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Number 65

COMMUNITY SCHOOL RELATIONS
AND THE TEACHER



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Wari Iamo

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Front cover photograph:

The Headmaster (right) of a school in the Kaiapit area of Morobe Province leading his students in a traditional dance. The teacher had to learn the dance from members of the community who taught it to the students.

INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at the problem of poor community support for community schooling and at the teacher's role in strengthening community-school relations. The years since independence have brought a rapid expansion of primary education. In just fourteen years, 150 000 additional students have been enrolled in Grades 1-6 and more than 800 new community schools have been opened. In addition, the teaching force at the primary level has been fully localized, more than 9 000 Papua New Guineans have entered the teaching service since 1975, and most of the curriculum is locally developed. These are impressive gains for such a short time span.

During the same period, the gross enrolment rate at the primary level has increased from fifty-seven percent to seventy-four percent. Almost all Papua New Guinean children now begin Grade 1 and the Government has set 1999 as its target year for achieving universal primary education. However, this goal cannot be achieved unless there is significant change in parental and community attitudes about community schooling.

To achieve universal primary education parents need not only to enrol their children in Grade 1, but to see that they remain in school until they have completed Grade 6. This is not happening. In fact, the drop-out rate between Grades 1 and 6 has increased sharply in recent years, from twenty-seven percent in 1976 to thirty-eight percent in 1988 (Tawaiyole and Gibson 1989). The Government recognizes that the high drop-out rate is the biggest obstacle in the drive for universal primary education. Major investments have been made in the educational system over the past decade in order to strengthen the curriculum, increase both the quantity and quality of pupil materials, and upgrade the training provided to teachers. These changes have been made in an effort to improve the quality of classroom instruction. School facilities have also been improved, with many villages now having permanent or semi-permanent classrooms.

However, in spite of these modifications, the drop-out rate continues to rise. Parental support for schooling at the primary level has declined to such a point that the functioning of community schools in many parts of the country is seriously affected. Perhaps this is because the new initiatives have not had sufficient time to take hold. The fact that parental support for education has decreased in the same period that the curriculum and the preparation of teachers have been strengthened, suggests otherwise. The adjustments that have been made to the system — however worthwhile and necessary — may not bring about improvement in school attendance and a reduction in the drop-out rate because the forces that motivate children to persist in school and apply themselves to their studies are strongly influenced by forces outside the school. Paramount among these are parental and community attitudes about formal education.

THE DECLINE IN COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF SCHOOLING

In many parts of Papua New Guinea, generally in rural areas, parents are refusing to maintain school facilities and in some cases are actively involved in their destruction. This is a public statement against the institution of schooling as it exists today and calls for rapid changes in the system to suit the social and cultural conditions of indigenous Papua New Guineans.

If parents are dissatisfied with the educational system why, we might ask, did they more actively support it in the past? The answer, quite simply, is that in the late 1960s and early 1970s almost all those who attended school were rewarded with wage employment. From an instrumental perspective, an investment in schooling had a clear monetary return. As we enter the 1990s, jobs for new graduates are scarce and the pay-off for investing in a community school education is far less clear to parents than it was a decade or two ago.

In 1965, sixty-seven percent of all Grade 6 graduates were able to go on to high school (McNamara 1971). By 1971, because of the rapid increase in primary school enrolments, which were not matched by a parallel increase in secondary enrolments, the proportion of Grade 6 students moving up to Grade 7 had fallen to thirty-four percent (Kemelfield 1976). The job market was expanding rapidly, however, with the advent of self-government and the localization of many civil service positions. The monetary benefit from sending children to school was still clear.

Throughout the 1970s, the opportunity to attend high school was equitably distributed across the nation. Students were selected for high school on the basis of a 'quota system' which enabled the same percentage of students from every school in the country, — rural or urban, small or large, — to go on to Grade 7 regardless of differences among schools in student performance. The quota system was founded on the premise that children in rural and remote areas could not be expected to compete on an equal footing with the urban child because the rural child's out-of-school learning environment was less likely to reinforce and support in-school instruction and because, in many cases, the academic standards of rural schools were inferior to those located in towns. About one-third of the Grade 6 pupils from every community, no matter how poor their academic preparation to that point, were guaranteed the chance to go on with their schooling. The use of a quota as the basis for high school selection assured a certain amount of community support for schooling in rural areas because parents knew that a fair proportion of the village children would progress to high school and later into the wage-earning economy (Bray 1982). It also fitted in with the egalitarian ideology of Melanesian society.

