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Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education

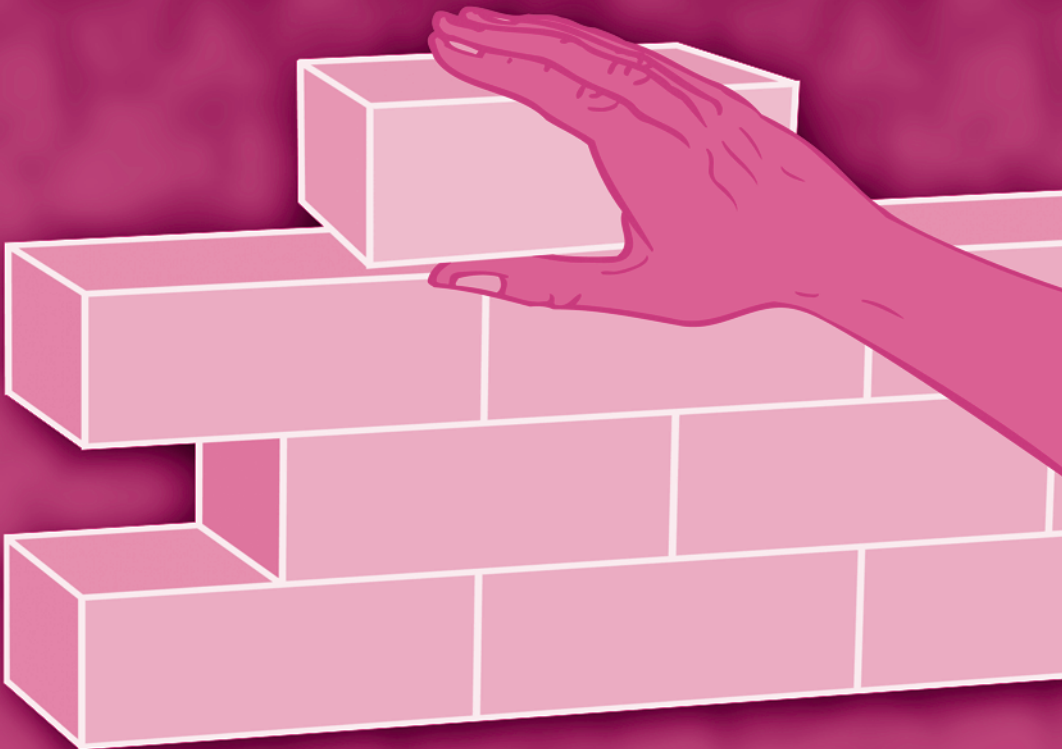
17th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2005

BUILDING BLOCKS

for Effective Special Educational Needs Provision

9th, 10th & 11th June 2005

St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.



Postal Enquiries to: I.A.T.S.E. Conference Secretary, Drumcondra Education Centre, Dublin 9.
Email enquiries to : ajackson@crc.ie • www.iatseireland.com • conference@iatseireland.com
Tel: 087 919 6986



iatse

Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2004/2005

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Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Welcome to the Conference

On behalf of the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education, I would like to welcome you to our Seventeenth Annual International Conference.

Building Blocks for Effective Special Needs Provision

This year's programme offers a wide and varied choice of papers from teachers and other professionals who wish to share their experience and expertise in the many areas of Special Education. We especially welcome our visiting presenters from abroad.

Together with our social activities we hope that all delegates will find our conference programme to be interesting, informative and entertaining.

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 **red** 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. Messages for other delegates may also be left on this notice board. In addition, please take note of any announcements made by chairpersons at the end of each session.

A Poster Presentation will be displayed in the Auditorium on Friday during the coffee and lunch break. Details of the display are contained in your folder.

Throughout the conference there will be a Publishers' Books and Materials Exhibition in the students' canteen.

On Thursday evening, after the official opening, there will be a reception hosted by St Patrick's College.

On Friday there will be a reception held in the Mansion House, Dawson St., Dublin 2. A bus will leave the college gates at 5.30 p.m. to bring delegates to this reception. See notice board for further details on the reception and the transport arrangements for the evening.

Presenters and delegates should note that **no photocopying facilities** will be provided by IATSE during the conference.

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

Ann Jackson
Conference Director

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 9th JUNE 2005

5.00-8.00 **REGISTRATION**

8.00 pm

Official Opening of Conference

Keynote Address: Stalling Beneath the Summit: Why is Progress Towards Inclusion Proving Elusive?

Richard Rose, Professor of Special and Inclusive Education, University College, Northampton, UK

Reception in the College for all delegates.

FRIDAY 10th JUNE 2005

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. Please do not leave half way through double sessions as it is very disruptive for presenters and delegates.

8.00-9.00 **Breakfast** – College Dining Hall

8.30-9.30 **REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**

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

For further information on presentations see **Abstracts** at the end of the programme.

D210

Towards the Development of a Model of Parent-Professional Relationships

Bernard McGettrick, Education Department, University College, Dublin

Inclusion – Real or Imagined?

