

TAPE ONE

R G PETER: Well Bob you have asked me about this period, this decade and a bit from 1948 to about 1958. In Western Australia, in the field of Teacher Education, as a background to answering that you have got to understand where the Claremont Teachers College stood in the eyes of the teaching profession at that time. It was a small College, it was a remote College in the sense that it didn't fit into the normal career plans of teachers, an appointment there was a very rare thing. It was almost as if it were outside the Department altogether, and it was with considerable surprise that I received my invitation to begin there in 1948 as a temporary lecturer in Psychology. Luckily I had worked with and followed in the footsteps of Neil Traylen as a Psychologist in the RAAF. We had both been in the air crew side of the Air Force, and after we had finished our flying careers we both transferred across to the Psychological Division of the Royal Australian Air Force. Neil took over the Western Command psychology area and I followed him, he went to the Claremont Teachers College and I followed him there. So I began lecturing with tremendous awe of the College and the colleagues with whom I worked at the time. Teacher training in those days was a fairly absolute thing, the objectives were set, the course was set, variations were not easily approved and in fact occurred quite rarely, and they were of a minor nature when they did occur. Also they tended to follow changes that had already taken place in the British pattern. For example, the introduction of major areas of study in round about 1949, Claremont followed the Main Areas as the British call them in the British Colleges of Education, innovation which had occurred some time earlier. The length of training for primary teachers was two years, and this was of course the basic course at the College, but in addition the College carried out training for Manual Training specialists, Home Economic specialists, participated in Kindergarten training, trained for Secondary teaching, took University Graduates and gave them a years training of a professional kind, and also took failed University people and gave them modified teacher training course. So that the College was an omnibus College, it did everything that should be done in Teacher Education at the time.

B. ROGERS: Bob you are mentioning some changes and you said they followed an overseas pattern, which changes did you think were the most important at the time, and were you associated personally, feeling very very much that there should be one or two adjustments that were made.

R G PETER: Well, as a novice, I didn't see my role as an initiator of change for some years. So I stood by and simply helped to bring into existence the changes proposed by Senior Administration. And I indicated that one of the changes was the changing emphasis on the acquisition of teaching skills and methodology generally, to a sharing of that emphasis with a general education thrust, and I think that is what the Majors or the Optional Subjects as they were called in those days, Options I think was the title we used. That was the thrust of the Options, to allow students to go

into depth in one of the areas of the Primary School curriculum, and later on, areas which were not directly associated with the Primary School curriculum. As for other changes, it is hard to identify much else that changed in that decade, and I often look back on the way in which the Calendar was changed from year to year. One crossed out the date, added the new staff, subtracted the people who had left, made a minor correction here and there and the new calendar emerges, you know, this is indicative of a steady state situation as far as the curriculum/teacher education was concerned. Techniques were very much the lecture technique in preparation for an examination system of assessment. Assignments were gradually becoming more important, and I think that was the precursor of the continuous assessment scheme which came round about 1968 or thereabouts.

B ROGERS:

Bob, if you were saying that the, in so to speak, amongst the landmarks was this extension in depth of study, what affect do you think this would have on the trainee teachers who are going out, would that have been changed when you look back over that decade? Do you feel there would have been much of a change in approach from the students of the late 40's to the students of the middle/late 50's.

R G PETER:

I think the, I'd go further back. I would have made the first comparison between the middle 30's and the late 40's. Remember I'd been at College a decade before, the emphasis at that time had been very much on techniques of classroom instruction teaching, the general education side was secondary to all this. Although some of us opted to do University Units, well that was really our choice and was possible, especially in the short courses in the 30's, to go through train to be a teacher without adding very much to your general education. Now when the emphasis began to show itself in this way, that is in the way of increasing the general education component, it seemed to me it had some important effects, one of which was to indicate to teachers that the continuing intellectual or academic growth of the teacher was just as important as the mastery of teaching techniques, and it widened the horizons and lifted the aspirations of teachers in this respect so they began to seek degrees, first of all the Bachelors Degree this was the top aspiration I suppose in the 40's and 50's. But later on it became the Masters Degree and then later on still I suppose the Doctoral Degree.

B ROGERS:

I am wondering, Bob, if this is connected with, amongst your many functions then, one of being the Examiner and Chief Examiner in Educational Psychology, did you see Psychology as becoming more and more an important component in the training of teachers?