Such an equitable method of high school selection is unusual in the developing world and, as Mark Bray has noted, Papua New Guinea is one of the few countries that has taken such deliberate steps to counteract the 'inherent inequalities in the education system'. However, the use of the quota system was short-lived. It came under criticism from high school teachers (themselves either expatriates or the local products of an elitist and competitive system of education), who found many of their students ill-prepared. It was also heavily

attacked by parents whose children had high marks but were passed over in favour of those from disadvantaged areas. Usually such parents were urban, Western-educated and influential (Bray 1982).

The quota system was phased out in the early 1980s and today most provinces select students for high school strictly on the basis of the Grade 6 Examination scores. Those with the highest marks are the winners. As a consequence of this change, it is not unusual in some provinces to find well over fifty percent of the pupils from town schools and the largest rural schools are selected, while only ten or fifteen percent are selected from the smallest schools (see Gibson 1990; Gibson and Weeks 1990). In some instances, a year or two may go by when not even one student 'passes' the National Grade Six Examination and a community is denied all opportunity for its young people to proceed to high school.

The new system is labelled 'merit selection', suggesting that those who receive top marks in Grade 6 are more worthy of further education than those who receive low marks. In actuality, many of the rural children who are passed over in the present selection process are not only as diligent as their urban counterparts, but they are also every bit as intelligent. They have the capability to excel in academic work, but lacking the same education as their urban counterparts, they are severely handicapped in the competition for places in high school (Gibson and Weeks 1990).

It is a clear case of 'blaming the victim'. First, these youngsters are penalized for their poor classroom instruction and the nature of their out-of-school learning environment — factors over which they have no control. Second, they are denied the chance to continue with their formal education following Grade 6 and are told indirectly, if not directly, that the failure is their own rather than the system's. The National Department of Education itself uses the terms 'pass' and 'fail' when referring to students' marks on the National Grade Six Examination. No matter how high their marks, two-thirds of all Papua New Guinean school children will not be able to continue to high school until more high schools are constructed. Yet those who are denied places in Grade 7 are commonly referred to as 'drop-outs' — a term that suggests these children have voluntarily chosen to withdraw from school.

No national data are available to indicate what percentage of those children passed over for high school come from the nation's smallest and most disadvantaged schools. This is because the National Department of Education does not monitor Grade 6 performance by school size or by distance from an urban centre. Also, it does not monitor high school selection rates as such, only students' scores on the National Grade Six Examination. The degree to which a decline in community support for schooling is related to present high school selection policies is an area which requires further investigation.

Even without further research on the topic, there appears to be widespread consensus regarding the negative impact of the present system. Children passed over for high school are seen all too often to be socially and mentally defective. The victims and their parents are condemned together. In many cases, social relations between child and parent become strained, particularly in regard to male children. Knowing he has failed and knowing, too, that he is poorly

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educated, the teenage boy joins throngs of idle village youths who reject parental authority and seek to escape community obligations or who migrate to nearby towns in search of menial jobs to fulfil traditional obligations. Unable to find work, many turn to illegal economic activities for survival. Many more place immense burdens on their extended families, which must provide for their support. Most of these youths no longer want to work the land, or if they do, they may encounter difficulties fitting back into the social structures of their villages. School has changed them, altered their values, made them less understanding of their parents' and grandparents' ways of life, and left them without any clear alternatives or sense of purpose.

