to be further broken into a number of more specific instructional objectives so that the specific components which constitute the more general goal become clear. Instructional objectives should clearly indicate the kinds of behaviour desired of students and the content they will be expected to learn. Kappell⁽⁴⁾ holds that, the instructional objectives should indicate what it is the students will be expected to understand and do (including thinking and feeling as well as acting) after participating in the learning experience.

Gronlund⁽⁵⁾ summarises the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives as providing a three domain scheme (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) and follows Bloom in holding that these three domains are sufficient to

(3) Bloom et. al. Op. Cit. p.21

(4) Kappell F.R., Vitality in a Business Enterprise (New York: McGraw Hill) 1960

(5) Gronlund N.E., Stating Behavioural Objectives for Classroom Instruction, New York: The Macmillan Co. 1970, p.16.

classify all possible instructional objectives. Each domain is subdivided into a series of categories arranged in order from simple to complex. These categories and the illustrative instructional objectives and behavioural terms accompanying them aid in:

- (i) identifying objectives for instruction;
- (ii) stating objectives in general terms;
- (iii) defining objectives in behavioural terms;
- (iv) checking on the totality of the list of objectives; and
- (v) communicating the nature and level of learning outcomes included in the objectives with others.

The advantage of using Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives for an Aboriginal Studies Centre rests on the fact that by identifying clearly those tasks which students can perform; those products which are desirable to create; those behaviours which are desirable to demonstrate and those experiences in which students should participate, in order to achieve those objectives considered most important, it is possible to measure the degree to which students are learning important relationships and concepts.

The cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains are not mutually exclusive. Gronlund described clearly that they overlapped:

Instructional objectives in the psychomotor domain typically involve concomitant cognitive and affective elements, Learning outcomes in the cognitive area have some affective elements, and outcomes in the affective area have some cognitive components. The three domains of the taxonomy provide a useful classification system, but they simply represent particular emphasis in stating objectives and not mutually exclusive divisions.(6)

Changes in the cognitive domain have taken place when an individual is capable of recalling or recognising knowledge when required. Knowledge can be evaluated through the intellectual abilities and skills that have been developed. Changes in the affective domain are reflected in changing interests, attitudes and values as well as the development of appreciations. The third domain is involved with changes in the manipulative or motor skill area.

The materials provided and the approach taken in the Aboriginal Studies Centre will concentrate on the first two domains. The cognitive domain will be a primary concern and through gaining and using knowledge about Aboriginal Australians, it is believed changes will be brought about in the students' behaviour and their affective domains.

The real test of the effectiveness of exposure to the Aboriginal Centre for students will be shown by the subsequent actions of the teachers and students. The learning outcomes would cover a broad range of activities but the major concern will be the behaviour of the students.

(6) Gronlund Op. Cit.

More specific objectives for students are:-

A. Objectives Related to Acquiring Information About Aborigines

1. To gain knowledge of past and present Aboriginal life in Australia and the nature of differences between Aboriginal groups.
2. To comprehend the social, economic and political realities of Aboriginal life and the consequent inter-relationship with non-Aboriginal Australia.
3. To acquire information dealing with aspects of Aboriginal life.
4. To appreciate the contribution Aborigines have made to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia.
5. To gain a suitable background for studies in other areas of the curriculum.
6. To learn the how and why of prejudice and understand the benefits of good race relations.
7. To be aware of the importance of land to Aborigines today.

B. Objectives Related to Acquiring Skills and Techniques at the Centre and through Aboriginal Studies Programs

1. To increase ability to use selected resource tools - books, pamphlets, papers, maps, charts, graphs, posters, cartoons and audio-visual material.
2. To develop powers of critical thought and independent judgement.

3. To participate in group discussions.
4. To effectively present oral reports.
5. To work in groups within the classroom.
6. To use Aboriginal community resources as an aid to learning about Aborigines.
7. To enlarge opportunities for interest-based reading.
8. To receive training in the collection and use of data.
9. To effectively apply the rules of study.

C. Objectives Related to Acquiring Desirable Attitudes Towards Aborigines

1. To have a positive attitude towards indigenous Australians.
2. To have a desire to learn more about Aboriginal Australians and the contribution they make to Australian life.
3. To have a respect for the rights of others regardless of race, skin colour or religion.
4. To understand that while Aborigines may have different values they are Australians.
5. To have a desire to participate personally in improving the community and nation by improving the situation of Aborigines.
6. To have an appreciation for the efforts made by Aborigines to improve their position.

The above lists of objectives imply that the knowledge category of objectives includes facts, events, concepts and generalisations. The skills category involves social behaviour and social studies skills such as reading for meaning and facts, recognising unsubstantiated opinion and prejudice, graph interpretation and design, and gaining information from a range of selected media. The attitudinal objectives include interests, dispositions, beliefs and values.

6. SELECTION & ORGANISATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

The aims and objectives of the Centre have been outlined. The selection of subject matter for the students to experience is a matter of care and sensitivity on the part of the Centre's management. The imperative is that the selected materials be relevant to children and the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Canberra.

The materials in the Centre will be drawn from a range of sources - historical, geographical, political, economic, anthropological, sociological, artistic, literary, music and the natural sciences. The materials will endeavour to give a general understanding of life as experienced by Aboriginal Australians.

Due to the diversity in Aboriginal society, it is not possible for any one set of materials to completely cover all aspects of Aboriginal life. Traditionally, Aborigines developed a whole range of cultures, languages and life-styles to meet their environment and needs. Today, they live in urban, provincial, rural, fringe and remote localities. They differ in standards of education, use of English and observance of traditional cultural practices. A selection of materials will have to be made so that while the Centre will have a strong focus on the Canberra region, it will also include materials to allow students to have a broad understanding of the situations of Aborigines throughout Australia.

6.1 FACTS

Statements of fact can be regarded as testable propositions the proof being the absence or presence of empirical evidence such as data, statistics and location of places. They are fact. Statements of fact provide information and can be proven to be true or false. For example:

- the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs was established in 1973;
- Kath Walker is an Aboriginal poet;
- some 160,000 Aboriginal people live in Australia today.

Teachers usually require their pupils to learn some factual material. This is because the retention of factual information is fundamental to knowledge. The most important reason for including factual material in the Centre is that it can increase the students knowledge of Aborigines. The facts however must be tied together so that meaningful positive relationships will help the students understand and explain more fully the situation of Aborigines. To gain this understanding students need to acquire more theoretical knowledge such as concepts and generalizations.

6.2 CONCEPTS

A fact refers to a single event or object. While in comparison a concept represents characteristics that are common to several events or objects. The concept 'Aboriginal Art' covers many objects that are characterised as being works which are both artistic and Aboriginal in origin. Concepts are an attempt to give order to reality by ordering information that we receive through our senses.

Concepts are mental constructions invented by people. They enable people to categorise a wide variety of individual pieces of information together and to exclude others. 'Aboriginal Art', for example, includes bark painting, sand pictures, rock engraving, wood carving and body painting from various parts of Australia with differing techniques and designs. It also includes contemporary Aboriginal art where Aboriginal Australians use techniques and mediums not previously available to their forebears. Such art could include landscape painting, sculptures and pottery which are not traditionally Aboriginal. Concepts allow us to communicate by allowing us to conceptualise. Similar objects have a common identity. They denote a group of objects or ideas with common characteristics.

If we see a kookaburra and a galah in a tree, we can refer to them as two birds. Thus we are saved from having to describe in detail their specific characteristics.

Conceptualisation helps us to reduce our environment to manageable proportions. It also reduces the necessity for continual re-learning and helps us to solve problems and make sense out of the world in which we live. Conceptualisation can however lead to stereotyping. A stereotype implies several characteristics, but the characteristics do not indicate the category. Many students will have stereotypes for Aborigines which hold that Aborigines are dirty, lazy and unintelligent. Students accepting this stereotype would reason that all Aborigines have these characteristics. They probably would not argue the reverse, however, that anyone who is dirty, lazy and unintelligent is an Aborigine. The important point here is that

dirtiness and laziness and low intelligence are not the defining characteristics of the category 'Aborigine'. Some Aborigines may have all three attributes. So do some Europeans, Americans and Orientals. The key attributes by which Aborigines are differentiated from the rest of the Australian population are - ancestry, identification and acceptance as an Aborigine by the community in which they live.

6.3 GENERALISATIONS

A generalisation is a statement of broad applicability that expresses relationships among concepts. Its strength depends on the broadness of its applicability. Thus it is similar to a fact in this regard. It has similar importance to a concept in that it helps make sense out of the world.

Much confusion surrounds concepts and generalisations. For children to form a generalisation it is necessary for them to be aware of its broad application by bringing to their attention as many instances of its application as possible. The children can actually discover that a relationship is a generalisation by putting together many specific instances. The process of forming concepts and generalisations through an analysis of specifics is a method of conceptualisation. The Aboriginal Studies Centre materials will endeavour to use this method.

To further clarify the situation in respect to generalisations, it could be said that they are ideas which suggest relationships that appear to exist and offer some insight into how the world works. The amount of factual material which support the relationships they suggest is a test to their accuracy.

The following are some of the generalisations which may be drawn by students who visit the Centre.

- the activities of Aboriginal people reflect their culture and values;
- Aboriginal Australians have made and can make positive contributions to Australian life;
- the view people have of themselves affects their behaviour;
- Aborigines are more likely to experience the negative aspects of Australian society than non-Aborigines. Poor health, higher unemployment, less education, worse housing, greater social problems, and difficulties with the law are the norm with Aborigines.

Generalisations help us to think and understand. As well as describing data, they structure it also. While facts refer to solitary situations, events or people, a generalisation refers to more than one case. Thus the generalisation that - 'the view people have of themselves affects their behaviour' - can be supported not only with examples from Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians, but also other civilisations including Greece, Rome, China and seventeenth-century England.

