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SMALL SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

KATHERINE

21ST - 23RD AUGUST 1974.

The Crossways Hotel Functions room was the venue of a very stimulating and informative conference for teachers from small schools in the "Top End". The conference was unique in that it was the first of its type to be organised since the merger of the two N.T. education systems. It was also unique in that the conference concluded with valedictory dinner for Mr. George Lee of the Beswick School, who retires after twenty years of teaching service in the N.T., most of which time was spent in small schools. George maintained his reputation, at the conference, of being a speaker's "nightmare".

Sharing ideas and problems appeared to be the main gain by the participants. An over-riding conclusion drawn by all was the noticeable difference between each small school represented. There can be no stereotyping of small schools in the N.T.

As to be expected the conference became the forum to debate an education philosophy for the teacher of a small school. No concluding or concise answer could be offered for basic and imposing questions such as :

Education for what?

What is in store after school, for the child attending the small school?

These are problems for all educators. A note of optimism crept into the conference at this stage as the conference was reminded that we have the task to educate and teach skills that will form the basis of social change ultimately.

Another important outcome of the conference was to re-assure the teachers of small schools, that they are not a forgotten "race" within the N.T. Education Division. A number of senior officers of the Department, including the Director and the Assistant Director, Schools Branch, addressed the conference. The latest developments in policy and organisation were expounded.

As co-organiser of the conference I was greatly impressed by the enthusiasm, amount of preparation, and contributions made to the conference by all the attending teachers. Teachers were unanimous in suggesting that the Katherine Small Schools Conference should become an annual event.

K. Davis

Conference Members

1.	Mr. D. Nethercott	Wave Hill Settlement School
2.	Mrs. A. Flemming	Victoria River Downs School
3.	Mrs. B. Downie	Montejinni School
4.	Miss P. Lewis	Killarney School
5.	Mrs. A. McColm	Mountain Valley School
6.	Mr. G. Lee	Beswick School
7.	Miss K. Borger	Beswick School
8.	Mr. W. Blackley	Urapunga School
9.	Mr. G. Roufeil	Nutwood Downs School
10.	Mr. G. Neilson	Mudginberri School
11.	Mr. R. Sampson	Jabiru School
12.	Mr. R. Bibby	Larrimah School

Apologies were received from :

1.	Mr. A. Christopher	Nangalala School
2.	Mrs. G. Siddons	Roper Valley School
3.	Miss R. Gallasch	Wave Hill Station School
4.	Mr. D. Blacklock	Mataranka School

Conference Speakers (in order of appearance)

1. Mr. J. Britton - P.E.A. Darwin/Arnhem Land.
2. Mr. K. Davis - P.E.A. Katherine
3. Dr. J. Grant - P.E.A. Curriculum
4. Miss M. Tait - S.E.A. Mathematics
5. Miss C. Neilson - S.E.A. English
6. Miss P. Shorne - Drama Consultant
7. Mr. G. Hodgson - Assistant Director, Schools Branch
8. Dr. H. Beare - Director

SMALL SCHOOLS CONFERENCE KATHERINE

PROGRAMME

Wednesday Aug. 21st

- 2 p.m. Topic "School Records and Departmental Administration"  
Speaker Mr. J. Britton
- 3.30 p.m. "Watergate" - Open discussion on administrative problems.

Thursday Aug. 22nd

- 8.30 a.m. Topic "The One Teacher School Model"  
Speakers - Mrs. A. Flemming  
Mr. W. Blackley  
Mr. G. Roufeil  
Mr. R. Sampson  
(Talks appear in this report)
- 10.30 Topic "Curriculum Development in N.T. Schools"  
Speakers - Dr. Grant  
Miss M. Tait
- 1.00 p.m. Topic "Teaching Oral English"  
Speaker - Miss C. Neilson
- 3.00 p.m. Topic "Aboriginal Education"  
Speaker - Mr. K. Davis

Friday Aug. 23rd

- 8.30 a.m. Topic "Drama in the Small School"  
Speaker - Miss P. Shorne
- 10.30 a.m. Topic "Departmental Organisation: Now and Future"  
Speaker - Mr. G. Hodgson
- 1.30 p.m. Topic "Accountability and Responsibility"  
Speaker - Dr. H. Beare
- 3.30 p.m. Conference Recommendations.

## SCHOOL RECORDS AND DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Mr. J. Britton

A forms committee has been planning a new set of forms for schools which are designed to reduce paperwork, to clarify exactly what information is required and to unify school records from pre school through high school. The committee consists of teachers from the various levels of education. The forms accompanied by a new administrative manual will hopefully be in the schools before the end of 1974.