The severe stresses caused by the current, colonially bequeathed system of education, with its heavy emphasis on high school selection and salaried employment as the ultimate goals, are not only those which arise between children and parents. They also arise between parents and teachers and, more generally, between the community and the school. It is small wonder that parents in many parts of Papua New Guinea have become disillusioned with schooling. When parents have several children — particularly sons — passed over in the competition, they frequently withdraw support for their community school. They may cease taking part in school activities or the maintenance of school buildings. They may refuse to pay school fees or to see that their children attend school with any regularity, if at all. They may deliberately steal or destroy school property. Disgruntled male parents may even verbally and physically abuse the Grade 6 teachers and headteachers, whom they hold responsible for their child's failure and their own shattered dreams. In sum, parents may stop playing the school game by the rules established in Port Moresby because they know the rules are stacked against them (cf. Banton 1983:391). Only when the rules are changed can we expect community-school relations to improve.

Perspectives of Teachers and the Needs for Training

The present situation places teachers under great pressure and has a negative impact on the entire teaching-learning environment. Community school teachers themselves become preoccupied with the 'numbers game' and classroom instruction is geared toward preparing children for high school. The performance of teachers is judged from this perspective, and their preservice and inservice training is overwhelmingly oriented in this direction. Teachers are all too conscious of the fact that their relationship with the community is influenced by high school selection rates and that parents have adopted 'numbers selected' as their own chief criterion for judging the teachers' competence and the school's value. Until there is a change in the orientation of teacher training and in the system by which teachers are inspected for promotion, this stressful situation between community and school will persist.

Given this context it is not surprising that teachers in rural areas identify the lack of parental and community support for schooling as either the leading or one of the leading problems that they face. However, most teachers, , blame the parents for the situation, themselves not comprehending that they all — parents, students and teachers—are victims of the current system.

A 1975 survey, carried out in three provinces, showed that teachers perceived the school to be 'removed from the community, often incompatible with it and communicating with it only with difficulty' (Smith, Carss and Power 1979). More recent surveys reveal similar school-community problems. Teachers in Western Province, when polled in 1988, noted that 'local leaders are not cooperating with the teachers' and that 'for one reason or the other parents have lost interest in school activities' (Gibson and Weeks 1990).

Studies carried out in the 1970s, following the shift from 'primary schools' to 'community schools', also found that:

[Teachers] are not trained or motivated to make self-reliant use of local materials, lack sufficient background knowledge to build their own curricula, prefer to live in Western-style accommodation rather than in the village, and decry lack of community assistance' (Scaglione and Auro 1980:2-3 referring to the collection of articles in Lancy 1979).

More recently, a national survey of beginning teachers has pointed to the need for teachers to be more aware of the cultural backgrounds of their students. The same survey calls for more field-oriented, preservice training and for inservice training directed towards strengthening community-school relations (Ross 1989:61-70). A recent study on the use and impact of the community life syllabus has also found that community school teachers are being asked to play a role for which they are ill-prepared:

Although the teachers were familiar with the content of the syllabus they felt uncertain about the degree of community involvement they were supposed to promote through this subject and how much freedom they really had to develop [their] own initiatives. Expectations of parents, demands of inspectors from the education department, pressure caused by the Grade 6 Examination and the well-known 'rhetoric' about community involvement in community schools often clashed. *The teachers become mediators, a role for which they are not prepared* (Otto 1989:39, emphasis added).

Many teachers are quite conscious of the fact that they lack the necessary skills to work effectively with parents and community leaders and, when asked, they cite community-school relations as one of their most urgent training needs (Scaglione and Auro 1980).

TEACHERS AS MEDIATORS

To 'mediate', according to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* means: 'to interpose (serve in an intervening position) between parties in order to reconcile them, to reconcile differences, to bring accord (a balanced interrelationship)'. One who mediates is called a mediator, a go-between or an intermediary.

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The concept of the teacher as an intermediary is a very useful one in the Papua New Guinean context. Community school teachers must mediate between the national education system and the local community: between Western and Papua New Guinean ways of knowing and ways of educating children, between traditional and modern values, and between the national development needs and the needs of small rural villages. To be successful in this role, teachers must be provided with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to bring accord between the various parties and interests.

The processes by which such training can best take place, the training content and the resources required for the training to be successful are topics that need the urgent consideration of educators and policy makers throughout the country. The immediate response of those responsible for teacher education may be, 'How can we possibly add this on top of all the other courses that preservice teachers need?' We reply that the decline in community support for schooling and the alienation experienced by young school leavers are such serious problems that a way must be found. Such training, moreover, must not be viewed as an 'add-on' — an additional course or courses to be tacked on to the already crowded college curriculum. Rather, the concept of teachers as mediators should become an integral part of the educational system, not only in the context of teacher education but integrated into curriculum development, school administration, inspections, research, evaluation, finance and policy.