6.4 THEORIES

Generalisations, when combined, can form theories; a theory being a set of propositions which are interrelating and suggest relationships among a number of generalisations. Like concepts, they assist students to make sense of their world. The power of a theory lies in its capability to both explain and prophesise behaviour or events. Despite the importance of theories in social studies, the Aboriginal Studies

Centre will not aim to combine generalisations to form theories due to the limits of the materials, time to be devoted and the maturity of the pupils. It is possible that some teachers who develop Aboriginal Studies programs may take that final step in an attempt to establish an extensive set of interrelated propositions but that will be outside the scope of the Centre.

7.0 NEED FOR INTERPRETATION OF THE CENTRE'S OBJECTIVES

Objectives communicate the intent of instruction but intent and evidence of attainment are not the same thing. Confusion between communication of intent contained within an objective should be avoided by the description of the specific evidence that teacher and students will accept as indicating that the objective has been attained. On most occasions, the most appropriate evidence will consist of certain student behaviour such as describing, interviewing, leading a discussion and asking a certain kind of question. In other instances the most appropriate evidence will consist of certain student product such as an essay, model, map, drawing, graphs, diagrams or outlines. On other occasions the most appropriate evidence will consist of participation by students in certain experiences with Aboriginal people. Each of the objectives has to be applied to elicit specific behaviour appropriate to the pupil's maturity level. Unless this is done, the objectives have failed to function effectively. A good guide to help analyse the results of broad objectives on specific behaviours is Bloom's Model.⁽¹⁾ Bloom and his associates break down general objectives for the cognitive domain into the following six categories of behaviour.

1. **Knowledge:**

behaviours such as the ability to recall specifics, facts, terminology and events.

2. **Comprehension:**

assumes that the child is capable of transferring or interpreting from one form of communication to another.

(1) Bloom, B.J. et al. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain.* McKay, New York, 1956.

3. **Application:**
means the child can use what he has learnt in his efforts to deal with new problem situations.
4. **Analysis:**
implies that the student is able to interpret the principle of a particular message.
5. **Synthesis:**
is of a high mental level and implies that the youngster is capable of putting together the parts of the communication and creating a whole.
6. **Evaluation:**
demands yet more effectual involvement and refers to the ability of children to make judgements on the basis of the external or internal criteria.

While for the affective domain the general objectives have been broken down into five categories by Krathwohl.⁽²⁾

1. Receiving
The lowest level of learning outcomes in the affective domain. Receiving refers to the students willingness to be aware of particular stimuli or phenomenon.
2. Responding
Refers to the student's active participation. They not only attend to stimuli but also react. Responses can be acquiescent, willing or self-satisfying.
3. Valuing
This is concerned with the worth a student places on an activity, object behaviour or phenomenon. It is internalizing a set of specialised values and can range from single acceptance to a more complex assumption of responsibility.

(2) D.R. Krathwohl (ed.): Taxonomy of Educational Objectives : The Classification of Educational Goals. Handbook II: Affective Domain, McKay - New York, 1964.

4. Organization

Is concerned with bringing together different values, resolving conflicts between them and building an internally consistent value systems. It emphasises compassion, relating and synthesing values.

5. Characterization

By a value or value complex. At this level the individual has maintained a set of values for such a length of time that they become a lifestyle.

8. VALUES

8.1 VALUES UNDERLYING THE MATERIALS IN THE CENTRE

Human behaviour is dependent on values held. Teachers, as human beings, therefore, cannot avoid teaching values. They should endeavour to have their students identify their own and other people's values so that there can be greater understanding. The conflict for the teacher is deciding which views should be taught and how to teach them.

As values are intangible, the teaching of values is fraught with controversy. Some teachers believe that values should be 'caught' and not taught and that they should concentrate on content and not values. However, the teaching of values can be justified on both logical and empathic grounds. Discipline and order in the classroom require the imposition of a value system. While the teaching of logical or critical thinking is essential for teacher effectiveness.

One aim of the Centres activities will be to provide students with information which will help them to draw conclusions about their own values and those of other Australians. By doing this, the student will begin to overcome the negative attitudes and general apathy that characterise the general Australian population's view of the indigenous Australians, as measured by the 1986 A.N.O.P. Poll.

Positive attitudes may be generated by role playing which requires students to accept and act out the role of real or imaginary individuals in a variety of situations. Fannie and George Shaftel

outline the following steps for role playing:⁽¹⁾

1. Warm up (teacher introduction and reading of the story);
2. Selecting role players;
3. Preparing the audience to observe;
4. Setting the stage;
5. The enactment;
6. Discussion and evaluation.
7. Further enactments;
8. Further discussion
9. Generalising.

The use of role play is not specifically recommended in all aspects of Aboriginal life such as children making 'tjuringas' or playing tribal elders. However, if time is available it could well be used so that students gain experience in facing the problems of others. For example, 'You are a member of a class of Aboriginal children. A non-Aboriginal student arrives to start school. You want to welcome him/her. What action should you take?

8.2 VALUE CONFLICT

Teachers using the Centre will be encouraged to develop a question sequence as a teaching strategy which will help their students resolve or explore value conflicts during Aboriginal Studies programs. For example, upon reading prepared materials a teacher could ask questions similar to the following:

- "What is the text about?"
- "What could an Aboriginal person do if he/she were involved in such a situation?"

(1) Shaftel and George Shaftel, Role Playing for Social Values : Decision Making in the Social Studies, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1967, p. 84

- "What might happen if they followed the course suggested?"
- "What might be the effect on other people?"
- "What do you think should happen?"
- "Why?"

The variety of solutions offered can be used by the teacher to lay a foundation from which the student may examine their conclusions. This enables a period of self exploration i.e. Why did you come to that conclusion? What were the influencing factors? National socio-economic status? Parental attitudes? Education?

After discussion with the students in relation to the points above, it would probably be advantageous for the teacher to focus on a similar action suggestion. For example, in discussing 'race relations' or discrimination, questions could be asked of the students such as:

- "Has anything like that happened to you?"
- "What did you do?"
- "As you recall what happened, was it a good thing or a bad thing?"
- "What else could you have done to overcome the situation."

This strategy enables students the opportunity to consider the alternatives rather than simply answering 'good' or 'bad'. Teachers will need to be careful not to approve or disapprove answers provided. All responses must be accepted and even responses which are both anti-social and anti-Aboriginal must be accepted at face value although teachers should encourage such students to fully consider the consequence of their response.

8.3 EMPATHY

One of the aims of the Centre will be to help students identify and empathise with Aboriginal people. The materials in the Centre will need to promote an understanding of the roles of Aboriginal people in this continent over the last 40,000 years. To ensure that students increase their sensitivity towards Aboriginal people, it is important that they have an opportunity to react with the feelings identified as those of Aboriginal people. Feelings, values and sensitivities are more discovered than taught. Allowing students to have a wide range of experiences will enable their values to develop with a broader base than previously. Students can read material, watch video and film or role play excerpts from Aboriginal literature as written by Kevin Gilbert, Colin Johnson and others. This will enable them to establish real-life characters and express their feelings and even show their emotions about other people, events or ideas.

8.4 VALUE DISPUTES

Many value disputes can be understood after rational discussion.

Defining values may arouse argument. Possibly this can be overcome by:

- consulting an authoritative source;
- agreement as to the meaning of terms.

To teach values effectively, it is necessary to understand that there are various factors affecting pupils:

- students bring values and attitudes to school which they have learned from their family, peer group and other organisations;
- values and attitudes develop continuously and are capable of modification through experience;

- valuing is a developmental process. Acceptance of values and choosing values are all part of the development of the individual;
- teachers should endeavour to understand the values of their pupils and the attitudes they hold so that they may help them;
- social values are learnt;
- personal values have to be developed;
- values come from the individual's commitment and the underlying values guiding their behaviour;
- the difference between values of the school and teachers, parents, and students is a cause of conflict in the classroom;
- values are, by and large, communicated by example. Teachers have to watch their own value systems;
- teaching values allows the teacher to raise value questions, to discuss these within the limits of the evidence available and within the bounds of rationality;
- value teaching involves affective as well as cognitive processes. Teachers should be aware that children may use role playing as suggested earlier to gain an appreciation of values.

Self-esteem and pride in oneself comes from having a well-balanced value system. Some teachers who use the Centre may find that they have Aboriginal pupils in their class and will wish to use them to assist with the Aboriginal Studies program. This has to be handled with sensitivity due to several factors. The child may have doubts about the value of being Aboriginal or may have little knowledge of traditional Aboriginal life. Focussing on such a child can embarrass the child and produce a negative result.

Social and personal values can develop by having group activities. These activities will create a social environment which allows the children to develop and adapt elements of the values under consideration, e.g. discussions in groups, role play, buzz sessions, dramatic activities, simulation games.

Individuals often behave differently when alone to what they would in a group situation. The teacher should look continually at the interaction between pupils and observe the ability of children to change role when necessary in the context of developing a broader set of values.

9. CURRICULUM IMPLICATIONS

Co-operation helps foster positive attitudes to learning, understanding and participation in programmes offered. It is important that meaningful involvement is obtained from Aboriginal people where Aboriginal studies is concerned. Failure to gain such participation can lead to non-cooperation and negative attitudes from Aborigines and the development of a curriculum which can ignore Aborigines or foster negative attitudes towards Aborigines.

As Stenhouse⁽¹⁾ points out, curriculum is concerned with the relationship between two views of curriculum: intention and reality. He emphasises that educational realities seldom conform to educational intentions. Putting policy into successful practices is most difficult. Such failure is not exclusively confined to educators and educational institutions. It seems to be part of human nature. Central to curriculum study is the gap between ideas outlined and the attempts to make them operational.

