



**25th Annual International Conference 2013**

# **BACK TO BASICS**

**PORTFOLIO FOR PRACTICE**

**6th, 7th & 8th June, 2013**

**St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9**

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## **Welcome to the Twenty Fifth Annual International Conference of the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education – “Back to Basics- Portfolio for Practice”.**

This conference celebrates the excellent practice to be found across schools in the field of special education. Against a challenging political and financial backdrop, teachers continue to meet the needs of their students at primary and secondary level and in the special school context. With increasingly limited resources, today's teachers use research based methodologies, diverse and innovative solutions to enable their students to learn and achieve their potential. We understand how important quality professional development opportunities are to Irish teachers and we are delighted to bring together some fantastic home grown talent and colleagues from further afield, the voice of the practitioner alongside the researcher. We hope that you enjoy the conference.

### **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 flashing on their badges will be happy to assist you.

From time to time, due to unforeseen circumstances, changes have to be made to the programme, 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 your feedback is also useful as the organising committee are always keen to hear new ideas about how we can improve conference. For Irish delegates, the Department of Education & Skills Register will be available at the registration area at the main entrance and teachers on leave from school are required to sign this.

### **Throughout the conference there will be a Publishers' Books and Materials Exhibition, which we encourage you to visit.**

Presenters and delegates should note that **no photocopying facilities** are 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. Delegates are requested to adhere to the usual conference etiquette- mobile phones should be powered off, delegates should proceed promptly to presentations and should endeavour to stay for the duration of the session so as to avoid disruption.

## **Social Diary**

On Thursday evening, after the official opening, there will be a reception hosted by Dr. Daire Keogh, President of St Patrick's College. All delegates and guests are invited to attend.

On Friday evening, we will enjoy, yet again, a social evening in one of Dublin's most historic locations- the James Joyce Centre on North Great Georges St. Entertainment will be provided by the wonderful 'Cascade' choir. Here you can enjoy refreshments and canapés in the Georgian splendour of one of Dublin's great town houses of the period. A bus will leave the college at 5.15pm, the event will finish at 8.00pm- please note there is no return bus.

On behalf of the CEC of the IATSE, we hope that you enjoy the conference and leave with new ideas and a new network of friends!

## **Rosemary Fahey & Lisa White**

*Conference Directors*

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## THURSDAY 6th JUNE 2013

7.00-8.00pm **REGISTRATION** at Main Entrance Hall of St. Patrick's College

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

Welcome by **Isobel Ryan**, President, IATSE

### **Formal Opening Address**

### **Keynote Address- Áine Ó'Neill, Church of Ireland College, Rathmines**

#### **Inspiring Practice in Challenging Times**

In the last two decades education at all levels has been presented with challenges on many fronts. In Ireland, schools have experienced enormous change with the introduction of new policy initiatives, legislation, structures, personnel and curricula. These combined with the national and international discourse relating to 'outcomes' in education have presented challenges to schools and to those working in them. The current economic crisis has had implications for the support services and structures put in place to help schools to mediate and facilitate changes in practice at school level and this has put further pressure on schools. This paper, in line with the conference theme, reflects on the work of teachers when faced with challenges and seeks to identify basic principles of practice to help them mediate those challenges.

#### **Biography:**

Áine O'Neill qualified as a primary teacher in 1982. She has worked in schools as a mainstream and special class teacher for twenty years. In that time she has been involved in INTO initiatives at local and national level that related to professional and policy developments in Education. She has worked on number of curricular initiatives including the Stay Safe Programme and the drafting of NCCA curriculum guidelines for teachers of students with mild general learning disabilities (primary). In 2002 she began her career as lecturer in the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) and currently works with teachers from primary, post-primary and special schools on the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Education Needs. In 2002, Áine was involved with colleagues from St. Angela's College, Sligo; MICE, Limerick and the Education Centres in the development of a national training programme for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), an initiative funded by the DES. Since then she has worked with SNAs completing the Certificate Programme for SNAs at CICE. Her research and published work includes a comparative study of the role of SNAs in Ireland and Teaching Assistants (TAs) in England conducted in collaboration with Prof. Richard Rose, University of Northampton. She has also published work related to training of SNAs. More recently she collaborated with Ann Marie Farrell of St. Patrick's College of Education in research relating to the roles of learning support and resource teachers in mainstream post-primary schools and the challenges of inclusion evident in those schools.