Miriam Kingston, Granagh National School, Co Limerick
Chair: Oonagh Kenny

D211

Disability Legislation in Ireland: Educational Implications

William Kinsella, Education Department, University College, Dublin
Chair: Páid McGee

E217

Essential Components of School-based Autism Programs: Social Validation of Empirically Demonstrated Practices

Kevin Callahan, Associate Professor, Special Education, University of North Texas
Chair: Anita Prunty

E211

Teaching Interventions for the Pupil with Dyslexia

Thérèse McPhillips, Principal, St. Oliver Plunketts School, Dublin

Social Skills and the Dyslexic Learner

Fiona de Buitléir, Reading Class Teacher, Ennis National School.
Chair: Thérèse Day

E210

Where do Special Schools come from? A Rough History of Western Thinking on Disability

Michael Dobbins, Principal, Foyle View School, Derry

School-based Research – Empowering Schools from Within

Peter J. Murphy, Leadership Studies, University of Victoria, Canada
Chair: Jean Ware

E235

Inclusion and Resilience in Action : Reflections on a University Teacher's Experience in India

Bob Finlay, Australian Catholic University, New South Wales.
Chair: Helen Colman

11.00-11.30 **Coffee – College Dining Hall**

Poster Presentations in Auditorium

Materials and Books Exhibition in the Students' Canteen

11.30-1.00 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (B)**

D210

Individual Educational Planning in the Context of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

Mary Nugent, Senior Educational Psychologist, NEPS, Waterford.
Chair: Pat Lynch

D211

Using Differentiation to Meet Individual Needs in the Classroom

Ann Marie Farrell, Special Education Department, St. Patrick's College

Chair: Séan Buckley

E217

Bringing Some Discipline to a Website: An Effective Resource for Teachers

Ann Grieve & Gilbert McKay, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

Using Computer-Assisted Language Learning & Authoring Tools to Develop Materials for Students with Dyslexia

Cara N. Greene, National Centre for Language Technology, DCU

Chair: Kay Burke

E211

Assistants & Teachers: Changing Times, Changing Roles

Isobel Calder, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

Working Effectively with Special Needs Assistants in Primary School

Dolores Brady, Holy Family NS, Newport, Co Mayo

Chair: Éamonn Ó'Dúlainn

E210

Designing and Delivering a Training Programme for Teachers on Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Michael Cullinane, Educational Psychologist, NEPS, Drogheda

Chair: Mary Carrig

E235

The Child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in a Mainstream Class: First Steps for Resource and Classroom Teachers

Tish Balfe, St Joseph's NS, Newtownmountkennedy, Wicklow

Meeting the Individual Needs of Children with ASD: Irish Outreach Preschool Model

Mary McKenna, Scoil Mhuire, Ballyboden, Dublin.

Chair: Adrienne Dunne

1.00-2.15

Lunch – College Dining Hall

**Poster Presentations in Auditorium
Materials and Books Exhibition in the Students' Canteen**

2.15-3.15

CONCURRENT SESSIONS (C)

D210

Using ICT to Support Reading Development

Marty Holland, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

Chair: Geraldine Hayes

D211

A Tale of Two Acts: Legislation in Ireland and the USA

Liam Lawlor, Principal, Catherine McAuley School, Limerick

Deborah Peters Goessling, Providence College, RI, USA

Chair: Paul O'Mahony

E217

Developing the Numeracy and Math Problem-Solving Skills of Pupils with Special Educational Needs at Mainstream Primary School

Órla Ní Bhroin, Special Education Department, St. Patrick's College

Chair: Joe Travers

E211

Inclusive Musical Activities

Máireád Ní Chondúin, Music Teacher, CRC School, Dublin

Chair: Anne McGough

E210

Considerations Involved in Facilitating Learning for Deaf Students

Bernard McGettrick, Education Department, University College, Dublin

Chair: Mary Steen

E235

Inclusion in Action – Going the Extra Mile

Frances Ross-Watt, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

Chair: Brendan Hennigan

3.15-4.00

Coffee – College Dining Hall

Materials and Books Exhibition in the Students' Canteen.

4.00-5.00

CONCURRENT SESSIONS (D)

D210

Transition from Primary to Post-Primary: A Model of Collaboration

Helen Taylor, Jobstown Community College, Tallaght, Dublin

Eithne O'Shea, St. Thomas SNS, Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin

Chair: Rosemary Fahey

D211

The Need for Collaboration Between Paediatric Occupational Therapists and Teachers in Special Education

Sandra Patton, School of Occupational Therapy, Dublin .

Chair: Michael O’Keeffe

E217

Setting up Specific Provision for a Child with ASD in an All-Age Special School : Rationale, Issues and Challenges

Brigid Dunphy, St Laserian’s School, Carlow

Chair: Deirdre Corcoran

E211

Lack of Training in ABA Promotes the Using of Punishment : A Study with General Implications

Elizabeth Sparling, Behavioural Consultant, Victoria, Canada

Chair: Anita Prunty

E210

Understanding Life in Olden Days – Strategies for Teaching History to Students with Mild and Moderate General Learning Disabilities

Ann Marie Farrell, Special Education Department, St. Patrick’s College.

Chair: Mary Black

E235

Looking for a Way Out - Youth, Self-Destructive Behaviour and Modern Irish Popular Culture

Michael Flanagan, Deputy Principal, Central Model Senior School, Dublin

Chair: Moira Proctor

5.30

Transport available at College gates to reception in the Mansion House.

