

Welcome to the 22nd Annual International Conference of the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education – “Sustaining Quality in Schools- Creativity, Innovation & Best Practice”.

This year’s programme offers a wide and varied choice of papers from teachers and other professionals who wish to share their experience of working with students with special needs. Research, innovative school-based projects and examples of best practice, both at home and abroad, will be presented. The voice of the learner is a key theme running through our conference this year affirming the value of participatory research, and enabling students to be informants in the development of special educational needs practice. We extend a warm welcome to both our opening and keynote speakers, all delegates and presenters from abroad and to our fraternal guests. We hope that all participants will find the conference informative and thought provoking. The social events will give delegates an opportunity to meet old friends and make new contacts.

Conference Notes

Badges should be worn at all times, both as a courtesy to other delegates and to indicate that you have registered. IATSE Committee members wearing green flashing on their badges will be happy to assist you.

Please check the notice board near the Registration Desk in case of any programme changes or new information. Messages for other delegates may also be left on this board. Please take note of any announcements made by chairpersons at the end of each session. Delegates are requested to complete a Conference Evaluation Form before they leave conference. These are required as part of our funding criteria and also to inform committee of ideas to improve conference. For Irish delegates, the Department of Education & Skills register, as required for official leave from school, will be available at the registration area at main entrance.

Throughout the conference there will be a Publishers’ Books and Materials Exhibition in Room B103, behind the college reception.

On Thursday evening, after the official opening, there will be a reception at St Patrick’s College. All delegates and guests are invited to attend.

Presenters and delegates should note that **no photocopying facilities** can be provided by IATSE during the conference. Presenters should provide their own handouts and may make arrangements to email handouts, powerpoint presentation notes and other material to delegates, if applicable. All presenters are requested to provide a synopsis of their presentation and those provided to us will be available on the IATSE website immediately after conference.

Papers presented at conference may be submitted for publication in the forthcoming issues of REACH journal. Members will receive the journal, twice yearly, as part of their subscription. Separate subscriptions may be taken out at the REACH stand.

Rosemary Fahey & Lisa White, Conference Directors

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 10th JUNE 2010

6.00-8.00 **REGISTRATION** at Main Entrance Hall of St. Patrick's College

8.00 pm **Official Opening of Conference in Auditorium**

Welcome by **Anna Lombard**, President, IATSE

Formal Opening Address- **Senator David Norris**

Senator David Norris is a member of the Trinity College Dublin University Panel in Seanad Eireann since 1987 and a founding member of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs. He was Senior Lecturer in the Department of English in Trinity College Dublin from 1968 to 1996. He is one of Ireland's leading Joyce scholars, was Founding Chairman of the James Joyce Centre, the North Great Georges Street Preservation Society and Friends of the Library (longest serving Chairman) Trinity College Dublin.

Keynote Address

Sustaining Quality in Schools: Supporting Teachers in Developing and Sustaining Best Practice

Dr. Anne Lodge

Dr. Anne Lodge is the Principal of the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) since September 2009. Anne was previously a Senior Lecturer in the Education Department in NUI Maynooth where she taught students engaged in initial post-primary teacher education as well as working on a range of post-graduate programmes for practising teachers in all sectors. Anne originally qualified and worked as a primary teacher. She has a particular commitment to equality issues in education, especially the development and support of the inclusive school. Much of her research, teaching and advisory work reflects this commitment. Her publications include *Primary Voices* (co-edited with Jim Deegan and Dympna Devine), *Diversity at School* (co-edited with Kathleen Lynch) and *Equality and Power in Schools* (co-authored with Kathleen Lynch). She is currently participating in a number of large-scale research projects that are concerned particularly with supporting children with emotional and behavioural disabilities in family and school environments. She is Deputy Director of the national study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Incredible Years Parent, Teacher and Child Training Series in Ireland ('Incredible Years Ireland') 2007 - 2010. She is also currently involved with a national research project examining the transition experiences of young people with disabilities moving from primary to post-primary school along with colleagues Dr. Ger Scanlon (DCU) and Dr. Yvonne Barnes-Holmes (NUI Maynooth). Anne has been a member of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) since January 2010. Anne was President of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) from 2006 to 2008.

Reception in the College for all delegates.

