INDIAN EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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INDIAN EDUCATION RESOURCES CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
HUT O-12, VANCOUVER 8, B. C.

SCHOOL DROP - OUTS (INDIAN EDUCATION)

ALVIN A. MCKAY

DIRECTOR - INDIAN EDUCATION RESOURCES CENTER - U. B. C.

At this time of the year all schools are faced with drop-outs or potential drop-outs. My concern is that Indian students are considered synonymous with this phenomenon of our school system. This article will make suggestions as to probably preventative approaches or immediate steps that should be included at the end of the school year.

All schools should ensure that there is every effort made to provide a one to one relationship counselling in the last few weeks of school, for those who are failing all or at least half of their school year. Without this direct line of communication with these particular individuals, the school and its personnel are guilty of encouraging a school drop-out!!

Drop-outs are not caused by inherent or hereditary factors - they are caused by everyday forces (tensions, complex situations, poor adjustment, (or none at all) in the out-of-school and in-school environment). These daily forces are usually cushioned by the warmth, love and guidance of parents - those Indian students on the Boarding Program are denied this cushioning-effect-of-the-causes, since they are away from their parents the whole school year.

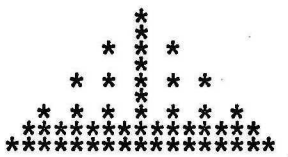
It seems logical then, to look into the adjustment part of the Indian students school life, if he, or she is failing. Perhaps a concentrated effort to ensure a better chance of adjustment for these students for the coming term, will decrease the chances of failure. In the more pronounced or extreme cases of low achievement - a series of conference/consultations with the Indian Affairs Guidance Counsellors, or with the parents, and the school personnel may be all that is needed.

Students who were not properly assessed as to the pupil potential, at the start of the school year are usually found in the low achievers group at the end of the year. Perhaps, an attempt at this time of the year (supplemented by this years school records,) to assess the actual potential of the student will help this particular student to get out of the low achievers bracket for next term.

Finally, the forces acting on the student during the school year, are not chosen ones. They happen at random, and if no cushioning of these forces are offered, the student withdraws into a protective shell, and the individuals defense mechanisms begin to take

over (no classroom participation, no homework, smart alex's, skipping school, antagonism towards teachers and class etc.) It may be to the student's and the school's advantage to set-up a Team Counselling approach for the next school term. That is, genuinely interested teachers (regarding Indian students) may be asked to keep daily contact with the Indian students from the first week of September (say, from three to six students per teacher), and just simply be a consistent, warm and interested friend to these students. As the weeks progress, pronounced uncontrollable weakness areas for these students can then be analytically diagnosed and referred to the proper channels, and alleviated at the on-set of the problem situation, instead of letting these problem situations multiply one on top of the other, until finally, the student as well as the teachers, are so engulfed by the multi-complex problem situations, that no one can ever begin to alleviate the problem areas.

Educational research has proven that a well adjusted student, in and out of school, is receptive to learning.



ANNOUNCEMENTS - MAY/JUNE, 1972.

1. The Indian Education Resources Center has finally acquired larger office space!!!

   By the beginning week of July, 1972 - our Center will be relocated in the Brock Hall (right behind the main library), in Room 6 (South end the basement).

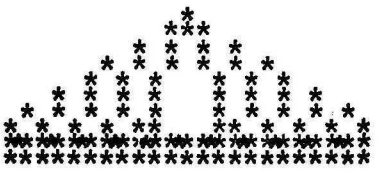
2. By September, 1972 - the first unit of a series of twelve - Teacher/Pupil Supplemental, Illustrated Reference Units - will be made available in every provincial school and federal schools. It is dealing with the historical and contemporary aspects of the general Skeena River Valley - focussing on the K'san Cultural Project in Hazelton, B. C. The unit was prepared by Mr. Gordon Reid - Vice-Principal of the Hazelton High School.

3. Please notify us of your change of address regarding the Indian Education Newsletter. (This chould be done by September, 1972.)

4. See last Newsletter, Volume 2 # 7 & 8 - March - April, 1972 issue for summer schedule of Indian Education Resources Center.

