Student Teachers' Stereotyping and Typification of Aborigines and Australians: Consequences and Implications for the Construction of Aboriginal Identity

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Abstract

This paper investigates pre-service teacher education students' stereotyping and typifying of Aborigines and Australians. This investigation is located in the context of the construction of Aboriginal social identity and in particular the role of the teacher in this social process.

The assumption made is that the meanings teachers take into their classrooms re different racial and ethnic groups are fairly clearly represented in the way in which they define, stereotype and typify those respective racial and ethnic groups. Particularly for children, these stereotypes and typifications held by the teacher, by groups of teachers, and school principals, will be important determinants of the child's construction of his social identity(self), his self-respect and his self-esteem. When linked to the data on self, school achievement and life chances the consequences would seem to be significant.

In this study a sample of eighty second and fourth semester preservice teacher education students were asked to typify Aborigines and Australians in relation to seventeen traits. Of the ten stereotypes attributed to Aborigines all but one were negative. By contrast of the thirteen stereotypes attributed to Australians only three were negative. It is highly likely that these students, on graduating, will take their theorizing about these categories of people to their classrooms and construct their interactions with their pupils and pupils' parents around these theories.

The paper suggests that the difficulties these student teachers will have in constructing positive expectations and interactions with Aboriginal students is considerable and likely to be overwhelming. The context which they enter will provide social, professional and academic interactions which will reinforce the already constructed stereotypes and typifications. This is clearly to the detriment of Aboriginal pupils.

The outcomes of this study have important ramifications for the preservice and inservice education of teachers. The stereotypes found to exist and their likely consequences would suggest that there is a need for teacher education programs to confront and respond to the ethnocentric attitudes that many students arrive with and maintain.
during their programs. The question that emerges is, "How do we break down the stereotypes and typifications student teachers (and teachers) have?" There would appear to be little in most current teacher education programs that successfully respond to this task.

INTRODUCTION

An ongoing concern to Aborigines has been the contemporary problem of constructing an Aboriginal identity and community. Construction of this identity has been dominated by white interventions since earliest European settlement through official policies, official practices and everyday discriminatory practices. Many of the policies and practices have been founded upon and sustained through the construction of negative stereotypes and typifications of Aborigines. Even at the academic level these have been consistently defined and perpetuated through whites' research findings on blacks (Sykes, 1986). Aboriginal people and others assert that there must be a reconstruction of Aboriginal identity and community (Folds, 1987; Sykes, 1986; and Christie, 1985) which has as its very essence self determination a la land rights, lands rights compensation, dispossession compensation and a treaty, and a sense of pride in Aboriginality.

For Aborigines identity is an emotional subject. They speak of losing it, discovering it, searching for it and helping children to develop it. Identity was thought to be the vital link between the individual and the community. The ability of the individual and the community to retain their Aboriginal identity was the second (after survival) most frequent identification for what could be considered an achievement (Sykes, 1986).

Despite Aboriginal assertions that it is they who must respond to this problem it would appear that any chance of success requires a recognition by all of those involved in the problem as to how social identity is constructed, who are some of the important "players" in the construction of the identity, and how they are currently playing the game. To state the obvious the construction of Aboriginal social identity is a social process that allows aborigines to know themselves - attach certain meanings to themselves. Knowing themselves is determined by the way they theorise about themselves; how others, including others like themselves, theorise about them; and the social interactions between these activities. The opportunities for self-determination of this social identity are critical but problematical because of the complexity of these same social interactions. Some individuals and groups of individuals are more important in this theorizing process than others. The terms sometimes given to these
individuals and groups of individuals are significant others and generalised others respectively (Meade, 1934).

The importance of the teacher and groups of teachers in this identity construction process is well documented in a large number of biographies and autobiographies, and qualitative studies. For example, Malcolm X, a black radical of the 1960's, clearly indicates how his interactions with some of his teachers and his school peers clearly defined for him what he was and in particular what it meant to be black. His teachers were directly responsible for theorizing about what being black meant both covertly and overtly, and indirectly in "assisting" Malcolm X's school peers to define black, that is, theorise about being black in particular ways. Sally Morgan's (1987) autobiography also describes the impact of teachers and school peers on the construction of her identity.