The proposed forms are :

1. Admission Form : This will consist of a sheet (3 copies) and a card (student information card). The first copy of the sheet will be placed in the student record file. The second copy will be held by the class teacher. The third copy will be held in a numerical file. The student information cards are to be kept in a "live" alphabetical file. The student information cards of school leavers will be kept safely in a "dead" file.
2. Student Record File : This is to be available to teachers at the school, appropriate departmental officers, parents or guardians and other individuals professionally interested in and entitled to information contained therein. (e.g. doctor; cases such as this depend on the discretion of the head teacher).
3. Request for transfer of student record : To be forwarded to the school from which the pupil transferred.
4. Roll Book : This is designed to accomodate records of sports carnivals, money raised for any purpose, timetables, forms list, calendars etc.
5. Teacher's Notebook : For programme, policy, comments etc. The Conference suggested the following information should be left for a "hand over take over": student record files; programme; timetable; roll; correspondence files; lists of ancilliary staff; stores information; journal recording conferences; sports carnivals; festivals; local features and customs; list of assets; record of money and stamp useage. Send a resume to P.E.A. so that he can inform successor of the availability of such information.



## "THE URAPUNGA MODEL"

Mr. W. Blackley

Urapunga is situated on the Wilton River, 14 miles from Roper River Community.

The main problems I found when I arrived and subsequently encountered over the next few months were :

- (1) Conditions of School Building
- (2) Lack of Audio-Visual Aids and suitable reference and reading material.
- (3) Finance
- (4) My own inexperience in One Teacher School
- (5) The lack of any records on the achievement level and progress of the kids in the school.
- (6) I also find myself asking questions like : "What am I educating these children for?".  
To become good stock "boys", well behaved, keeping off the grog or good cleaners and housekeepers for the owner.  
No other employment opportunities exist in the area for the people.
- (7) "How can I involve the parents and the Aboriginal Culture or what's left in my school programme".

From my limited experience on Stations I think this is the biggest problem facing teachers. This and the general anti-black fella feeling of the management.

Not being able to walk on water I have not solved all the problems facing the school but I have made a fair start in several directions.

The condition of the exterior of the school building is still the same. We still have no louvres, the fly screening still continues to fall off the walls, a new coat of paint is required. However, the interior is beginning to look reasonable even though electric wires still dangle from the ceiling where fans are yet to be installed. A book shelf made at the technical centre at Roper Community School and two other not so professional ones made from scrounged bricks and stolen timber have provided areas for research material and general equipment previously stored on rough tables made from empty flour drums and planks. The delapidated curtains from the Caravan Residence now serve as display areas in the school to which are pinned examples of children's work. However, with no louvres it is a constant job repinning the sheets after every gust of wind. I have been visited by the Works Department who listed the requirements to upgrade the building to a reasonable standard. When this is to be done however, is another question.

## "The Urapunga Model" Contd.

After I arrived I formed a P & C Association and we decided to start a store to raise a bit of finance. However, when the people were put off rations at the station by necessity the store had to be capable of feeding the whole Community. I felt - far better than the school feeding the people - the people could feel more independent by running their own store. Therefore we reformed the Urapunga Village Council and now the profits are going back into the Community Cheque Account which we opened. School has access to this account as the people fully realise the value of education - this is one way the people are directly involved with it. The store is situated in the school and when people come down for food it is an ideal time to talk about the problems and progress of the children. It has definitely brought an excellent relationship between the parents and myself.

With twelve to fourteen children, instruction is individualized and although the standard is far from good in most areas I am pleased with the progress of most children this term, also they have become more open and express themselves more freely now - whereas when I arrived a "yes" or "no" answer was the only form of communication. Other advances made include the arrival of a 16 mm Projector, that Kevin acquired for us from Wave Hill. Thus we show Adult and General Education Films which we borrow from Roper River when they have them. I hope this will be on a weekly basis in future. Ned Kelly from the Roper Bar Store donated a Polaroid Colour-pack Camera with which we do experience reading and writing activities.

Plans for next term include:

Exchange sporting visits to Roper Community.

An adventure camp at the mouth of the Roper River for children and interested parents for a week.

Night classes covering a wide variety of areas for adults and children.

These things I feel will help to solidify identity in the school/parent relationships.

With regard to the question "Education for what". This is one of the things I hope to gain from this conference.

## "THE JABIRU MODEL"

Mr. Sampson

We have 9 pupils enrolled. Coming from a High School with 1200 pupils it makes quite a difference.

Sometimes I think we must be the most disorganised school in the Territory! As soon as I organise something, somebody inevitably buggers the whole thing up!