5. POTLATCHES - Indian Dances, story telling, bone games, barbeque fish, canoe races etc. Please note the following dates:

   1) Duncan - (Vancouver Island) - June 17, 18, 1972.
   2) North Vancouver - June 24, 25, 1972.
   3) Stanley Park, July 22, 1972.
   4) Victoria - (Vancouver Island) - August 12, 13, 1972.
   5) Neah Bay - (U.S.A.) - August 26, 27, 1972.



HOME - SCHOOL CO-ORDINATORS

ALLAN P. ROBERTS

On February 18th, we were fortunate in having Chilliwack School District Teachers invite Alvin McKay, George Wilson and Dr. Art More to their District Convention, for an afternoon presentation from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The man most responsible for securing these gentlemen for the workshop was Walter Wiebe, who is in charge of Special Counselling in School District #33.

Kathleen and myself have found our work in the area becoming much more significant due to the co-operation of Mr. Wiebe.

Many of the Chilliwack Teachers who participated in the presentation "Understanding the Native Student" left the meeting with a much broader scope of the Native Students everyday problems than they previously had.

Mr. Wiebe has since contacted my and he informs that he has had good feed back from George and Alvin's presentation.

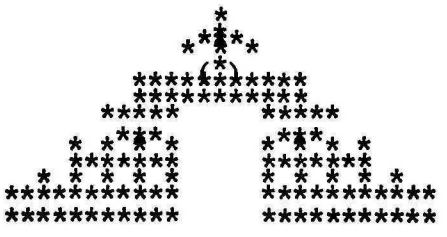
The suggestion of Family, School and Community Orientation for the Indian Student who arrives in Chilliwack from a Total Indian Community is one that deserves follow-up from all Teachers, Social Workers, and Community Service Workers in the Chilliwack Community. I have discussed this with Public Health Nurses and the Family Life Division of Community Services Center and they all agree that this would be a good move to take action on. Such workshops would enable the student to meet the Resource and Service Counsellors that are available to them in the Community that is Alien to them when they first arrive.

Alvin's presentation was from his report in the January Indian Education Newsletter, which covered most contents of Indian Educaton.

George gave the group an insight into background on some of our Indians who are living on isolated areas where day to day activity consists of survival duties and chores ie., greater distances of travel to get the mail and to stores for necessities. A great deal of time in these areas is used in travelling and as a result a less hurried and conjested daily routine. A student who is faced with a much more conjested routine when he or she arrives here no doubt will be a little confused.

As a result of this workshop I feel that many more of the white population are a little more aware of the problems facing our Indian students. But we also feel there are fare too many who are not concerned about our children and their education.

We have seen our Indian parents becoming more concerned about the education of our children. It seems there is much to be done and much to be desired from the non-Indian faction before there is a significant change.



NICOLA VALLEY INDIAN CULTURE WORKSHOP

ROBERT STERLING

On February 9th the Spahomin Band Hall was opened at 7:00 p.m., for the first of a series of weekly gatherings that would go on until Easter. Forty-two teachers came out and about ninety Indians sat down together and something new began. Our Indian Culture Workshop was underway and the attendance that night would set the pace which virtually kept up throughout the workshop.

Months before, a small group of Indians began talking about this project and how we could put one together. David and June Wyatt were around and we asked them to help us. Shortly afterward we approached the Nicola Valley Teachers' Association and we were supremely gratified to learn that the teachers were very anxious to meet our people. Caution was exercised as we dared not place our old people as "objects for display" or our Indian ways to be exploited. We called it an "Indian Culture Workshop" and we would talk about the Indians of the Nicola Valley.

Using local Indian Resource speakers, films, slides, tapes and anthropologists (the Wyatts and Morley Eldridge) mixed in with Indian artifacts, arts and crafts, we went weekly from Reserve to Reserve going back 100 years and gradually worked our way to today's contemporary Indian even into the future. Much credit is due to all our people who with deep breaths swallowed their shyness, spoke, and were heard. Teachers were taken into a world of Tribalism; of dancing and songs, legends and lore; arts and crafts and the sadness of today's Indian in a alien world. Economic Development, Education, Culture, the Indian Act and Indian Organizations were looked at and everyone learned something new.

The Indian Culture Workshop was designed to accomplish three things: -

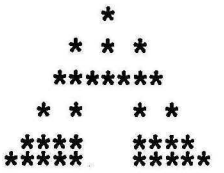
1) for teachers to gain an understanding of the ways of our people so that this knowledge would help in teaching our children.

