

GUEST EDITORIAL

This issue of A.J.S.E. contains some of the papers that were delivered at the Sixth Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Special Education, at Mannix College, Monash University, Melbourne, in August 1981.

In his summation of the Conference Proceedings, Mr. George Cooke (vice-president, Warnock Committee, U.K.) made several observations related to the integration of handicapped children and adults into the mainstream, and to prevailing attitudes to education of the handicapped. Since his summation is not included among the conference papers in this issue, I want to note seven of his points. They are worthy of your consideration.

- (i) We must resolve the paradox re work as a status-giver and the lack of employment opportunities; this needs coherent and comprehensive planning and training. It is a critical problem of present times.
- (ii) There is a need for curricula development in all areas of special education.
- (iii) There is a need to emphasize that administrative machinery should CONTRIBUTE to the promotion of co-operation between services.
- (iv) We must encourage and nourish the developing role for separate special schools — currently many of them are isolated.
- (v) Better facilities for early intervention and for parents of young handicapped children are needed. The problems of relationships should be included.
- (vi) Integration is a question of process and monitoring, not a question of placement. Careful monitoring and development of the process must take place.
- (vii) There is a need to maintain both generalist and specialist teacher training programs.

Some of the conference papers published here are concerned with the issues summarized by Cooke.

John Codd's paper on 'Some Ethical Problems in Special Education' is valuable in two ways: (a) it raises some very important issues in relation to decision-making in special education; (b) it expresses the views of an observer from another country (New Zealand) who is examining carefully some Australian approaches to special education.

'Structured Employment and Workshop Reform', the paper written by Thomas Bellamy and his colleagues, and to which Dr. Bellamy spoke at the Conference, presents some ideas that are challenging to those who are involved in sheltered workshop situations. His concept of structured employment for severely handicapped individuals with an emphasis on productivity and wages and its business orientation is topical in the current climate of integration.

Both of these papers provide material that could be well used for discussion or forum purposes at Chapter and/or Branch Meetings.

Sharon Wilson, in her paper 'Teaching Interpersonal Problem Solving Strategies to the Mildly Handicapped', discusses a program of special interest to those involved in social-emotional development programs — an area that many educators want to learn more about.

We have included two papers from the staff of Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine School, one in the 'Viewpoints and Brief Reports' section, and the second in 'Special Education Centres of Interest'. The first of these, giving the Principal's view of 'Organization of a School for Direct Instruction' is a case study of one school's approach to implementation of whole school programs in direct instruction in language, reading and arithmetic. The second paper describes the preschool section of the residential facility. Direct Instruction is used here, too.

Des Pickering's comments on Victoria's 'Special Assistance Programme' will be of interest to special educators in other states. While the Victorian model has its own unique features, its approach to certain aspects of special education support services is not new. Most educators will want to observe the pattern of development that emerges in the future.

The annual Conference of A.A.S.E. and the biannual issues of A.J.S.E. are the two most obvious activities of our national association. Not all A.A.S.E. members are able to attend a national conference, although the rotation of the venue around the State capitals enhances the chances of many members attending one conference. However, the publication of selected Conference Papers in A.J.S.E. ensures that some of the conference material is made available to all members, and to a wider audience of readers. A feature of the 1981 Conference program was the number of overseas speakers who presented papers. The organizing committee for the Conference must be commended for their efficiency in planning this program. Views of overseas educators broaden our perspective of current issues.

I take this opportunity to urge all A.A.S.E. members to become actively involved in their local branches and thus in A.A.S.E. I also urge members to become actively involved in A.J.S.E. The Editor and editorial committee would welcome your comments, and more specially, would welcome articles for publication. The people who wrote the papers included in this issue were willing to put their views on paper. Will you write yours? Sharing ideas, views and facts is part of education. Let us take up John Burge's challenge, share his faith in the future, and play a part in setting future directions for both A.A.S.E. and Special Education.

*Patricia White,
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