

## *Editorial*

Research in Special Education has, of necessity, been conducted on a wide variety of topics. The concern of Special Education Associations such as AASE and NZSEA has been with problems of learning and development experienced by children and other learners having a disability, learning difficulty and/or behaviour disorder. These and related concerns have directed our research efforts to many diverse issues with these populations. If any particular issue does unify or link, the diversity of Special Education endeavour, it is the developing belief, indeed the legal requirement (see Australia's Federal Disability Discrimination Act) that Special Education services should be offered, in generic service settings such as regular schools, child care centres or work settings.

Clearly, these beliefs and the notions of equity which are directing public policy towards the inclusion of Special Education services in regular settings need research support. It is not sufficient for wholesale reorganisation of Special Education at system and school levels to take place without establishing, through research, that regular schools are able to change to accommodate the challenges of fully inclusive practice. Optimum ways need to be established for matching Special Education practice in regular schools with available, or at least obtainable, resources. While there will always be an infinite number of important issues to address through Special Education research, we are clearly at present in an era of fundamental change in the way we provide Special Education for our students. The best efforts of research are sorely needed therefore, to help teachers and other service providers meet the challenge of Inclusive Education. The papers in the current issue of the Journal address many relevant issues.

Some of these themes were identified by Roy Brown, in his Inaugural Professorial Lecture at Flinders University this year. Brown used a framework of program models in disability intervention to show how levels of structure and client dependency have been reduced in recent years as education and development for independence have achieved greater importance.

Some developing work is described by Ayshe Talay-Ongan on the development of an infant screening approach, with suggested follow up activities, to help in the prevention of learning difficulties in young children. Drawing on well established work in this field an approach is foreshadowed which should be of continuing interest.

Retaining the focus on learning difficulties, Robin Jones describes a study in which sentence repetition has

been investigated as a means of evaluating oral language usage. Interesting data result from her use of groups of children with mild intellectual disability, and with no disability but of differing developmental ages.

The link between chronological age and the adoption of inclusive education practices in schools is brought to our attention by Christine Rietveld's New Zealand research. This study investigated some of the reasons for the decline, with increasing chronological age, in regular school placement of students with disabilities and the different perceptions between parents and school personnel in their understanding of disability are discussed.

A detailed attempt has been made by Christopher Gordon to unravel the complex web of terminology and classification approaches surrounding Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). In addition, a useful review is offered of approaches to management and training, including verbal self-instruction strategies which may prove to be helpful for some students with ADHD.

Finally, the paper by Sigafos and Elkins helps to identify some of the concerns about integrated educational placements expressed by at least one sample of teachers in regular schools. These data point to directions for further large scale research designed to address the declining use of inclusive educational practices as students with disabilities progress through school systems. Further research in Special Education which addresses the contemporary theme of Inclusive Education should do much to advance the interests of students with disabilities, learning difficulties and/or behaviour disorders and their families.

On a personal note, I wish to announce my move to the University of Western Sydney, Nepean from the beginning of 1995 to take up the appointment of Associate Professor of Special Education. On behalf of the Australian and the New Zealand Associations I wish to thank the management and University Printery and Despatch personnel of Charles Sturt University for their generous support and unstinting efforts to enable the efficient and punctual production and distribution of the Journal over the last three years. This assistance has been very much appreciated by myself as Editor and by members of our Associations.

I now look forward to continuing as Editor from the University of Western Sydney. The new address for manuscripts, advertising enquiries or review materials is shown on the inside front cover of this issue.

*Ken Linfoot*  
Editor