The keynote address will be followed by reception in the college for all attendees.

## FRIDAY 7th JUNE 2013

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)**

8.20-9.00 **REGISTRATION**

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

E210

**The Effectiveness of a Static Pictorial Sequence in the Delivery of a Life-Skills Programme for Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in a Post-Primary School.**

Judith Callan-Gough, ASD Co-ordinator, Deerpark CBS, Cork & Maeve Feehan, Senior OT, Regional ASD Service, Cork/Kerry

*Chair: Michael O'Keeffe*

E217

**Task Analysis: Assessment, Target Setting and Teaching**

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

*Chair: Bernie Smyth*

E211

**Reciprocal Teaching for Reading Comprehension: Providing Pupils with Strategies for Further Learning**

Peadar Ó Muirí, B.Ed, PG Dip.SEN, MSEN, Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Scoil na Mainistreach, Celbridge, Co. Kildare

*Chair: Thérèse Day*

E235

**Teacher Training in School-Based Consultation**

Paula Long, Senior Psychologist, NEPS, Cavan

*Chair: Denis McCarthy*

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

**Please visit the Materials and Books Exhibition**

11.00-12.00

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS (B)

E217

### **Behaviours that Challenge: Supporting Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in the Post-Primary School**

Fiona Jennings, Lecturer & Ailbhe O'Halloran, Lecturer, Centre for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity, St. Angela's College, Sligo

*Chair: Tim Quinlan*

E211

### **Accessing Transitions: Exploring Good Practice for Working with Learners with SEN as they Move on from Compulsory Education**

Sheena Bell & Dr Cristina Devecchi, Senior Lecturers SEN and Inclusion, University of Northampton

*Chair: Rosemary Fahey*

E210

### **Using the Curriculum as a Preventative Behaviour Management Tool**

Adie Clarke, Behaviour Management Consultant

*Chair: Jerry Pierce*

E201

### **In Safe Hands- An Examination of the Everyday Lived Experience of Intimate Care Policy/Procedures from the Perspectives of Young People with a Physical Disability and Special Needs Assistants in a Special School Setting**

Patricia Muldoon, MSc Child Protection and Welfare, Teacher, Central Remedial Clinic, Clontarf

*Chair: Lisa White*

12.00-1.00

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS (C)

E210

### **The Eating Preferences of Irish Children with ASD**

Joanna Gill, Senior Speech and Language Therapist, Scoil Triest, Lota, Cork

*Chair: Carol-Ann O'Sioráin*

E201

### **Literacy Strategies for Supporting Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Secondary Schools**

Karen Moni, Associate Professor, University of Queensland, Australia

*Chair: Ger Hayes*

E217

### **Where Are They Now? A Look at How Young People with Disabilities Have Fared in Mainstream Schools Over the Past Decade and Their Achievements to Date**

Nollaig Rowan, Senior Clinical Psychologist & Sara Donoghue, Senior Speech and Language Therapist, St Michael's House, Dublin

*Chair: Paul O'Mahony*

E235

### **Pupils with SEN Statements Making the Transition Between Mainstream Schools at Age 11 - Does Expectation Meet Reality? What Can We Do to Help?**

Phil Ellender, PhD Candidate, University of Northampton, UK

*Chair: Colin McElroy*

E211

### **Young Children's Perceptions and Understanding of Bullying**

Dr Anita Purcell, Educational Psychologist, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Carlow

*Chair: Pat O'Keefe*

**1.00-2.15**

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

**Please visit the Materials and Books Exhibition**

**2.15-3.15**

## **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (D)**

E211

### **Post Primary Social Skills Programme for Students with Autism/Asperger's Syndrome**

Suzanne McCanney, Learning Support Manager, Middletown Centre for Autism

*Chair: Anita Prunty*

E210

### **Enabling Teachers to Select Toys that Appeal to and Elicit Positive Responses in Pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities with a Cortical Visual Impairment**

Ann Higgins, Principal, St Michael's House School, Baldoyle

*Chair: Elaine Hall*

E217

### **Using iPads to Enhance Learning in Classrooms for Children with Special Educational Needs**

Tish Balfe, Lecturer in Special Education, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin

*Chair: Ann Jackson*

E201

### **Model Mini Lessons to Distinguish between General and Special Education in Practice**

Dr Patricia Daly, Director; Department of Special Education, & Johanna Fitzgerald, Lecturer; Department of Special Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

