

Editorial

This year marks the publication of the 30th volume of AJSE as well as the 30th National Conference (to be held in Canberra later this year). There have been many changes in special education over the past thirty years. In the 1970s many children with more severe disabilities were still excluded from state education systems and attended schools run by parent groups. Today, with the movement to inclusive practices, regular schools are expected to meet the educational needs of a wide range of students and to provide accommodations and supports for students with disabilities. Students who depend on complex medical care such as gastrostomy feeding and ventilators are no longer confined to home or hospital, but attend school in the belief that all students can learn meaningful skills that will enhance their quality of life.

AJSE too continues to progress and at the recent National Council meeting of AASE, the president Bernard Knight signed a contract with *Taylor and Francis Group Ltd* to take over the publication of the journal from 2007. This will raise the profile of the journal internationally and hopefully increase the circulation to libraries, universities and other institutions. AJSE also welcomes a number of new editorial consultants. We now have members from more Australian organisations and universities. We have added reviewers from Aspect, University of Canberra, Charles Darwin University, Charles Sturt University, Flinders University, Griffith University, University of Sydney, University of New England, and the University of Western Sydney. We particularly welcome international reviewers Tim Lewis and Diane Browder who have previously presented at AASE conferences.

In this issue we print the Des English Memorial Lecture given by Associate Professor Christina van Kraayenoord at the 2005 National Conference in Brisbane. Her areas of expertise are literacy, learning difficulties, and individuals with disabilities and she has had a long association with AASE. In her address she considered the meaning of "evidence based practice" for special education.

Continuing the theme of evidence based practice, Mark Carter and Mark Apps review the evidence for the efficacy of constructivist teaching approaches for students with special education needs and warn that there is limited support for the use of these strategies with students with learning difficulties and intellectual disability. Alan Bain and Julie Lancaster address the complexities, problems and promises of comprehensive school reform. Karen Hollands, Sandra McMahon, and Christina van Kraayenoord report on the perceptions of secondary school teachers of speech pathology services in schools and note the need for professional cooperation. Kevin Wheldall and Alison Madelaine describe the further development of a set of reading passages to track the progress of students having difficulties with reading. Kim Kyoung Sun and Coral Kemp review the research on the relationship between phonological awareness and reading in children with intellectual disability and note that the evidence available suggests that explicit instruction that includes phonological skills is appropriate for developing reading skills in these children.

Jennifer Stephenson PhD.