The development of curriculum is the applied branch of curriculum study. In his book on curriculum, Ralph Tyler⁽²⁾ poses four basic questions:

1. What educational purposes should we seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided to attain these purposes?

(1) Stenhouse Laurence: An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development, Heinemann, London, 1975.
(2) Tyler, Ralph W.: Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1949.

3. How can the educational experiences be effectively organised?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Many educators brush over the first question, even though it is fundamental to educational policy. Stenhouse has observed that it is difficult to translate purpose into policy. To overcome any negative aspects of this observation, he suggests that there are exciting educational proposals, whereas practice that lives up to them is hard to find. The gap between aspiration and practices is both real and frustrating.

In looking at a Centre for Aboriginal Studies for school children, the question of defining curriculum arises. By necessity, the Centre will be available only as a supplementary resource centre for teachers and pupils, so definition of its curriculum can probably be best described as follows:

"Curriculum is 'all the planned experiences provided ... to assist the pupils in attaining the designated learning outcomes to the best of their abilities'."

(Neagley and Evans, 1967, p. 2)(3)

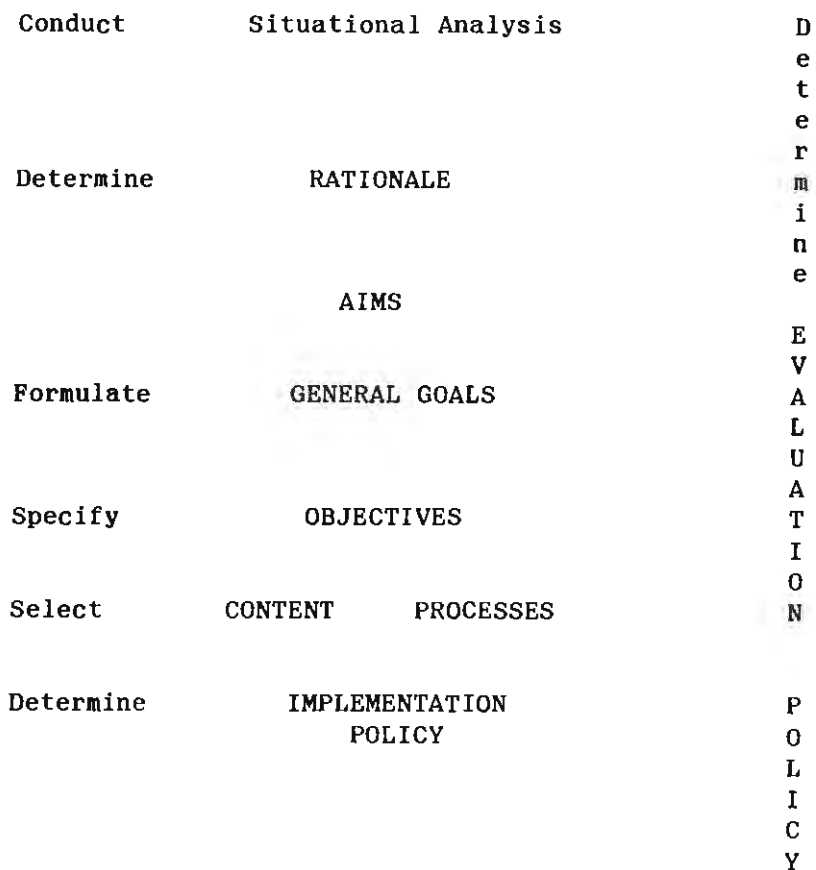
The curriculum needs to define the performance or attainment which students should reach from their being exposed to the chosen experience.

It is hoped that exposure to the Centre will result in student attainment in respect to learning outcomes or modified student behaviour. Hopefully, the learning experiences proposed for the Centre can be translated effectively into practice.

(3) Neagley, R. and Evans, N.: Handbook for Effective Curriculum Development, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1967.

In looking at a Centre for Aboriginal Studies, it is necessary to have a basis for planning a series of learning experiences, to study them empirically and consider their justification.

Soliman (et al)⁽⁴⁾ diagrammatically represent the steps involved in the curriculum planning process.



Conducting a situational analysis is seen as the first step in the curriculum planning process. While it is possible to commence at another stage in the above model it is evident that the decisions made

(4) Soliman I. School Based Curriculum Development. A Model for School Based Curriculum Planning CDC Tasmania 1981

in the whole process are interdependent and require an information base obtained from the situational analysis, determining a rationale and formulating general goals are vital aspects of curriculum planning. Other critical steps in curriculum development require objectives to be specified and the content and processes to be selected. Many curriculum development projects neglect developing policies in respect to implementation and evaluation which are of prime importance.

(i) Planning

1. Principles for selection of what is to be learned or taught.
2. Principles for the development strategies to aid teaching and learning.
3. Principles for making decisions about sequences and layout.
4. Principles to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of the Centre.

(ii) Empirical Study

1. Principles to gauge experiential effects on children.
2. Principles to evaluate effect of Centre on teachers.
3. Feasibility of broadening effects of Centre in various school situations, pupil contexts, environments and peer group situations.
4. Information on the differing effects on individuals.

(iii) Justification

The aims and objectives for the Centre will be available for close scrutiny. The proposed Centre will be exposed to a great deal of critical analysis. It must therefore be both sophisticated and efficient.

The Centre should make available to Aborigines and non-Aborigines a selection of the local and national Aboriginal societies' knowledge,

including arts, skills, technology, languages, beliefs, conventions and values.

Any study of Aboriginal culture requires an understanding of the term "culture". In Australia, the term has generally had a narrow definition similar to that of the Oxford Dictionary: "the training and refinement of mind, tastes and manners".

While the Centre will concentrate on the broad fields of Aboriginal Studies, past and present, it must address itself to a concept of culture similar to Tylor's, "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society".⁽⁵⁾

From the A.C.T. Aborigines' point of view, the writings of Talcott Parsons may be even more significant to the operations of the Centre. Parsons⁽⁶⁾ stressed three attributes of culture: firstly, that culture is transmitted and constitutes a heritage or a social tradition; secondly, that it is learned and has nothing to do with genetics; and thirdly, that it is shared. There is relevance in his conceptualization to curriculum: the content of education is transmitted, learned and shared.

(5) Tylor, E.B.: Primitive Culture, John Murray, London, 1877.

(6) Parsons, Talcott: The Social System, Tavistock, London, 1952, pp15.

The difficulty faced by an Aboriginal Studies Centre in Canberra if it concentrated on the culture of the original inhabitants of this region is that there is a shortage of recorded information. In Parsons' terms, culture is a product of social interaction and to transmit cultural knowledge to persons who can interact only on a limited basis is extremely difficult.

While culture is a product of social action, it is also a determinant of it. Cultural norms decide who is to act and when, who an individual can talk to and the subject of the conversation.

The Centre will be designed to show the social structure of knowledge, skills, customs and beliefs of Aboriginal people, thus creating an understanding of how they came about, how Aboriginal society related to them in the past and how Aboriginal society relates to them today.

The Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre must provide pupils with an opportunity to take part in learning. It must introduce them to the cultures which in most part are alien to them and which may well conflict with their own. The problem for such a Centre is to provide experiences so that the pupils who attend gain a knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal Cultures.

No study centre can transmit the entire culture of any society. A judgement has to be made as to what material is worthwhile and what processes should be established which will be interesting and give some understanding of the knowledge, arts, skills, languages, conventions

and values of Aborigines of the A.C.T. in particular and Australian
Aborigines in general.

10. LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT THE CENTRE

Teachers must realise that their teaching methods are influenced by the learning theory to which they adhere. A teacher who believes students learn by being conditioned step by step will act accordingly. If a teacher holds that students learn most effectively by perceiving and understanding relationships then different teachers methods will be followed. Any teacher who does not base decisions regarding learning on a learning theory is teaching haphazardly and trusting to chance for success. As Bigge says:

"A teacher without a strong theoretical orientation inescapably makes little more than busy work assignments."(1)

Learning takes place when an individual's behaviour is changed because of a learning experience. It can be defined as any change that takes place in an individual that is not due to that person's maturing. The individual will also think, feel or act differently than he would have prior to the learning experience. Maurice Bigge⁽²⁾ stated that learning may be a change in insights, behaviour, perception or motivation or a combination of these. Learning theories are carefully worked out sets of interrelated propositions which influence the methodology of teachers because they attempt to explain how learning takes place. One learning theory that has been expounded since Plato holds that the major task of education is to develop the individual's ability to reason, remember and imagine. This theory, promulgated by mental

(1) Bigge, Maurice, Learning Theories for Teachers. Harper and Row, New York, 1964, pp6.

(2) Ibid. p1.

disciplinarians, holds that the mind is developed through the acquisition of knowledge. Mental disciplinarians also put forward the view that some subjects are more important than others. Mathematics, science and history are thought to be better for the mind. Practice and drill are important components of this theory. Mental discipline has however, been discredited as having no base in psychological theory. Despite this, some teachers still emphasise rote learning and memorisation, and apparently believe that some subjects are tougher than others.

Another theory of learning that has affected school teaching methods is associatism. This theory views learning as the connection between a stimulus and a response. Supporters of this theory such as Brubacher⁽³⁾ assume that every specific reaction an individual makes is a response to a specific stimulus. In the classroom, offering the correct response is rewarded by approval from the teacher either through gesture, action or other rewards. The question of understanding why the answer is correct is another matter. With associatism, having pupils think about what they are learning is less important than receiving the desired response.