See notice board for details of event and transport arrangements

6.00

Reception in the Mansion House

SATURDAY 11th JUNE 2005

8.00-9.00

Breakfast – College Dining Hall

8.15-9.00

Registration

9.00-10.30 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (E)**

D210

Shaking Off Disability: Using Robotics in a Constructionist Approach towards the Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills

Mary Glynn, Learning Support Trainer, Primary Curriculum Support Programme

Finding the Technology That Works: Assessment Principles for Technology Use by Children with Special Educational Needs

Bryan Boyle, Assistive Technology Advisor, CRC, Dublin
Chair: Valerie Monaghan

D211

Social Acceptance in Secondary School

Elizabeth Sparling, Behavioural Consultant, Victoria, Canada

Equality of Access and Provision for All

William Kinsella, Education Department, University College, Dublin
Chair: Paul O'Mahony

E217

A Nationwide Study of Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools in Ireland

Áine Kelly, Research Department, St John of God Services.
Séan Carey, Special Education Dept, St Patrick's College.
Chair: Patricia McCrossan

E211

Inclusion at Post-Primary Level: Special and Mainstream Schools Working Collaboratively to Achieve Success

Oonagh Kenny, Marino School, Bray
Siobhán de Paor, Marino School, Bray
Michael Sheridan, Principal, St. Kilians Community School, Bray
Chair: Kathryn O'Connor

E210

Towards the Understanding of Students who have Physical Disabilities: Implications for Teaching and Learning

Eucharia McCarthy, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
Chair: Niamh Harrington

E235

Adapting the School to Suit the Child : The Reality of Providing an Individualised Education

Clara O'Byrne, Scoil Bernadette, Montenotte, Cork
Chair: Martin Stynes

10.30-11.00 **Coffee – College Dining Hall**

Materials and Books Exhibition in the Students' Canteen.

11.00-12.00 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (F)**

D210

The Teacher, The SNA, The Students and Their Classroom

Sonia Gibbons, St Laserian's Special School, Carlow

Chair: Anna Logan

D211

Oral Language and Literacy: Differentiation Strategies for Teaching Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Brid Laffan, Special Education Dept, St Patrick's College.

Chair: Deirdre Daly

E217

The Special School as Part of the Continuum of Special Educational Provision for Students with Special Needs: A Model of Good Practice

Patricia Ward, St Brigids Special School, Dundalk

Chair: Carmel Bradwell

E211

A Survey of Transition Education Programmes Available to Students Leaving Specials Schools and Post-School Centres in Ireland

Fiona Minogue, St John of God School, Islandbridge, Dublin

Chair: Liam Lawlor

E210

Characteristics of Young Gifted Children in Ireland

Nicky O'Leary, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.

Chair: Lisa Mullen

E235

The Impact of a Modified School Year on Students with Special Educational Needs

Eileen Winter, Queen's University, Belfast

Chair: Barbara O'Neill

12.00-1.00

Plenary Session

IATSE Research Project Report: The Current Status of Special Schools as Part of the Continuum of Educational Provision in Ireland

Chair: Jerry Pierce, President, I.A.T.S.E.

1.00

Close of Conference

ABSTRACTS

Keynote Speaker

Richard Rose is Professor of Special and Inclusive Education and Director of the Centre for Special Needs Education and Research at University College Northampton. He has previously held teaching posts in schools in four English local authorities, was head teacher of a special school and special educational needs inspector for a Local Education Authority. Richard has researched and published widely in the field of special and inclusive education, and has presented papers at international conferences in several parts of the world. He has worked closely with a number of colleagues in Ireland, as an external examiner to Church of Ireland College in Dublin and on the Encouraging Voices project with Michael Shevlin at Trinity College.

Keynote Address: Stalling Beneath the Summit; Why is Progress Towards Inclusion Proving Elusive?

Richard Rose

Moves towards the greater inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into the mainstream of education have progressed over several decades. Debates about where and how such pupils should be educated have held a dominant position in international educational discourse and has led to a greater understanding of the conditions required for the promotion of inclusive education and the ways in which these may be created.

Recent reports from national governments, and accounts within academic publications indicate that whilst progress has been made, this has been at a rate considerably slower than is thought desirable. In this address, consideration will be given to three specific issues. Firstly an attempt will be made to try to understand the ways in which the term inclusion has been interpreted and in so doing to consider what this means for a diverse population who have been labelled as having special educational needs. Secondly, a review of what is known about the conditions which favour inclusion will be discussed alongside the implications for implementing such measures as standard practice in schools. Finally, it will be suggested that despite recent critiques and caveats, the progress made towards promoting a more equitable and inclusive education system has been good, but that in common with other ideals, the push towards perfection has been stalled as we have begun to confront the needs of those pupils who offer the highest levels of challenge and those teachers who provide the greatest resistance.

In conclusion, it will be suggested that the time is right to review our current understanding of what constitutes effective inclusion, to re-affirm our beliefs in the rights of all pupils to an education that is broad, balanced and relevant and to set new goals for what might be realistically achieved in the immediate future.

Towards The Development of a Model of Parent-Professional Relationships

Bernard McGettrick

Drawing on research undertaken in the Education Department and relevant literature the notion of what constitutes an appropriate parent-professional relationship will be explored.

Beginning with parental reaction to diagnosis, the paper will examine aspects of the adjustment process and how this can be facilitated by the quality of the relationship between professional and parent. Parental expectations of teachers as the students with special educational needs progress through the school system will be explored together with teachers' expectations of parents.

Models of parent-professional relationships will be examined with specific attention being given to the partnership model. A framework for the evaluation of existing practice of parent-professional relationships in the school setting will be suggested and considerations relating to the development of a School Policy on parent-teacher relationships will be explored.

Inclusion – Real or Imagined?

Miriam Kingston

This paper explores the question of whether and to what extent Irish education policy promotes the principle of 'inclusion' for disabled students. Drawing on the work of disability theorists, the paper explores the emergence of the principles of 'integration' and 'inclusion' and examines the broader issue of inclusion as a human rights issue underpinned by principles of social justice and equality. The implications of failure at policy level to conceive of disability and education for children with SEN as an equal opportunities issue is then addressed. Current trends and recent initiatives in Irish education policy-making are outlined and counter-initiatives which dilute the impetus towards achieving the goals of inclusive education are explored. The paper concludes with a broad critique of the central policy conflicts at the heart of Irish education policy which call for resolution and a broad reconceptualisation of education in line with the social model of disability.

