

Editorial

This journal is published for members of the Australian Association of Special Education and the New Zealand Special Education Association by the first of those two organisations. As a result, the journal tries to meet the needs of Association members in both countries by reporting the best ideas from theory, public policy and practice from research in Special Education. But Special Educators in Australia and New Zealand are not insular. We need to learn of developments in Special Education practice as they emerge in other countries, too. We need to be able to benefit from developments in countries with larger budgets for research on intervention with people with disabilities or learning difficulties and who share similar cultural traditions and challenges to our own.

It is important that efforts are made to increase the strength of the voices which our Associations can bring to our respective communities concerning our students' needs. As governments face increasing financial pressures and education authorities are forced to consider less costly forms of education service provision, there is a danger that the very sound arguments for "inclusive" Special Education in the least restrictive environments are used as a rationale for leaving students with special needs in regular classrooms with minimal support services. Such an eventuality is possible in both Australian and New Zealand education systems, as both countries grapple with effects on their economies of the worldwide recession. It is to be hoped that in both countries, practitioners can continue their past achievements in striving to find the best educational solutions for individuals with special learning needs despite the shifting economic circumstances. This journal should continue to provide a forum for Special Educators in both countries to explore these issues and to report useful practices from our research. It is hoped that each issue will be relevant to readers in our two countries in particular, and that contributions will continue from both sides of the Tasman.

The present issue of the journal reflects a number of perspectives in addressing these issues. James Kauffman's paper is a thought provoking examination of current developments in Special Education in the United States. Among other issues, Kauffman comments on the extreme position taken by ideologues promoting regular class placement for all special education students. This paper, delivered as the keynote address to the Australian Association of Special Education conference in Perth in 1992, argues for a more rational approach to Special Education service delivery.

Keri Wilton's paper and keynote address to the 1992 New Zealand Special Education Association Conference is also concerned with dangers of the new Regular Education ideology in times of economic restraint. In particular, children with mild intellectual disability are seen to have suffered from recent reorganisation of Special Education in that country.

The remaining articles in this issue reflect perspective on Special Education from four Australian states or territories. Lewin and Fletcher from Western Australia report from clinical experience on the effect of taking prescribed doses of Ritalin on the behaviour of children with Attention Deficit Disorder. Articles by Westwood and Palmer in South Australia and Dempsey from Newcastle in New South Wales report on teacher training in Special Education. Westwood and Palmer report interesting data on the changing nature of training needs while Dempsey investigated the knowledge of teacher trainees about intellectual disability. Data on misconceptions of intellectual disability support the need for training in this field for all teacher education students.

Finally, an opportunity comes from Shaddock's research team in Canberra to examine data on choice making by adults with severe intellectual disabilities. Implications of data from this study, with its focus on assisting individuals to achieve some personal autonomy, must also be relevant to Special Educators working with individuals in school settings.

Reviews for this issue include publications concerned with Special Education teaching methods, cultural issues, recent assessment instruments, community resources for people with disabilities and a guide to legal issues and intellectual disability in NSW. People interested in reviewing publications for future issues of the Journal are warmly encouraged to contact the Editor.

Finally, the attention of readers is directed to the Registration Form appearing on the last page of this issue. The National Conference is being planned as a highlight of the year for AASE and the committee is hoping to see many members attending the Melbourne National Conference.

Ken Linfoot
Editor