FRIDAY 11th JUNE 2010

N.B. All presentations have been confirmed at time of going to press. Please consult notice board for possible cancellations due to unforeseen circumstances. Delegates are asked to attend sessions on time, both as a courtesy to presenters and other delegates and to avoid your chosen session being full. Health and Safety regulations limiting numbers in rooms will apply. Please do not leave half way through sessions as it is very disruptive for presenters and other delegates. Mobile phones must be turned off during all presentations. For further information on presentations see abstracts/ summaries at the end of the programme.

8.00-9.00 **Breakfast – College Dining Hall (pre-booked tickets only)**

8.30-9.30 **REGISTRATION**

9.30-11.00 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (A)**

D210

SYMPOSIUM:

TRANSITIONS- Experience, Progress, Policy and Access for Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream and Special Schools

Geraldine Scanlon, Dublin City University & Yvonne Barnes-Holmes, The National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Sheena Bell & Andrew Smith, University of Northampton, Michael Shevlin & Conor McGuckin, Trinity College, Dublin, Richard Rose, University of Northampton, Michael Shevlin, Trinity College Dublin, Eileen Winter & Paul O'Raw, Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe

Chair: Ann Jackson

D211

Dual session

Teaching Young Children with ASD: A Social Developmental Approach

Mary Mc Kenna, Teacher, Early Intervention Class for Children with ASD, Scoil Mhuire, Ballyboden, Dublin 16.

&

Exploring the use of 'Kids on the Block' Puppet Programmes on Autism and Deafness in Primary Schools

Ann Marie Byrne (Assistant National Coordinator, SESS) and Madeline Hickey (Deputy Director, SESS)

Chair: Geraldine Hayes

- E210** **Reading – How Quality Interventions Can Ensure Success For Every Child**
Dr. Ann Marie Casserly, Lecturer in SEN, St. Angela’s College, Sligo
Chair: Áine O’Neill
- E211** **Assistive Technology in the Classroom for Children with Specific Learning Disabilities**
Paula Treacy, Principal, Catherine Mc Auley N.S., Lr. Baggot St.
Chair: Thérèse Day
- E217** **Handwriting Difficulties Remediation – a Practical Approach**
Sandra Patton BSc. COT, Occupational Therapist & Postgraduate Researcher, Trinity College, Dublin
Chair: Aidín Ní Mhaonaigh

11.00-11.30 Coffee – College Dining Hall

Materials and Books Exhibition in B103 (behind the reception desk)

11.30-1.00 CONCURRENT SESSIONS (B)

- D210** **Sustaining Quality for Pupils with SEN: The Contribution of Special Schools and Classes- Implications of the Review of Special Schools and Classes**
Dr. Jean Ware, Reader in Special Education, Bangor University, Wales, Dr. Anita Prunty, Lecturer, St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, Dublin & Dr. Cathal Butler, Research Assistant, St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, Dublin
Chair: Pat O’Keeffe
- D211** **Transition from Primary to Post-Primary for Students with Special Educational Needs-Challenges for the Pupil and Strategies for the Teacher**
Nora O’ Connor, Assistant National Co-ordinator, SESS
Chair: Julie Cassidy
- E210** **Working with Pupils with Selective Mutism**
Ailbhe Dunne, Assistant National Co-ordinator, SESS
Chair: Deirdre Corcoran
- E211** **Co-operative Teaching: Creativity and Innovation in the Classroom**
Dr. Sean O’Leary, Deputy Director, SESS
Chair: Colin McElroy

E217 **Supporting Exceptionally Able, or 'Gifted and Talented' Learners Through Creativity, Innovation and Best Practice**
Leslie S. Graves, Occasional Lecturer UCD, Templeton Fellow/Belin-Blank Centre of Excellence- University of Iowa and Secretary of WCGTC (World Council for Gifted and Talented Children)
Chair: Barbara O'Neill

1.00-2.15 **Lunch – College Dining Hall (with pre-booked ticket) or choose from a number of local establishments**

Materials and Books Exhibition in B103

2.15-3.15 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (C)**

D210 **Adjusting the Volume! Learner Voice Amongst Students with Social, Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulties**
Ms. Paula Flynn, PhD student, School of Education, Trinity College, University of Dublin
Chair: Mary Carrig