A village appointed field marshal controlling the crowd during a school athletics carnival (1991).

We have identified two major areas which can provide a conceptual framework for such training. The first area deals with the teacher as a 'community worker' or 'extension officer' and the second deals with the teacher as a 'cultural broker'. The first addresses the more instrumental aspects of education, and the second the more expressive aspects.

The Teacher as Community Development Worker

As noted, the problem of declining parental support for education is directly related to the fact that children are pushed out of school with nowhere to go. Their expectations and those of their parents' have been falsely raised and the result is frustration and discontent. The failure of schools and society to meet economic expectations is a major facet of the problem, but it is only one facet. Parents need to understand the many other tangible benefits which six years of schooling can provide. These benefits need to be explained to them in ways that they can understand and the teacher has an immediate role to play there.

A recent press release prepared by the Department of Education had the following to say about the benefits of schooling:

Research conducted in many developing countries shows that people with a basic education are more productive farmers than uneducated people.... Studies also show that people with basic education tend to have better health (*Post-Courier* 1990, p.11).

The Department needs to package this sort of information into formats that parents can readily grasp and make copies of such material available to all teachers to use in their classrooms and communities. At the community level teachers can work cooperatively with non-formal education officers, village councils, and the schools' Board of Management to disseminate the information. As many teachers are not always well-informed about the non-monetary — but nonetheless tangible — benefits of formal education or the useful contributions that they can make in spreading this information to their communities, we suggest that such training becomes a priority for inservice teacher education. Similarly, teachers need to explain to parents and students that at this point in Papua New Guinea's development there are not enough places in high school for all students to attend, nor are there paid jobs for all those who wish them, and that it is therefore the job of the teacher to work cooperatively with the parents and students to ensure that the school can meet locally defined needs and objectives.

At the same time we urge Provincial Education Boards to reconsider their high school selection policies to make them more equitable to rural communities. This has occurred in Western Province where, beginning in 1989, selection for high school was based on a modified quota system (similar to the systems used by some provinces in the late 1970s). A fixed percentage of all places in Grade 7 are reserved for children from 'disadvantaged areas' and at least half of the reserved places are allocated to females. This change was prompted by recent research findings on the inequities of the 'merit selection' system and recommendations from the participants at the Kiunga Education Seminar held in

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April 1991 (Gibson and Weeks 1990). Many Western Province community school teachers participated in this seminar and their views were instrumental in bringing about the change. It may be anticipated that this change, coupled with other strategies now being pursued by Western teachers to reach out to their communities and involve them in more positive ways in school affairs, will lead to improvements in community-school relations.

Community school teachers can also serve as useful conduits of information about the possible ways that children can continue with their education after Grade 6. Some teachers already do this, but many more do not see this as part of their official job. It is this latter attitude that teacher training courses must seek to overcome. All teachers must see themselves as education extension officers and take pride in this role.

Teachers must also be well informed about the College of Distance Education (CODE) and encouraged to help those children who have been unable to go on to Grade 7 in a provincial high school to enrol in CODE courses. Teachers can also serve as a conduit for information about vocational centres, an increasing number of which are now combining CODE courses with vocational training (for example, the vocational centres in Enga Province and Boys' Town in Kiunga). The popularity of these programmes is a clear indication of students' motivation to pursue high school level courses. Community school teachers have a clear role to play here in spreading information about these programmes. Parents need to know long before the end of Grade 6 that their children will not be closed out of further education and that there are other options available to them beyond provincial high school.

To be effective in strengthening community-school relations teachers will also need training in the concepts and processes of community development. They need to see themselves as leaders in this area, preparing children for a self-reliant and productive future in their villages. At the present time, far too many teachers see their primary role as preparing children to leave their villages. The teachers themselves are often the children's main contact with these new ways and thus, unconsciously, the teacher may contribute to their false expectations of the future that are available to those who study hard.