However, I realize that this is not the kind of organization intended for this Paper.

Jabiru has 7 European students and one very small and bright Aboriginal boy and a fluctuating aboriginal enrolment. Thus I have 4 in Grade 1, one in Grade 2, two in Grade 4 and 1 in grade 6. The "babies" require my constant attention which means that, after directions the others look after themselves. (I'm very lucky to have an authoritative lady school captain, who not only keeps the kids in check, but me also!).

My policy as a Head teacher and the teacher, is one of freedom of thought and movement. (With guidelines of course!). I try to get the kids out of the classroom as much as possible. I never talk "down" to the kids but treat them as equals, until they prove themselves otherwise. (Then I give them a smack!).

A unique thing about our school is its Parents and Friends Association. We have 100% representation per family at each meeting.

Their means of making money for the school is quite extraordinary. We've already had a fete which raised nearly \$300.00. In an idle jest, I suggested that we buy a piano. It was delivered three weeks later! In fact, it's almost embarrassing trying to think up ways of spending their money. An auction is coming up during the August holidays, so that will replenish our bank account. Also there is a flagon at the Club which is constantly full of change which the Members put in.

Living in a tight knit community such as ours, I am in constant contact with the parents. Thus, over a beer or two at the Club, we generally solve the problems of the school day.

I will be very glad when our new school building arrives because we have so much equipment, books etc., there's just no room for anything.

### Problems

Naturally, the main general problem is that of isolation. However, we have partially solved this problem by regular contact with Mudginberri School, which is about 12 miles away. I must admit though I wish sometimes that I could go into the next room and ask another teacher's advice.



### "The Jabiru Model" Contd.

Another problem is trying to cope with the masses of mainly irrelevant mail that is sent to me. Recently I received four copies of the same letter, and the Department is trying to cut down on paper usage' (The letter about paper conservation was sent to me twice.)

Discipline problems are virtually non-existent. One young man was sent home recently, because, as I am forbidden to smack him, there was just no other alternative. Another parent told me that as soon as his son arrived at school, he was "my property" and if he was naughty "to bash hell out of him", Naturally the latter case rarely arises.

As our present school is situated in a house, we have all the amenities such as kitchen, bathroom etc. The Geo-Peko Company supplies us with free milk and cordial.

A permanent problem is that of organised sport. At the moment we have weekly cricket matches with 5 on each side. (I have to make one of the teams even). Also we have a table tennis outfit, two basketballs an Aussie Rules football, a Totem Tennis Set and various other paraphernalia.

Living and working in Jabiru is a very pleasant experience. However, we have one very main problem. The Government has yet to give permission to start mining. This is causing tension, not only with the Community, but with the children themselves.

Mr. Whitlam has been out and has said nothing so far. Billy Snedden is due this Saturday.

The future of our school depends on the Government's decision to "GO AHEAD". Otherwise our school, and Jabiru, will surely die!

## DEPARTMENTAL ORGANISATION.

Mr. G. Hodgson

On February 13, 1973, the Federal Government took a third important step by amalgamating the Welfare and the Community School Systems. A temporary re-arrangement of officers was made to give effect to the Governments stated objective of achieving an inter-gration of the resources of the former two systems. The position of Director of Education (Northern Territory Community Schools) was changed to the local designation "Director of Northern Territory Education". Dr. Hedley Beare was given responsibility for the new, combined system. Mr. Jim Gallacher, formerly in charge of the Aboriginal Education Branch in the N.T. Administration became Assistant Director (Special Projects) and Mr. Brian Taylor was made Assistant Director (Field Operations).

At the same time, a proposal had to be prepared for a substantive organisational structure for the new education authority. The new N.T. Education Division was to have four Branches, each headed by an Assistant Director.

The Top Structure at present is as follows:-  
Director of N.T. Education (Dr. H. Beare)

Assistant Director Curriculum and Research (Ian Whelan)	Assistant Director Field Operations (Mr. G. Hodgson)	Assistant Director Special Projects (Mr. J. Gallacher)	Asst. Dir. Management Services (Mr. M. Brassington)
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Within each professional Branch would be a number of Sections each of which would be under the control of a Principal Education Adviser (Band 4, Secondary, status), a person equivalent in seniority with the Principal of the system's most complex school. The activities carried out by each Branch include:-

### Curriculum and Research Branch -

1. A curriculum laboratory to develop curricula for all N.T. Schools.
2. A Resource and Production Centre, handling a Staff Library, Library services to schools, a Media Centre, the production, publication and distribution of learning materials.
3. Educational Research.
4. Teacher Education and staff development programmes.