R G PETER:

I have always regarded Psychology in its various forms as being the basic element in the training of the teacher. Because for me it leads to an understanding of the important parts of the education process, which simplified might be, a learner, a person who facilitates learning and the learning process itself. That is apart from what one is attempting to learn or teach as the case may be. I substantiated this view to some extent in a follow-up of teachers in my six years of the prediction of teaching success, and I found that

the highest correlation between what happened in a College and what happened in field teaching, occurred in the area of Psychology, its relationship with later success in teaching was the highest that I could establish in my study, and the highest that has been established in any study anywhere in the world.

B ROGERS: And I think in that time, Bob, you went from the position of Lecturer to the Head of your own Department in the field?

R G PETER: This was a very rare thing actually, and I was, I think the third or fourth to be promoted in the Post-War period. So it was regarded as a very important landmark, it was a moment of great personal satisfaction.

B ROGERS: And unless I am telling stories out of school, I think that you were also tutoring in psychology at the University of Western Australia during the same period.

R G PETER: This is something that was encouraged, of course. It was one of the several things that I did apart from lecturing in psychology. Ahead of that I would place my ten years consultancy with the Royal Australian Air Force in the field of psychology.

B ROGERS: I think there you were the consultant psychologist to the Royal Australian Air Force in Western Australia?

R G PETER: Thats right, yes. Chiefly concerned with the selection of air crew, officers and ground crew.

B ROGERS: And you were mentioning earlier about the idea of trying to predict the right sort of person, in terms of who would be a good teacher, I suppose this came over also into your field in the Air Force when you were trying to predict who would be most suitable?

R G PETER: Yes, there is a relationship, I think, between the two situations. Different factors, of course, emerged, but one thing came through fairly clearly to me, and that is that if an individual is armed with a fairly high level of general intelligence, and can apply that intelligence in a balanced mature way, then he has good chance of success in whatever field he chooses.

B ROGERS: And during this period, Bob, you would have done some writing could you perhaps give us some idea of the writing you were undertaking as well as tutoring and working up to Head of Department.

R G PETER: The main writing I did was in connection with the presentation of courses in Educational Psychology both for students at the Claremont Teachers College and for teachers engaged in the Teachers Certificate courses conducted by the Education Department, and later the Teachers Higher Certificate. These were published at Claremont and in fact became a kind of text book. But they were also I found later in demand by teachers for their examinations, and I was flattered to find that University students also used them. But I wouldn't claim they reached the standard of a present-day publication.

B ROGERS:

I don't agree perhaps.

R G PETER:

Other features that are worthy of follow-up or notice, Bob, during that period 1948 -1958, by comparison with the Decade before the war would be the attempt to develop the personal qualities of the student through a host of experiences which could be called extra-mural, such as camps, concerts and the like. Also visits to interstate carnivals, sporting and cultural. A second characteristic of the period as far as students were concerned, was the attempt to develop greater responsibility and student governance, student affairs. This was strongly supported by the Principal, Mr Sten and the Vice-Principal, Mr Traylen at the time. There was probably a strong mother-hen atmosphere at the College at the beginning of that period, which was beginning to dissipate by the end of the Decade, and we find that in the next Decade this changed quite radically.

We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that during this decade, there was tremendous pressure on Claremont Teachers College to meet the great demand for teachers in the post-war period. A result of this was the formation of the Graylands Teachers College as a temporary measure in 1955, and if I may insert one other factor to, the first part of the decade in question was characterised by the mature age enrolment, ex-serviceman ex-servicewomen, in the frame-work of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, and they were in the College in great numbers during the first half of the decade.

B ROGERS:

And I think, Bob, when you did mention about Graylands being formed in 1955, you were subsequently to join the staff at Graylands, and if I am correct, you became Principal at Graylands.

R G PETER:

Yes, I joined the staff in 1964 and became the Principal in 1966, which rather surprised me.

On a personal note, and in relation to the work that I was doing from 1964 onwards, that is when I became Vice-Principal of Graylands College and so joined the ranks of Senior Academic Administrators, rather than teaching, lecturing, the most notable contribution to that was the great responsibility thrust on me and other lecturers, during the period 1948 to 58 when there was practically no support staff, one typist, I think, for the first few years. Later on some clerical assistance other than typing. This resulted in the devolution of these responsibilities, or of administrative responsibilities, on the academic staff, and at one stage I counted some twenty-two duties that I had, in addition to teaching duties. Now not all these were major things, but they gave me a tremendous background in administration and also in administrivia, which is an inescapable part of the administrator's life.