Disability Legislation in Ireland: Educational Implications

William Kinsella

This paper will entail an update, review and critique of current and proposed disability legislation in Ireland, with particular focus on the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, as well as a consideration of the status and implications of the Disability Bill 2004.

Essential Components of School-Based Autism Programs: Social Validation of Empirically Demonstrated Practices

Kevin Callahan

What makes a high quality public school classroom for students with autism? The presentation will consist of two parts. Part one will review practices,

interventions and classroom components which are associated with the highest quality programs for students with autism and autistic spectrum disorders. The presenter will share illustrative classroom-based examples and discuss the components of an IDEAL autism program.

The second part will summarise the results of a survey conducted in 12 school districts in the Dallas Fort Worth area. This survey compares the opinions of parents, teachers and special education administrators. The implication of these findings for establishing quality programs will be discussed in the context of realistic budgetary and school considerations.

Teaching Interventions for the Pupil with Dyslexia

Thérèse McPhillips

The aim of this presentation is to assist the Special Needs Teacher to address the difficulties faced by the pupil with dyslexia. In addition, some children with special educational needs other than dyslexia may present with similar problems "at the word level" i.e. reading and writing difficulties. Practical strategies to address literacy difficulties for these pupils will be outlined. Some current research findings on school provision for pupils with dyslexia will be presented.

Social Skills and the Dyslexic Learner

Fiona de Buitléir

The issue of social and emotional needs and behavioural difficulties will also be addressed. This is an area where teachers sometimes find it particularly difficult to get information and support.

Both presenters above have wide experience of teaching pupils with dyslexia in special settings.

Where do Special Schools come from? A Rough History of Western Thinking on Disability

Michael Dobbins

Through a review of the research literature and key documents, the historical, philosophical and policy determinants of current provision for people with intellectual disabilities are outlined. The historical positioning of people with disabilities within western thinking is set out. This leads to a further exploration of dominant ideas and conceptualisations shaping special educational provision today. As special education is currently experiencing rapid change, a strong case is made that "future thinking" needs to be informed by an understanding of how society received disabled people in the past and how provision is currently made.

School-based Research: Empowering Schools from Within

Peter J. Murphy

Staff, administrators and parents are often frustrated when confronted by demanding challenges and decisions in their school. There is an abundance of material, information and literature available to them but much of it is of

limited value locally and for the particular circumstances. Decisions are often made based on local politics, personal values and priorities or financial consideration. In consequence, many schools are perceived as being organised by the well-known process of “muddling through”

Small, simple and important research studies can be undertaken on crucial issues to improve schools from within. The findings, yielded by analysis, can provide new insights regarding an issue, can generate useful recommendations, can nurture collaborative practice and can offer a more objective approach to resolving challenges.

This presentation, using a systems model, will provide a guide to conducting school-based research. Applied research studies, completed by practising professionals, will be available for review.

Inclusion and Resilience in Action: Reflections of a University Teacher’s Experience in India

Bob Finlay

Reflections on recent lecturing experiences at the Research in Integrated Training and Education Centre (RITE) in Mumbai highlighted many challenges facing inclusive practitioners in different cultural settings. Students on Diploma in Integrated Education demonstrated how both inclusion and resilience could be put into action through cooperative learning, drama, music and magic.

Promoting inclusion and resilience requires a paradigm shift from transmission education with an often deficit perspective towards a developmental approach focussing on an individual’s perceived strengths. Furthermore, the latter approach illustrates that with a change in teacher perspective, “at risk” students can be assisted to develop capacities to help them overcome adversity. Many issues are raised for policy makers and education providers.

Individual Educational Planning in the Context of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

Mary Nugent

This presentation will explore the development of individual education plans across a range of settings. The content will include an overview of the requirements under the new Education Act 2004, looking at definitions and the purposes of the IEPs. The presenter will give some practical advice about convening planning meetings, engaging parents and students, writing targets and strategies and reviewing IEPs. Some sample IEPs will be available for review.

Using Differentiation to Meet Individual Needs in the Classroom

Ann Marie Farrell

Differentiation is one of the new ‘buzz words’ in the field of special education but what does it mean in the reality of the classroom? This presentation aims to define the term and to provide practical examples of effective use of differentiation to include individual students with special educational needs

(SEN) when delivering the curriculum to the whole group/class. The strategies outlined are applicable to all educational settings (mainstream and special schools) and to teachers of students with special educational needs of all ages.

Bringing Some Discipline to a Website: An Effective Resource for Teachers

Ann Grieve and Gilbert McKay

This paper is about work in progress – the development of a website for teachers concerned for their pupils' behaviour. Difficult behaviour by pupils in schools is seen as a priority for attention in contemporary Scotland by the press, teaching unions and the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). Our task is to help concerned teachers articulate sound intuitive and evidence-based practice, which will develop their professionalism when they meet behaviour that disrupts learning. The website centres on two inter-related features: a set of interactive case studies and a knowledge hub of support materials. The two principles underlying the choice of content on the website will be explained. The website offers opportunities for professional development at the levels of both initial teacher education and in-service school-based initiatives

Using Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Authoring Tools to Develop Materials for Dyslexic Students

Cara N. Greene

This presentation discusses how teachers can use Computer-Aided Language Learning (CALL) and authoring tools to develop materials for students who have dyslexia. CALL has much to offer students, including increased motivation, privacy, multimedia presentation of materials and the ability for the learner to work at his/her own pace and to use preferred learning styles.