The Centre's approach will be based on concepts of learning described as Field Psychology which is different to the two previous theories. Field Psychology sees learning not as mental discipline or stimulus and response, but as a discovery of meaning or understanding. It holds that the best learning is that which enables students to perceive,

(3) Brubacher, John S.: A History of the Problems of Education, McGraw Hill, New York, 1947, p43.

develop and test relationships for validity. The Centre's materials and suggested activities will not stress memorisation of facts, but they will help place facts within organised relationships. As Hunt and Metcalf have stated placing facts within the context of an organised relationship has little meaning "unless its (their) connection with some general principle or rule is made explicit"⁽⁴⁾.

Most of the Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre content will consist of facts, concepts and generalisations drawn from the disciplines of history and social sciences, anthropology, economics, geography, sociology and political science. According to Bruner⁽⁵⁾ the way in which each of the elements is put together or arranged is called the structure of a discipline. Although the scholars within each discipline appear to disagree on the structure of any one discipline, theoretically at least the concepts and generalisations of one discipline differ from those in another.

The Studies Centre materials will involve concepts (family, culture, weapons, art, religion, land), generalisations (Aboriginal people depended upon each other in traditional life), and specific facts (Aboriginal people have lived in Australia for 40,000 years) from each of the social science disciplines as well as from other sources. Collectively they will make the subject matter of the Studies Centre.

(4) Hunt, Maurice P. and Metcalf, Laurence: Teaching High School Social Studies (2nd Ed.), Harper & Row, New York, 1968, pp53.

(5) Bruner, Jerome S.: The Process of Education, Random House, New York, 1968.

The Aboriginal studies materials will be only part of the whole process. Attention will also have to be given to the learning process. The Centre will have to consider not only what the students learn but how they learn it. This doesn't rule out the importance of sound materials. According to Mayer :

Weak content in a discipline cannot be seriously defended by the claim of good method⁽⁶⁾., method will be judged by the quality of content.

In developing the student materials an endeavour will be made to select factual materials, learning experiences and activities which will motivate the students to meet the established objectives. As with all similar subject specific centres, the materials will be prepared without knowledge of the individual students who will use it.

It is accepted that individual students learn differently. Some learn easily through printed materials but others need to use observation or other senses such as hearing or feeling the materials with which they are working. Some students work best alone, others need the support and stimulation of a group. Some understand better if they can express themselves in prose or poetry while others according to Taba⁽⁷⁾ understand more readily if they can group data into chart or tabular form. The Centre must give students as many ways as possible to learn for as Taba⁽⁸⁾ says the more varied the student's ways of learning, the better off he will be.

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- (6) Mayer Martin: Social Studies in American Schools, Harper & Row, New York, 1963, p111.
(7) Taba, Hilda: Curriculum Development; Theory and Practice, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1962.
(8) Ibid. p309.

For the Centre to be successful the purpose of each learning activity should be clear to all involved and serve a justifiable function related to specific objectives.

In line with its objectives the Centre will endeavour to increase the ability to form concepts in the students who attend. Concept formation involves the three essential tasks of listing, grouping and labelling. The Centre will assist students form concepts by offering a rich supply of data from which students can select certain items in which they are interested, encouraging them to group the items selected, and then asking the students to label the groups formed.

Ideally, teaching materials should be prepared to meet the needs of individual students. As this will not be possible, classroom teachers and Centre staff will be expected to take steps to ensure that individual students' needs in respect to how they learn will be met.

The Centre will have activities to offer a variety of ways of learning - reading, writing, discussing, observation, painting, constructing, mapping, tabulating, analysis and evaluation.

It is expected that the learning experiences will motivate children to use the full range of problem solving, thinking and creative skills. The Centre will try to meet the objectives specifically relating to Aborigines and those relating to the pupils' individual skill development in the social sciences. Emphasis will therefore be laid on the process as well as the content.

The only constraint on different learning experiences should be their applicability to the aims and objectives outlined previously.

Activity/Experiences in the Centre

- encourage individual group or class scrap books on Aboriginal affairs;
- arrange to have an Aboriginal person visit the class at their own school to lecture or hold a discussion session;
- arrange film/video viewing;
- arrange a display of books, newspaper cuttings or pictures to stimulate discussion;
- use of computer software packages and computer games;
- pose question on problems to solve on a chalkboard or chart;
- have children listen to and/or view aspects of Aboriginal art including music and dance;
- "hands on" experience with aspects of Aboriginal material culture e.g. stone flaking;
- use of simulation and board games to gain understanding of concepts such as kinship.

The major student activities can be divided into research, creative activities, organising and interpreting information and problem solving.

Research

The location, gathering and evaluation of information is most important in the development of students' skills. The Centre will develop a 'Materials Available' chart to list the variety of data which can be used for reading, viewing, listening and discussion.

In addition, creative activities will be encouraged through writing, interviewing, observation, questioning (real and simulated).

Organising and Interpreting Information

Once the information is gathered the children may use it as follows: discussions; listing specific items; arranging material under headings; making outlines and summarising; writing statements and arranging displays.

After each experience or activity there will be a series of questions to allow students to apply what they have learned. The questions will assess evaluate and pull together the main ideas that were established as the activity objectives. They will assist in the evaluation of the development of pupil comprehension, attitudes, values and social studies skills. Such activities will include:

- answering specific questions about the text (print & computer package);
- completing unfinished sentences;
- collecting additional material;
- group and class discussions;
- presenting reports;
- role play to focus on main ideas or problems;
- forming generalisations.

In addition, students will be encouraged to undertake other activities such as:

- visiting an Aboriginal organisation or community;
- conducting a quiz program relating to Aborigines;
- publishing a paper on Aboriginal Australia;
- making a display of pictures and charts;
- presenting reports;
- role playing aspects of Aboriginal life;
- holding a debate.

Problem Solving

One of the most important objectives achieved through the use of the Centre's material will be to develop problem solving skills in the users. The importance of problem solving stems from two aspects of the content. One of these will deal with human and race relations on a formal and informal level. The second characteristic which demands the development of problem solving is the fact that human relationships are so often conflicts.

Problem solving is a series of steps which a person takes when faced with a problem.

1. Initial stage where the person becomes aware of a problem which requires solution.
2. Data gathering phase in which the person becomes familiar with the problem and seeks materials for solution.
3. Hypotheses formation state in which the person formulates tentative solutions.
4. Hypotheses testing phase in which such possible solutions are tested.

Most educators involved in the teaching of social studies advocate a similar approach to this method of problem solving. Problem solving will form the basis of the approach to many activities at the Centre.

Some students may wish to pursue a particular interest to much greater depth. The Centre will encourage such studies even though some students may not experience all the suggested activities available.

As suggested earlier in an endeavour to get students to think about values the Centre could involve students in role playing. This activity allows students to take on a new identity in a situation where new feelings and insights may result while the student is protected by being in a non real situation.

Louis Rath⁽¹⁾ gives a good example of using role play in gaining an insight into the feelings of others while helping to promote an understanding of the difficulties underlying race relations in the United States. Similar situations could be created at the Centre to increase students' sensitivity to race relations in Australia.

Most activities provide for the realisation and development of more than one objective. For example, they could include acquiring knowledge, encouraging thinking, increasing social and academic skills and developing sensitivity.

Learning activities at the Centre should be sequentially structured to give continuity to learning. This means that each learning activity should both be a revision of previous activity and a preparation for further activities. Learning activities should proceed from the concrete and the specific to the abstract, from the known to the unknown and from the simple to the complex.

Each learning activity should provide more than the previous one and challenge the students but not be too difficult to accomplish. The

(1) Rath Louis et al, Values and Teaching, Robert Merrill, Columbus, Ohio, 1966, p.121.

learning activities must encourage all the students to make an effort and not discourage them.

The learning activities should also enable the students to apply what they have learned at the Centre to other and new situations. They should also be open ended and assist students to increase their understanding not only of Aborigines but also of themselves and the world.

Not all learning activities will provide the same function. Some will provide for intake of information through reading, observing, listening, touching and interviewing. These kinds of activities give students the information, or new data, to think about before acting. This leads to a second type of learning activity which can include organising and internalising the information by outlining, charting, graphing, arranging, summarising, time line building and writing.

Through a third type of learning activity students can demonstrate what they have learned by role playing, describing, writing, discussing, generalising, debating, story telling, singing and drawing. A fourth type of learning activity involves the students creating or producing something by painting, writing fiction, building, problem solving, dancing, discussing, miming and poetry.

In the belief that different kinds of learning activities serve different functions the Centre will design learning activities that will assist students in a variety of ways. Activities will wherever possible involve the students doing things as well as receiving

information and all four types of learning activities (intake, organisation, demonstration and creation) which are essential to learning will take place.

11. ORGANISATION OF THE CENTRE

11.1 Name of Centre

The Centre will be called The Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre. This title indicates the scope and major thrust of the Centre.

11.2 Management of the Centre

As an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre intending to transmit, teach and share Aboriginal culture, it could be argued that it is essential that the management of the Centre is under Aboriginal control. However, as the Centre will have to be funded from Government sources, an equitable working arrangement will need to be made between the Aboriginal community and the funding source.

The A.C.T. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group has been recognised by the Minister for Education, the Schools Commission, the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the A.C.T. Schools Authority as the body to speak on Aboriginal education issues in the A.C.T. The constitution of the Consultative Group allows for effective community control through annual elections. It is therefore the body most suited to manage an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre in the A.C.T. It is Aboriginal, an educational body, and is community controlled.

11.3 Focus of the Centre

There will be a focus on the local area. However, the Centre will not be restricted solely to the Monaro/Wreck Bay district due to lack of local information and resources. Also overall understanding of Aboriginal Australia is required to understand the local region.