Similarly in some of Sykes' interview data respondents reported that while identity was not to be taught in schools, schools were often the places where one's identity was undermined and destroyed. As such it was closely related to the environment of schools. And the destruction of an individual's identity within a school was a contributing factor to the destruction of community. It should be emphasized that the process being considered is not as simple as it may appear because the individual does not just accept those theories about himself that are being communicated but interprets them on the basis of his previous experiences and intuitive processes. There will also be inconsistencies in the theories that are occurring and these have to be reconciled by the individual.

The teacher and teachers are likely to be significant in the constructing of Aboriginal identity and community as is indicated above. How they do theorise about Aborigines (and whites) needs to be identified. If the theorizing is in terms of negative stereotypes and typifications this needs to be recognised and its consequences confronted. To avoid doing this will make Aborigines reconstruction of their identity, in the directions they seek, extremely difficult.

This study attempts to identify what meanings/labels pre-service primary teacher education students are likely to impute to Aborigines and to compare this with those meanings they impute to white Australians. This latter point is important because part of Aborigines construction of their identity is linked to how they compare with the way others are theorized about. The likely consequences of the meanings that are imputed are also discussed.
BACKGROUND

The assumption made is that meanings teachers take into classrooms regarding different racial and ethnic groups are fairly clearly represented in the way in which they define, stereotype and typify those respective racial and ethnic groups. Agreed, it is possible to be racially prejudiced without discriminating and vice versa, but for most, particularly in the intimate regularity of the classroom it would be difficult.

Stereotypes are group-shared images of another group or category of people. Stereotyping can be negative, positive or mixed. It is well exemplified in unpleasant racial and ethnic stereotypes that are cyclically popular in the media, particularly letters to the editor, and in racial and ethnic humour (Italian jokes, Aboriginal jokes, etc.). Stereotypes are applied indiscriminately to all members of the stereotyped group, without allowances for individual differences.

Just what is the source of stereotypes is unknown. Once the stereotype has been constructed and become part of the culture, it is maintained by selective perception (noting only the confirming incidents or cases and failing to recognise or remember the exceptions), selective interpretation (interpreting observations and experiences in terms of the stereotypes, for example, business women are aggressive, while businessmen are ambitious), and selective identification (he doesn't really act like an Aborigine). All of these processes involve a reminder of the stereotype, so that even the exceptions and incorrect identifications serve to feed and sustain the stereotype. Like much that is learned in the socialization process the stereotype tends to be passed on from one generation to another unthinkingly and unquestioningly. Typifications tend not to be as emphatic as stereotypes but are operationalised in the same way.

Stereotypes and typifications are important because people treat members of the other group in terms of the stereotype or typification views they hold of that group. They interact, at least initially, with the stereotype rather than with the "true" person. This results in many injustices, since only some or even none of the persons in a group fully fit the stereotype. Excellent examples of this are well identified in Sykes' Black Majority (1989), Griffin's Black Like Me (1964) and Zinkin's Gandhi (1965). Generally the more negative the stereotype the less opportunities there are available for the stereotyped to be able to negotiate who he "really" is and for the stereotypes and typifications to be challenged.

Most important, however, is the tendency for social interactions in terms of the stereotypes and typifications to encourage people to develop a social identity like the stereotypes and typifications. In this sense the stereotypes and typifications are an example of a self-
fulfilling prophecy. These social interactions or social processes that form the social identity have been popularly identified by Meade (1934), Cooley (1902), Berger and Luckman (1966), et al. Once the social identity has been crystallised, it is maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations. These social relations may be directly and vicariously experienced. Certain beliefs the individual comes to hold about himself are more important than others and the way in which the individual feels about himself in regard to these more important beliefs are generalised through the whole social identity. For example, the individual may believe that it is more important to be good at football than other activities he engages in. Hence if he is good at football he will feel good about it and will generalise this to the rest of his social identity. These beliefs are usually laid down early in life and are fairly conservatively held - they tend to resist change.

In developing a social identity (self) the individual has to locate himself in a particular world of meanings. This location as was pointed out earlier is determined by both the self and others. It requires that the individual theorises about himself on the basis of the interactions he has with others. Part of this theorizing involves the seeking of confirmation or evidence of the evolving identity. The individual must see the identity as plausible to both himself and others. The plausibility needs to be with his "own" group and with the other groups with whom he interacts.