D211 **Keeping Them in the System – The Prevention of Early School Leaving in Ireland**
Dr. Michael Flanagan, recently retired teacher & former Deputy Principal of the Central Model School, Marlborough Street, Dublin.
Chair: Sean Lyons

E210 **A Multidisciplinary Approach to IEPs for Students with Moderate Intellectual Disability**
Nicola Barry & Sinead Travers (Psychologists) & Laura Fingleton (Speech & Language Therapist), St. Michael's House
Chair: Anita Prunty

E211 **How are the Supportive Structures and Key Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) Reflected in the Practice of a School for Students with a Mild General Learning Disability?**
Sheila McCarthy, Teacher, Catherine McAuley Special School, Ashbourne Avenue, South Circular Road, Limerick
Chair: Rosemary Fahey

E217

Working Memory –is it the new IQ?

Tomás Mac An Bhreithiún, NEPS

Chair: Lisa White

3.15-4.00

Coffee – College Dining Hall

Materials and Books Exhibition B103

4.00-5.00

CONCURRENT SESSIONS (D)

D210

The Impact of Visual Impairment

Gráinne Meaney & Eileen Beechinor, Visiting Teacher Service
(Visual Impairment), DES

Chair: Michael O’Keefe

D211

Best Practice in Psychological Assessment

Dr. Nicky O’Leary, Consultant Psychologist

Chair: Deirdre Walshe

E210

WoW - An Innovative School/Community Partnership to Improve Children’s Reading Achievement

Maura McMahon, Kerri Smith & Debbie Oxley, Barnardos WoW

Chair: Katie Vaughan

E211

Meaningful Handwriting Goals for Children with Complex Needs

Sandra Patton B.Sc. COT, Occupational Therapist & Postgraduate Researcher, Trinity College, Dublin

Chair: Elaine Hall

E217

Specialist and Mainstream Primary Schools-How the Responses of Children with Dyslexia can Help Schools Provide Quality Education to Meet their Needs.

Dr. Ann Marie Casserly, Lecturer in SEN, St. Angela’s College, Sligo

Chair: Dermot McCullen

5.30 pm

Coach to Social Event departing from college entrance

6.00-8.00

Social Event- evening of wine, light refreshments and traditional music in the historic James Joyce Centre in North Great George’s St, Dublin 1

SATURDAY 12th JUNE 2010

8.00-9.00 **Breakfast – College Dining Hall (pre-booked tickets only)**

8.30-9.15 **Registration**

9.15-10.15 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (E)**

D210 **Fun with 'The Cave Monster' – a Drama Workshop**

Helen Hallissey, Scoil Mhuire, Ballincollig, Co Cork

Chair: Colin McElroy

D211 **The Educational Needs of School Age Children with Significant Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Colin Reilly, Educational Psychologist and Postgraduate Researcher, UCD

Chair: Lisa White

E210 **Involving Parents of Students with Severe & Profound Learning Difficulties in the Education of their Children**

Marlette Koller, Teacher, Stewart's School, Palmerstown

Chair: Isobel Ryan

E211 **Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in the Classroom: A Psychiatric Perspective**

Dr. Aileen Murtagh, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Insight Centre, Naas, Co Kildare

Chair: Julie Cassidy

E217 **The Workload of Principals of Special Schools in the Republic of Ireland catering for Pupils with a Moderate or Severe / Profound Learning Disability**

Liam Twomey, Principal, St. Francis Special School, Beaufort, Co Kerry

Chair: Barbara O'Neill

10.15-10.45 **Coffee – College Dining Hall**

Materials and Books Exhibition in B103

10.45-11.45

D210 Exploring the Potential of Site-based, Teacher Learning Communities to Support Teachers' Development of Assessment Literacy

Dr. Zita Lysaght, Lecturer, Special Education Department, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Chair: Maura Sharkey

D211 Is Literacy Really For All?

Denis McCarthy, Regional Coordinator of Home School Community Liaison Scheme
Chair: Anna Lombard

E210 Identification and Assessment-Language Needs or Special Needs: Does it Matter?

Ms Sarah Jackson, MAIM, EAL Resource Teacher, Good Shepherd National School, Dublin.
Chair: Katie Vaughan

E211 Dilemmas of Difference – What do Students Think About Being in a Special School?