B ROGERS:

Another thing, Bob, that its often been said that Graylands, and you were mentioning Graylands from the days of its conception when you were aware of staff and students going over, that the old College was noted for its spirit, do you think, how could you sort of define what could be the spirit.

R G PETER:

Well, I think that the spirit of Graylands was real enough, although I think also it has tended to be built up and developed a little bit out of proportion, somewhat to the detriment of other Colleges which I think might be a bit unfair to the students of those colleges. As a small college, as a homogeneous college, as a disadvantaged college, it developed a strength in unity and a feeling of being different from the others, but in addition to that its my hypothesis that the college attracted persons who were somewhat gifted in their social and sporting talents, resulting in a greater immediately effectiveness in the schools when they left the college. By contrast the University, and the Claremont Teachers College, tended to attract the more academically oriented students who may have taken a little longer to find their feet in the schools and develop effectiveness. So it could be said that Graylands Graduates were probably more sought after and more effective in the first few years after they left the college, and this could be the beginning of the Graylands ethos if you wish to call it that. In addition there are other factors, such as the self fulfilling prophecy, they were expected to be better, and perhaps they tried a bit harder and were better in the early years. But my own research in my follow-up study of teachers, indicates that the initial advantages of the non-academic student which I link to his sporting and social talents, greater capacity to get along with people, handle people, this advantage tended to wear off after four or so years, when the other type of student gathered the experience that enabled him to compete with the Graylands Graduate I suppose.

B ROGERS:

Bob, I understand in 1959 there was change in direction of your career as a psychologist in teaching and your interest in training teachers, and you became a U.N.E.S.C.O. Consultant in Teacher Education and Educational Research to the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, Indonesia. How did this come about?

R G PETER:

In the most remarkable way! I was at the time at Claremont College, also Secretary to the W.A. Institute for Educational Research, and from time to time the higher professional division of the Department, the Commonwealth Employment Service as it was known at the time, used to contact me in relation to overseas appointments, because it was a recruiting source, and one afternoon the officer rang me and asked me if I knew of a person who has the following qualities: a strong interest in psychology and Educational Psychology in particular, a strong interest in Teacher Education and experience in Teacher Education and a strong interest in developing countries, and I said yes, that just about describes me. He said, I thought it would, and obviously I think he had rung me in order to see whether I was interested, and that was the beginning. The next thing I knew I was offered a position by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation of the type and nature that you described. Now that began what I consider to be the most exciting episode in my personal and professional life. The Indonesian experience is something so unusual that you, I find it difficult to describe, but it is a change in the sense that it takes you back a century sometimes two centuries in time, to a world that might have existed then, and has remained unchanged since. It takes you to a world which seems to be so isolated from the rest of the world that it staggers the imagination that this could

be so, at a period when communications, science and transportation are so highly developed.

B ROGERS: Bob, where were you stationed, I take it it would be in Djakarta?

R G PETER: First I went to Mundal, mainly because there was no accommodation in Djakarta. It took <sup>me</sup> a year to get back to Djakarta, where I spent the next three years. I spent a lot of time travelling right over the Archipeligo in various forms.

I suppose the most exciting thing to me was to witness the evolution of an education system, from the time of the development of philosophy through the social agitations and changes and clamourings through to the political implementation stage and right through to the development of the, or the reification ~~of~~ if you like of policy, philosophies and so on into actuality in schools and school systems. This process is very rarely observable to a person because its a process that normally goes on over centuries of time, and here it was all incapsulated in a very short period of time, and this was staggering to behold.

B ROGERS: Did you find some basic differences in approach between Indonesian system which could be linked with the Asian idea of education as compared to your own training in what one might perhaps style a Western college with a Western approach.

R G PETER: There were many contrasts, I think, rather than points of similarity. The basic thrust was of course literacy, but many people saw education as a way to an improved standard of living, and a way of, for the women it was seen as a way of emancipation to some extent. Unhappily, these motives dominated the system unduly, so that instead of education serving the actual needs of the Indonesian nation which were mainly developmental needs, leading to, or technical needs, people used education as a way of getting a status in life, so economics became more important than trades because to be an economist or a lawyer was important, to be a tradesman was not important. The so-called white collar complex, or in Indonesia it was more a dirty hands complex, dominated their thinking and influenced their attitude towards education, and in turn influenced the way education developed.

B ROGERS: Bob, I've been looking at your list of publications in the training of teachers and the educational problems of Indonesia and of Asia as such, I was wondering what would be some of your main impressions of the problems that were confronting you then.