There are Aborigines living in Canberra, and their children need to be able to identify and appreciate the traditional Aboriginal heritage of the region. The rock art, traditional foods, and fishing and hunting techniques of the Nungawal people of the A.C.T. are part of the heritage of the present Aboriginal people and will form an important part of the Centre.

The Centre will not be designed to cater for tertiary students; that role is provided by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. It will, however, show primary and secondary school students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, that Aboriginal culture was a viable form of organisation and that to understand and appreciate the Canberra region, they have to recognise that they are living in an area which has been inhabited for thousands of years.

11.4 Functions of the Centre

The Centre will:

- . Undertake resource collection
- . Establish resource production
- . Develop teacher in-service programs
- . Provide teaching programs at the Centre
- . Develop teaching support on site with pupils in schools
- . Set up displays
- . Establish an audio visual library
- . Set up an audio visual theatre
- . Develop a library of books, pamphlets and charts
- . Act as the Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group administrative centre
- . Provide personnel resource services
- . Provide a curriculum development in-service
- . Maintain close relations with A.C.T. Schools Authority

11.5 Language Centre

Language is important to the understanding of culture. Unlike some other parts of Australia, the A.C.T. suffers an Aboriginal language deficit. In the Eden/Monaro region, some words are retained and expressions still used, but a fluent speaker of any of the local languages does not appear to be available. Because of their relative isolation, the people of Wreck Bay appear to have retained more of their language.

The possibility of putting together a complete vocabulary and linguistic structure with correct syntactic aspects appears to be remote. However, research may well indicate that such a project is worthwhile. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies will be approached in an endeavour to obtain the services of a linguist to ensure that the remnants of the Aboriginal languages of the A.C.T. and Eden/Monaro regions are recorded. Following such recording, a limited language programme could be developed which would increase the understanding of the traditional Aboriginal culture of the A.C.T.

11.6 Centre's Role

The Centre should provide:

- (a) a suitable venue for Aboriginal Studies in the A.C.T. at primary and secondary levels;
- (b) a place where materials are stored, assessed and developed;
- (c) a place where primary and secondary students and others can have a hands-on experience with selected elements of Aboriginal culture;
- (d) functional areas which would enable an integrated approach to be made in Aboriginal Studies programs;

- (e) accommodation for the A.E.C.G which has the responsibility for consulting and liaising with the A.C.T. Schools Authority and other Government bodies;
- (f) a source of expertise in Aboriginal Studies courses.

11.7 Physical Resources

The centre as envisaged in this study would require:

- . Two multi-purpose rooms (audio visual and teaching), 24' x 24';
- . library plus work area properly set up and equipped as a resource for teachers and pupils with books, posters, photographs and audio visual aids;
- . a room for a collection of material cultural items from the region and other parts of Australia where applicable;
- . teacher/student room for resource materials;
- . display area for exhibitions and items of interest;
- . four offices for staff;
- . staff room for teachers and ancillary staff;
- . reception area with Aboriginal theme;
- . store room facilities, including dark room, reproduction area and wet areas;
- . indoor-outdoor activity area which will be particularly suitable for hands-on activity;
- . a computer terminal to enable access to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and the Museum of Australia collections.

11.8 Material Resources

The A.C.T. Schools Authority has produced, at great expense, an Aboriginal Studies kit, "The Aborigines of the Canberra Region". The kit contains a great deal of information about the Aboriginal inhabitants of this region. Unfortunately, local Aboriginal input was minimal. However, with modifications, the kit can be an integral part of the Centre.

It is designed to assist teachers presenting courses in Aboriginal studies to upper primary and secondary school classes. It aims to assist the social development of students by engendering an appreciation and understanding of the values, beliefs and customs of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the area. The specific objectives of the kit are:

- (a) to give students an appreciation of the traditional Aboriginal culture of the Canberra region;
- (b) to give students an insight into what happened when two societies came into contact with each other.

Europeans entered the Canberra region about 1820 and it is believed that the traditional culture of the Ngunawal people ceased to be a feature of the area about 1897. The kit contains audio visual and printed material designed to assist students and teachers in the study of two basic questions:

- (a) How did the Aborigines live in the Canberra region before the European invasion?
- (b) Did some of the local Aborigines survive that invasion?

The kit extends Australian history beyond 1770 and Captain Cook. It attempts to clarify attitudes and beliefs concerning the indigenous cultural heritage of Australia. It should be able to provide a focus for the Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre.

The Schools Authority employs an Aboriginal Schools Visitor as a resource person for schools with programmes in Aboriginal Studies. This person provides an Aboriginal presence and has the knowledge, background and experience of Aboriginal lifestyles, and is able to assist teachers with the planning and presentation of courses. The Aboriginal Schools Visitor should be located in the Centre and be an integral part of its activities.

The following material resources would also be required:-

- (a) a time-line approach to A.C.T. and Australian Aboriginal history to show the development of Aboriginal culture in this district where it fits into the development of man in the rest of the world, and to tie pre-contact Aboriginal people to the present Aboriginal community in Canberra;
- (b) a collection of materials to depict aspects of the Aboriginal culture of the region and other parts of Australia;
- (c) a library of Aboriginal Australia for teachers and school students;
- (d) a photographic collection of important local Aboriginal people and sites;
- (e) an area for a collection of local materials for hands-on experience so that students can gain practical experience of some aspects of Aboriginal culture;
- (f) development of materials such as board games to allow students to gain a greater understanding of aspects of Aboriginal culture such as kinship (Appendix 4);

- (g) access to materials in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and the Museum of Australia.

11.9 Staffing

A fully operational Centre would require:

- . Receptionist
- . Steno-secretary
- . Clerical Assistant
- . Exhibition Officer
- . Two Technical Assistants, including an audio visual officer
- . Material Preservationist
- . Aboriginal Schools Visitor
- . Two Teachers, one of whom is a Librarian
- . Teacher Aide
- . Groundsman/Gardener to develop a garden growing traditional food plants of the region

11.10 Role of Aborigines in the Centre

In 1975, the Aboriginal Consultative Group in the Schools Commission wrote:

We see education as a most important strategy for achieving realistic self-determination for Aboriginal people of Australia. We do not see education as a method of producing anglicised Aborigines but rather as an instrument for creating an individual community with intellectual and technological skills in harmony with our own cultural values and identity. We wish to be Aboriginal citizens in a changing Australia. (1)

(1) Aboriginal Consultative Group Education for Aborigines: Report to the Schools Commission, Canberra 1975.

The above quotation highlights the importance of Aboriginal involvement in the Centre. For Aboriginal people to retain their Aboriginality, it is vital that they be involved in their own education. Therefore, the Centre should be strongly influenced by Aboriginal people so that it can effectively show young Aborigines of the A.C.T. the cultural aspects they need to understand in order to be viable members of Aboriginal society. Non-Aboriginal students would also benefit.

If the Centre is to be successful in developing and maintaining Aboriginal cultural mores, Aboriginal people must be involved. In the past, too many efforts in Aboriginal education have been narrowly based and assimilationist. Aboriginal children need to be exposed to Aboriginal education and this is the right and the responsibility of Aboriginal people.

Educational aspects of the Centre should include Aboriginal knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, history, food gathering and hunting techniques. This is an ambitious list to attempt in any study centre. However, it is a challenge which Aboriginal people can meet if they are given the opportunity and the necessary resources. Successful programs at the Centre will allow Aboriginal children to be educated in such a way that they know themselves as Aborigines and have pride in their cultural heritage.

11.11 Role of non-Aborigines in the Centre

Non-Aboriginal people have a vital role to play in the establishment and development of an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre in two main areas -

1. As support and resource people
2. As students learning about Aboriginal culture.

It is anticipated that in the early stages of development of the Centre, support will be required from anthropologists, archaeologists, botanists, zoologists and linguists. It is expected that most of these will be non-Aboriginal people. The Centre will also require support from Government, educational administrators, and other non-Aboriginal professionals. Hopefully, most of the staff will eventually be Aboriginal, although to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Centre it is not necessary to have a totally Aboriginal staff. There will be a role for non-Aborigines to assist the Centre's controlling body in developing programs, arranging displays and generally developing the Centre.

Non-Aboriginal students will benefit from the Centre in that they too have a right to understand their cultural heritage. They are Australians and Australia has been inhabited for possibly 100,000 years. Non-Aboriginal children can gain a greater appreciation of their environment and the history of this country if they undertake Aboriginal Studies programs.

Non-Aboriginal people have been in Australia for less than 200 years. If this were depicted on a clock showing mid-day, it would mean that while Aborigines were here the day before, the Europeans arrived at about two minutes to twelve. While non-Aboriginal people have made drastic changes to the environment, it is hoped that the Centre will be able to give non-Aboriginal students a deeper understanding of the

profound climatic changes which men and women have lived through in this country, such as the last Ice Age, the rising of the waters and volcanic activity mentioned earlier.

The Centre should also broaden the cultural perception and understanding of non-Aboriginal students by showing them that Aborigines who lived in this region had a practical way of life which suited their needs. Through the promotion of greater understanding, the Centre should enrich the cultural experience of non-Aboriginal students.

12 INITIAL SCHOOL/TEACHER ACTIVITIES AND FUNDING

12.1 Static Display

The initial steps in establishing the Centre will be to collect various materials to set up a static display depicting aspects of the life of the Aboriginal people of the region.

With the help of archaeologists and the Canberra Historical Society, the Centre should develop a display of materials based on a time-line which shows the development of Aboriginal life in the A.C.T. from, say, 100,000 years ago through to the present time.

In addition to the time-line, background murals could indicate the type of climate that existed at the various stages, evidence of what the people ate, and the various materials they used in their daily lives. Large photographs of significant Aboriginal sites in the area should also form part of the display.

