

EDITORIAL

In the November, 1984 edition of the Australian Journal of Special Education, under Warren Fairfax's Editorship, we published some of the papers from the highly successful 1984 National Conference of the Australian Association of Special Education, hosted by the N.S.W. Chapter of the Australian Association of Special Education in Sydney. Two very important papers which could not be included in that journal are included herein — the paper by Bud Fredericks, which outlines some curriculum considerations for those with intellectual handicaps, and the paper by Bill Rose and Heather Fiala on the school to work nexus.

These two papers and the other three included in this journal pose some very interesting questions, challenges and answers. It might prove to be a useful step to outline some of the major themes as I see them.

1. We *must* develop a set of personal and professional attitudes towards the severely mentally handicapped which views them as people with the competence to perform in a wide range of tasks which we traditionally may view as inappropriate to the skills and capacities of the severely handicapped.
2. We must conceive of a curriculum for the severely handicapped which:
 - a. reflects this positive view as described above;
 - b. provides appropriate curriculum prescriptions (e.g. task-analysis, PATIENCE) to allow those with intellectual handicaps to PROVE their capacities.
 - c. develops and implements this curriculum in an environment characterised by warmth, positiveness and belief in the rights and abilities of the intellectually handicapped.
3. We must engage in new partnerships, e.g., in the utilisation of TAFE colleges, as recommended by Bill Rose and Heather Fiala. Education, whether it be pre-compulsory, compulsory, or post-compulsory is for ALL people, not just those whose intellectual gifts make it easy for them to profit from the education provided.
4. Taking up Lyn Gow's point, our community must be encouraged to allow equal and unrestricted access to people of all ages, social class, ethnic and/or levels of disability. If it's important for 'Norm' to be fit and, assuming (if one can) that Norm is the average unfit Australian person, its ALSO important for those whose intellectual gifts are less than average to be fit.
5. As we grow to accept the right of all to prosper from the riches offered by our society and its cultures, we must make the means available to allow all the disabled to partake in that rich milieu. Whether the barriers are ethnic, social, psychological or physical, they must, to borrow from I.Y.D.P., be barriers that are broken down. The provision of physical access in the Institute of Educational Administration, in which Peter Lea Wood, a strong member of the Australian Association of Special Education, has obviously had an influence, is one example of barrier-free architectural opportunities.

The papers by Fredericks, Rose and Fiala and Gow, along with the report on the Victorian Institute of Educational Administration, provoke these themes. Malcolm Gill's paper challenges certain types of instruction and proposes a very inexpensive but obviously effective remediation programme — peer tutoring. Such research points to the objective benefits of cross-age tutoring. The interesting question, of course, is to determine the influence that person-to-person programmes have on the *motivation* of reluctant readers to improve their reading skills.

Peter Hallman gives us more valuable, practical advice when seeking out media to use for training and staff development programmes.

I hope you enjoy the advice and challenges contained in these valuable articles.

DR. JEFF BAILEY, Editor