Teachers can develop their own exercises with authoring tools and work with CALL practitioners on larger scale projects. By focusing on the dyslexic learners' needs they can create relevant CALL courseware for this target group e.g. spelling and memory games or comprehension exercises where students can be supported to build a visual story in their minds of the text they are reading.

Assistants and Teachers: Changing Times, Changing Roles

Isobel Calder

Learning Support Assistants have been present in Scottish schools for many years. However their work has not, generally, been the subject of research. The two major pieces of research completed in Scotland since 1975 have concerned assistants working in primary schools. The research reported in this paper hopes to add to the literature by looking at how assistants work in schools and how they are supervised and directed by class teachers. This research, part of a larger study, looks at assistants in one secondary school. It examines the assistants' role in a geography classroom and in a science laboratory. There were some interesting findings concerning teachers' roles in the classroom and how they are affected by and in turn affect the roles of the assistants.

Working Effectively with Special Needs Assistants in Primary Schools

Dolores Brady

This paper is based on research undertaken in Co. Mayo primary schools during 2004 as part of an M.Ed course of study. The focus of the research was the role of the special needs assistant (SNA) in supporting children with special educational needs. It was found that while there is a broad welcome from principals and teachers for this new resource, there are a number of issues surrounding the deployment of SNAs. It found that some SNAs have an excessive level of responsibility for their assigned pupil and are undertaking work for which they do not have the necessary qualifications. Unless effective use is made of this resource, the appointment of an SNA may not always foster the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education.

Designing and Delivering a Training Course for Teachers on Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Michael Cullinane

In this paper the presenter will consider the nature of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by examining a range of psychological theories that aim to explain the characteristics associated with autism. Using best practice guidelines and the results of a survey of teachers the presenter will outline the main themes that were included in an in-service training programme. Reference will be made to the main intervention programmes for pupils with ASD. An evaluation of this course will be provided and some recommendations for those involved in delivering training to teachers will be outlined.

The Child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in a Mainstream Class: First Steps for Resource and Classroom Teacher

Tish Balfe

This presentation will explore assessment tools specifically designed for use with pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These tools will enable the teachers to assess where the pupil is at and then to plan an IEP, which will differentiate the curriculum for the pupil with ASD. The two main tools discussed will be ABLLS and PEP-R.

The presentation will then discuss the learning style of the pupil with ASD, highlighting in particular their visual strengths. Suggestions will be made about how the teacher can adapt the environment in order to make it easier for the pupil with ASD to access the curriculum within the classroom. Finally some teaching strategies will be suggested that might be used by teachers and SNAs when working with pupils with ASD.

Meeting the Individual Needs of Children with ASD: Irish Outreach Pre-school Model

Mary McKenna

This presentation will focus on ASD specific educational provision, as provided by the Scoil Mhuire Outreach Pre-School. The strengths and needs of young children with ASD will be described. How these strengths and needs can be

translated into the creation of an environment that fosters development in socialisation, communication and flexibility will be explored. Concrete examples of the Outreach approach will be presented: multi-dimensional teaching approach, assessment and planning, collaboration with clinical team, parental involvement and transition to school.

Using ICT to Support Reading Development

Marty Holland

There is growing evidence that Information & Communication Technology (ICT) has an important role to play in supporting pupils with literacy difficulties. This presentation will look at the ways in which technology is being used to support pupils in the area of reading skills acquisition. The presentation will highlight evidence from recent research, will include examples of pupils' work and will refer to a range of relevant software.

Inclusion at Post-Primary Level: Special and Mainstream Schools Working Collaboratively to Achieve Success

Oonagh Kenny, Siobhán de Paor and Michael Sheridan

The presentation team will outline current good practice in addressing the educational needs of students in St Killian's Community School and Marino School, Bray. The focus will be on the successful inclusion of students with physical and multiple disabilities into the post-primary school setting, in collaboration with a special school.

The benefits of collaborative working practices between teachers in different types of schools will be outlined. The organisation of a shared educational placement option for some students will be discussed.

The future role of the special school in supporting inclusion in the local community will be explored. The team will also examine the obvious benefits of the existence of a continuum of education provision so that the needs of all students can be catered for in an appropriate and effective way.

Developing the Numeracy and Maths Problem-Solving Skills of Pupils with Special Educational Needs at Mainstream Primary School

Órla Ní Bhroin

Children with special educational needs may experience difficulty in acquiring number concepts and coping with the demands of calculation and problem solving. This paper considers reasons for this difficulty, offers practical suggestions for assessing students' abilities in basic mathematics and examines teaching methods and strategies that promote numeracy development and math problem-solving skills.

Inclusive Musical Activities

Máiréad Ní Chondúin

Music is hugely versatile and cogently demonstrates the importance of joy in learning. There is a multiplicity of ways in which students with special

educational needs can actively participate in musical activities. This lecture will use videos of 10 classroom based musical activities to illustrate ways to

- involve students with different learning needs in a common activity, which includes appropriately differentiated musical tasks
- stimulate creativity and encourage self-expression
- develop skills in concentration and perseverance
- promote active group involvement and social interaction

The emphasis will be on activities accessible to the general class teacher requiring simple resources.

Considerations Involved in Facilitating Learning for Deaf Students

Bernard McGettrick

This presentation will focus on the factors teachers with a deaf pupil in the classroom will need to consider. The topics covered will include definitions of deafness, classification of deafness and degree of deafness as determined by an audiogram. The presenter will also explore the effects of hearing loss on the pupil and how this will affect teaching and learning in the school environment. There will be a particular focus on language acquisition for deaf pupils.