Dr. Colman Motherway, Scoil Bernadette, Cork
Chair: Michael O'Keefe

E217 Teaching Social & Behaviour Skills – Optional or Essential?

Anne Mac Mathúna, Resource Teacher, Ennis NS, Co. Clare, Fiona de Buitléir, Reading Class Teacher, Ennis NS., Co. Clare
Chair: Deirdre Corcoran

E325 Developing Creative Writing in Two Dublin Schools

Carol-Ann O'Síoráin, Teacher, Scoil Bhríde & Associate Advisor (DEIS) Primary Professional Development Service
Chair: Áine O'Neill

12.00 -1.00

E201 Plenary Session:

Time Travels- four professionals involved in the field of special education were asked to travel to the year 2020 to examine the provision of education for students with special educational needs. In this Session, they tell us what they saw.....

1.00 **Close of Conference**

ABSTRACTS/ SUMMARIES OF PRESENTATIONS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Sustaining Quality in Schools: Supporting Teachers in Developing and Sustaining Best Practice

Dr. Anne Lodge

This address will focus particularly on the role of teacher education in supporting the inclusive school. It will consider the needs of those in initial teacher education for specific engagement with issues relating to special educational needs and to the development of the skills, understandings and attitudes required to support inclusive practice in schools. It will also consider the role of targeted continuing professional development in supporting individual teachers to further develop innovative inclusive practice. How such engagement can support whole school staffs will also be explored. It will also consider the importance of practitioner research in developing and disseminating creativity, innovation and best practice in schools.

SYMPOSIUM

TRANSITIONS- Experience, Progress, Policy and Access for Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream and Special Schools

Geraldine Scanlon, Yvonne Barnes-Holmes, Sheena Bell, Andrew Smith, Michael Shevlin & Conor McGuckin, Richard Rose, Michael Shevlin, Eileen Winter & Paul O'Raw

This symposium will present current findings from three key studies funded by the National Council for Special Education. The cores issues addressed within this research include: the experiences of pupils and their parents with SEN during their transition from primary to post primary school: the access and progression of students with SEN from compulsory to Further/Higher Education and the identification of policy, practice experience and outcomes of pupils with SEN in inclusive settings. The overarching aim of all three studies is to identify and examine "best practice" to facilitate students with SEN in inclusive settings from primary to post primary to further and higher education. Implications for policy and practice will be discussed for mainstream and special education in Ireland.

Teaching Young Children with ASD: A Social Developmental Approach

Mary Mc Kenna

This presentation will focus on ASD specific educational provision, as provided by the Scoil Mhuire Ballyboden Early Intervention classes. Having worked in this class since its set-up in 1999 and having employed many different methodologies, a personal approach has evolved which I call a social developmental approach. This approach looks at how best we can facilitate the establishment of relationships that will support development of social communication, social and emotional understanding and flexibility in both thought and behaviour.

Exploring the Use of 'Kids on the Block' Puppet Programmes on Autism and Deafness in Primary Schools

Ann Marie Byrne & Madeline Hickey

In recent years, there has been a growing trend towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. This has increased the need for all members of school communities to understand and welcome diversity. The primary goal of this project was to develop a model of support and professional development that responded to teachers' needs within the context of inclusion and increasing diversity within schools and classrooms. In this presentation, we briefly describe the 'Kids on the Block' programmes for autism and deafness along with their potential contribution towards fostering increased knowledge and awareness amongst targeted pupils about deafness and autism. We also explore teachers' perceptions in selected primary schools about whether such programmes contribute to their continuing professional development needs.

Reading – How Quality Interventions Can Ensure Success For Every Child

Dr. Ann Marie Casserly

This presentation captures some of the research evidence and current approaches aimed at preventing reading difficulties in young children including children with dyslexia. In particular the role of phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics instruction, oral reading and comprehension instruction will be discussed as some of the skills children require to become independent readers.