McNamara (1971) noted that the implicit message of the primary school was that if children 'try really hard to reject traditional life and embrace the new way of life of the school, they will get into high school' and following that go on to live in towns and obtain salaried jobs. Those passed over in the selection process, McNamara noted, had spent 'six years ... learning that village life is only for the second best' (ibid.). Unfortunately, little has happened in teacher training over the past two decades to turn this situation around. Teacher training colleges need to help teachers become much more conscious of the messages that they are conveying to children and parents and of how schooling can reinforce traditional values and how it can replace them with new values. The acquisition of new values need not result in the rejection or replacement of old ways. Acculturation (a process of culture change and adaptation which results when groups with different cultures come into contact) may be an additive process or

one in which old and new traits are blended. This point is further discussed in the following section on the teacher as cultural broker.

The suggestion that a 'major component of the training of teachers should emphasize the politics, economics and sociology of development' is not a new one (Cheetham 1980:82). Such training, as Cheetham has noted, 'will necessarily mean that teacher training will focus more on the needs of the community, which is appropriate' (ibid.). Formal courses in community development and rural development are currently offered at the University of Papua New Guinea. The content of these courses could readily be adapted to fit the needs of the community school teacher. Teachers need to see themselves not only as education extension officers but as the link between national agencies and their communities in such areas as health, agriculture, commerce and youth affairs. Teachers need to see their role as intermediaries as an integral part of their jobs and critical to their success in developing a mutually supportive relationship between school and community.



Members of the community providing band music to the school during the school festivities.

Too many teachers, as a product of their own formal education and teacher training, feel that they are paid to teach within the four walls of their classroom, or on the school grounds, and that it is someone else's job to work with the families and communities. The emphasis of their preservice training is basic academic skills, acquainting themselves with the community school curriculum, and learning the fundamentals of teaching, based largely, if not entirely, on

Western models of education. To our knowledge, almost no systematic attention is given to the teachers' role in promoting community development or to what is commonly called in Western societies the 'social and cultural foundations of education'. Yet teachers work outside the school in a rural community is probably just as important as their work inside the school (Cheetham 1979).

Just what intermediary roles individual teachers will play will depend of necessity not only on their training, but also on their talents and interests and on the local community context. In general, the community school teacher in a rural area needs to see himself or herself as a 'jack of all trades' with integrated skills that can benefit the larger community, rather than merely being a classroom instructor. The Community Schools Agricultural Programme in Enga provides us with one excellent example of teachers working as intermediaries between the Department of Agriculture and the village community.

The Enga agriculture project not only meets local needs in terms of teaching parents and children about new crops and improved methods of cultivation, it serves to involve parents in the school day, increases their awareness of what their children are learning in school, combines theory with practice, and enables teachers to help both parents and students acquire a realistic view of the benefits of six years of primary education.

Parents in the participating schools are told explicitly and repeatedly that they cannot expect the majority of their children to secure places in high school or ultimately to obtain wage employment. Rather, they are encouraged to see how their children are acquiring skills and outlooks that will enable them to fit back into their own villages and contribute to their development. The process has been a reciprocal one. Among other things, parents provide land for the school gardens and help to work them. The talents and energies of parents and community leaders have shaped the project quite as much as the expertise of the national officers. Because parents are at the school at least once a week, the school takes on the function of being a community centre — something advocated in the original call for community schools (Kemelfield 1972, 1976) — a place where ideas can be shared and important information can be passed from parents to teachers and vice versa. Education becomes a reciprocal process where parents and teachers participate together in the education of the child and where each learns from the other. The programme thus incorporates the Melanesian concept of reciprocity — the sharing and exchange which is an essential feature of Papua New Guinean societies (O'Collins 1980). The programme allows teachers to be successful intermediaries between government agencies and local communities and to take pride in their achievements in teaching practical as well as academic skills and in helping to strengthen community-school relations.

The Enga programme can be viewed as a prototype and used as a basis for teacher discussion and training in the teachers' colleges. Given the enormous diversity of this country, however, there can be no single prescriptive model for community development. Local communities need to define the roles that they wish their own local schools and teachers to play. Where these goals are not already well defined, teachers, particularly if they have received some training in this area, can make a direct contribution to this process by helping village leaders to articulate education goals and objectives.