Inclusion in Action – Going the Extra Mile

Frances Ross-Watt

Following directly from a paper delivered at IATSE conference in 2004 this paper presents the next chapter in the on-going case study into the experiences of Heather, a girl with spina bifida. Against the background of good inclusive practice, Heather's mainstream primary school continues to provide the additional support she requires to meet her special educational needs. Now established in Primary 2, Heather finds her mobility somewhat reduced, but her indomitable spirit and determination to engage in every aspect of school life remain completely undiminished. Staff, of all levels, are also focussed to ensuring that Heather receives the best possible education in a setting which is both inclusive and entirely supportive.

Transition from Primary to Post-Primary: A Model of Collaboration

Helen Taylor and Eithne O'Shea

The transition from primary to post-primary school is a period of great change for both pupils and parents. When a child has special educational needs the transition can have additional stresses. An effective transition programme requires the establishment of close links between the post-primary school and its feeder schools.

This paper describes the transition programme from St Thomas SNS to Jobstown Community College in Tallaght. A rationale underpinning the programme is presented and the various strands of the programme and the personnel in its implementation are outlined. While all pupils participate in the programme, some activities are particularly designed to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs and their parents.

The Need for Collaboration Between Paediatric Occupational Therapists and Teachers in Special Education

Sandra Patton

Paediatric Occupational Therapy specialises in assessing a child's abilities in relation to activities that they do every day, such as self care, school work and play. The therapist works with children aged from 0-18 years old with sensory, physical, learning and/ or mental health issues. Assessment involves assessing the child's functional level in relation to their developmental level and identifies components affecting performance in activities of daily living. The therapist works in collaboration with parents and teachers to offer individual treatment and advice regarding issues such as handwriting, gross and fine motor skills development, organisation of self and work materials in class, physical adaptations needed at home and school to promote independence etc. In Ireland therapists are primarily employed within the health service and levels of service delivery varies nationwide.

This presentation is aimed at explaining the role that Paediatric Occupational Therapy can play in assisting a child's abilities in an educational setting. It will also discuss a possible model of collaboration with teachers of pupils with special educational needs given that the level of service provision both in Paediatric Occupational Therapy and Special Education varies nationwide.

Setting up Specific Provision for a Child with ASD in an All-Age Special School: Rationale, Issues and Challenges

Brigid Dunphy

The presentation will focus on the educational needs of a young boy with ASD and general learning difficulties. It will start with a brief history of previous provision in an integrated class and the move to an autism specific provision. The reasons why a different provision was required will be explored. The issues of getting approval for new provision, staffing requirements, environmental considerations as well as the design and delivery of a suitable educational programme will be presented. Finally the presentation will look at the issue of challenging behaviour and the outcomes of the new programme and setting.

Lack of Training in ABA Promotes the Using of Punishment: A Study with General Implications

Elizabeth Sparling

Teacher training does not equip educators to manage severe problem behaviours. This lack of training has a significant impact on the education of children in British Columbia who exhibit challenging behaviours. For many teachers, the extent of training for working with aggressive students is a 2-day Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training class, which includes the use of restraint. Although "holds" are accepted by school systems because of their protective quality for staff, it is recognized that a secondary, punitive role is played by the use of restraint. Therefore, it is often assumed by teachers, that the introduction of "holds" will be sufficient to eliminate problem behaviour. This study shows the fallacy of this assumption. Instead it supports the use of

positive reinforcement for both the efficacy and the social validity of this process.

Understanding Life in the 'Olden Days' - Strategies for Teaching History to Students with Mild and Moderate General Learning Disabilities

Ann Marie Farrell

Students with Mild and Moderate General Learning Disabilities often experience difficulties relating to literacy and conceptual understanding. This presents a challenge to teachers to find ways of effectively accessing the curriculum to maximise learning. This is particularly apparent in 'content laden' subjects such as history where the volume of information is large and concepts such as time, chronology, cause and effect, change etc. are difficult to grasp. This presentation aims to identify teaching strategies (differentiation, modelling...) that may be used to increase access to the history curriculum for this group of students. Practical examples will be used to illustrate the main points throughout. This information would be useful for teachers working in mainstream primary, post-primary and special schools and can be adapted for other curricular subjects.

Looking for a Way Out – Youth, Self-Destructive Behaviour and Modern Irish Popular Culture

Michael Flanagan

The last decade has witnessed a marked upsurge in the occurrence of what may be termed "self-destructive behaviour" among Irish youth. Increased levels of alcohol and substance abuse, more public order offences and a significant rise in suicide rates, particularly among a cohort of young men, are all comparatively recent features in the transition experience from childhood to adulthood.

This paper examines the social, economic and cultural factors that distinguish modern Irish society, in an effort to place the question of self-destructive behaviour in a broader context. Some aspects of modern Ireland, such as the decline of traditional values against the background of increased prosperity and a greater emphasis on media and technology in the lives of the young, are addressed. The potential role of the school in developing strategies to counteract the culture of self-destructive behaviour is explored and initiatives in this field that have been applied internationally are considered.

Shaking Off Disability: Using Robotics in a Constructionist Approach Towards the Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills

Mary Glynn

Higher order thinking skills are an essential requirement for all students in today's Knowledge Society. With infinite knowledge now available at the touch of a button, educational emphasis is no longer on the inner storing of knowledge but on the development of complex skills to gather, analyse, interpret, evaluate, build on and use it effectively.