Assistive Technology in the Classroom for Children with Specific Learning Disabilities

Paula Treacy

Our aim is to present IT in use with children with Specific Learning Disabilities. The presentation has theoretical and a practical elements. Teachers regularly ask to visit our school to see technology such as Kurtzweil and Dragon Speaking (voice activated software) in action. Video footage will demonstrate the following in use:

- Kurtzweil in use in the classroom (scan and read software).
- Dragon Speaking voice activated software in use.
- Wordshark integrated with our phonic scheme (Wilson Language)
- Lessons in various subjects using the interactive whiteboard
- Powerpoint in art
- Use of digital and Flip cameras in the classroom
- Photostory
- Kidspiration
- Type to Learn
- Lexia
- Oxford Reading Tree: Clicker

Handwriting Difficulties Remediation – a Practical Approach

Sandra Patton

Handwriting is an important form of communication in the classroom and in everyday life. This workshop will provide a framework for assessing the underlying skills necessary to produce legible handwriting, including a discussion of pre-writing skills. Alternative multi- sensory teaching approaches that can be applied in the classroom and resource settings will be discussed as well as useful equipment to support children during handwriting tasks. Participants will have the opportunity to receive hands on experience of these resources. The workshop will include discussion of issues relevant to mainstream and special education settings.

Sustaining Quality for Pupils with SEN: The Contribution of Special Schools and Classes- Implications of the Review of Special Schools and Classes

Dr. Jean Ware, Dr. Anita Prunty, & Dr. Cathal Butler

This paper reports the findings of the Review of Special Schools and Classes which took place between December 2005 and December 2008 and examines the contribution which special schools and classes can make to sustaining and enhancing the quality of education for pupils with SEN. The study collected data from special schools, mainstream primary and post-primary schools with special classes, and other interested stakeholders, using questionnaires, focus groups, submissions and case studies. Factors which contributed to high quality provision, and those which seemed to be in conflict with it are identified and the implications for policy and practice are discussed

Transition from Primary to Post-Primary for Students with Special Educational Needs-Challenges for the Pupil and Strategies for the Teacher

Nora O' Connor

This talk is aimed at all teaching professionals within both the primary and post-primary sectors to include principals, class teacher, subject teachers, resource/learning support teachers and guidance counsellors. Based on recent legislation and reports we will explore the difficulties pupils with SEN may have at the time of transition from primary to post primary and suggest activities and strategies which may ease transitional anxieties and difficulties. Participants will also be provided with information on further reading, resources and materials to assist them in the management of the transition process.

Working with Pupils with Selective Mutism

Ailbhe Dunne

This seminar will introduce participants to the main characteristics of Selective Mutism (SM) along with the challenges that it poses for children. The implications of SM for learning and teaching in the classroom will also be addressed. Participants will be enabled to interpret students' behaviour and reactions so that they can be managed effectively. The importance of creating the right learning environment will be illustrated. Participants will also be introduced to the stages of confident speaking and enabled to decide on appropriate intervention plans for pupils with SM.

Co-operative Teaching: Creativity and Innovation in the Classroom

Dr. Sean O'Leary

Co-operative teaching, also known as team-teaching or co-teaching emphasises the value of communication, collaboration and creativity amongst teachers. It typically occurs when two or more teachers work together to meet the diverse needs of pupils more effectively within an inclusive classroom. The education of pupils with special educational needs can be enhanced through the development of ongoing collaboration between mainstream teachers and resource/learning support teachers. One example of such collaboration is co-teaching, which can facilitate the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. This presentation will outline various forms of co-teaching and illustrate creative approaches to co-teaching using video footage of classroom practice along with a peer support methodology for teachers involving participant interaction.

Supporting Exceptionally Able, or 'Gifted and Talented' Learners Through Creativity, Innovation and Best Practice

Leslie S. Graves

This presentation will firstly take a look at a number of characteristics inherent in this group of learners as well as a number of distinct populations that may be encountered in mainstream classrooms. A number of best practice strategies used in a variety of countries will also be briefly explored. Secondly, it will go on to share some examples and ideas of how to support these learners with a number of interactive hands on activities which will hopefully give participants some tools and food for thought to create some of their own materials and methodologies dependent on their own classroom situations.