12.2 Audio Visual

With the help of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies it is hoped to find slides, film and videos which have been produced in the area to establish an audio visual unit.

Some of this material will be used in carrels with supporting materials to give students an educational experience in some aspects of Aboriginal life. When fully established, the Centre would be able to produce its own audio visual materials through the audio visual unit.

12.3 Library Resources

The A.C.T. A.E.C.G. has established a small library with books being donated by members of the Aboriginal community and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. It is anticipated that with the help of the funding bodies, a library will be established with areas set aside to aid circulation and usage of the collection.

(a) Required Areas

- (i) Teacher reference in respect to curriculum, history and Aboriginal cultural matters;
- (ii) Student reference with multiple copies of books suitable for students' use which could be loaned to schools undertaking Aboriginal Studies courses;
- (iii) A section of material dealing specifically with Aborigines of the A.C.T. - both traditional and contemporary - which would be open to the general public.
- (iv) Reading area - for detailed study of reference books;
- (v) Audio-visual preparation room - with video, movie still and sound equipment;
- (vi) viewing and listening - a small room to view video and film and to hold seminars for up to thirty students;

- (vii) Individual study carrels - which could be set up with slide and sound equipment, graphics and print materials on particular topics and used for individual study;
- (viii) Office/workroom/storage area - adequate storage and work space will be required.

(b) Aims

- (i) to provide a centralised collection of library resource material for A.C.T. School students and their teachers;
- (ii) To collect materials which will contribute to increasing understanding of Aborigines in the non-Aboriginal community and positively Aboriginality;
- (iii) To develop a collection of materials devoted to local Aboriginal culture;
- (iv) To act as a coordinating focal point for existing resources on Aboriginal culture in the A.C.T. which are suitable for school students or their teachers.
- (v) To make library resources available to assist schools to develop Aboriginal studies courses. This is a long term aim which cannot be achieved until the library is fully established and staffed;
- (vi) To form close relationships with the national Library, AIAS Library, O'Connell Education Centre and the Australia Museum.

(c) Objectives

- (i) to develop and equip a specialist library on Aborigines in the A.C.T.;
- (ii) to provide an Aboriginal influenced environment where school students and their teachers can use the collected resources, both print and non-print to study and investigate aspects of Aboriginal culture;
- (iii) To have a seminar room to conduct in service courses on library resources available for Aboriginal studies courses. Cultural awareness and sensitivity programs could also be conducted;
- (iv) To provide a source of expertise and resources in Aboriginal studies for schools.

(d) Size: general guidelines are determined on the basis of 5 square feet per person per projected client usage. In the initial stages of the Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre a double classroom size space would be required.

Note Bene: to be adapted to current space available.

(e) Acoustics: all floor area should be carpeted.

(f) Basic equipment:

- . Charging desk
- . book carts, audio visual carts
- . tables, chairs, lounge chairs, carrels, step stools
- . shelving (free standing; to be attached to wall high and/or low)
- . browsing bins for books, periodicals, records
- . magazine display shelves and storage shelves

- . audio-visual shelving for records, cassettes, filmstrips etc.
- . open shelves to house viewers, projectors, tape recorders, record players etc
- . card catalogue units
- . atlas stand
- . dictionary stand
- . hanging picture file or large-sized cabinets
- . bulletin board, display stands or areas, blackboard space
- . projection screen
(Ektalite screen for daylight viewing recommended)
- . projectors, viewers, record players tape recorders etc.
- . photocopying machine
- . Office workroom: work counter, sink, desk, typewriter, telephone, filing cabinets, storage shelves, etc.
- . sacred/secret cabinet.

(g) The Media Collection: The development of and initial collection should revolve around the aims and objectives and projected growth of the collection. The collection should comprise print and non-print media, realia and audio-visual elements. These elements should be introduced during the first triennium of the Resource Centre. Annual acquisitions would provide new materials, introduce new elements and new subject areas. In addition, loss,

deterioration and obsolescence will destroy about 10% of the collection annually and forward planning must be made in this area.

Examples;

Print - books
posters
maps
pictures
charts
clippings
vertical file material
other?

Non-Print -
cassettes
records
videos
filmstrips
slides
overlays
transparencies
multi-media kits
globes
realia
equipment
other?

Library Administration:

- a) Budget: Regardless of the allocated budget figure, for a balanced collection the budget should be divided up, according to percentages, based on the aims and objectives and designated emphasis.

Example:- reference

non-fiction i) specific subject areas

ii) general subject areas

fiction

periodicals

audio-visual - (breakdown of types)

paper-backs

library supplies (stationery, processing materials etc)

equipment - (breakdown of types)

levels - appropriate categories would be

required in each section depending on

whether materials will cater for

adults, teenagers, children. if it

perceived that this will be done on a

gradual basis then time-lines and

forward planning would need to be

considered.

- (b) Circulation: Since most libraries in Australia use the Dewey Decimal system and Sears List of subject headings this library will do likewise.

In the first instance the collection will not be available for loan but will be used on site for purely reference purposes.

When some of the collection is available for loan a loan system will have to be decided upon. Borrowing period policy and lates and losses procedures will also need to be determined.

- (c) Material Processing: All materials will be assigned a Dewey Number and thereby facilitate ease of access and client location.

Unfortunately in Australia, it is not possible to buy fully processed books. Sometimes it is possible to buy partially processed books which will be a considerable saving in librarian time.

A processed book has book cover, Dewey number on outside spine of book, book pocket, book card (borrowing purposes), shelf list card and catalogue cards.

- (d) Statistics and records: (to be set up and maintained)

- . circulation records
- . shelf list
- . catalogue cards
- . ordering of materials
- . reserve list or file if appropriate
- . where-to-look file
- . vertical file
- . picture file
- . equipment file
- . audio-visual file
- . file for publishers, dealers, supplies, catalogues etc.

- . office files - clippings
- diary
- handbooks
- budgetary records
- . services supplied
- . meetings to be attended
- . other as required

(e) Librarian's duties: Until such time as full-time specific personnel are employed to maintain the collection a "Teacher-Librarian" should be employed on at least a part time basis.

(iv) Hands on Experience

If it is going to be effective and not rely solely on static museum-like displays, the Centre must provide students with activities which can probably be best described as "hands-on experience".

Already suggestions have been put forward for experiential activities such as stone flaking, flour production from seeds, net making, weapon manufacture, making fire and development of board games to give students an understanding of kinship and other aspects of traditional life. The students would also be able to experiment with tracking and other traditional skills in an outdoor area.

It is anticipated that modern audio visual and technological techniques may well be used to give children an understanding of the skills

required; for example, a special electric drill may be used to show how friction between two pieces of wood produced fire.

The Centre will establish specific learning experiences by providing children with "hand on" activities, board games, and specific learning carrels for particular aspects of Aboriginal life.

It is envisaged the Centre will offer children some of the following experiences:

Stone flaking - Spearheads

Boomerang making

Fire lighting

Woomera use

Tracking

Hunting techniques

Wood carving

Food containers - bark, wooden, woven

Bush String

Music and dance

Fish nets

Housing/shelter

Cooking

Mat making

Board Games

Kinship

Trade

Kangaroo hunting

Study Carrels

Language
Ceremonies
Foods
Medicines
Decoration - body marking

Example of Hands on Activities

Stone Flaking

Objective - To have/children gain an appreciation of the skill required to flake a stone to make a spear head and then successfully attach same to a shaft.

Materials

required - Suitable stone from South Coast and ti-tree shafts, bush string and glue.

Method - children are shown technique and steps required by personal demonstration or video. This also involves the safety aspects required to avoid injury.

The students flake stones until they obtain a satisfactory head.

The head is attached to the shaft provided by means of string and glue. The spears are then tried out by their makers with throws for distance and accuracy (targets). Spears can be taken back to school and home for display purposes only if parental permission is obtained.

XIV. EVALUATION

Assessment of student development is essential if teachers are to help students learn. The evaluation must take cognisance of the objectives formed and the problems set, selection of other content and the organisation of the learning experiences (the opening activities, sequential and concluding activities at the Centre should be evaluated.

John U. Michaelis in his Social Studies for Children in a Democracy⁽¹⁾ listed the following evidence and tests that could be used to evaluate various outcomes. He pointed out that other devices could be added to each category of special needs indicated:

Critical thinking - tests, observation, group discussion, checklists, charts.

Attitudes - questionnaires, checklists, scale of beliefs. (attitude scales), observation, anecdotal records, recordings, discussions, individual interviews.

Interests - observation, diaries and logs, interest inventories and checklists, questionnaires, records of activities, and use of leisure time.

Concepts and generalisations - observation of use, group discussion, tests, samples of written work.

Work study skills - samples of work, tests, observation of use, checklists, charts, group discussions, interviews.

(1) John U. Michaelis, Social Studies for Children in a Democracy, 4th Edition, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1968, p. 523

Functional information - tests, charts, discussion, observations, samples of work.

Group processes - observation, group discussion, checklists, sociograms.

Evaluation should reveal that students have achieved the various objectives set for the Centre. It will be essential that teachers undertake additional instruction or revise, review or even re-teach if necessary when it is obvious that experience with the materials has not achieved the desired results.

The evaluation of the Centre's success will be difficult to measure because of the widespread student population which will visit the Centre for varying lengths of time over their school career. However, the Centre's administration and the Consultative Group will be keen to watch carefully the development of programs, keep records as to which aspects of the Centre are most popular and ascertain from pupils and teachers their feelings as to the worth of the Centre as an educational experience and the practicality of the various experiences offered.

CONCLUSION

At present, the A.C.T. does not have a Centre which promotes Aboriginal culture and heritage in the context of Aboriginal education. Teachers need support in the development of Aboriginal Studies courses. Having expertise and resources available at the Centre would provide that support for A.C.T. teachers and others involved in Aboriginal education.