R G PETER: I saw the main problem as a management one, the higher echelon in the Indonesian education structure, higher echelon of administrators were by our standards naive, unsophisticated and poorly informed, and so the most prosaic thing, that is from my view-point as a person who had been in a teachers college for ten years, was to them quite revolutionary, innovatory, even mind-boggling, and I can recall when I first introduced to them the fairly common technique of conducting a conference using small group discussion technique

and group dynamic theory, that they were absolutely amazed. Their conferences had been conducted in an authoritarian pact with the director speaking for considerable time, and then listening, and that was the general way in which they accepted conferences. For them to participate in small groups and take up leadership roles, or recording roles, or porting roles was highly exciting, and this became the general pattern for conferences all over Indonesia from then on, but that's just one example of many of what I am trying to get at, that practically all that I learned was it appeared new to them, even challenging and exciting.

B ROGERS:

Yes, and just again looking at your publications, Bob, I was noticing that the title for one of your publications was "Master Plan of Operations for Education in Indonesia" and while I feel this would cover some of the points you have been making about management, would there be any other also important ideas in the master plan that you would care to discuss?

R G PETER:

Master Plan was a document prepared for U.N.I.C.E.F., remember I had worked for U.N.E.S.C.O. from 1959 to 1962 and was invited back to Indonesia in 1963, for a relatively short mission to prepare a Master Plan covering the areas of Primary Teacher Training, Libraries, Home Economics and Science Education. Some of these fields were not mine in the sense of my basic discipline, but I was required to develop a plan covering a five year period. Nevertheless, I can't identify anything in particular that emerged from this except that it was accepted by the Executive Board of U.N.I.C.E.F. in New York in January 1964 and put into practice. I can recall this one anecdote or funny incident as I thought of it at the time in relation to this. I had in 1962 asked some Senior Indonesian Administrators to prepare a list of tools and equipment for a manual training situation in an Indonesian village context, and to help them with it I'd given them a tremendous catalogue. They went away and prepared a list which unhappily involved electric tools of all kinds, quite inappropriate for a village situation without electricity and I put the list in the drawer and forgot about it, and then shortly after I left the country. Now when I came back in 1963 I was staggered to find this list had been resurrected and forwarded to U.N.I.C.E.F. and adopted by U.N.I.C.E.F. as being a standard list of tools and equipment for villages in Asia. That illustrates just how naive the people were, how unsophisticated they were in matters that were quite common to, or common knowledge if you like to people in the western technological setting.

In the late 50's and 60's, the question of teacher education was prominent in the minds of Asian educators, and the various United Nations Agencies, such as U.N.E.S.C.O. and U.N.I.C.E.F. responded to this move. A tangible expression of their concern was the setting up in Manilla in 1962 of a conference involving the Directors and Superintendents, and sometimes the Ministers responsible for teacher education in about 16 Asian Countries. I was invited to be the consultant to the conference, and at the conclusion of the conference, helped to draft the report which was later published, "Problems of Teacher Education in Asia".

The thing that emerged there was the fact that all these countries had the same sorts of basic problems. Problems of illiteracy, problems of attitudes, such as the attitude towards technical work, trade work and so on, which plagued them all, problems too I think of sheer money for capital development, building the colleges for the training of teachers. The impression I got too was that the quantitative aspect of teacher education was quite staggering. Their requirements ran into hundreds of thousands, and they were forced, therefore, to adopt emergency training measures whereby people often boys and girls at the tender age of 13 or 14 at the completion of a primary school education went straight into a teachers college which had to prepare them for teaching, at the same time give them a secondary education.

B ROGERS:

Bob, in view of all your commitments in Asia and so on, do you see yourself, in the future, keeping up ties with Asia and perhaps playing another role in the forward movement of Asian education?

R G PETER:

Yes, I would myself like to return to Asia, although there are certain factors which are not favourable, for example, in recent years they have adopted a policy in the United Nations Agencies of the non-recruitment of people over the age of 60. This didn't apply before, but it does now, so I'm I think probably dreaming a little bit when I say I would like to return, but I feel an affinity for the Asian seen, I thought that I got on very well with Asian educators and Asian people, non educators, and would like to spend some more time during the retirement years.



