Reference No. 111

Summarising: Schwab (1995), Twenty years of policy recommendations for Indigenous education: overview and research implications
Responsibility for the preparation of this research summary rests with the authors of the MCEETYA report *Education, Training and Indigenous Futures: CAEPR Policy Research 1990-2007* and not the original author(s) of the summarised material.

Title of Research:
Twenty years of policy recommendations for Indigenous education: overview and research implications

Research Publication:
CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 92/1995

Name of Researcher(s):
R.G. Schwab

Time period:
1975 - 1995

Geographic location:
Australia-general

Methodology:
A review of Australian Indigenous education policies between 1975-1995, with a special focus upon three major reviews: the Report to the Schools Commission by the Aboriginal Consultative Group, the Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force and the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The 140 recommendations were clustered into five topic areas: consultation, responsibility and decision making, curriculum, support structures and instructional approaches, educational staffing and future research.

Aims:
This paper aims to trace trends and patterns in national policy through analysis of the recommendations of the above three reviews.

Selected findings and insights:
The analysis revealed that while the recommendations became more specific over time, they remained relevant, indicating lack of progress in them being adequately addressed.

Consultation, responsibility and decision making, which included:
• increased Indigenous representation and participation in Indigenous education; and
• more effective communication between educational authorities and Indigenous communities, especially increased awareness and involvement in particular educational programs and resources.

Content and focus of curricula, which included:
• preschool education and post-school education and training;
• Aboriginal languages, Aboriginal studies and cultural awareness, noting the importance of cultural awareness among employees as a counter to racism in the workplace; and
• literacy and numeracy emphases.
Support structures and instructional approaches to support Indigenous learning, which included:

- facilitation of parental support and community involvement through increased awareness of educational issues and approaches and cultural programs within communities;
- increasing parental involvement in pre-schools;
- development of strategies for rural and remote students; and
- provision of health and welfare services as apart of an overall educational provision, targeting hearing and sight difficulties, drug and substance abuse, nutrition and child protection.

Educational staffing, with an emphasis upon:

- Training and provision of Aboriginal teachers, liaison officers and teacher aides in schools; and
- Inclusion of an Aboriginal culture component within teacher education programs.

Future research priorities identified in the three reviews were wide-ranging, and only a sample is included here:

- Causes of educational alienation among boys and men;
- Post education destinations;
- Local exploration of two-ways education models;
- Development of counter-racism education; and
- Community assessment of educational aspirations.

Educational implications:

The usefulness of this review of Indigenous education priorities over the 1975–1995 period is that it serves as a benchmark to critically assess progress which has been made since then, to compare those priorities with the contemporary issues for Indigenous education as identified in the MCEETYA Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008 Statement and to reassess the value of those earlier priorities which have not been addressed but which are considered no longer important. It may also assist the review of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) during 2007–08. [policy]

For example, the focus upon parent and community involvement in education continues to be relevant, especially with regard to school and community partnerships and associated agreements. By contrast, emphases upon Indigenous languages and the training of Indigenous staff appear to be less important in the MCEETYA Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008 Statement. [policy]

Relevance:

Domain 2: School and Community Educational Partnerships

Domain 4: Quality Teaching

Domain 5: Pathways to training, employment and higher education

Pathways and strategies for remote locations

Adult return to education

Pathways and strategies for remote locations

Adult return to education