*Chair: Bernie Smyth*

E235

### **Is There Anyone There Who Understands Me? – Schools, Mental Health and the Emotional Wellbeing of Young People in Ireland**

Dr Michael Flanagan, Lecturer; Popular Media Studies, All Hallows College, DCU

*Chair: Denis McCarthy*

**3.15-3.45**

**Coffee – College Dining Hall**

**Please visit the Materials and Books Exhibition**

### 3.45-4.45 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (E)**

E211

#### **The Prevalence and Presentation of Mental Health Issues in Young People with Autism and Other Intellectual Disabilities: Implications for Teachers**

Leanne Traynor - B.Ed, PG Dip. SEN (ASD), Teacher, Senior Autism Unit, Lakeview Special School, Galway

*Chair: Teresa McGann*

E217

#### **Planning to Support the Development of Literacy Skills in the Early Years**

Dr Bairbre Tiernan & Dr Pauline Kerins, Lecturers in Education, Centre for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity, St. Angela's College, Sligo

*Chair: Marie Rafferty*

E210

#### **Otitis Media/Glue Ear – A Common Problem**

Carmel Capewell, University of Northampton

*Chair: Áidín Ní Mhaonaigh*

D235

#### **UK in Focus:**

#### **An Investigation into Strategies of Transition from Primary to Post Primary Education for Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

Yu Zhao, PhD candidate, University of Northampton, UK

#### **How do Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in England Enhance Teachers' Classroom Practice?**

Saneeya Qureshi, Doctoral Researcher, University of Northampton, UK

*Chair: Colin McElroy*

## **SATURDAY 8th JUNE 2013**

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

8.30-9.05 **REGISTRATION**

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

E217

### **Supporting Students with Autism Through Transitions**

Frances O'Neill, Autism Advisor/Trainer, Middletown Centre for Autism

*Chair: Carol-Ann O'Sioráin*

E235

### **Using the Interactive White Board to Enhance the Language Skills of Students with Special Educational Needs**

Marlette Koller, Teacher, Stewarts School, Dublin

*Chair: Barbara O'Neill*

E201

### **'Learning from Experience': What Stakeholders Can Teach Us about Including Students with ADHD**

Kate Carr-Fanning, PhD Candidate & Dr Conor McGuckin, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin

*Chair: Teresa McGann*

E211

### **Precision Teaching: Supporting Pupils' Mastery of Basic Skills in Literacy and Numeracy**

Siobhán O'Sullivan, EdPsych & Programme Leader for the MA in Educational Psychology & Claire Griffin, EdPsych & Lecturer in Psychology of Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

*Chair: Colin McElroy*

E210

### **Second Level Teachers Knowledge of the Law Relating to Special Education**

Lisa Barnes, Teacher, St Laurence College, Loughlinstown, Dublin

*Chair: Paul O'Mahony*

10.15-10.45 **Coffee**

10.45-11.45 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS (G)**

E211

### **Managing Anxiety for Children and Young People with Autism**

Dr Fiona McCaffrey, Head of Research and Development, Middletown Centre for Autism

*Chair: Paddy McAlhinney*

E210

### **Dyspraxia - Practical Strategies for the Classroom**

Trevor O'Brien, Teacher, currently seconded as Lecturer in Special Education to Mary Immaculate College

*Chair: Jerry Pierce*

E217

**An Investigation of the Effectiveness of a Computerised Memory Intervention Programme for Pupils with Working Memory Deficits**

Tomás Mac An Bhreithiún, Doctoral Researcher, UCD, School of Lifelong Education, Belfield, Dublin

*Chair: Anna Logan*

E235

**Building Success in Concept Development of Students with Sensory Impairments Through Individualised Communication Strategies**

Deirdre Leech, MEd, Deafblind Outreach Services, Anne Sullivan Foundation

*Chair: Isobel Ryan*

**12.00-1.00 CONCURRENT SESSIONS (H)**

E210

**Working Memory in Children with Autism**

Dr Fiona McCaffrey & Sheila Cross, Middletown Centre for Autism

*Chair: Mary McKenna*

E211

**Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction? There's an App for That!**

Dr Shane Gallagher, Educational and Child Psychologist, Camden Educational Psychology Service, London, UK