Two mothers who came to cook, and help to feed the children during the Kaiapit Festival of Arts (1991).

The Teacher as Cultural Broker

A community's response to schooling is affected not only by its perceptions of the instrumental outcomes of formal education but also by its perceptions of the expressive or cultural aspects of schooling. Most importantly in this regard are the ways in which schooling is perceived to affect a child's values and identity. This is an area which has received little systematic attention from educational researchers in Papua New Guinea or from those who formulate educational policies. Many have noted concern over the years that the Western-oriented system of education has alienated Papua New Guinean youngsters from their families and communities. Those young people who have left school but who have been unsuccessful in their quest for further education or jobs are frequently described as 'big-headed' and disobedient, lacking appreciation for traditional ways of knowing and for traditional systems of authority. School leavers are also said to be pulled between cultures, dissatisfied with village life, yet poorly equipped or disposed to change it and unable to fit in elsewhere.

If parents are unhappy with the values that their children learn in community school, and we believe that such a feeling is fairly widespread in rural areas, it sheds further light on the issues of why parents are not more supportive of their community schools. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, parents embraced the notion that children went to school to acquire European values and European jobs. Most parents at that time saw only what they and their children had to gain

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from a Western-style education. Few focused on what they had to lose if schools caused children to reject their village roots and cultures.

Do parents believe that community schools are equipping young people with the values, attitudes and skills that they will need to be successful adult members of their communities? This is a question which teachers can be trained to ask of parents and community leaders. The answers may reveal how schools and teachers can become more responsive to community needs.

Community school teachers will be better able to deal with their situation as cultural brokers if they seek to understand how the community and parents view the role of teachers, how formal education does or does not fit into the village social structure, and how village life impacts upon what goes on in the classroom (Carrier 1983; Pomponio 1985). Parents and teachers both want children to be successful, but they may have very different notions about the meaning of success and what it actually entails to become a successful adult. Moreover, just what success and achievement mean to parents will vary from one cultural group to another. For teachers to be effective educators in the communities to which they are posted, they need the skills to work with parents and community leaders and to try to see the world and the school from their perspectives.



Proud Zumim community school students showing off the stall built by their community to sell coconuts and watermelons grown by the community (1991).

Educational policy makers, planners, and teacher educators in Papua New Guinea have given little attention to the connections between school and community. They ignore them at their peril (Carrier 1983). Teachers and those training to be teachers need to be given the opportunity to reflect upon the kinds of values taught in schools and how these values complement or conflict with those that children learn at home and in their communities. They need to see themselves as cultural brokers, mediating between school and community and helping young people to deal constructively with the different sets of values to which they are exposed.

Where possible, teachers need to utilize their own knowledge of traditional Melanesian values and styles of learning to help them be more effective teachers. They need a chance to explore such basic Papua New Guinean concepts as 'sharing' and 'reciprocal exchange' and their implications for improving relations between school and community (O'Collins 1980). They need to look at why some and perhaps most Papua New Guineans believe a child of seven or eight, or even one considerably older, is too young for formal instruction (Cheetham 1980). They need to explore how the school year and school activities can complement such traditional ceremonies as the Trobriand yam harvest, rather than operating in competition with them, thus contributing to high absenteeism and loss of interest in school (Pumuye 1978). They need to understand that parents in the communities where they teach are likely to evaluate the community school teachers' behaviour using local village criteria (versus those of the Department of Education), and that to be successful in 'winning over parents in a rural village' teachers need to learn just what these local criteria are (Pomponio 1985:249).

In sum, we believe that community school teachers need an understanding of the social and cultural context of schooling in Papua New Guinea. Such training should not be principally theoretical, but rather a combination of theory and practical application. Community school teachers would find great practical value and could put into immediate use many of the techniques used by cultural anthropologists in their field work (cf. Apelis 1980). Teachers could learn about the anthropological techniques of participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, event analysis, and the collection of oral histories and then use these techniques in their communities to help them build stronger relations between community and school. Teachers could also teach their students how to carry out simple interviews, draw village maps, gather genealogical information, collect life histories and learn about local legends and belief systems. Armed with these techniques, teachers could then involve students in class projects which would enrich their understanding of their extended families, their villages, their clans and their clan histories. Such projects would serve as well to deepen teachers' knowledge of the village in which they work and to demonstrate in a very tangible way their interest in and respect for the local culture.