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Tape 2

TAPE TWO

B ROGERS:

Bob, you were saying to me that when you came back to Australia and to an appointment as the Senior Lecturer-in-charge of Department of Psychology and Principal Lecturer at Claremont Teachers College, their ideas more or less fermenting in your mind particularly how you could influence the structure of teaching education, who could create worthwhile changes, and I note that you were a Senior Lecturer-in-Charge, therefore, comparatively a short period, then you moved on to being Vice Principal at Graylands, and I was wondering if you could give us some idea of what was in your mind as the Senior Lecturer thinking of what could happen, then you move on to a position when you are the Vice Principal and starting to be able to have a greater influence on the structure of teacher education.

R G PETER:

Just a correction in terms of the dates. I was Senior Lecturer-in-Charge of the Department of Psychology from 1956 before I went to Indonesia, so I had, and before that I had been nominally in charge, but I gained the appointment to Senior Lecturer in 56. When I came back from Indonesia, I admit to a certain restlessness. I had been concerned for four years with the structure and administration of education, the policy making issues, and I had seen as I explained before, this encapsulation of the processes that normally take decades and decades to come about, that is to say, the translation of societal and community wishes and desires and needs into actual educational programs. In Indonesia this has all been compacted into a few short years. This process I found quite fascinating and I don't think it was unnatural that I should become a little impatient with the fairly mundane process of lecturing in say remedial education to first year students, or whatever, and to be quite frank, I don't know quite how long I would have lasted if it hadn't been for the fortunate event of having an appointment, or gaining an appointment as Vice Principal of Graylands Teachers College, which I accepted with alacrity and for the first time saw myself in a position where I could possibly give some direction to the broader issues of structure of teacher education programs. So this I would call a water-shed in my career when I went from teaching, in a relatively narrow field to fairly responsible administration, and you will recall that within two years I was Principal of Graylands, and so had an even greater opportunity to exert influence over the determination of policy, translation of policy and the initiation of policy, and I think it is fair to say that it was in the period from 1966 to 69 at Graylands College, that many of the important changes that were to take place later in teacher education were born. I refer to things which are quite every day now, but which in those times were fairly revolutionary in the context of a strongly authoritarian teacher education system, in which the College was embedded in the administration of the Education Department. This such as the Semester system,

R G PETER:  
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who would have thought that the Colleges would have departed from the Lockstep system whereby we have the same holidays, the same terms as the schools, primary schools in particular. So the Semester system was an important event. Remember that this had the effect of reducing the weekly burden of a student from 16 or so subjects over a five day week, to about 8, admittedly he didn't follow them for the same continuous period of time, but at least the strain on the mind, his capacity to receive information, and the capacity to follow up lines of instruction and teaching, transmitted by the lecturers, was greatly enhanced. I felt that that was one of the big steps forward. Who would have thought that the lecture would give way to all kinds of other techniques, teaching strategies involving audio visual techniques, workshop techniques and so on, and yet it did within four or five years after that particular period, but I think it began at Graylands.

Similarly, the next problem of how to weld theory and practice in education, I think was given a good start in thinking although it wasn't put into practice at Graylands, it was left to the Mt Lawley College to do that through the device we then called the Teaching Practice Workshop, which took two forms. First, a weekly session of a half day devoted to the eminently practical aspects of teaching. That is classroom oriented activities conducted in the schools, followed up at the college by the methods lecturers and the teaching practice lecturers. The other form the teaching workshop took was a week devoted to specific teaching practises. Remember that before this students would procede to the schools cold almost, they might the schools on the Friday afternoon and start teaching on the Monday. We abolished all lectures in the whole week before the teaching practice and set up a system whereby students could receive counselling on specific teaching tasks set for them in the teaching practice situation, but that was an important step.

Again, who would have thought in the authoritarian system of the Department and Teaching Education, that students and staff would have a voice in the day by day administration as well as the policy determination, and yet that had its genesis at Graylands and was put into wider practice with the formation of the Mt. Lawley College, through committee structures in general. I think also, we began to examine the curriculum of teacher education more closely at Graylands. I, with others, considered it was too vast, that students were expected to master too many fields of study, that students were unable to concentrate on areas of interest, that in the process of trying to tackle up to 22 subjects they very often lost interest and finished up with their energies and their interests spread over too wide a canvas. So we made changes in the structure which would allow students to exploit their interests and talents more widely than was ever possible before.

