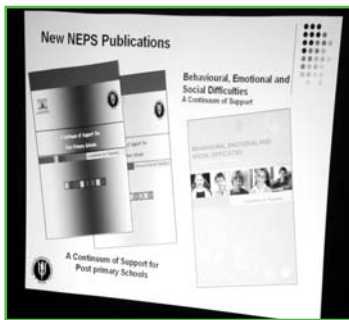


# iatse Update

SPRING UPDATE

SPRING 11

## IATSE AGM 2010



The Annual General Meeting of IATSE, 2010 took place on Saturday, November 20th, at the Teachers Club, Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

The AGM is the forum for

conducting the formal business that reflects the varied activities of the association throughout the year. It gives an opportunity to all members to have an input into planning for the future and comment on the work of the CEC.

The officers presented the reports, the new committee members were voted in and the motions were discussed. This year's motions concerned membership and required constitutional change. Some of the motions were referred back to CEC for future work.

## GUEST SPEAKER



*Guest Speaker Gabrielle Green from NEPS*

for effective individualised approaches.

Two new publications from NEPS: Behavioural, Social and Emotional Difficulties – A Continuum of Support, and A Continuum of Support for

Post Primary Schools were introduced. These reports have been published to assist primary and post-primary schools in responding to the needs of pupils experiencing behavioural and emotional difficulties.

The session provoked many questions from those present. The IATSE CEC thanked Gabrielle Green for her presentation.

The meeting was well attended.

## The Clarion Hotel, Sligo

### The Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education invite you to our Connaught Regional Seminar.

#### Schedule:

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 9.15am – 9.30am   | Registration   |
| 9.30am – 10.45am  | Teaching Young children with ASD: A Social Developmental Approach<br>Presenter: Mary McKenna   |
| 10.45am – 11.05am | Coffee Break   |
| 11.15am - 12.45am | A "Menu" of Technologies for Students with SEN – What technology can you utilise in your primary, secondary or special school for students with SEN?<br>Presenter: Ann Jackson |

This seminar is open to primary, post-primary, special class, special school teachers, special needs assistants, parents and all other professionals working in the area of special education.

\*Free to IATSE Members. \*€5 for all other participants

To register please contact: [membership@iatse.ie](mailto:membership@iatse.ie) or [anna.lombard@stewartsCare.ie](mailto:anna.lombard@stewartsCare.ie)

# Free and Easy Ways to Make ICTs More Accessible

One of the most positive trends in recent years has been the integration of accessibility features into mainstream operating systems and devices. This means that our basic laptop or desktop computers now come with many features that can reduce barriers for our students. In addition, there are some excellent free online tools to support all learners. Many smart phones and the Apple suite (iPod, iPad, and iPhone) have built-in features and downloadable apps that support pupils with a range of special needs. Links to these features and to all the links mentioned in this article are available at this dedicated livebinder: <http://bit.ly/assistive3>.

## Some simple changes that can make a big difference in Windows



Windows offers the **Accessibility Wizard** (start > programs > accessories > Accessibility Wizard) where you can set options to help those with Visual or Hearing impairments or with

some physical restriction. This is very comprehensive; options covered include contrast, audible signals, size of menu font, size of cursor etc.



If you know what changes are needed, then you may find it faster to go directly to **Windows Accessibility Options** (start > control panel > Accessibility Options). Here you can turn on **Sticky Keys** which helps pupils who find it difficult to use key combinations e.g. ctrl+alt+delete. With Sticky Keys, you can just click on each key in turn rather than try to hold them all down at once. **Filter keys** will help students who tend to keep their finger on the keyboard and type ZZZZZZZZZZ, by mistake.

**Toggle Keys** will give us an audible sound when we have Caps Lock on. The **Sound** and **Display** tabs offer features to support those with hearing and visual impairments

Similarly, you can go directly to start>control panel>Mouse to change the cursor size, double-click speed etc. . . .

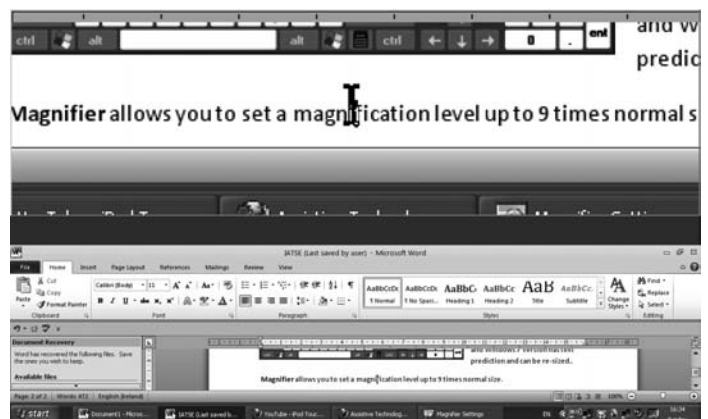
In addition to the features above, Windows XP offers Narrator, On-Screen Keyboard and Magnifier (start>programs>accessories>Accessibility). While these tools are not as good as dedicated assistive technology packages, they do give us an opportunity to support a range of pupils and to try out various possible solutions.

**Narrator** reads aloud what is displayed on the screen—the contents of the active window, menu options, or text that has been typed. It would benefit those with visual impairments or with reading difficulties.



The **on-screen keyboard** is very useful for pupils using an alternative mouse (joystick, roller ball etc.) or for use on an interactive whiteboard. The Vista and Windows 7 version has text prediction and can be re-sized...

