WARNING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document contains images or names of people who have since passed away.
AITEP GRADUATES

In 1984, six (6) Aborigines and three (3) Islanders graduated with the Diploma of Teaching from James Cook University. These students entered through AITEP. Six commenced teaching on 29 January, 1985; Maureen Liddy, from Coen, is teaching at Cairns West State Primary School; Irene Hocke who is from Innisfail is also teaching in Cairns; two have been posted to schools in their home towns - Kathy Williams to Mareeba and Letitia Chopp to Mackay; Shirley Close from Brisbane is teaching in Townsville; and Anne-Marie Neill from Nambour is at Maloolaba. Lily-Jane Shibasaki is working as an Education Officer for the Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs.

We wish them well in their new careers and are confident they will make valuable contributions to education and to Aboriginal and Islander education in particular as have the other 29 graduates, the majority of who are teaching in classrooms from Thursday Island to Mt Isa to Brisbane.
QATSICC Conference  
December 2-7th 1984

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee held its State Conference at the Queensland Agricultural College near Gatton last year. This meeting was of great importance due to the changes that were made to the structure and operations of the QATSICC committees. The following information is a brief overview of the discussion points and changes to be incorporated.

1. **Nature of QATSICC**
   a) QATSICC began in 1976.
   b) There is a need for Aboriginal and Islander people to advise governments and departments of their educational needs.
   c) Recommendations from QATSICC are presented to the Director — General who has previously acted on 70% of these.
   d) The biggest problem in the past was that of consulting at the 'grass-roots' level, therefore regional committees are needed to pressure local people to make demands on QATSICC.
   e) Regional committees should consult with regional Department of Education Directors.
   f) Previously there has been a big problem with lack of funding for QATSICC.

2. **Future of QATSICC**
   a) Emphasis should be placed on regional committees to ensure local input.
   b) **WE AS MEMBERS HAVE A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY TO Ourselves AND TO THE EDUCATION OF OUR PEOPLE. QATSICC IS THE ONLY RECOGNIZED BODY ADVISING THE QUEENSLAND EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.**
   c) We need to develop long and short term goals.
   d) QATSICC needs to be more credible on the educational scene. To become credible, we must consider our worth as advisors to the Education Department.
   e) A LOCAL GROUP OF QATSICC NEEDS TO BE SET UP. QATSICC is open to all members of the Community. Members should work closely with educational institutions. Groups should meet regularly and keep in contact with other Aboriginal and Islander organizations. QATSICC can work towards the following: information on needs and successes to be gathered from local groups; promotion of education for all people i.e., children to adults; organization of short courses which develop local community awareness eg., C.D.E.Y.A., TAFE, QATSICC; and being visible to all members of the community.

The changes that are going to take place will be an exciting step forward for Aboriginal and Islander people. The revised constitution and setting up procedures for local, regional and state levels of QATSICC will be available in the near future. I have a number of papers from the December 1984 QATSICC conference. If you are interested in seeing these please contact me on 718565.

*Rebecca Hooper.*
Senior Tutor in AITEP.

**AITEP NEWS**
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RESULTS

1984 results reflected the hard work put in by AITEP students during the year. Our students gained 2 High Distinctions; 20 Distinctions; and 70 Credits.

Special congratulations go to Kim Kosanovic who received a High Distinction in Contemporary Australian Society and Samantha Kain who was awarded a High Distinction in The Social Setting of Education.

Reflections From Two Different Perspectives

Reflecting back on when I was an AITEP student about to embark on my Community School teaching practice at Edward River or Pormpuraaw, I was not confident about my abilities to cope with the teaching situation or the social circumstances.

My background was urban, while the children that I would be teaching would be mostly traditional. The Van Leer Program was sampled in our studies but we certainly weren't as familiar with it as we were about to be.

The people spoke their own languages: Thayooore or Wik Munken or both. Some community members, including the children, were competent trilingual speakers; so I found myself learning more from the children than they could learn from me!