*Chair: Denis McCarthy*

B139

**“On a Shoestring” - Providing for Potential through PLNs and Creative Collaboration**

Leslie S. Graves, Occasional Lecturer on Gifted Education, UCD and International Templeton Fellow/ Belin Blank Centre for Excellence in Gifted Education

*Chair: Rosemary Fahey*

E217

**Basic Handwriting Skills- Where Teachers Sharpen Up On Their Handwriting Intervention!**

Frances Kinnane, Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Presentation Girls School, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

*Chair: Bernie Smyth*

# **ABSTRACTS/ SUMMARIES OF PRESENTATIONS**

## **The Effectiveness of a Static Pictorial Sequence in the Delivery of a Life-Skills Programme for Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in a Post-Primary School.**

*Judith Callan-Gough & Maeve Feehan*

Many students with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) benefit from visual supports. The aim of the project was to establish if static pictorial sequences allow students to complete a life-skills task independently. Observation of students carrying out a simple daily task took place. The number of questions asked, and the number of stalls that occurred was monitored and a decrease in these behaviours was observed with the use of a static pictorial sequence. In addition, the use of AMPS (Assessment of Motor and Processing Skills, Fisher, 2005), undertaken by the school Occupational Therapist corroborated these findings. The principal success of this intervention was an improved capacity for the students to remain on task.

## **Task Analysis: Assessment, Target Setting and Teaching**

*Ann Marie Farrell*

"Task analysis breaks down the complexity of an activity into easier steps; these steps are organised as a sequence, and the student is taught each step of the sequence" (Lerner, 2003). This presentation explores task analysis in terms of its use in assessing the student's current level of performance, identification of a starting point for teaching, and setting appropriate learning targets. There will be a workshop element within the presentation whereby participants will have a chance to work together to analyse tasks and discuss the issues arising.

## **Reciprocal Teaching for Reading Comprehension: Providing Pupils with Strategies for Further Learning**

*Peadar Ó Muirí*

Many pupils attending learning support, while having reasonable proficiency at word recognition, exhibit relatively poor levels of reading comprehension. Prompted by this phenomenon in his own school, the presenter designed and delivered a twenty-week action research intervention, using a Reciprocal Teaching model, to five fifth class students in receipt of literacy support during withdrawal time. While positive findings resulted in improved and sustained levels of comprehension along with greater levels of dialogue and participation in reading lessons, social skills deficits emerged, indicating a need for focussed attention in this area. This presentation highlights how the initial intervention was delivered, and how it eventually expanded into the main classroom leading to a higher level of inclusion of pupils with reading difficulties.

## **Teacher Training in School-Based Consultation**

*Paula Long*

This presentation concerns why and how we need to continue to develop consultation practice and skills in the educational psychology services and in schools. Consultation is defined as interpersonal actions involving "an indirect problem-solving process between a consultant and one or more consultees to address concerns presented by a client (student)". The role of the educational psychologist is to support and assist schools in addressing a range of concerns using a staged approach to assessment, in a consultation framework. This presentation will focus on helping teachers and others understand and use consultation as a way of promoting best practice and a more effective and consistent approach to working with schools on a range of issues and concerns.

## **Behaviours That Challenge: Supporting Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in the Post-Primary School**

*Fiona Jennings & Ailbhe O'Halloran*

This presentation is based on research that has been conducted on methodologies and strategies employed by graduates of the Post-Graduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs (Autistic Spectrum Disorders) in supporting students with ASDs presenting with challenging behaviours in post primary settings. It identifies strategies and methodologies used by these teachers and their schools to prevent and respond to challenging behaviours. It is hoped by sharing examples of good practice among the post-primary community that teachers and schools will be better equipped to reflect on their practice in relation to the education of students with ASD and challenging behaviours in the post-primary school.

## **Accessing Transitions: Exploring Good Practice for Working With Learners with SEN as They Move On from Compulsory Education**

*Sheena Bell & Dr Cristina Devecchi*

This paper will draw on findings from the recent research carried out for the NCSE in Ireland, into the access and progression experiences of students with SEN/disabilities moving from compulsory education to further and higher education. The researchers will propose how an analysis of their findings can be put to practical use, in allowing teachers to build up a portfolio of tools to enhance good practice in preparing students with SEN for transition into post-school contexts. The presentation will include interactive workshop activities in which participants will be asked to relate research findings from this project as a basis for pedagogy.