The individual's own group is important in two ways. One, it allows the individual to recognise how people like himself theorise about themselves, in very general terms positively, negatively or mixed, and in very specific terms in relation to typications; and two, it allows the individual to recognise how other groups theorise about people like him.

An integral and significant part of this development of an identity is the development of associated self-esteem and self-respect. As Young (1961) suggests "men who have lost their self-respect are liable to lose their inner vitality". Both self-esteem and self-respect are dependent on the perceptions of how the individual is rated by others, especially others one considers to be important or significant. For young children, and even older children, this is likely to include the school teacher, some school peers, as well as parents and other authority figures. It needs to be emphasized that for these others to be considered significant it does not necessarily mean that they have to be liked by the individual.

Therefore, particularly for children, the stereotypes and typications held by the teacher, by groups of teachers, and school principals, will be important determinants of the child's construction of his social identity (self), his self-respect and his self-esteem. When linked to the data on self, school achievement and life chances (
Marsh, 1987; Hansford and Hattie, 1982; Winnie and Walsh, 1980; West and Fish, 1973; Purkey, 1970; Brookover, 1967; et al.) the consequences are significant. Although the importance of school-academic success for Aborigines has often been questioned or completely left off the agenda, both black and white writers (Fold, 1987; Sykes, 1986; Christie, 1985; et al) who are intimately involved in the field regularly emphasize the need for Aboriginal children to be academically successful even to the extent that this be deliberately in terms of self-interest so that they can help their own people make a contribution to their community. Education is an important strategy for achieving realistic self-determination for the Aborigines, and an instrument for creating an informed community, with intellectual and technological skills, compatible with the Aboriginal culture and identity.

METHOD

In this study an attempt was made to determine how white pre-service primary teacher education students theorise about, that is stereotype and typify, two categories of people in the society. The two categories of interest were Australians and Aborigines.

SAMPLE

A sample of eighty, second and fourth semester pre-service primary teacher education students was randomly selected from a population of nine hundred students on one campus of an Australian College of Advanced Education. The background of these students was probably fairly typical of student teachers throughout Australia. Based on father's occupation approximately 6% were from the upper-class, 80% from the middle class and 8% from the working-class. Just under 20% were mature-age entry students with the rest direct entry from school. 85% were female and three-quarters had attended state high schools.

MEASURES

The instrument used was that developed by Jordan (1984) in her study of Aboriginal identity. From a variety of sources she devised seventeen traits which were held to be characteristic of Aboriginal people.

The traits which are set out in Table 1 were presented to the sample of students who were asked where on the seven-point scale they would place Australians and then at a slightly later time they were asked where they would place Aborigines on the seven-point scale. At both times the response sheets were filled out anonymously.

Table 1: Traits for typification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>trustworthy</th>
<th>untrustworthy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strong sense of right &amp; wrong</td>
<td>poor sense of right &amp; wrong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
neglect their children are good parents
have no purpose in life know where they are going
are good providers don't keep jobs
don't take care of possessions care for possessions
(cars, clothes, house) (cars, clothes, house)
friendly & outgoing unfriendly
aggressive, picks fights live & let live
know when to stop drinking drink too much
often in trouble with the police lead law-abiding lives
often in debt careful with money
speak English well don't speak proper English
have no ambition motivated to get somewhere
waste money generous with money
clean & tidy dirty, uncared for
can't be counted on to do what reliable
what they say
even tempered quick tempered

Jordan's definition of stereotype was used. Where the greatest concentration of choices was at the mid-point of the scale, it was judged that the characteristic was not stereotyped. When the mid-point approximated or equalled another choice, it was judged that this did not reflect stereotyping. For a score to be accepted as a stereotype, it had to be both greater than the mid-point as well as greater than its opposite. Typifications were identified in terms of the percentage of students who identified the category of people either positively or negatively on a particular item.

RESULTS

The stereotypes constructed by the pre-service teacher education students are identified in Table 2.

Table 2: Stereotyping of Australians and Aborigines by pre-service teacher education students (n=80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australians</th>
<th>rank</th>
<th>Aborigines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>friendly &amp; outgoing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>drink too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink too much</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>don't take care of possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are good providers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>don't speak English correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivated to get somewhere</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>don't keep jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>have no ambition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trustworthy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>waste money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong sense of right &amp; wrong</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>often in trouble with the police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are good parents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>have no purpose in life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
care for their possessions     9      a strong sense of right & wrong
clean & tidy                  10      aggressive, picks fights
don't speak English properly  11      often in debt                 12
live & let live               13
(Note: rank 1 = most strongly stereotyped)

When the students were asked to typify Aborigines all but one of ten items stereotyped were negative. In contrast with this was the stereotypes that emerged for Australians. Of the seventeen traits thirteen were seen as stereotypical of Australians. However only three of these, "drink too much", "often in debt" (for some this may be considered positive), and "don't speak proper English", were negative.