2) for teachers to find local resource material and speakers to take back to the classroom to enrich their curriculum.

3) most important of all for both Indian people and teachers to develop friendships and their own two-way communications for the benefit of all concerned.

Much credit must go to the teachers who braved the terrible weather, roads and their patience in learning about "Indian time". The ladies groups on each reserve were wonderful with refreshments, cakes, bannocks, Indian Ice Cream, or some other delights available every night.

Our final session for what I consider to be a successful project is set for late May or early June when an outdoor social gathering will take place at a suitable mountain lake or meadow where our people will gather wild potatoes, wild onions, etc., to go with the barbecued salmon and hopefully some smoked deer meat.



RESPONSE TO THE NICOLA VALLEY INDIAN CULTURE WORKSHOP

JUNE WYATT

At a meeting of the Nicola Valley Indian Education Committee, held after the eighth session of the workshop, members of the committee expressed an interest in finding out what the teachers thought of the program. I have spoken with approximately half of the teachers who were involved and found the following responses:

1) The sessions were a tremendous social success. It provided teachers with an opportunity to meet Indian people in the community, something they had found difficulty doing by themselves. This success was attributed to the informality of the gatherings. There was usually a display or activity to been seen. This enabled people to walk around, have coffee and "have something to talk to each other about." Many teachers found the sessions challenging because they had to depend on themselves and their own willingness to talk to people, in order to learn. Some identified their own shyness as a block to this learning and valued the realization that only personal effort could overcome it. Some expected the workshop to be a lecture series, when this did not materialize they felt somewhat disoriented - of these individuals a number re-oriented themselves and found at the end of the eight weeks that not only had they learned new information but had had an insight into a new way of learning.

(cont.)...1) Others felt that because the sessions were so well attended and because only two sessions were held at each reserve - often hindering the establishment of personal contacts - it would have been helpful to formalize the presentation of information, or to cut down on the number of participants.

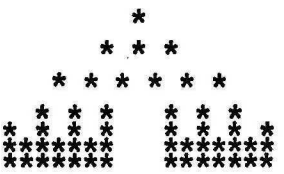
2) Another predominant set of reactions were phrased in the form of a question: What could be done next? Was this workshop an end in itself or was it the first step in a new process? The prime concern was to devise ways to continue and to deepen the personal contacts which had just been initiated. Some of those who asked these questions offered the following suggestions:

a) to have another series of sessions where teachers would have a chance to present their views of the schools to the Indian community. Many of the teachers who participated in the program are themselves dissatisfied with the schools. They see them as unsatisfactory in their responses to the needs of the majority of students, not only Indian students. They are anxious to clear-up some stereotypes: they realize they are often seen as representatives of a system with which they are not always sympathetic. They are anxious to deepen their relationships with Indian people and felt that discussion of problem issues (not "problem" students) could serve as a way of doing this and perhaps point the way to some solutions.

b) courses ought to be offered which focussed on the contemporary Indian social, economic, political situation and that such courses (particularly in the high school) would give Indian students a chance to discuss with each other where they stand with relation to the Indian and white communities. Those who made this suggestion felt it was mandatory that such courses be taught by Indians. It has also become clear to many concerned that such courses, as well as ones on the history of Indian people in the area, be made available on a long term basis.

c) a series of activity groups focussing on crafts and outdoor activities, be initiated by teachers and Indian people both. Anyone with a skill could serve as instructor: both teachers and Indian people could fill the roles of instructor and student depending on their interests and abilities. These groups were seen as a way to learn and get together at the same time; that by doing things together individuals would get to know each other. Many individuals have offered to volunteer time and equipment to start working on these groups during the summer months and have expressed the hope that their Indian students will want to join them.

The above is a sample of suggestions that were made. The overall impression I received from talking with the teachers was that a nucleus of people interested and excited about Indian Education is beginning to identify itself and make plans for future projects.



SUMMER COURSE - U. B. C. FOR HOME - SCHOOL CO-ORDINATORS

ROBERT W. STERLING

The Home-School Co-ordinators course will begin in July 10, 1972 and will carry on for twenty sessions ending August 4, 1972. The classes will be after noon sessions 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. daily, Monday through Friday.

