

Editorial

I am pleased to be able to be writing another AJSE editorial this year. This issue is the first of our two issues for 2003, and is appearing late in 2003. I would like to extend my thanks to those who have submitted papers and revised them for this issue. I would also like to thank the reviewers who have reviewed these papers promptly and assisted the authors in their endeavours.

In September, AASE held its annual conference which comprised the traditional mix of workshops, papers and invited speakers. The contents of the sessions I attended varied from basic research through to interesting and innovative reports on current practices to presentations of controversial practices that remain without a firm research base. This mix led me to reflect on the guidelines we should use for selecting content we provide to AASE members, whether as papers in this journal or as conference presentations. As readers would know, papers for this journal are reviewed by referees who provide feedback to ensure that research methods are sound, analysis of the results is appropriate and that interpretation of the research is soundly argued. The contents thus represent a consensus view from a group of peers with recognised special education expertise of what is sound special education practice, or what is worth taking into consideration as leading to good practice. The conference presented a much wider range of material, without the same rigorous selection procedures. There were some dynamic and forceful presenters who were entertaining to hear, but who presented material that would be regarded as controversial or unproven by many special educators. On the one hand, it is important that we hear about new developments and about approaches from fields outside special education and a conference may be an appropriate forum for this. On the other hand, if those who hear such

presentations assume that because AASE has organised and sponsored the conference, everything they hear has a firm research base and is well accepted as responsible practice, I believe we may be on dangerous ground. In his final editorial, David Evans noted that there appears to be a lack of agreement on what is meant by special education and perhaps some of the presentations at the conference represent this lack of agreement. I would join with David in his call for the promulgation and implementation of sound research based practice in special education and endorse the role of AASE and AJSE in promoting good practice.

This issue has three papers that present very different faces of special education research and writing; a focus on the individual child, a focus on the institutional and management issues that support good practice and a focus on teachers and teaching behaviour. Anastasia Anderson and Kevin Wheldall describe the use of a tactile device to prompt self-monitoring and recording of on task behaviour of three primary school students. Their detailed analysis of the findings confirm the idiosyncratic nature of student responses to self monitoring procedures. Moving from this clear and detailed focus on the behaviour of individual students, Liz Horrocks discusses school level relationships between regular and special education settings in South Australia. Finally Gwyn Symonds provides an interesting discussion piece which draws on acting theory as a framework to discuss the ways in which teachers might learn to depersonalise their reactions to challenging behaviour in the classroom.

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