In September 1984 I visited several Community Schools including Pormpuraaw, but on this occasion I was not the student but the Visiting Lecturer from James Cook University. During the conversations with the students that I visited, they related to me some of the same feelings I'd had years previously. Of the eight

Deidre Alley, originally from Ingham, began as Clerk-Typist for AITEP in June 1984. She was employed under the NESA Scheme for twelve months. In that time her duties included typing, filing, receptionist work, and other general AITEP business. Both staff and students found Deidre's help and cooperation invaluable and she will be greatly missed.

Deidre finishes work at AITEP in June. We wish her all the best.

Rebecca Hooper.
university students, all were happy that they had made the decision to complete a teaching practice block at a Community School. They all perceived this 'prac.' to be a valuable teaching and learning experience which ought to be available to all students.

Some G7 members will return to a Community School after graduation as a matter of choice, others will teach in urban centres as I did. Wherever they choose to go, the Community School teaching practice will be remembered as a useful and, in some cases, precious apprenticeship for future teaching.

Rebecca Hooper,
Tutor in AITEP.

COMMUNITY TEACHING PRACTICE

Each intake of AITEP students has the opportunity to undertake a Community Practice Teaching block in their third semester. Since this has proved to be a very popular component of the course we have decided to devote the major part of this issue to it. The rationale for the Community Teaching Practice is summed up by this excerpt from the letter circulated to principals involved in the programme.

During the teaching career of an Aboriginal and Islander graduate it is highly probable that s/he will teach in a school located on an Aboriginal or Islander Community or in a school with a significant Aboriginal and Islander enrolment. Because of this, and because many of these students have had little or no experience of life on a remote Aboriginal/Islander community, the provision of a community-based practicum is necessary to ensure that students gain appropriate experiences which will assist in their future careers.

These experiences should involve activities which will ensure interaction amongst student teachers, university staff, teachers, pupils, parents, and other members of the community.

Such activities should involve learning experiences which would be of mutual benefit to all.

Students will participate in a wide range of professional and social activities not available in a mainstream school setting. Professional experiences will include teaching the whole class through group work, teaching in bi-lingual programs, contact with and use of the Van Leer Language Development Program (Van Leer), the Language Development (L.D.P.), and the Mathematics Program for Schools in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, Years 1-10 (Mathematics Program). Social experiences, such as living in an Aboriginal or Islander community, sharing community life and conditions, and developing interaction skills appropriate for the Aboriginal or Islander teacher's role in small isolated Aboriginal or Islander communities will be integral to this community teaching practice.
Though it is felt to be an unreasonable expectation, Aboriginal and Islander teachers will be looked to as “experts” on Aboriginal and Islander education by the general teacher body and public. It is, therefore, important that they experience teaching in Aboriginal and Islander Community Schools so they can gain some knowledge of the area.

COMMUNITY PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

The following interviews took place during Community ‘Prac.’ We think they give valuable insights into the experiences of both students and those involved in teaching with them on the Communities.

THURSDAY ISLAND

I am speaking to Leanne Hollingsworth who is doing her teaching practice at Thursday Island. How have you found your teaching practice?

Well, so far, I’ve really enjoyed it. The children are so warm towards you and so welcoming. I like the place. I like the people and I’ve been thoroughly enjoying myself.

How have you found the school on Thursday Island compares with the mainland schools where you have done your ‘prac. teaching’?

Well, things at Thursday Island are taken at a much more comfortable pace and not in such a formal manner as in the schools down south. People don’t seem to get worked up over little things.

Leanne, what is it that makes Thursday Island Primary School particularly Thursday Island Primary School?

It would have to be the children. I’ve never been to a place before where the children were so friendly and responsive.

What efforts does the school make to incorporate Torres Strait culture into the daily life of the school?

They have an island dancing team of boys and girls for one thing and their own language isn’t banned from the classroom. The teachers often use a little Islander language which makes it seem valid. The children enjoy it when they speak some English and the teacher speaks some Islander.

What about life outside school?
I've done some very interesting things. We heard a local singing group which was first-class and I've been to a couple of dances. Everyone wants to show you around their island, they are so proud of it, and I was taken to a local feast for the unveiling of a tombstone.