## **Using the Curriculum as a Preventative Behaviour Management Tool**

*Adie Clarke*

The aim of this presentation is to offer colleagues a structure for good practice by embedding behaviour management strategies within general classroom teaching. In the stressful busyness of the classroom day, teachers clearly don't have time to develop a separate plan for behaviour management. So, when we consider the curriculum itself as a preventative behaviour management tool, it's time to take a fresh look at teaching and at the areas of Language, Maths, etc. as well as SPHE. Through research and practice, I have developed a classroom teaching approach that illustrates how the structure of lessons themselves, as well as the layout of the classroom can be used to support disruptive students towards self discipline. Included in this session is a range of simple and silent behaviour management tools and strategies - based in part on and developed from the work of Dr. Bill Rogers.

## **In Safe Hands- An Examination of the Everyday Lived Experience of Intimate Care Policy/Procedures from the Perspectives of Young People with a Physical Disability and Special Needs Assistants in a Special School Setting**

*Patricia Muldoon*

The issue of child protection has been attracting significant attention recently. There remains a dearth of research in the area of intimate care surrounding one of the most vulnerable of all groups - children with disabilities. The approach to address this matter was to review the limited literature in this area, examine policies and procedures that cover the delivery of intimate care and through a series of interviews with both young people with a disability and special needs assistants, gain a practical understanding of their everyday experiences. The findings of this research will be discussed and practical recommendations given.

## **The Eating Preferences of Irish Children with ASD**

*Joanna Gill*

Unusual eating preferences have been identified in children with autism. This study examined the feeding selectivity, mealtime behaviours, sensory preferences, feeding independence, health and weight of Irish children with autism, and the concerns their parents have around their children's eating behaviours. Parents of 81 children with autism completed a food consumption checklist for the previous 24 hours, which was compared with the normative data of 8,568 representatively selected Irish 9 year olds as part of the Growing Up in Ireland project. Children in the ASD group had a significantly lower consumption of healthier, fresh foods, and a higher consumption of less nutritious, processed foods. The parents also completed an eating behaviours questionnaire. Children with ASD showed significant social difficulties around mealtimes, preferring to eat alone, and not to sit at the family table. Children's food preferences threaten their general health and challenge their full participation in family and community life. As a result of this study, the speech and language therapy team in a special school for children with ASD in Cork instigated a whole school approach to meal time behaviours and food preferences to encourage changes in eating preferences. Practical strategies and Food is Fun! interventions for improving children's eating habits will be discussed.

## **Literacy Strategies for Supporting Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Secondary Schools**

*Karen Moni*

Drawing on fourteen years of research and teaching in the Latch-On programme (Literacy and Technology: Hands-On- a post-school literacy programme for young adult with intellectual disabilities developed at The University of Queensland in Australia), this presentation addresses some of the challenges in supporting the literacy learning of young adults with intellectual disabilities in mainstream English classrooms. Specifically, the presentation will share strategies for moving beyond deficit models of literacy; address the challenges of curriculum planning, limited resources and assessment, and promote active participation. The presentation will be supported with examples of practical classroom activities.

## **Where Are They Now? A Look at How Young People with Disabilities have Fared in Mainstream Schools Over the Past Decade and Their Achievements to Date**

*Nollaig Rowan & Sara Donoghue*

Clinicians from Support Team for Education in Mainstream Schools (STEMS) will present a paper on how they support students with moderate learning disabilities in mainstream primary and secondary schools and how these young adults fare after leaving school at 18 – pathways they take, academic achievements, social/occupational roles they engage in. St Michael's House has been providing outreach support to students in mainstream education for over 10 years now and has experience with children and teenagers of varying disabilities and with varying strengths and weaknesses.

## **Pupils with SEN Statements Making the Transition Between Mainstream Schools at Age 11 - Does Expectation Meet Reality? What Can We Do to Help?**

*Phil Ellender*

This project followed eight children with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) as they transferred between primary and secondary mainstream schools at age 11. The children, their parents, and professionals in schools were interviewed before and after transition. While data at pre-transition shows there was some optimism, most children expressed social concerns, i.e. loss of friends and bullying; academic concerns, i.e. increased demands and decreased support; and personal organisation worries including getting lost and managing timetables and equipment. This presentation describes how participants' views altered post-transition, and highlights some factors which were effective in facilitating transition.