With regard to typifications Table 3 indicates the contrasts between the extent to which the students' typifications were positive for Australians and for Aborigines.

Table 3: Comparisons of the extent of positive typifications (percentage of students identifying) of Australians and Aborigines by pre-service teacher education students (n = 80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Australians</th>
<th>Aborigines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trustworthy</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong sense of right &amp; wrong</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are good parents</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know where they are going</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are good providers</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care for their possessions</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendly &amp; outgoing</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>live &amp; let live</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know when to stop drinking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead law abiding lives</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>careful with money</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak English well</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivated to get somewhere</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>careful with money</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean &amp; tidy</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliable</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even tempered</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were no major differences between students' stereotyping and typifying on the basis of student gender, social class or school
background. Hence a male student who had attended a private school and whose father had a professional occupation was just as likely to theorise about Aborigines and Australians in the same way as a female student who had attended a state school and whose father was a labourer.

Of interest concerning the results was that the student teachers were no more likely to typify Aborigines any more positively or alternatively any less negatively than Jordan's sample of non-Aboriginal high school students. This suggests that longer periods of formal schooling and participating in tertiary education does not necessarily reduce an individual's ethnocentrism.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that white pre-service primary teacher education students hold different stereotypes and typifications of different categories of people. This is reinforced even further in a concurrent smaller study where another sample of student teachers stereotyped Vietnamese on eight of the seventeen traits, only one of which was negative. It is highly likely that these students, on graduating, will take their theorizing about these categories of people to their classrooms and construct their interactions with pupils and parents around these theories.

On the basis of these results these student teachers are likely to have positive expectations of Australian pupils and generally negative expectations of Aboriginal pupils. It should be emphasized however that the stereotypes and typification were not universally held by all students in the sample. There was also unclear, inconsistent and incoherent theorizing by some students in the sample.

If social construction of identity(self), self-respect and self-esteem does occur as described in the early part of this paper, then the consequences are that teachers are more likely to develop positive social identities in Australian pupils and negative social identities in Aboriginal children. At the very least initial interactions between the teacher and the two categories of pupils will be on the basis of the typifications and stereotypes. This means that Aboriginal children will have to "work" a lot harder at changing the teacher's initial views if they are to obtain positive interactions. As Sykes (1986) reports from her interviews: "Aboriginal children had to struggle to establish themselves in mix-raced schools with all-white teachers". Conversely Australian students will get a head start in the constructing of positive, productive relationships with the teacher. Clearly the theories of labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy come strongly into play here.

The difficulties that these student teachers will have in constructing positive expectations and interactions with Aboriginal students is
considerable and likely to be overwhelming. It is not simply a case of
the teacher transferring information. The teacher must have some
understanding of what the child "knows" and more importantly what the
child's world view is in order to facilitate the child's self-concept
and the child's learning. This is particularly difficult and highly
unlikely as the Aboriginal child's world view is ordered and
constructed in ways quite foreign to that of the white teacher's
(Christie, 1985). This is more graphically described by two of Syke's
(1986) interviewees:

They (teachers) don't understand Aboriginal society. Most
teachers think that urban(black) kids, especially the fair
skinned ones, are just poor white kids and treat them like
second-class citizens when, in fact, they are first-class
citizens.

and

Many teachers refuse to believe that Black kids are culturally
different. They want to say that they are just urban kids ...
Most teachers are pretty racist, don't know how to cope, and
don't understand our culture...