You've been on Thursday Island before, I know. How was it returning?

It was great. There's a saying that once you've visited Thursday Island you'll always come back. I'd like to come back here and teach. The whole place gives you a feeling of belonging. People respect you and everyone smiles at you. I love the place, the people, the food, the school, everything, especially the way the children accept you. It's just great.

JESSICA POINT

Tammy Rohlf and Samantha Kain have been following the AITEP program for a year and a half and have already spent some time out in the Community Schools. What do you think of the course so far, Samantha?

Samantha

I'm really enjoying it. Being spread over eighteen months instead of the usual twelve gives you time to adjust to college life and to all the new things you have to learn.

What are some of the high spots of the course?

Tammy

Besides being able to spend time with people of my own culture, I think that teaching practice in Community Schools is especially good.

Samantha

Yes, the children in Community Schools are very eager to learn but need a lot of love and attention.

And what about you, Tammy? Have you learnt anything from your experience in a Community School?

Tammy

I like the first-name relationship with the teacher. It puts you on a more personal level and they respect you just the same.

Kerry Hollingsworth with students from Thursday Island.
And what about teacher aides? What sort of role do they play in a Community School?

Tammy
They play a much more active role in the classroom than they do in mainstream schools. Also, because they are Aboriginal or Islanders, they can help manage the children more easily because they know their background. The children are ready to accept them too.

Would you say that teaching practice in a Community School should be a regular feature for each first year?

Tammy
Certainly. But it should be available to all first year students not only AITEP students. If a mainstream student goes to a Community School after graduating, she could find it very hard to cope.

Finally, could you each sum up your experience of teaching in a Community School?

Samantha
It's given me a new incentive to become a teacher.

Tammy
Very rewarding.

WEIPA

Dalton has been teaching in Weipa for three years. He joined the AITEP course in the middle of 1978 and graduated in 1981. Why did you want to become a teacher, Dalton?

When I left High School, I could see there was a need for Aboriginal and Islander teachers so I applied to join the course.

How did you find the course?

The biggest problem for me was English. It is a third language for me and I found it hard to put my ideas down on paper when I was writing essays.

All the same, I remember you always got your essays in on time. Now, tell me, how well did your course prepare you for taking up a job as a full-time teacher?
It was certainly very different sitting in lectures. I remember on my first day I felt completely lost. During your first year of teaching you need a lot of support from experienced teachers. I found that first year very hard, especially in a place like Weipa State School where they have a special program for the Aboriginal and Islander students.

But would you still advise someone to take up teaching if that's what they felt they wanted to do?

Oh, yes! It's a big challenge but I feel that I am achieving my goals and I'm enjoying it. Besides, the money is pretty good and I can look forward to an overseas holiday now and again.

Maria Camenzuli teaching at Bamaga.
They seem to be very pleased to see the students taking classes.

Do you think that the student teachers should be more involved with the community or is that something which is going to take time?

It will take time, I think. When the people get more used to the idea although we have had a few student teachers who became quite involved and it was good.

Cynthia Edwards teaching at Aurukun.

BAMAGA

I'm talking to Sepi Woosup from Bamaga. Tell me, Sepi, what's your involvement with education in Bamaga?

I'm a teacher aide in the Primary School here. I've been working in education for a long time and I've been appointed a member of the NAEC. I became involved in anything to do with education and I'm on the council.

So you are well and truly both a member of the school and of the community. How does the community react to the AITEP students coming up to Bamaga?

Sepi, is there anything that you think is important for the AITEP students to know about coming to Bamaga?

They should be prepared to learn about the people and meet some parents. They could do this at the P & C meetings. All the communities have a council meeting once a month and the student teachers should go and tell the council what they are here for.

We always tell the students that it is by working through people like yourself that they will get to know the community better.
That's the best thing to do. They should then come out to the community sometimes rather than spend all their time in Bamaga. With the show coming soon, they could meet a lot of people.

Would you like to make any general comment on how you see Aboriginal and Islander education?