This research focuses on the creation of a powerful learning environment to facilitate higher order thinking skills in children presenting with mild general learning disability. Two ten-year-old boys are exposed to a robotics programme. The learning environment is of a constructionist nature, based on the contemporary educational theories of Seymour Papert but underpinned by a core of teaching methodologies proven effective in the cognitive development of learning disabled students.

In line with Papert's theories, the constructionist experience of using a robot as an external artefact 'to think with' had an empowering effect on the research participants. Higher levels of thinking which previously lay dormant and undeveloped were unlocked as the children, on many occasions, succeeded in shaking off their apparent disabilities through learning in a style that came naturally to them.

Finding the Technology that Works: Assessment Principles for Technology Use by Children with Special Educational Needs

Bryan Boyle

With the recent proliferation of technology for children at all levels in their education, there exists an economic and educational imperative to give more careful consideration to finding the most suitable range of technology for the individual student.

Where computer-based technology can be highly motivating to students with special educational needs, exposure to the wrong technology or to technology that may be overwhelming can often have the opposite effect on students.

Careful consideration of each student's needs, the requirements of the curriculum and the practicalities of the classroom must be thoroughly examined in order to ensure that students are provided with a solution that is practical for the teachers and appropriate for the student. The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors necessary in order to ensure that teachers can select technology solutions that work for students with special educational needs in their own classroom. An outline of the types of technology available, their application and an examination of the supports necessary to make them work will be provided.

Social Acceptance in Secondary School

Elizabeth Sparling

A qualitative study, consisting of a survey of 534 senior high school student, was undertaken to determine factors that affect the social acceptance of students with moderate and severe disabilities at senior high school. The nature of the student's disability, social and cultural influences, teacher attitude and modeling, as well as adolescent psychology and peer pressure are all cited as issues which impact inclusion. This study, however, indicates that the overall factor appears to be a lack of knowledge and understanding, which are crucial to facilitate social acceptance and inclusion.

Equality of Access and Provision for All

William Kinsella

This paper is based on part of a research project into equality of access to, and participation in, mainstream education for persons with disabilities/special educational needs in the Republic of Ireland. The aim of the study was to identify legislation, policies and practices in Ireland and internationally which facilitate or impede the accessibility of effective, egalitarian and inclusive educational services to students with disabilities/special educational needs at primary and post-primary levels. A particular focus of the study was to identify the education and support systems which need to be developed in this country in order to ensure equality of access.

The empirical component of the study consisted of the conduct and analysis of structured interviews with key informants, including service users, within the education system in Ireland. The study was also informed by perspectives gleaned from visits to Northern Ireland and the United States. The study aimed to formulate a set of preliminary recommendations for a co-ordinated system of inclusive education in Ireland. This paper provides a summary of the findings of the study, with particular emphasis on the perspectives of the participants within the study.

A Nationwide Study of Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools in Ireland

Authors: Áine Kelly, Seán Carey & Siobhán McCarthy. Presented by Áine Kelly & Seán Carey.

Introduction: The aims of the project were to describe the prevalence and severity of challenging behaviour in special schools in Ireland, its effects on principals, teachers and pupils, the strategies used by schools to respond to challenging behaviour and the perceived resources needed by schools to deal with this issue.

Methodology: All Principals (n=111), as listed in the Irish Directory of Special Schools (2003), were sent a questionnaire in which they were asked to provide information relevant to the aims of the project. In addition, Boards of Management, Principals and Teachers were interviewed in a stratified random sample of schools (n=12) to obtain their perceptions of issues related to challenging behaviour.

Results: Results showed the prevalence and severity of challenging behaviour across school categories and insufficient resources provided to special schools to manage challenging behaviour, particularly in the areas of training, specialist/clinical support service provision, staff allocation and practical resources.

Implications: Challenging behaviour in special schools in Ireland presents a significant problem. Seven key recommendations were made in the areas of training, service provision, standardised policies and guidelines, challenging behaviour forums, parental involvement, nationwide statistics and curriculum and further study. The research report was presented to the funding body the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education, the Department of Education and Science and associated agencies.

LEGISLATION IN IRELAND AND THE US: A TALE OF TWO ACTS

ACT 1: The Reauthorization of the IDEA: Big Changes for the United States or Just a Minor Adjustment?

Deborah Peters Goessling.

In the United States, special education federal legislation has been in effect since 1975 when Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law was reauthorized in 1990 and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On November 19, 2004, Congress reauthorized the IDEA. This presentation will focus on three important revisions to IDEA that may have implications for Ireland's special education system. These changes are: in the Individual Education Plan, in the definition of learning disabilities, and in the new requirements for the development of "highly qualified" special education teachers. The presentation will also refer to the 'No Child Left Behind Act' 2002 and its relationship to IDEA 2004.

ACT 2: The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004: Implications in Irish Education for the 'High Incidence' Mild General Learning Disability Students.

Liam Lawlor

Some 30 years after the United States passed their Education for All Handicapped Children Act (later to be known as IDEA 1990), the Irish Parliament passed the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. This EPSEN Act is the most significant development in special education legislation and sets out the 'road map' for all SEN pupils to be educated in Ireland in future. Or does it? This paper proposes to investigate if the needs of all special needs pupils are covered by this Act. It outlines the concerns of many practitioners who work with pupils assessed as having a Mild General Learning Disability (Moderate General Learning Disability in U.K. i.e. IQ 50-70). It questions if these pupils, now referred to as 'high incidence disability' students will be 'lost' in the general population of mainstream schools. Could this EPSEN Act and subsequent DES policy (Cir. 01/05) prove to be a landmark piece of legislation for all pupils with special educational needs or regrettably come to be known in future as the 'Many Children Left Out Act' 2004?