The list wouldn't be complete without a mention of the radical change in assessment techniques. The examination, following a series of lectures ~~was~~ was fairly firmly entrenched. It was something that lecturers were used to, were comfortable with and tended to perpetuate for a number of reasons. Moves were made at Graylands to introduce a system whereby instruktural methods were changed, as I mentioned, but concomitant with this came a change in the way in which students were assessed. The two go together, in fact. If you abandon or modify your style, your teaching style so as to incorporate more work activity

R G PETER:  
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during lectures, then it's obvious that you are presented with an opportunity to change your assessment style, because students begin to behave, instead of being passive, and when they behave you can start to measure behaviour, and we began to measure behaviour in the continuous assessment style, and the examination, the final exam, began to disappear slowly and the disappearance was fairly complete after two or three years, well after the first year at Mt. Lawley, after the establishment of Mt. Lawley.

B ROGERS:

Bob, just a point here that is not too clear to me at the moment, is how many of these changes were sort of thought about and considered at Graylands and how many did you go on to implement at Mt. Lawley. Where did the implementation commence?

R G PETER:

Well, I feel they were probably all thought of in the last couple of years that I was at Graylands. A number of staff that subsequently transferred to Mt. Lawley from Graylands were interested in changing the face of teacher education and I think it was fair to say that they were probably all thought of there, but Mt. Lawley presented the opportunity to change them thoroughly without the problem of tradition and history.

B ROGERS:

Bob, you said without the problem of tradition and history, but I take it there were obstacles to overcome?

R G PETER:

While the Education Department was in charge, while they selected students and then employed the same students, we accepted their right to determine the nature of the curriculum, and the way in which we went about implementing it. But they proved to be fairly resilient it transpired, and part of this I think was due to the fact that probably only one man in the Department was really interested in teacher education, and that of course was Neil Traylen, and Neil gave me plenty of scope and in fact encouraged initiatives, and the rest of the Department didn't care about teacher education anyway, so that made it a bit easier.

One of my most interesting research interests was in the prediction of teaching success. I don't claim that what I did was at all world shattering, but it was extremely fruitful as far as I'm concerned. I took a group of people who entered the Teachers College, Claremont, in 1948 and trained there in that year and the following year, and then taught in the four years subsequently. The group initially was about 300, but through attrition we came down to about 220, for whom there were fairly comprehensive reports available.

I applied to them in 1948 a number of measures on entry, all sorts of psycho-metric measure, intelligence, spacial capacity, spacial analysis that is, mechanical ability, or aptitude, verbal capacity, number capacity or aptitude, story-telling ability in the sense of a formal test, written expression things of that nature. And then during the training year, a number of other measures were available such as their teaching practice marks. I had, of course, their Secondary School record and there was another factor that emerged because of the fact that a lot of post-war reconstruction training students were there, that is the mature

R G PETER:  
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versus the non-mature factor. These measure where then transposed against their teaching success in each of the four years of field teaching that followed, taking success in field teaching as being that judgement which was expressed in the inspectors' marks. I justified this on the grounds that the inspectors in those years were themselves highly experienced teachers and head teachers, perhaps with an average of twenty-five or so years experience. Their judgement transposed into teaching marks became my criterion of teaching success, and a number of findings emerged. For example, there is obviously, in my opinion, anyway, no curvilinear relationship between intelligence and teaching success in the sense that a person with an I.Q. of 105 is better than a person with 100, and a person with an I.Q. of 110 is better than a person with an I.Q. of 105 and so on in a steady one to one relationship or rectilinear relationship. The relationship is curvilinear, did I say curvilinear before, if I did I correct myself. The relationship is curvilinear and not rectilinear, that is to say after an I.Q. of say about 110/112 it doesn't matter very much, that is to say the criterion of extra intelligence points doesn't matter a great deal. What does matter is which of those groups you belong to, there seems to be some sort of cutting point at 110/112, which means that below that point most of your failures occur, and above that point most of your successes occur, but mixed up with the successes will be some people who do reasonably well and mixed up with your failures are some people who will do reasonably well. When it comes to things such as teaching practice, relationship was just about non-existent, it didn't matter very much how well you did in teaching practice, it would appear.