## **Young Children's Perceptions and Understanding of Bullying**

*Dr Anita Purcell*

This small-scale research examined young children's aged six to seven ( $n = 8$ ) perceptions and understanding of bullying in Irish Primary schools. It also included the views of the children's parents ( $n = 8$ ) and teachers ( $n = 2$ ) on bullying. The participants' views were obtained through semi-structured interviews which were analysed using the constant comparative method as per grounded theory approach. The results revealed the complexity of young children's interactions in school and the difficulty the adults around them have in accurately defining and addressing bullying behaviour. The data indicate the need for parents and teachers to listen attentively and sensitively to children's accounts of bullying and to provide consistent advice on how to address bullying.

## **Post Primary Social Skills Programme for Students with Autism/Asperger's Syndrome**

*Suzanne McCanney*

This presentation looks at teaching functional core social skills through motivating shared experiences using a structured approach for students in post primary school settings. This approach to teaching social skills has been developed by Middletown Centre for Autism in collaboration with Gina Davis, Attention Autism. The presentation will:

- Outline the development of the programme
- Describe the social needs of students with autism/ Asperger's
- Describe the programme content
- Provide examples of content

## **Enabling Teachers to Select Toys that Appeal to and Elicit Positive Responses in Pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities with a Cortical Visual Impairment**

*Ann Higgins*

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics in toys likely to appeal to pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) who also have a Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) and to develop a rating scale for these characteristics. It was also the intention of this study to enable teachers to select toys that are likely to appeal to these pupils using the rating scale. Results from this study indicated that pupils responded positively when the identified characteristics were present in toys. Toys with more characteristics were more appealing than those with less. The findings of this study suggest that the presence of these characteristics is important in attracting visual attention. It also illustrates that the devised rating scale could enable teachers to select toys that appeal to pupils with PMLD and CVI.

## **Using iPads to Enhance Learning in Classrooms for Children with Special Educational Needs**

*Tish Balfe*

This presentation will consider the value of using iPads in classes for children with more complex needs. Topics will include: choosing android and or iPad tablet, sourcing, buying and managing apps, hardware to enhance the use of an iPad in a classroom, and managing iPads in schools. The settings and accessibility features will also be discussed. Reference will be made to a range of applications available for the development of communication and language, fine motor, attention and cognition skills. Apps to enhance the sensory experiences of the children will also be discussed. This presentation is particularly pertinent to all teachers who are teaching students with special educational needs who are non-verbal or minimally verbal.

## **Model Mini Lessons to Distinguish Between General and Special Education in Practice**

*Dr Patricia Daly & Johanna Fitzgerald*

In this presentation two model mini-lessons will be taught on the same content. One will exemplify teaching the lesson 'traditionally' and the other will add the 'additional' or 'extra' to make it an example of 'Special Education' in practice. The audience will be asked to discriminate between both types of practice. Doing 'Special Education' will then be positioned within the nuanced environments of teaching syllabus content at senior primary level and teaching students for state examinations in post-primary class settings. The session will conclude with some suggestions for incorporating special educational considerations when planning for teaching diverse groups of learners in mainstream classrooms.

## **Is There Anyone There Who Understands Me? – Schools, Mental Health and the Emotional Wellbeing of Young People in Ireland**

*Dr Michael Flanagan*

Children referred for special education often have emotional and behavioural problems that require psychiatric treatment, and tend to have lower social interaction and classroom participation, both isolating risk factors in terms of mental well-being, compared to peers in general education (Wagner et al., 2006). This paper examines the manner in which schools can play an important role in the promotion of positive mental health, particularly from the perspective of special educational needs, building up resilience and in identifying and supporting students who may be vulnerable or at risk. Education about mental well-being and mental health problems should become an integral part of the school curriculum, starting in primary school. It is especially important to address the myths and stigma surrounding mental health which, for many young people, is a barrier to seeking help for emotional and mental health problems. Finally, this paper will argue, the support needs of staff in developing mental and emotional health promotion must be acknowledged and met.