**Magnifier** allows you to set a magnification level up to 9 times normal size.



The examples above have been taken from XP. Vista and Windows 7 offer improved accessibility features. There are dedicated web pages outlining the accessibility features in **XP, Vista, Windows 7, iPad, iTouch, iPhone and OSX**. You will find these in the livebinder at <http://bit.ly/assistive3>.

## FÍS FILM FESTIVAL

Fís is an exciting film-making project for primary school children. It channels children's creative talents and it's an ideal project to integrate ICT across the curriculum. For teachers, Fís offers excellent support with its resource pack and online tutorials, in addition to its sound pedagogical principles.



The National Fís Film Festival took place recently in the Helix at DCU where twenty-five schools were represented, among them CRC School, Clontarf. Our entry, while quite short and simple, took weeks to finalise and involved many students in the senior section of the school who learned a lot from the process. The students who represented CRC at the Film Festival felt very proud of their achievements and enjoyed their day in the limelight.

Links

<http://www.fis.ie/fis/> - Teaching Resources etc...

<http://bit.ly/crcschool> - How to Apply / Contact Information /Resources.

## CONFERENCE 2011

### TEACHING AND LEARNING - FORGING AHEAD

9th, 10th and 11th June  
St. Patrick's College,  
Drumcondra, Dublin 9.  
[www.iatse.ie](http://www.iatse.ie)

## IATSE ANNUAL AWARD 2010/2011

IATSE has in recent years, established an annual award to give recognition to good practice in Irish schools in the area of Special Education. All practising teachers involved in Special Education are eligible to apply. This also includes teachers of mainstream classes where pupils with Special Needs are included.

Submissions may describe:

- A piece of work carried out with a particular pupil/group/class
- A programme of staff development established e.g. school based induction programme for new staff i.e. Teachers, SNAs
- A curricular programme or innovation

A submission may be in the form of a case study/project which would describe the practical application, methodologies and outcomes of the innovation. It may also take the form of a narrative through which the story is told. It should be between 1,000 and 3,000 words in length. Submissions may be made by an individual or group of teachers. Up to four prizes of €500 each will be awarded each year. Only one award will be made for each winning submission.

### Adjudication

Winning submissions will be selected by a panel of adjudicators, comprising members of the IATSE CEC, and representatives, members selected from a panel of readers. The CEC of IATSE will be the final arbiter in relation to the award.

Applications should be made to Annual Award, IATSE, Drumcondra Education Centre, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Closing date for submissions is March 31st, 2011.

# New IATSE Honorary Member

At this year's IATSE Conference in June, I had the pleasure of presenting the coveted silver IATSE honorary membership pin to a dear friend and former colleague, Paul O'Mahony. Honorary membership is a singular privilege which has only been bestowed on fourteen members over the forty-one years since the birth of the organisation. In order to be considered for this honour there are two key considerations. The first requires that those conferred with the honour have made a significant contribution to the field of special educational needs in the Irish context and secondly, that the candidate has made a significant contribution to IATSE.

Paul retired from his position as Principal of St. Michael's House Special School in August, 2009 after twenty-nine years at the helm of this well known school. During this time, he contributed to immense changes and developments and was involved with a myriad of committees and research endeavours which have shaped the landscape of special education in Ireland. It is easy to focus on all of the deficits and shortcomings of today's educational system and particularly the impact of the current financial difficulties on the provision of education to students with special educational needs. However, a short lesson in the history of the development of education for this group of learners shows us that massive positive change has occurred and this has been influenced in no small way by the involvement and commitment of people like Paul O'Mahony. In common with the previous honorary members (John Blake, Patrick Chambers, Lucille Burke, Seosamh O'Driscoll, Sean Griffin, Eamonn O'Murchu, Paddy McAllinney, Paid McGee, Pat Lynch, Anita Craig, Pat O'Keefe, Barbara O'Neill, Ann Jackson), Paul has demonstrated a deep and broad commitment to learners with special educational needs and ongoing support to those who are engaged in the provision of education to these learners.

Paul's generosity of spirit is a pervading aspect of his character-always supportive, encouraging, trusting and respectful. A wise mentor- Paul remains a veritable oracle of information and advice for school Principals who seek guidance on



*Honorary member Paul O' Mahony (left)*

all aspects of SEN provision. A founding member of the Principals of Special Schools for Students with Moderate General Learning Disabilities Group, he supported his colleagues amply and continues to do so through his various involvements. Paul has also been involved in the development of curriculum for students with special educational needs through his work with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, he has kept the needs of teachers of students with SEN to the fore of union discourse through his involvement with the INTO, and he has been a tireless advocate for those who are marginalised in society.

For many years, Paul has proven himself to be a friend, supporter and contributor to the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education- a regular at conference and AGM, where he has performed duties on the Standing Orders Committee for many years, always bringing experience and measure to the committee's deliberations. He has been a reliable and skilled chairperson at various presentations at conference over the years and has been an enduring and consistent promoter of the work of the organisation throughout the years. Paul has also contributed to REACH, the Journal of IATSE.

It is clear that Paul O'Mahony fulfils the criteria for Honorary membership and I know that he will wear his pin with pride! On behalf of the CEC of IATSE, I would like to wish Paul many years of health and happiness during which he can enjoy the privilege of the little silver pin.

by Lisa White