### DIRECTORY.

Assistant Director:	Ian Whelan
P.E.A. Curriculum Development:	Dr. J.M. Grant
Senior Education Adviser (Inservice Education)	Mr. K. Peljo
Senior Education Adviser (Curriculum):	(to be appointed)

Head of Media Centre:	Mr. G. Jennex
Publications Officer:	Mr. G. Tschirner
Research Officer:	Mrs. S. Bradley
Curriculum Specialist (English):	Miss C. Nielson
Curriculum Specialist (Mathematics):	Mr. G. Bishop
Curriculum Specialist (Social Studies):	Mr. C. Young
Curriculum Specialist (English):	Miss M. Boase
Curriculum Specialist (Art and Craft):	Mr. D. Schapel
Curriculum Specialist (Music and Dance):	Mr. J. Horne
Curriculum Specialist (P.E.):	Mr. P. Garner

#### Field Operations Branch

1. A staffing section to handle the appointment, development and differentiation of teachers and para professional staff; estimates of staff needs; and liaison with the C.T.S. Commissioner.
2. Regional Offices at Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, each under a P.E.A.
3. Deployment of field staff, including P.E.A.s (i.e. Senior Field Officers to replace "Inspectors of Schools"), Advisory Teachers, and advisers to parent groups.
4. Assessment of particular school and teacher needs.

#### DIRECTORY.

Assistant Director:	Mr. G. Hodgson
P.E.A. Darwin Region (incl. Arnhem)	Mr. J. Britton
P.E.A. Darwin Region	Mr. M. Glenn
P.E.A. Darwin and Secondary:	Mr. J. Hicks
P.E.A. Katherine Region:	Mr. K. Davis
P.E.A. Tennant Creek Region:	Mr. G. Benjamin
P.E.A. Alice Springs Region:	Mr. E. Watter
P.E.A. Staffing:	Mr. G. Chard
Pre School Officer:	Miss L. Wills
Pre School Officer:	Miss M. Peevers
Consultant Teacher (Music)	

The Department has also advertised for a further sixteen teacher consultants in various curriculum areas.

### Special Projects Branch

1. Development projects, such as the bilingual education programme and the Aboriginal Teacher education programme.
2. Special Education services, such as education of handicapped children, and provision of psychological services.
3. Supplementary programmes, such as migrant education, driver education, adult education, apprenticeship training.

### DIRECTORY.

Assistant Director:	Mr. J.D. Gallacher
P.E.A. Special Services and Supplementary Programmes:	Mr. E.A. Robertson
Regional Guidance Officer:	Mr. P. McInerney
Advisory Teacher Pre-School:	Miss A. Perrett (on study leave)
Supervisor (Domestic Science):	Mrs. L.W. Hillier
Supervisor (Manual Arts):	Mr. K.G. Thiele (on study leave)
Supervisor (Adult Education):	Mr. P.M. Turnbull
Supervisor (Migrant Education):	Mrs. L. Powierza
Supervisor (Student Driver Education):	Mr. R. Bucknell
Supervisor (Out-of-School Activities):	(to be appointed)
Supervisor (Aboriginal Teacher Education)	Mr. P. Garner (Acting)
P.E.A. Bilingual Education:	Mr. W.J. McGrath
S.E.A. (Linguistics - Bilingual):	Dr. C. Metcalfe
S.E.A. (Pre-Primary Bilingual):	Miss B. Edmonds
S.E.A. (T.E.S.L. Bilingual):	Mrs. L. Pearce
S.E.A. (Anthropology):	Dr. M. Brandl

### Management Services Branch

1. Finance - estimates, accounts, auditing.
2. Personnel and Office services.
3. Stores, contracts, industrial staff, purchasing
4. Buildings and equipment.
5. Students (financial) assistance schemes
6. Statistics and demographic surveys; planning
7. Travel and accommodation
8. Organisation and methods.



## DIRECTORY.

Assistant Director:	Mr. M. Brassington
Administrative Officer:	Mr. R. Leever
Planning:	Mr. K. Frame
Stores and Supply:	Mr. M. Higgins
Finance:	Mr. D. Greenhill
Personnel:	Mr. P. McMahon
Study Assistance:	Mr. M. Kaye

N.B.

These are Section Heads of Management Services Branch only. Detailed lists of personnel to be contacted on queries are to be advised by notices in the Bulletin.

The following basic principles are embodied in the structure.