One of the problems is letting the people in the communities know what it's all about. The people from the outer islands speak English only as their third language, so that's another problem.

How have the communities reacted to the idea that adults — people like you, Sepi — can come to Townsville to train as teachers?

Most people think that it's something only for young people leaving High School. We need to send more pamphlets and posters into the communities telling them there is a program for older people.

Next year we hope to have a video that will show just that sort of thing.

But sometimes the men can't afford it. They find it hard to keep the family on the study grant.

Sepi, are there any final comments you would like to make about AITEP and our students coming to Bamaga?

I think it's very good to have the students with us. Bamaga is a mixed Aboriginal and Islander community and the students find it very different from a solely Aboriginal community. The languages are different and the children behave differently in the classroom. It's a mixed culture.
Sepi also spoke about Early Childhood Education at Bamaga.

When you have new teachers who have problems in settling down with the children, what sort of things do you do to help them?

Well, the teacher aide can be a big help. Some of the new teachers are not used to teacher aides and sometimes they want to work on their own. They can find it hard to understand the children. Most of the children speak Creole, especially the little ones.

Is this a state Preschool or D.A.I.A?

D.A.I.A.

Is there a trained kindergarten teacher or a kindercraft teacher?

We have a trained white kindergarten teacher and she's training a local assistant.

Do you know about our Early Childhood Education course at James Cook University? It prepares teachers for kindergarten, pre-school and Grades 1, 2 and 3. A lot of women from the Islands take the course. Can you see these women coming back to the communities?

Oh yes. We have children from the outer islands in Primary School and sometimes their English is very poor.

Do you think the student teachers should speak Creole to the class?

That can be useful if a child really doesn't understand but they should not speak Creole all the time.

Is there anything from the linguistics conference you attended that can be applied to Bamaga?

We would like to see more of our languages written down. Even the Creole needs to be written down. To some it is just corrupt English but it is a real language. In the lower Primary School we have trouble with children who can understand English but they cannot speak it.

So language would be one of the biggest problems for teachers and students?

Yes, definitely.
If you are interested in becoming a teacher through AITEP, write to:

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or telephone (077) 71 8516

Barbara Dempsey at Aurukun State School.

Leanne Hollingsworth.

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AITEP NEWS : NEWS

Dr Noel Loos has recently been appointed as Acting Head of the Department of Social and Cultural Studies. Previously he was the Head of Division of Aboriginal and Islander Education. As this Division is within his department, Dr Loos will still be very much involved with AITEP. Dr Loos has also recently been awarded an Associate Professorship.

Greg Miller has been appointed to the position of Head of the Aboriginal and Islander Division this year. Greg is the Co-ordinator of the Diploma of Teaching (E.C.E.) as well as a Senior Lecturer in E.C.E. He will continue with these positions as well as his new position.

Dave King has returned to Commonwealth Education after a year as Tutor/Senior Tutor with AITEP. He will be missed by students and staff alike. As Education Officer he will, however, still have a lot of contact with AITEP.

The Aboriginal and Islander Education Division is ten years old this year. It was started in 1975 with a staff of two, Noel Loos and Julia Koppe. At the time there was only one Aboriginal student on campus! Things have certainly come a long way in the ensuing ten years.

In November 1984 AITEP Tutors Rebecca Hooper, Barbara Watson and Helene Hipp attended the A.E.C.G. Enclave Conference at Newcastle College of Advanced Education. Discussion points included funding, student accommodation and liaison between students and lecturers in tertiary support programs. A report on the recommendations will be available in the near future from Newcastle C.A.E.

Julia Koppe, Co-ordinator of the Graduate Diploma of Aboriginal Education, is embarking on a three week research trip to Cherbourg and Palm Island. She will be doing a follow-up study with the children of the subjects in her original study in the 1970’s. It is hoped that the second generation study will provide insights which could be helpful in Aboriginal education.

After two years of teaching at Belgian Gardens State School, Rebecca Hooper was appointed as a tutor in July 1984. She replaced Narelle Warton as an AITEP primary tutor. Being an ex-AITEP student she is aware of the ups and downs that the Murri students go through.

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