Towards the Understanding of Students who have Physical Disabilities: Implications for Teaching and Learning

Eucharia McCarthy

Knowledge and understanding about physical disabilities can enable teachers to respond appropriately to the needs of these students. For some children a physical disability may be unnoticeable. For others the effects may be profound, causing involuntary movements, paralysis, problems with speech and balance, and possibly learning difficulties.

This presentation examines the nature of various physical disabilities. It outlines a variety of educational strategies, supports and assistive technologies that can be used by teachers to effectively meet the individual needs of these students.

Adapting the School to Suit the Child: The Reality of Providing an Individualised Education

Clara O'Byrne

An IEP is an individualised education plan which allows the student to access the curriculum to the best of his/her ability. This paper aims to explore ways in which IEPs can be used to co-ordinate a multidisciplinary approach and can offer the teacher a real opportunity to provide the pupil with a differentiated curriculum.

Recent legislation has prompted many schools to re-examine their attitudes to the IEP and perhaps to see it as a live planning document rather than a bureaucratic obligation. The presentation examines the reality of setting and achieving social and academic targets through the use of case studies. Programmes such as FETAC and JCSP can be invaluable resources when tracking and assessing learning goals. Their contribution to the IEP process in Scoil Bernadette will be examined.

Special schools, where both primary and secondary curricula are used, have developed expertise in the provision of differentiated curricula. These schools can be viewed as models of best practice in the promotion of diverse teaching methodologies and the assimilation of new legislative obligations.

The Teacher, The SNA, The Students and Their Classroom

Sonia Gibbons

This presentation points out the importance of co-operation between the teacher and the Special Needs Assistant (SNA). Planning collaboration will ensure best practice, effective educational provision for the students with special educational needs and a happy, successful classroom environment. The presenter will demonstrate how each adult in the class compliments the other for the benefit of the student.

Oral Language and Literacy: Differentiation Strategies for Teaching Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Brid Laffan

This presentation will address the process of meeting the oral language and literacy needs of pupils with special educational needs, both in small group and classroom settings. It will include the following components: a framework for assessing oral language skills, planning for oral language and literacy, teaching strategies and resources to be used and classroom management needed to facilitate differentiation in oral language and literacy.

The Special School as Part of the Continuum of Provision for Students with Special Educational Needs: A Model of Good Practice

Patricia Ward

Education for students with special needs consists of a broad continuum of provision answering the needs of individual students. Every student has the right to a teaching and learning environment appropriate to him/her.

Throughout the proceedings of this conference many models of best practice will be cited. This paper aims to place St Brigid's School on this broad continuum and outline the ways in which we endeavour to create a supportive, stimulating and challenging learning environment for our students.

St Brigid's school community is holistic in its approach. We provide integrated cross curricular education differentiated for individual students. Our educational plans are developed and reviewed bi-annually in consultation with parents and students. At all stages within the school we strive to integrate our students in the local community and participate in events across the whole curriculum.

Our school has three distinct sections: primary, secondary and pre-vocational.

This presentation will highlight the aspects of each section of which we are particularly proud.

A Survey of Transition Education Programmes Available to Students with General Learning Disabilities in Special Schools and Post-School Training Centres

Fiona Minogue

The findings of this survey (undertaken in 2004) will be presented in relation to the following topics: The transition curricula offered by special schools and post-school centres; the methods of planning for transition; assessment methods; certification offered by special schools and post-schools centres; accreditation of centres; links between the school/centres and external agencies; the type of service accessed by students when they left the special school and the outcomes for the students when they completed training. The finding will be considered in relation to Irish and international research and practice. Twenty three recommendations were made and a number of these will be highlighted.

The Impact of a Modified School Year on Students with Special Educational Needs

Eileen Winter

A Modified School Year (MSY) is one in which the traditional ten-month school year is reorganized into balanced segments of instructional and holiday time spread throughout the year. It has been implemented in a number of jurisdictions in the UK and abroad (Canada, USA, Australia), and similar changes may well be considered in other places in the future. It is imperative that such changes are examined critically, with the potential impact on all students and the wider school community taken into consideration.

This paper reports on a research study conducted in two Canadian schools that have implemented the MSY. The study investigates the impact of this alternative calendar on students with special educational needs (SEN). Much of the current literature on the impact of the MSY focuses on achievement test scores as evidence of its success. This project focuses on the overall school experience of students with SEN currently enrolled in a MSY rather than just

test scores. Data was collected from practitioners, students and parents in both schools. The presentation will look at a range of models for the MSY, the lived experience of students, their teachers and parents and the impact of MSY on inclusive practices. The presentation will conclude with a number of recommendations for policymakers and practitioners considering implementing the MSY.

PLENARY SESSION

IATSE Research Project: The Current Status of Special Schools as Part of the Continuum of Educational Provision in Ireland

IATSE members working in special schools have over a period of some years expressed their concern about the value being placed by decision-makers on the service they provide. There is a fear that special schools have been down-graded as providers in the continuum of special needs provision as the pendulum has swung towards mainstream inclusion. Many teachers working in mainstream and special schools have expressed the view that mainstream inclusion is being pursued at the expense of correct student placement and in pursuit of an ideology rather than in an effort to achieve the best outcome for the student.

The Central Executive Committee of IATSE made a decision in November 2004 to investigate the issues facing special schools and attempt to identify both positive and negative aspects of current provision. The research is qualitative and is examining each sector by assembling focus groups made up of teachers working in those schools. It has been in progress for some months now and it is intended that the research will be published by the end of the year.

An outline of the work and findings to-date will be presented to delegates at the Plenary session.

**THE IRISH ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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