Tuition fees for the course can be paid by Indian Affairs for status Indian students, for whom living expenses are also available and must be arranged by the individual and Vocational Counsellor.

Attached is a suggested outline of the coverage of the four week course. Alterations and refinements to the schedule can be made at the first session. Attached also is a list of other topics suggested by Home-School Co-ordinators and we hope to cover these topics under their most convenient category.

Many of the students enrolled in this course are already Home - School Co-ordinators who wish to exchange ideas with others and gain more knowledge. Others will be entering this field for the first time and will be anxious to absorb as much as possible during the course. The course has tentatively been set-up so that experienced Home - School Co-ordinators can begin classes on "Day 11" to cover Special Counselling techniques and other topics especially requested by them, but we hope that all will enroll for "Day 1."

Special Resource people who are experts in their field will be speakers at classes.

Any enquiries can be directed to the Indian Education Resources Center at U. B. C. or to myself.

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TIMETABLE FOR COURSE

July 10/Monday	Day 1	Discussion of Timetable, Introduction Home-School Co-ordinator & Duties Home-School Co-ordinator Priorities Special Problems - Discussion.
July 11/Tuesday	Day 2	Role of Teachers, Parents & Students.
July 12/Wednesday	Day 3	Working with Professional Resource People.
July 13/Thursday	Day 4	Adult Education - (Alvin ?) Social - (?).
July 14/Friday	Day 5	Court Work (Marg Cantryn ?).

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July 17/Monday	Day 6	Indian Education Committees & Their Role.
July 18/Tuesday	Day 7	Welfare & Its Role
July 19/Wednesday	Day 8	Drugs/Alcohol, Resources Available for Help.
July 20/Thursday	Day 9	Problems Experienced by Indian Affairs Counsellor.

July 21/Friday	Day 10	Half-time Break.

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July 24/Monday	Day 11	Comparison - Indian - Non-Indian Social Scale. (Deanna Sterling)
July 25/Tuesday	Day 12	Indian Affairs Responsibilities Toward Indian Education.
July 26/Wednesday	Day 13	Special Counselling Techniques - Meliva Nastiche.
July 27/Thursday	Day 14	Special Counselling Techniques - Meliva Nastiche.
July 28/Friday	Day 15	Special Counselling Techniques - Meliva Nastiche.

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July 31/Monday	Day 16	Special Counselling Techniques - Meliva Nastiche.
August 1/Tuesday	Day 17	Special Counselling Techniques - Meliva Nastiche.
August 2/Wednesday	Day 18	Structure of Provincial School System. Open Discussion on Today's Indian Attitude Toward Education in General.
August 3/Thursday	Day 19	Special Projects - Discussion. Social - (?).
August 4/Friday	Day 20	Evaluation of Home-School Co-ordinator Course.

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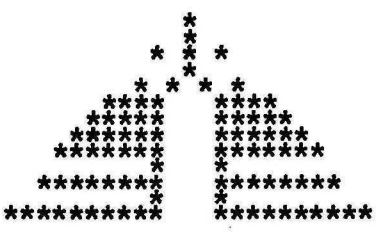
OTHER SUGGESTED TOPICS.



INNER LOOK - OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH PROJECT

MARYANN KATCHEECH, JOAN POCHA, & ARNOLD MARTIN

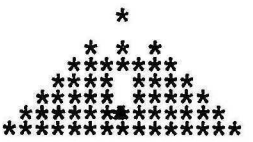
Inner Look is an Opportunity for Youth Project designed to work with the problems faced by the native youth in the city.

We are planning a drop-in center located at, 1855 Vine Street, in the Vancouver Indian Center building. It will serve as an information and referral source on such issues as: counselling on drug and alcohol problems, free medical care, accommodation, educational and employment counselling, information on native culture and lastly, current events concerning native people across Canada.

We plan organized recreation, informal get-togethers, seminars and group discussions. In this aspect, we are very fortunate as the recreational and art program of the Indian Center, itself is freely available to all.

Our staff consists of only three members and we welcome volunteers who like to work work with people. We are planning to get people involved through the Volunteer Opportunity Program. In essence, we are striving for a sense of community and involvement among native youth.

Anyone interested in the project can come and see us at, 1855 Vine Street or phone, 736-7481.



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