Christie goes on to point out that, in summary, the differences between
the white teacher and the Aboriginal child are brought about by white
teachers and Aboriginal pupils seeing what happens in classrooms very
differently. They act and react quite differently and their
interpretations are different. The consequences are, that due to the
white teacher failing to identify the child's perspective as a
reflection of cultural values, the Aboriginal child's logical cultural-
appropriate behaviours are misinterpreted by the teacher as signs of
laziness, copying, cheating, uninterest in formal education and lack of
parental support. Similarly an Aboriginal child's extreme reaction to
being told that his work is wrong, for example in the form of tantrums,
ripping out pages, crying and swearing, is not culturally interpreted
by the teacher. The teacher does not recognise that in telling the
Aboriginal pupil that his work is wrong the teacher is telling the
pupil that he as a person is no good. The teacher is presenting
feedback in the way that he has learned to and the child is
interpreting the feedback in the way he has learned to - there is a
mismatch.

Thus the initial negative stereotypes and typifications that were
identified earlier will be readily legitimised and added to due to the
teacher's misinterpretations of the Aboriginal child's behaviours.
Consequently the teacher will have less opportunities to enter into the
"right" social relations with the Aboriginal child which would allow
the teacher to find out what the child can do. Even visual feedback by
Aboriginal pupils is not very helpful and perhaps even misleading for
white teachers. The Aboriginal pupil is thus defined in this way as a
particular kind of person and consequent actions are interpreted
through the negative typifications (labels).

Again because the teacher classifies and evaluates the Aboriginal pupil in a particular way the teacher is "forced" to appropriate knowledge to match the appropriate pupil. This will mean "low-grade" knowledge being allocated to Aboriginal pupils and them being automatically denied knowledge which is essential for their educational and general success. As Fold (1987) indicates, children and their parents, unaware of what is happening, feel they (the children) are successful at many school tasks. They produce paintings and teachers engage them in "attractive" worksheets, but they are produced at the cost of learning in academic subjects.

Of further concern is that teachers' initial impressions of Aboriginal pupils (all pupils) tend to be relatively stable over time. One major reason for this is the first impression or primacy effect (Asch, 1946). That is, once the teacher forms a clear cut impression of the pupil this impression is likely to stay with the teacher even in the face of disconfirming evidence. What is known to determine these impressions are: presumed social status; inferred I.Q., assumed ability rate usually based on pupil attentiveness, self-confidence, social conduct and maturity, and ability to work independently; and race. All of these when linked to the stereotypes and typifications identified above, would be seen by white teachers as generally low or lacking in Aboriginal pupils. Even in the absence of specific and contradictory information it is known that teachers will tend to project their own attitudes, their stereotypes and typifications, on the pupils.

To push the argument even further it is well accepted that pupils' academic career paths are generally firmly established as early as grade one or at least in the first few grades of schooling (Williams, 1987; Hopkins, 1984; Essen et al, 1979; Bloom, 1976; and Good & Brophy, 1974). Academic success in grade one would seem to be based on neatness, speed of work, skill in the use of classroom context specific language, appearance, social behaviour, and perceived parental interest. These are all factors linked to the stereotypes and typifications held by the sample of students.

Obviously the contention that meanings and definitions of self and community are simply constructed in classrooms cannot be sustained. Clearly the classroom meanings have a wider and more fundamental basis. The classroom interactions that have been described can only be fully explained by reference to the wider society, particularly in terms of the nature and distribution of power and authority. It is these that impinge directly and indirectly on the teacher and the pupils. This is well identified by Sykes' (1986) discussions of power relationships as expressed in government policies, for example, in Queensland and Western Australia the attitude of those state governments is that if Aborigines are to be educated, they should be socialized at the same time into the Anglo-Australian culture. Again Federal grants
specifically targeting Aborigines tend to generate a strong white backlash against Aborigines. In specific instances as much by white teachers as by others in the community. Claiming such spending is unfair, white teachers vent their resentment on the "innocent victims", the Aboriginal pupils. As Sykes states,

... evidence from witnesses of the resentment of some white teachers of the grants received by Aboriginal children. Spiteful and sarcastic remarks made in the classroom within hearing of all other students made the lives of some Aboriginal children completely miserable at school and white children, acting on the example given by these teachers, would carry this harassment into the playground.

There will be those who argue that the child's social identity has been formed prior to entering school and that it and the associated behaviour patterns are fairly firmly fixed. There appears to be ample evidence to challenge this proposition (Becker, 1971; et al) which shows that self and behaviour can change radically depending on the situation. If Becker's view is correct then self and educational attainment is a reflection of what happens in the classroom rather than what happens in the cradle.