Aboriginal parents have expressed the desire for their children to know more about their own cultural heritage. It is expected that some parts of the traditional culture associated with survival in pre-European times is lost and the Centre will not be able to depict those aspects.

Aboriginal people are best able to communicate their own culture and they understand the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people. If the A.C.T. Aboriginal community is involved they will be able to assist in developing programs and experiences which will be of educational and cross-cultural benefit to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

It is recognised that for an individual's self-esteem and survival, the individual must be linked firmly with his or her past which, perhaps more than the present, is his or her culture. An Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre can help provide that link for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

At present Aboriginal Studies is only receiving peripheral treatment in most schools. If it is accepted that curriculum is the sum of all school based activities it must be recognised that experiences vary

from being planned and explicit to merely being indicated or unplanned. As well omission of experiences is also of importance because it reflects the teacher/school attitude that those experiences are not worth including in the curriculum.

Values, attitudes and assumptions about Aborigines are reflected in what is taught. There is also the implication in what is not taught. Three specific issues can be received in respect to Aboriginal Studies in the Curriculum:-

- . that a structural prejudice is developed by the omission of Aboriginal Studies;
- . that the context in which Aborigines are presented is vitally important. It can be positive and encourage favourable attitudes rather than negative stereotypes by presenting Aborigines as a problem for Australian society. The reporting of events in the media about Aborigines is generally involving a problem;
- . that the content of an Aboriginal Studies program be comprehensive and not merely a superficial survey.

To satisfactorily meet the above issues more has to be done in producing Aboriginal Studies programs in schools. As argued earlier teachers can bring in the desired changes if they have support, at all levels, and the resources to use. An Aboriginal Studies Centre could provide some of both.

As Senator Susan Ryan, Minister for Education said at the launching of "Windows onto Worlds", a review of Australian studies in tertiary education, the reasons for the neglect of the 40,000 years of human habitation of Australia prior to colonisation are complex. She did name two possibilities the easy access English speaking Australians had

to other great English speaking cultures and the fact that Australian education institutions were transplanted here rather than having evolved.

But she added that such reasons are no longer adequate and that it is only belatedly that serious account has been taken of Aboriginal Australia, its culture and its political and economic aspirations.

The House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education (1985) noted that 'The uncertainty of teachers on how to proceed with Aboriginal studies may be overcome with the assistance of the appropriate curriculum development authorities and State Departments of education.'⁽¹⁾ The Select Committee's preferred option was for State departments of education to prepare and widely disseminate guidelines for teaching Aboriginal studies. The states of N.S.W. and Queensland issued guidelines some five years ago with little result.

Aboriginal studies needs more than guidelines to receive its rightful place in the curriculum. Teachers need resources and support to implement such guidelines and contact with Aboriginal people.

The Select Committee did note there was insufficient suitable materials available and that there was insufficient involvement of Aborigines at the local level in developing curriculum materials and in the teaching of Aboriginal studies. The proposal for an Aboriginal Studies Centre

(1) Report of House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education A.G.P.S. Canberra, 1985.

would provide the resources and the opportunity, a model and a focus, to overcome both these deficiencies.

An Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre would be an ideal venue to prepare Aboriginal studies materials for use in schools as well as in the Centre. Expertise and resources could be gathered together in one place which no single school could afford. As with Questacon it would be a centre for the presentation of thematic concepts to school children of all ages. In this case, Aboriginal studies would become more alive, children would be actively participating and endeavouring to comprehend facets of Aboriginal life; past and present.

This thesis has looked at those issues which it is believed would influence the introduction of an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre into an education system. There has been an endeavour to ascertain the needs and rationale for such a centre its aims and objectives and the selection, organisation and use of the materials that are to be housed.

The question of values was also examined as was the role of Aborigines and non-Aborigines in the Centre. A theoretical approach was taken to curriculum implications and the scope of learning activities in the Centre and the Centre's influence upon schools generally in these two crucial areas was also given attention. Some learning theories were examined and it was argued that Field Psychology which sees learning as the discovery of meaning or insight within a given situation, is the most suitable approach for the Centre. Although it was recognised that it was essential to involve students in a variety of different kinds of learning activities so that multiple ways of learning are provided.

The National Aboriginal Education Committee summarised the importance of Aboriginal Studies in its Aims and Objectives (1980) "Aboriginal studies must become an integral part of the education of every Australian. It must be taught with a high degree of respect and understanding to develop an accurate knowledge of Australian history, Aboriginal cultures, and lifestyles."⁽²⁾ and as an objective "The establishment of an Aboriginal Education Resource and Curriculum Development Unit which would produce materials for Aborigines and non Aborigines."⁽³⁾

The establishment of an Aboriginal Studies Resource Centre would aid Aboriginal studies to become an integral part of the curriculum in schools and would provide a focal point for students and teachers by developing activities and materials to promote Aboriginal studies. It would be a resource for all Australians involved in the education system.

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2. National Aboriginal Education Committee: Rationale, Aims and Objectives Aboriginal Education. N.A.E.C. Canberra, 1980.
 3. Ibid.

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ACT ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

It is proposed that the responsibilities of the group will be:

1. To provide the ACT Schools Authority with a reliable expression of Aboriginal views on:
 - 1.1 The educational and training needs of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the ACT.
 - 1.2 The effectiveness of current programs and projects involving Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in giving them access to education and training which will make them proud of their Aboriginality and give them the academic and technical skills required in a multicultural society.
 - 1.3 The programs required to increase the knowledge and understanding that non-aborigines have of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Such programs should aim to increase the level of understanding and tolerance in the community and be part of an overall race relations program.
2. To advise other government and non-government authorities, colleges and educational institutions on Aboriginal policies and programs.
3. To consult with and advise the ACT Teachers' Federation and the O'Connell Teachers' Centre on the particular educational and training needs of ACT Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.
4. To assist in the planning, implementation and administration of policies and programs.
5. To promote and organise programs, exhibitions to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultural knowledge among Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Aboriginal people.
6. To survey the possibility of having an Aboriginal language introduced into the ACT school curriculum.
7. To provide for ACT Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders a source of current information on current and proposed programs and activities and policy changes.
8. Undertake any other activities which will meet the educational and training needs and aspirations of ACT Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.
9. To have Aboriginal pre-school centres and playgroups established in Canberra and Wreck Bay.

10. To have homework/study centres established where needed in the ACT.

ACT ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE GROUP

MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

1. The Group will be known as the ACT Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.
2. The 11 ordinary members of the Group shall be elected annually at a meeting of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community. 2 members must come from Wreck Bay.
3. Voting rights at the Annual General Meeting and Special General Meetings be restricted to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders over sixteen years of age, resident in, or being educated in the ACT and parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children being educated in the Australian Capital Territory.
4. Ex-officio members shall include the ACT Schools Authority Aboriginal Education Consultant, the Aboriginal Resource Person, the Director of the ACT Schools Authority or their delegates and a representative of the ACT Teachers Federation.
5. Co opted members shall be recruited for special projects.
6. Co opted and ex officio members do not have voting rights.
7. In the event of unsatisfactory attendance (missing three consecutive meetings) any members may have their membership cancelled. The group may co opt another person to fill the resultant vacancy for the remainder of the Group's year.
8. An Annual General Meeting shall be held in June each year. A quorum shall consist of 12 eligible voters.
9. Special general Meetings shall be held on the decision of the elected members or upon the receipt of a request for one signed by 20 eligible voters. Such a meeting to be advertised in a Saturday edition of the "Canberra Times" in the fortnight preceding the date of the meeting.

Notices of the Special general Meeting to be posted to all people who signed the attendance sheet at the last AGM and notices to be displayed prominently at ADC, NAEC, Hostels, DAA, Social Security, Wreck Bay Hall, Jervis Bay School and store and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.
10. A quorum of a Consultative Group meeting shall consist of 5 ordinary members.
11. Meetings shall be held monthly from February to November.

ABORIGINAL STUDIES

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SCHOOLS BULLETIN NO.160 OF 5 APRIL 1984.

The Schools Authority adopted the policy statement at the end of this paper at its meeting on 20 June 1983. The rationale accompanying the policy statement has been subsequently endorsed by the ACT Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the body recognised by the Authority as representing the ACT Aboriginal community on educational matters.

1. THE NEED FOR ABORIGINAL STUDIES

- 1.1 In the development of school curricula, involvement of all people concerned with children is essential. For curriculum to provide what is most needed for the student population of a particular institution, a good rapport should exist among those involved in its development; students, parents, teachers and administrators. Positive attitudes to studies and regular attendance and participation in a wide range of school activities by students are more likely to occur in such a co-operative situation than in one in which the curriculum is not developed with the involvement of all concerned. This sort of involvement is extremely important where Aboriginal children are concerned. Experience has shown that in cases in which it does not occur both parents and children can acquire anti-school attitudes which operate to the detriment of Aboriginal children's education.
- 1.2 The introduction of Aboriginal Studies courses in schools should help to overcome racist attitudes that prevail in some sections of the Australian community. Through the involvement of large numbers of students in such courses, negative attitudes towards multi-racialism and multi-culturalism could be countered. Aboriginal students could be assisted to have faith in themselves and pride in their own culture and history. These objectives should be achieved through the employment of Aboriginal teachers and teacher aides and the use of other Aboriginal people in the teaching process. Presumably such people would be highly motivated in dealing with aspects of Aboriginal culture and would thus produce beneficial effects in their relationships with students. In this way, positive attitudes towards multi-culturalism could be developed in all students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and through them in their parents. Aboriginal people need to be directly involved in the development and presentation of courses in Aboriginal Studies for such studies to retain the support of the Aboriginal community.
- 1.3 In order to foster the view that Aboriginal culture and present-day societies of all kinds are a vital part of Australian history and contemporary life, Aboriginal Studies should be coherent within the curriculum. It should exist across the curriculum rather than being regarded as a purely historical, sociological or anthropological study. The botanical expertise of Aborigines, their skills in dancing, art and craft together with their view

of spiritual life and the important and central role of the land in their lives provide examples of the broad scope to which Aboriginal Studies can be widened. In this way many aspects of a school curriculum may be enhanced in studying one or more of these fields and showing how Aboriginal culture has contributed to and enriched contemporary Australian society.