1. Division of duties is to be according to educational function, rather than on level of school. By this means a K-12 approach can be adopted over such matters as curriculum, staffing, school organisation, inservice education, and the use of advisory services.
2. A project-oriented, task-force approach to decision-making and policy formulation should prevail. It is obvious that the officers from the three Branches and schools will and should be in constant and dynamic interaction over educational matters.

## ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Mr. K. Davis

Aboriginal Education is a difficult problem area.

Emphasis on Aboriginal advancement in the N.T. has been :

Survival Approach

Assimilation

Self determination and integration (present approach)

The problem of Aboriginal education is essentially a problem of learning and development.

"I would like to emphasise that the problem of Aboriginal education is essentially a problem of understanding the processes of learning and development, and investigating the experiences and teaching methods that will lead to optimum development. Social factors are of course important, and improvements in social conditions would undoubtedly help to solve the educational problem. But the fundamental problem is one of education, and the ultimate solution to the social problem will only be achieved through education." M. de Lemos

### Reasons for problems in Achieving Goals

1. The Child is Bilingual. English is a foreign language. Concepts are verbalised in the mother tongue. This not only has implications for the teaching of English, but more importantly it has implications for the whole learning process in our style and system of education, particularly in the conceptual development domain. Our teaching sets out to develop concepts. Aboriginal children find it difficult to express and learn concepts in English.

Nurcombe and M. de Lemos have shown that Aboriginal children in Piagetian terms, are 2 to 3 years behind European children around 12 years of age, in conceptual development.

If these findings are acceptable, a 14 year old Aboriginal child is still in the concrete operations stage, which must severely retard him when attempting formal secondary work.

2. Under our Present Approach, Language Development is Slow.

Language development is the key to conceptual verbalisation. This is well expressed by Bernstein whose theory of language development has important implications for education.

Public Language : Condensed speech, meanings restricted, short sentences, grammatically simple, language of implicit meaning, great use of gestures, implied meanings by voice deflection etc.

Formal Language : Accurate, grammatically correct, greater use of adjectives, logical modification, use of pronoun "I", expressive symbols, structured and logical argument etc. (Bernstein).

Bernstein suggests a child possessing a public language has great difficulty in developing formal concepts. Aboriginal English, which is becoming more common, relates to a public language. If so, language development in our schools must rate the highest priority in our teaching programme.

### 3. Value Differences

Work of Don Williams quoted :

In School - European values dominant - roles are matched by children.

In Camp - Aboriginal values dominant - roles matched by children.

In Peer Group - Values mixed but more Aboriginal than European.

William's found little carry over of roles from one situation to another. Mental health is no real problem. When roles are carried over conflict occurs which could lead to a breakdown in mental health.

The implications of this for the educator are great.

1. How to achieve "carry over" in important value areas e.g. health?
2. What European values should be carried over?
3. How can good mental health be retained?

The answers are not simple. Perhaps we should have a greater Adult Education programme.

### 4. Different Aspirations.

Motivation to learn is different. Aboriginals view education in a different light.

Motivation will occur if children are learning.

The self-determination programme will mature as communities realise their need of skilled people.

#### Why Educate at all?

1. There is fallacy in the belief that Aboriginal Culture is perfect.
2. It is too late to turn back. "Return them to the bush", approach is impossible and unacceptable.
3. Individuals must have the right to decide their own life style. They have no choice without education.
4. Communities must have skilled members if self-determination is to be reality.
5. Aboriginals who can express themselves and interpret their culture have a valuable contribution to make to the Australian society.
6. Education has demonstrated its own worth by the increasing number of Aboriginals receiving education and who are making great contributions to their own community and the Australian community at large.

Some Suggestions to Improve Our Teaching.

1. Concentrate on language development - oral language based on concept formation.
2. Lessons should be short and "snappy" with a variety of approaches (much can be gained from the Sesame Street style).
3. Heavy emphasis should be placed on what the child is learning and why.
4. Goals for each lesson should be clearly stated and obtainable to the child.
5. Use a simple learning theory - stimulus/Response/Reward. Remind the child that he is learning. Experiment with rewards. Physical and extrinsic rewards are essential.



## SMALL SCHOOLS CONFERENCE KATHERINE 1974

### CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Department of Education assist to initiate a scheme whereby teachers in remote areas may purchase a four wheel drive vehicle. This may be through a group purchase scheme, reduction of sales tax, or semi official vehicle.
2. That a better system of repairing A/W equipment devised, such as a local contractor.
3. That the Van Lee Language Scheme be made available to schools on request.
4. The Conference heartily endorses the move by the Department to set up its own radio network.
5. That the Curriculum Branch advise teachers of the type of information that Branch requires.
6. That the Small School Conference in Katherine be an annual event.