Adjusting the Volume! Learner Voice Amongst Students with Social, Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulties

Ms. Paula Flynn

Presentation on preliminary findings and implications to date of a project entitled **I'm Me (Inclusive Methods in Mainstream Education)**. The project aims to contribute a research dimension to the engagement of 'learner voice' in the provision of personalised experiences of pupils who have been assessed with Social, Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulties and to give an opportunity to these young people to become 'active agents' in the pursuit of appropriate, beneficial and realistic methods to facilitate genuine inclusion for them in mainstream schools. The methods employed for the current study include individual and group interviews; focus groups; mentoring partnerships and creative workshops.

Keeping Them in the System-The Prevention of Early School Leaving in Ireland

Dr Michael Flanagan

The impact of early school leaving can be very disruptive to a young person's development and it can have a detrimental effect on their socio-economic standing in the future. The stage at which a young person decides to leave school is of utmost importance, the earlier a young person leaves, the more problematic this can be in their future. Among the factors that contribute to early school leaving and which will be considered in this paper are the following: low self-esteem; substance misuse; family conflict; lack of meaningful parental support; poverty; bereavement/separation/changes in family situation; bullying; psychological issues (including depression and mental health issues); cultural differences (particularly in relation to the expectations of some newcomer families) and lack of motivation, especially in the context in the current downturn in the economy. Recent international research in this field and its potential application to the Irish situation will also be considered and evaluated.

A Multidisciplinary Approach to IEPs for Students with Moderate Intellectual Disability

Nicola Barry, Sinead Travers & Laura Fingleton

The aim of this workshop is to discuss a multi-disciplinary approach to assessing and targeting IEP goals for students with a moderate intellectual disability. The partnership between the school and family is highlighted with separate and joint priorities framing the IEP goals. The role of clinicians supporting IEP goals is emphasised. A broad view of education is taken with an emphasis on selecting holistic IEP goals that reflect the student's development in a wide range of areas and are linked to all aspects of the person's life. The workshop will include discussion of multi-disciplinary perspective in assessing skills in order to set target appropriate goals. The focus of the workshop is discussion of best practice between teachers, families and other professions in supporting students with moderate intellectual disability.

How are the Supportive Structures and Key Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) Reflected in the Practice of a School for Students with a Mild General Learning Disability?

Sheila McCarthy

The concept of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is rooted in the corporate world. As a relatively new model of education, it is not familiar among educators. A PLC model is underpinned by five key characteristics (shared values and vision, collective responsibility for student learning, a collaborative culture, reflective professional inquiry and professional development). Within this paradigm, there is a focus on raising academic achievement. Given that the special school in this study offers a number of certificate programmes and that the student body range in age from eight to eighteen, the research findings suggest that the school would operate within a framework of a number of PLCs as distinct from one specific PLC. While further development of this model is possible, it would be difficult to envisage the whole school operating as a single PLC. However, operating in tandem would generate a PLC synergy.

Working Memory –is it the new IQ?

Tomás Mac An Bhreithiún

Research has indicated that working memory plays a crucial role in academic success and is used to store information while other material is being mentally manipulated during learning (Alloway, 2009). Working memory is necessary in forming the foundations for the acquisition of complex skills and knowledge (Alloway, 2009). Recent research (Gathercole et al., 2008) has indicated that there is a cognitive link between concentration/attentional difficulties and working memory overload in primary school subjects. A poor working memory profile encompasses normal social relationships with peers, being reserved in group activities, poor academic progress in reading and maths, difficulties in following instructions, problems with learning activities that require both storage and processing, place keeping difficulties, a tendency to be inattentive, to have attention span and distractibility difficulties. One aim of the research was to establish the (cognitive) working memory and (affective) anxiety profiles in participants (two groups) who were previously identified with a working memory deficit, so that appropriate interventions could be established to improve chances of school success. Another aim was to establish the effectiveness of a specific memory intervention and an anxiety intervention (CBT) and also to establish which of two treatment conditions used had the best outcomes in terms of memory improvement and anxiety reduction in each group. Literacy, numeracy and spelling scores were also examined.

The Impact of Visual Impairment

Grainne Meaney & Eileen Beechinor

The objective of the presentation is to give teachers an understanding of the obstacles imposed by Visual Impairment. We will seek to explore strategies which may assist the teacher in helping the child with visual impairment to access the curriculum.