- 1.4 Aboriginal studies can also provide a valuable contribution in the area of scientific method and its processes through investigation of the manner in which traditional Aboriginals used the processes of assessing evidence, making judgements and using objective reasoning. Emotive issues such as the cruel and inhumane treatment of Aborigines by some early settlers or arguments over land rights are examples of topics which should be examined from different points of view to develop wider perspectives and allow more balanced judgements.
- 1.5 In any presentation of Aboriginal Studies contemporary issues need special treatment as there has been a tendency to neglect this area in schools and school textbooks. An appropriate approach to the study of these issues is through the study of similar events which occurred in the past so that rash, ill-informed and emotionally-clouded judgements on current happenings can be avoided. confrontation that occurs between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups from time to time in Australian society indicates that contemporary issues need to be treated with sensitivity and understanding. The multicultural nature of our society which has long foregone its "White Australia Policy" makes such an approach to controversial issues, such as Aboriginal claims for land rights, most necessary.
- 1.6 Tolerance of different ethnic viewpoints is absolutely essential in Australia today. Knowledge and understanding of the history, cultural heritage, contribution of Aborigines to Australian life and society and various lifestyles of Aboriginal Australians are essential ingredients of any studies leading to the development of this philosophical attitude in young Australians.

2. ABORIGINAL STUDIES KIT

- 2.1 The ACT Schools Authority has produced an Aboriginal Studies Kit, the Aborigines of the Canberra Region. The kit is designed to assist teachers presenting courses in Aboriginal Studies to upper primary and secondary school classes. It aims to assist the social development of students by engendering an appreciation and understanding of the values, beliefs and customs of people with a different cultural heritage. The specific objectives of the kit are:
 - (a) to give students an appreciation of the traditional Aboriginal culture of the Canberra region;
 - (b) to give students an insight into what happened when two very different societies came into direct contact with each other.

2.2 The kit contains audio-visual and printed material designed to assist teachers and students to inquire into two basic questions:

- (a) How did the Aborigines live in the Canberra Region before the Contact Period?
- (b) Why didn't the local Aborigines survive the Contact Period?

(The Contact Period is that time from 1820 when the first Europeans entered the Canberra Region to 1897 when it is believed that the last surviving member of the local Ngunawal people died).

2.3 The kit extends Australian history beyond 1770 and Captain Cook. For too long Australian primary and secondary education has taken only the European perspective of the discovery and settlement of Australia. Projects such as the Aboriginal Studies Kit, The Aborigines of the Canberra Region attempt to clarify attitudes and beliefs concerning the indigenous cultural heritage of Australia. The kit can also act as a model for the development of similar packages in other regions which focus on the Aborigines of the local area.

3. ABORIGINAL SCHOOLS VISITOR

The Schools Authority employs an Aboriginal Schools Visitor whose role is to be a resource person for schools in programs in Aboriginal Studies. By providing an Aboriginal presence and through a knowledge and background experience of Aboriginal lifestyles and traditional culture, the Aboriginal Schools Visitor is able to assist teachers with the planning and presentation of courses.

4. AUTHORITY POLICY ON ABORIGINAL STUDIES (agreed to at the Authority meeting on 20 June 1983).

4.1 The authority reaffirms that in relation to Aboriginal people there should be:

"a perception of the cultural diversity within the Australian community that includes cognisance of the special position of Aborigines" (Multicultural Education Policy 1979).

4.2 The Authority adopts the following statement as an appropriate basis for Aboriginal Studies in ACT government schools:

- (i) Aboriginal Studies can be considered to be the study of the cultures including history, languages and lifestyles, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both prior to and following European colonisation in a context which places emphasis on understanding of issues central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contemporary society and on their relevance to the total Australian community. Its contents are the descriptions, insights and explanations

and human experience derived both from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sources. (Adapted from Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group, Report to the Australian Education Council, 1982).

(ii) Such a definition points to the following aims for Aboriginal Studies:

- (a) to develop in Aboriginal children and their communities an enhanced sense of personal worth through the acceptance by all people of Aboriginal identity;
- (b) to develop sequential class programs for all children to understand the full scope of Australia's history and to increase understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of the indigenous cultures of Australia;
- (c) to develop cross-cultural understanding based on appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity including knowledge and recognition of Aboriginal people as the indigenous people of Australia.

(iii) These aims would be best achieved through activities such as:

- (a) consultation with Aboriginal parents, community groups and organisations during the development of initiatives and implementation of programs in Aboriginal Studies;
- (b) the development and strengthening of the pride and self-esteem of Aboriginal students in their cultural heritage;
- (c) development of a full understanding of Australia's history including Aboriginal Australia prior to 1788;
- (d) development of an appreciation, in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, of the range, complexity and distinctiveness of the culture, heritage and lifestyles of Aboriginal Australians and the ways in which Aboriginal cultural heritage has enriched Australian society;
- (e) examination of contemporary issues resulting from the disruption to traditional Aboriginal life caused by the development of European settlement since 1788;
- (f) development of a recognition that Aboriginal Australians living in urban environment and in more traditional life-styles are the indigenous people of Australia who have a unique cultural heritage to maintain.

43. The Authority agrees in principle, dependent on the priority accorded and the resources available, to:
- (a) assist with the establishment of programs in Aboriginal Studies;
 - (b) assist with the development of co-ordinated programs which are integrated into the total school curriculum at all levels, from pre-school to Year 12, so that the study of Aboriginal people and their heritage becomes a part of the education of every child in the Australian Capital Territory;
 - (c) collect and produce a range of resource materials for all grade levels, that will provide both an historic and a contemporary coverage of issues in Aboriginal Studies;
 - (d) establish evaluation procedures for Schools Authority initiatives in Aboriginal Studies, the evaluation programs to be conducted by a team comprised of representatives from the Authority and interested Aboriginal groups and organisations;
 - (e) establish an Aboriginal Studies Centre.

DRAFT RULES

KINSHIPBOARD GAME

DEVELOPER: CLAY CONNER

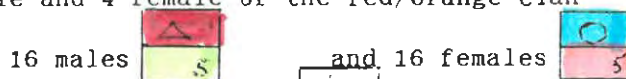
OBJECT OF GAME

Accumulate the greatest number of points by adding ancestors and descendants to the family tree, linked through marriages of six generations.

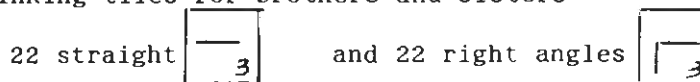
EQUIPMENT

The tiles include 32 people tiles divided equally between male and female representing 4 different clans. Linking tiles are used to connect the generatinos and to show kinship. The following are the tiles and their point values.

- 4 male and 4 female of the blue/green clan 5 pt.
- 4 male and 4 female of the blue/orange clan 5 pt.
- 4 male and 4 female of the red/green clan 5 pt.
- 4 male and 4 female of the red/orange clan 5 pt.



- 11 generation connectors 4 pt.
- 11 branching links to children 4 pt.
- 44 linking tiles for brothers and sisters 3 pt.



2 "wild links" that may be used for any ling but have no point value. They may not be used for people.

- 1 playing board
- 4 trays to hold players tiles.

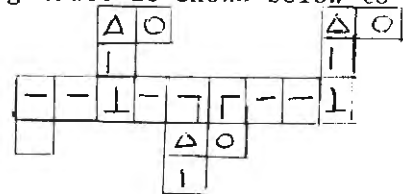
STARTING THE PLAY


Up to four players may play. Each player draws a tile and the one with the highest value goes first. In the event of a tie, the players involved redraw until one draws a higher tile. After the first player is chosen all tiles are placed back into the box and mixed up. Each player draws eight tiles, placing them in their own tray. The first play begins the contemporary generation or "EGO" generation.

RULES OF PLAY

1. The first player must place a male tile on the "START HERE" or "EGO" square indicated in the centre of the board. All eight of the players tiles may be played, if played according to the following restrictions.

2. The generation linking tiles may not be played until a marriage has been made by placing the appropriate male and female side by side.
3. To form an acceptable marriage, a man must choose his wife from his "Mandipula clan" and a woman must choose her husband from her "Wakupula clan". Simply put, an acceptable marriage is one where none of the four colours are alike.
4. Tiles must be played with linking tiles as shown below to add either descendants or ancestors.



5. Children will inherit the top colour of the father and the bottom colour of the mother.
6. The connecting link  for generations must be placed below the male tile.
7. For optimum points, male children should be placed to the right and female children to the left, but in marriages, males should be to the left.
8. In this game only two children are permitted for each couple.
9. When all possible correct plays have been made from the tiles in a player's tray new tiles are drawn to replace those used and play moves to the second player.
10. If no proper plays are possible for a player he replaces 1 to 8 tiles, mixes them, draws new ones and play moves onto the next player.
11. Game ends when no player can make a proper play with the remaining tiles.

CHALLENGES

If a player adds a marriage partner that would be of an acceptable clan for marriage, another player may challenge the marriage. If the challenger is correct, they receive a 10 point bonus, the offending tile and any others added afterwards are removed, and the player who made the error loses a turn. If the challenger is incorrect in the objection they lose 10 points and their turn.