Another interesting relationship was academic prowess, which in the first year or two, operated negatively, so that the brighter academic kids didn't do as well as the less academic in the field teaching situation, but after about four years, the more academic kid caught up and passed the less academic kid. The highest correlation, strangely enough, was in the subject that I taught, by chance, that is psychology, and I identified correlations of the order of Point 6 or higher Point 6.5, between success in psychology courses and success in field teaching. The study illustrated, in a way, that teachers don't have to be brilliant, but it's a definite advantage to have, to be out of the mediocre or normal range of intelligence. It illustrated to me that in the long-run the academically, oriented kind of person will come through and probably make a greater contribution because he is a better thinker, or greater thinker than the other person at the other end of the pole. I say this because it is often said that teachers don't need to have a good knowledge base, a good academic base, and this influenced my philosophy at Mt. Lawley, where I took the view that the course should be strongly oriented towards academics, it should be a difficult course, there should be a good knowledge base, coupled with, of course, as I have already pointed out a very strong emphasis on the marriage between theory and practice.

R G PETER:  
(Cont.)

The selection of teachers is something that can only be considered against a background in which the following factors are given prominence. First, the supply/demand ratio, if a great number of able people offer themselves then its possible to introduce a rather rigorous selection process, then establish what I would then do would be to establish cutting points in which you eliminate the possibility in the persons above the cutting point of failure as far as possible. Now this is ruthless in that you are, at the same time, rejecting people who could have been successful, but the point is that you are also rejecting a lot more people who are potentially failures. So in order to achieve the advantage of eliminating most of your failures, you pay the cost, if your prepared to pay the cost of eliminating some of your successes, then you can improve your eventual selection. That's one part of the background, the other part of the background, I suppose, is the peculiar destination pattern of people who leave colleges. You have got to be realistic and consider that they go to all sorts of unusual outback country and other situations in which certain qualities that you could call non-professional, non-academic qualities are important. For example, if you send a kid up to Warburton Mission and he's got charge of a number of aboriginal kids, how does he grip their attention, how does he gain their respect, and so on, he may have to do it through sport, and so a person skilled in sport might do better there than a person who would ordinarily in more normal circumstances be successful. That's one of the background factors.

I suppose another background factor is the picture, the situation in Western Australia, whereby more women than men offer themselves for Primary teaching, the ratio being something like 3 to 1. Now against that background, you have to perhaps vary what appear to be fairly sensible, otherwise sensible, selection procedures, and as I indicated earlier I would myself take the two main factors of intelligence and academic capacity and establish cutting points if I was allowed to establish cutting points by virtue of the ratio of supply and demand. That was vague, wasn't it?

The actual building of Mt. Lawley could be considered to be an historical phenomenon in that it was the first primary teachers college built as a new building since 1902. Remember that the Secondary Teachers College, although a new building was a, as I said, was a secondary teachers college, and remember also, that when Graylands was established in 1955 it was established in a collection of old huts, so as a physical entity, Mt. Lawley College was the, as I said, the first new primary teachers college to be built since Claremont in 1902. Because of that, obviously there wasn't anyone around to pass down experience as to concept and translation of concept into architectural terms, so it began in this way:

Neil Traylen, the Director of Teacher Education, asked me to co-ordinate 9 or 10 committees, each devoted to a particular aspect of Mt. Lawley. For example, Drama, Music, Psychology, the Physical Education building, and so on, and this was started as early as 1967, and these committees were composed of people at Graylands and Claremont College mainly with some

R G PETER:  
(Cont.)

persons from the Education Department, and they were very active. Some of them even constructed models. One of them emerged with a sketch plan which was in fact very close to what the architects themselves accepted some 2 or 3 years later. So that was the beginning of it, these committees laboured long and hard and developed extensive briefs for the Public Works Department, who were the architects for the enterprise.

The second phase was when the Public Works Department selected their team of architects, headed by Stan Hewitt, and at that point it was possible for me to enter into a working relationship with them, that went on for some years, they visited the college almost daily. I made available to them the ideas of staff or they discussed with staff themselves the concept of particular buildings, and gradually the place began to emerge. In 1969 the first sod was turned, and in September 1970 the south wing of the Administration Building was ready, the Administration and General Teaching Building, and we actually moved in to it from the old Subiaco Teachers Centre where the college was first established.

So having moved in, we began to exert, as a staff, even greater influence, not only on design but also on some of the details of building, and on occasions changes were made overnight, with a minimum of formality. I don't think that the cost of the building was ever really assessed, and I am sure we got very good value from the Public Works.

B ROGERS:

You were also mentioning, sort of the structural nature of the college, were any particularly innovative aspects of the structural nature of the administration of the college?