Best Practice in Psychological Assessment

Dr. Nicky O'Leary

This paper presents an overview of how a therapeutic psychological assessment can be used in the treatment of behavioural problems. This type of assessment examines cognitive, emotional, developmental, educational, social and physiological factors to explain the connection between psychological functioning and behaviour in the classroom. Analysis and integration of these elements provide a psychological picture of an individual from which specific behaviours can be understood, diagnoses made and recommendations formulated that contribute to effective development.

WoW - An Innovative School/Community Partnership to Improve Children's Reading Achievement

Maura McMahon, Kerri Smith & Debbie Oxley

Barnardos Wizards of Words (WoW) programme is an innovative school based reading intervention for First and Second Class children who do not have diagnosed learning disabilities, but are identified by their teachers as lagging behind in reading. WoW uses a systematic guided reading programme which pairs children with trained senior citizens with the aims of: 1) improving emotional well being, and 2) increasing reading achievement. Diagnostic and formative assessments throughout the academic year provide individualized information on each child's progress in vocabulary building, phonological awareness, comprehension, and fluency, which have been identified as the cornerstones of reading by the Rose Report and National Reading Panel. This session will provide an overview of the WoW programme and qualitative and quantitative evidence of its impact on the children involved to date.

Meaningful Handwriting Goals for Children with Complex Needs

Sandra Patton

Basic handwriting skills are necessary in everyday life, in particular the ability to write your name. The establishment of suitable handwriting goals for children with complex needs can be difficult, given the multiple processes required in handwriting. This presentation will review the current research in the area and provide a framework for assessment, intervention, goal setting and outcome measurement. This was developed in a recent Irish research study involving children with Down Syndrome at the pre-writing stage. Samples of materials used and work completed will be presented.

Specialist and Mainstream Primary Schools-How the Responses of Children with Dyslexia can Help Schools Provide Quality Education to Meet their Needs.

Dr. Ann Marie Casserly

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an insight into the experiences of children with dyslexia in a two year placement in special reading classes/schools, their subsequent transition and experiences back in the mainstream classroom. While the original much larger doctoral study encompassed parents' and teachers' perspectives, the views of children are mainly confined to this presentation.

Fun with 'The Cave Monster' – a Drama Workshop

Helen Hallissey

Puppets, frozen pictures, mime, improvisations based on first lines or objects or music, Readers' Theatre, making ads... These are some active learning drama approaches which can often 'speak' to the special needs child. How? Drama often operates on a number of levels. It is visual. It is immediate. It incorporates the verbal, the spiritual, the imaginative, group work, moving and stillness. The 'Cave Monster' is the story through which these drama approaches will be touched on in this workshop. The workshop will be practical and apply to the special needs class as well as the mainstream class. The workshop will also feature classroom management tips for the drama lesson plus some music and visual arts ideas. Laughter guaranteed!

The Educational Needs of School Age Children with Significant Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder

Colin Reilly

In recent years the reported prevalence rate of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has increased greatly. As well as increased identification among higher functioning individuals there has also been an increase in reported prevalence rates in individuals with intellectual disability (ID). This session begins with a discussion on current prevalence rates in children with moderate or severe/profound ID. The issue of 'diagnostic substitution' and the use of ASD as an educational label are discussed with regard to the resources available to meet the needs of these children. The manifestation of ASD in children with significant ID is discussed with reference to the behavioural profile and learning style. Educational and therapeutic interventions for children with ASD and significant ID are discussed with regard to research studies and clinical practice. The occurrence of ASD in children with genetic syndromes is also discussed. The paper concludes with a discussion on the challenges faced by schools in providing an appropriate education to support children with ASD and significant ID and their families.

Involving Parents of Students with Severe & Profound Learning Difficulties in the Education of their Children

Marlette Koller

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate practical strategies that can be implemented by teachers to involve parents of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) successfully in the education of their children. Expectations educators have of parents and vice versa, the best model for collaboration and possible approaches for partnership between educators and parents were discussed and evaluated. Active involvement by parents was experienced when some of the strategies, which were based on a combination of practical experience and a review of the literature, were introduced. It was concluded that planning with parents helps the child to achieve much more in school.