CONCLUSION

The question that emerges is, "How do we break down the stereotypes and typifications that student teachers (and teachers) have?" There would appear to be little in most teacher education programs, other than the occasional foundations unit that attempts this task. Again some blacks who have experienced these units described the content that was available as a lot of "false information", with the optional units on Aboriginal Studies being taken by white people and being taught by white people (Sykes, 1986). In fact it could be suggested that the experiences that student teachers hold as most valid, namely practice teaching or field experiences, are more likely to reinforce the stereotypes and typifications that have been identified. In these situations teacher education students see the "results" of the practices based on the generally unquestioned stereotypes and typifications of their more experienced peers and future colleagues. This further legitimises their own stereotypes and typifications.

Ironically students' views of Aborigines on this particular campus may be partly due to the high visibility of Aborigines on campus. Jordan (1984) suggests that the more visible the Aboriginal group, particularly where an institution has a policy that highlights Aborigines as a different group and holds policies that discriminate in favour of Aborigines, the more Aborigines will be rejected and
stereotyped negatively by the "host" group. Their special entry, from the mainstream's perspective gives them a marginal or charity status - the presence of some of the "poor" among the "rich" (Fensham, 1987).

This however is likely to have the positive effect of uniting, making more cohesive, and giving strength and determination to the Aboriginal group. It provides a "us versus them" climate which has the potential to enable rather than disable Aborigines' goals.

One of the difficulties in confronting student teachers' and teachers' stereotypes and typifications is intimately entwined in the very nature of teaching. As Jackson (1968) has pointed out, teaching involves such a rapidly paced sequence of actions and reactions that the teacher is hard pressed simply to keep up let alone monitor his behaviour or at least get feedback about it if he is to shape the pattern of interactions proactively in his classroom and not merely react to differential pupil behaviour which in effect conditions him. This suggests that teachers must be provided with opportunities to carry out a premeditated examination of their behaviours and the stereotypical beliefs they are based on.

In fairness to teachers it needs to be recognised that much teacher behaviour is unconscious not callous, indifferent, or irresponsible. However this again emphasizes that student teachers and teachers have to be made conscious of their stereotypes and typifications and become aware of what they are doing in the hope that this will modify their unconscious behaviour in positive directions.

Clearly white student teachers have to develop an understanding of Aboriginal differences in world view, differences in classroom perspectives, differences in personal goals, and differences in preferred modes of interpretation and learning. There is little to suggest in the reading of some of the literature that this has even been approximated by most teachers. In fact some data suggests that the reverse tends to occur. It is expected that it is the child (and his parents and his community) who must change not the school.

Other solutions while seemingly appearing trite and almost "motherhood" statements consistently appear in the literature of both white and black writers. These are that student teachers must be able to: reject information that suggests black children cannot learn ipso facto; possess and communicate positive expectations, recognising the cultural definitions of how to do this - learn the sociolinguistic rules of Aboriginal communications; be patient and sensitive but still maintain high expectations; take the time to know students as individuals and allow students' interests to influence curricular activities; understand that school learning in the early grades must be embedded in a meaningful context and then be gradually decontextualized through the grades; and develop specialized skills to help Aboriginal pupils to accept teacher interest as credible (Fold, 1987).
However these latter "solutions" do little to confront teacher education students and teachers with their stereotypical beliefs and behaviours. Allowing students and teachers to participate in and discuss the results and implications of an experiment such as the one reported here may be one worthwhile means through which stereotyping and typifying can be broken down. Such a strategy would provide them with an opportunity to consciously recognise and accept that:
1. they do engage in stereotyping and typifying;
2. stereotypes encourage them to engage in inhumane acts. It provides what appears to be a legitimate rationalization for such acts;
3. stereotyping and typifying are socially constructed and sustained as is indicated in the early section of the paper;
4. because stereotyping is socially constructed it can be changed - it is not fixed; and
5. there is little or no justification for stereotyping - they need to see past the stereotype and interact with the individual.

If student teachers and teachers gain social knowledgeable and destroy the social fictions that stereotypes represent they are then faced with a choice. They can no longer excuse their stereotyping and typifying on the basis of ignorance. If they stereotype they do it knowingly.

POSTSCRIPT

The regular zenophobic reactions of many Australians to ongoing Immigration Policy debate and the negative comments with regard to an increase of Federal Government spending on Aboriginal Welfare provides little cause for optimism in attempts to change stereotypes and typifications.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