R G PETER:

I suppose the development of committees of different kinds, such as Staff Committee, Academic Committee, Student Affairs Committee, and so on, and their development into fairly powerful committees, this was a change in structure. Up till that time I think the only really important group in college was called the Staff Meeting, and this was informal was more a place for people, on occasion, to air their views, than to make policy or decisions, the committees began to make decisions, and that was the forerunner possibly of the autonomous situation in which a college board was formed with committee such as the Academic Committee, the Staff Committee, the Student Affairs Committee and so on.

B ROGERS:

Bob, were you able to implement the ideas that you had been considering, you mentioned before the Semesters, and related ideas. Were you able to implement these points from the word 'go'?

R G PETER:

Yes, we took the opportunity to do this, rather than transport an existing system and then perhaps change it later. We took the opportunity with the establishment of the college, to introduce the changes immediately, and that is why I feel that they were fairly successful in developing.

and group dynamic theory, that they were absolutely amazed. Their conferences had been conducted in an authoritarian pact with the director speaking for considerable time, and then listening, and that was the general way in which they accepted conferences. For them to participate in small groups and take up leadership roles, or recording roles, or porting roles was highly exciting, and this became the general pattern for conferences all over Indonesia from then on, but that's just one example of many of what I am trying to get at, that practically all that I learned was it appeared new to them, even challenging and exciting.

B ROGERS:

Yes, and just again looking at your publications, Bob, I was noticing that the title for one of your publications was "Master Plan of Operations for Education in Indonesia" and while I feel this would cover some of the points you have been making about management, would there be any other also important ideas in the master plan that you would care to discuss?

R G PETER:

Master Plan was a document prepared for U.N.I.C.E.F., remember I had worked for U.N.E.S.C.O. from 1959 to 1962 and was invited back to Indonesia in 1963, for a relatively short mission to prepare a Master Plan covering the areas of Primary Teacher Training, Libraries, Home Economics and Science Education. Some of these fields were not mine in the sense of my basic discipline, but I was required to develop a plan covering a five year period. Nevertheless, I can't identify anything in particular that emerged from this except that it was accepted by the Executive Board of U.N.I.C.E.F. in New York in January 1964 and put into practice. I can recall this one anecdote or funny incident as I thought of it at the time in relation to this. I had in 1962 asked some Senior Indonesian Administrators to prepare a list of tools and equipment for a manual training situation in an Indonesian village context, and to help them with it I'd given them a tremendous catalogue. They went away and prepared a list which unhappily involved electric tools of all kinds, quite inappropriate for a village situation without electricity and I put the list in the draw and forgot about it, and then shortly after I left the country. Now when I came back in 1963 I was staggered to find this list had been resurrected and forwarded to U.N.I.C.E.F. and adopted by U.N.I.C.E.F. as being a standard list of tools and equipment for villages in Asia. That illustrates just how naive the people were, how unsophisticated they were in matters that were quite common to, or common knowledge if you like to people in the western technological setting.

In the late 50's and 60's, the question of teacher education was prominent in the minds of Asian educators, and the various United Nations Agencies, such as U.N.E.S.C.O. and U.N.I.C.E.F. responded to this move. A tangible expression of their concern was the setting up in Manila in 1962 of a conference involving the Directors and Superintendents, and sometimes the Ministers responsible for teacher education in about 16 Asian Countries. I was invited to be the consultant to the conference, and at the conclusion of the conference, helped to draft the report which was later published, "Problems of Teacher Education in Asia".



The thing that emerged there was the fact that all these countries had the same sorts of basic problems. Problems of illiteracy, problems of attitudes, such as the attitude towards technical work, trade work and so on, which plagued them all, problems too I think of sheer money for capital development, building the colleges for the training of teachers. The impression I got too was that the contentive aspect of teacher education was quite staggering. Their requirements ran into hundreds of thousands, and they were forced, therefore, to adopt emergency training measures whereby people often boys and girls at the tender age of 13 or 14 at the completion of a primary school education went straight into a teachers college which had to prepare them for teaching, at the same time give them a secondary education.

B ROGERS:

Bob, in view of all your commitments in Asia and so on, do you see yourself, in the future, keeping up ties with Asia and perhaps paying another role in the forward movement of Asian education?

R G PETER:

Yes, I would myself like to return to Asia, although there are certain factors which are not favourable, for example, in recent years they have adopted a policy in the United Nations Agencies of the non-recruitment of people over the age of 60. This didn't apply before, but it does now, so I'm I think probably dreaming a little bit when I say I would like to return, but I feel an affinity for the Asian seen, I thought that I got on very well with Asian educators and Asian people, non educators, and would like to spend some more time during the retirement years.