A teachers' course in anthropology needs also to include attention to traditional Melanesian religious belief systems and the role they have played and continue to play in Papua New Guinean societies. Teachers can then incorporate into their classroom teaching examples of local ritual practices regarding such things as death and dying, or local toboos related to gardening and fishing, or information on ancestor worship. By drawing pupils' attention to the wide array of belief systems that exist in their villages, rather than focusing entirely on

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Christian religious education, as is the current practice, teachers can help children deepen their appreciation of their cultural heritage.

Activities such as these would contribute directly to reinforcing clan or ethnic pride and identity. In times of rapid social change, such as we have in Papua New Guinea today, and which the schools themselves are helping to foster, it is essential that young people can assimilate these changes from the security of a strong and positive sense of cultural identity. Teachers have an important role to play here.



Kaipit community school students demonstrating the emu dance.

The sort of teacher training we are describing has become mandatory in many colleges of education in multiethnic Western societies where teachers are faced in their classrooms with children of linguistic and cultural backgrounds different from their own. Often the most difficult aspect of such courses when taught in Western societies is helping the neophyte or even the experienced teacher to understand the basic concept of culture, and the legitimacy of different cultural systems. This is because a majority of the teachers, as members of the dominant ethnic group, have not been faced with the necessity of learning how to negotiate between two or more distinctly different systems. Here in Papua New Guinea such a necessity is routine. Here all teachers speak two, three, four, or even more languages. All know the difficulties, as well as the rewards, of gaining competencies in multiple cultural systems. All also have first-hand experience of the conflicts between Melanesian and Western value systems. Thus, in designing and teaching a course on the social and cultural foundations of education, or what is often referred to as the 'anthropology of education' the teachers, and student-teachers' own experiences of life would provide both the content and the context.

What we are recommending, is an anthropology course designed specifically for community school teachers in which the teachers would be the course's major resource. The course ideally should include a field component to help teachers practise the skills they have learned and to help them come to terms with their role as mediators between community and classroom (cf. O'Collins 1980). There are many anthropologists with a deep knowledge of Papua New Guinea who could serve as resource persons in the preparation of such a course.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

One final area which we believe needs the urgent attention of the National Department of Education and teachers' colleges is the matter of how a community school's success is evaluated. When asked what the criteria are for judging a school's success, many teachers respond with students' performance on the Grade 6 final examination and the number of children selected for high school. When pushed for additional criteria, many have difficulty responding. As long as this continues to be the case, the majority of students attending community schools in the rural areas will be doomed to failure and community-school relations will inevitably suffer.

Teachers must be encouraged to broaden the criteria by which they judge their own achievements as well as those of their pupils. For this to occur, however, they will need a different kind of training and will need a different set of criteria governing their inspections. Inspections must be broadened to include the teacher's effectiveness as a mediator between the community and the classroom, his or her ability to reinforce ethnic pride and identity, and to help children acquire the skills they will need to fit successfully into their rapidly changing communities.

Recent research in multiethnic Western societies indicates that parents' support for schooling and, in turn, their children's academic performance, are very closely tied to parental attitudes about the expressive outcomes of schooling, as well as the instrumental aspects. This is especially true in the case of parents' whose home language and culture are different from those of the teacher and the school. Where parents view school learning and the acquisition of the new language and culture as a replacement process leading children to reject their ethnic identity and culture, school performance suffers and drop-out rates are very high. On the other hand, where parents see school learning as an additive process leading not to a rejection of the old culture but to the child's successful participation in both the larger society and in the community of his or her birth, student performance is found to be far better (Gibson 1988; Gibson and Ogbu, in press). These findings from other multilingual and multiethnic societies would appear to have important implications for educational policy in Papua New Guinea and, in turn, for the criteria by which the community school's success is measured.

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