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in the Classroom: A Psychiatric Perspective

Dr. Aileen Murtagh

Dr. Murtagh will highlight the association between special educational needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). The presentation of EBD in the classroom will be outlined. Management strategies for teachers will be discussed. Difficulties covered will include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression and anxiety disorders. School refusal and autistic spectrum disorders will also be considered.

The Workload of Principals of Special Schools in the Republic of Ireland for Pupils with a Moderate or Severe / Profound Learning Disability

Liam Twomey

School principalship has undergone immense change in Ireland over the past decade. A perception exists that the work has become more difficult. While a significant amount of research examines the workload of principals in both primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland, to date, no specific research has been completed on the workload of principals of the forty special schools in Ireland specifically catering for pupils with a moderate or severe/profound learning disability. The current research attempts to fill this research void by surveying the forty such schools in the State. The workload has significantly increased in recent years due to large increases in: the number of non-teaching staff employed in the schools, the number of pupils attending, and the number of student categories being educated. Among the challenges identified are the management of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviours, the management of a large and varied staff, and the multi-faceted workload – particular elements of which are rated to be 'excessive'. All in all, the respondent principals enjoy their work – much of it outside of 'formal' work hours, and the majority of them are optimistic about the future role of special schools.

Exploring the Potential of Site-based, Teacher Learning Communities to Support Teachers' Development of Assessment Literacy.

Dr. Zita Lysaght

This paper addresses the challenges and opportunities that present when school-based teacher learning communities are used to develop teachers' knowledge in/of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2002). Particular attention is given to the use of video as a tool to permeate the "hidden garden" of teachers' classrooms (Conway, 2002) in order to facilitate teachers' critical review of their use of formative assessment in teaching.

Is Literacy Really For All?

Denis McCarthy

As we move into the second half of the United Nations Literacy Decade, it is timely for us to re-examine the definition of literacy. Up to now, it has been narrowly defined as reading and writing. A broader concept of literacy is required if we are to respond to the changing needs and patterns of communication. Added to this is the twin- challenge of equity and inclusion. Globally, people with disabilities make up the world's largest and most disadvantaged minority. This paper attempts to examine some of these issues and their relevance to promoting quality in literacy provision.

Identification and Assessment Language Needs or Special Needs: Does it Matter?

Sarah Jackson

This workshop will review two computerised EAL assessment programmes that are based on the Primary and Post-Primary School Assessment Kits. The DVDs were created to facilitate the assessment of listening and spoken English for teachers. Oral communication is an essential foundation for any educational intervention and provision. The EAL DVDs provides an accurate measurement of oral and listening English proficiency, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It follows a definite set of indicators and could be equally applicable for special needs children. As practitioners in the field you are invited to view the DVDs in action and make up your own mind!

Dilemmas of Difference – What do Students Think About Being in a Special School?

Dr. Colman Motherway

Students who attend a special school were asked what they thought about school – their experiences in or opinions of their current school and of other schools. What they said was very interesting – given the current debate about inclusion and ‘appropriate education’. In this presentation, the rationale and the methodology for the study are outlined, and the results are discussed. The study should interest not just professionals working in special education, but anybody who has an interest in children’s rights, specifically in respect of enabling children to express their views and to have their views given due weight (Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

Teaching Social & Behaviour Skills – Optional or Essential?

Anne Mac Mathúna & Fiona de Buitléir

Children with special needs often find it difficult to blend in seamlessly with their peers, to make and keep friends. This is not always due to their disability per se, but frequently to under-developed social understanding, and poor social skills. They frequently use inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours, and get themselves into trouble unwittingly. The answer, for some at least, is to be explicitly taught these social and behaviour skills, and allowed to practise them in a structured way under supervision, aiming for them to become generalised. The presenters will describe their experiences of using social and behaviour training programmes in Ennis National School.

Developing Creative Writing in Two Dublin Schools

Carol-Ann O’Síoráin

This paper presents finding from an action research on creative writing skills development during a period of targeted intervention in two Dublin primary schools, designated as disadvantaged. The research adopted both a qualitative and quantitative approach focusing on the advancement of key skills in writing while providing in-service development for the teachers within the schools. The research involved collecting 714 samples of writing from 45 pupils across the two schools. A small selection of pupil profiles are presented from the study and provide evidence for adopting change in professional practice to secure the emergence of pupil voice and autonomy in writing.