## **The Prevalence and Presentation of Mental Health Issues in Young People with Autism and Other Intellectual Disabilities: Implications for Teachers**

*Leanne Traynor*

This presentation will focus on the practical, realistic strategies that teachers can use to promote Positive Mental Health in all class settings and with all age groups from 4-18. The research on Mental Health issues that affect children and adolescents with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be examined and reasons why students with SEN, especially students with Autism, are particularly vulnerable. The signs and symptoms of Mental Health Issues that teachers can expect to see in their classrooms will be identified. Mental Health, Mental Ill-Health and Mental Illness will be defined and the affect of each on behaviour will be discussed. Examples of how to integrate Positive Mental Health into Individualised Behaviour Programmes will be given. The main body of the presentation will look at simple and effective strategies to promote Positive Mental Health in the classroom and across the whole school. This will include sample lessons using highly visual resources and books, how to adapt the use of language by staff, how to use Social Stories™ for Positive Mental Health and how to promote Positive Mental Health to encourage academic achievement. Ways to incorporate lessons and messages about Positive Mental Health, not only into SPHE, but into range of cross-curricular subjects will be explored. It is hoped that teachers will leave the presentation with a greater knowledge of various types of Mental Health Issues affecting young people with SEN, clarification on the definition of Positive Mental Health and ways to simply and effectively promote it in their classrooms.

## **Planning to Support the Development of Literacy Skills in the Early Years**

*Dr Bairbre Tiernan & Dr Pauline Kerins*

Current policy states that developing good literacy skills among all young people is fundamental to the life chances of each individual and essential to the quality and equity of Irish society (DES, 2011). This presentation will focus on supporting literacy development for pupils with learning difficulties and/or special educational needs in their early years at school. The early literacy skills needed to support literacy development will be highlighted. The presentation will address issues central to planning for literacy development in a variety of contexts, including mainstream classes and special settings, so as to meet individual learning needs and facilitate greater access to the curriculum.

## **Otitis Media/Glue Ear – A Common Problem**

*Carmel Capewell*

This paper focuses on the lived experience of young people affected by Otitis Media (OM), commonly known as Glue Ear. The intermittent hearing loss caused by this condition can impact phonic acquisition, social skills, behaviour and the ability to hear what is being said. 80% of children under the age of 10 years are believed to have it at some point (Bluestone, 2003). This will be a workshop session providing an understanding of the impact of intermittent hearing loss, a summary of the findings of research into how OM can impact children in the classroom along with suggestions for changes to teaching practice to better accommodate them.

## **UK in Focus:**

### **An Investigation into Strategies of Transition from Primary to Post Primary Education for Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

*Yu Zhao*

This paper will revisit characteristics of ASD and the difficulties experienced by students with this disorder. The current project investigates the challenges faced by students as they make the transition from primary to post primary school, especially those with ASD. Reference will be made to previous studies to further illustrate the focus of this research, which will gather qualitative data through the use of interviews, school document scrutiny and the development of case studies. In addition to collecting original data, the researcher will undertake a detailed investigation of a large data set collected by researchers during a four year longitudinal study in Ireland (Project IRIS).

## **How do Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in England Enhance Teachers' Classroom Practice?**

*Saneeya Qureshi*

This paper addresses the conference theme by discussing practical ways in which SENCOs enhance teachers' skills, and how teachers reflect this support when addressing the needs of children with SEN in English Primary Schools. In this study, 18 teachers and 18 SENCOs – including a cross-section of those having multi-functional responsibilities – were interviewed. Key emergent themes include: SENCOs as 'agents of change'; the difficulties of ensuring the balance between teachers' over-reliance and under-utilisation of SENCOs' remit; and the nature of interventions and provisions made for children with SEN in terms of the 'usual' support, versus that which is 'over and above' normal practice.

## **Supporting Students with Autism Through Transitions**

*Frances O'Neill*

Middletown Centre for Autism offers a range of evidence based courses incorporating practical strategies to support teachers and parents when working with children and young people with autism. Transition from one educational setting to another for those with autism has traditionally been a focus of concern for both teachers and parents regarding pupil anxiety, social integration, lack of progression and underachievement; many demonstrate and communicate this through their behaviour which can be challenging in both the home and school environments.

## **Using the Interactive White Board to Enhance the Language Skills of Students with Special Educational Needs**

*Marlette Koller*

This project focused on examining the impact of the interactive white board (IWB) on the teaching and learning of language skills in a class of 10 and 11 year old students with moderate general learning difficulties (MGLD) and severe general learning difficulties (SGLD). Results from the study showed an overall increase in receptive and expressive vocabulary for the participants. The findings emphasised the importance of a functional system in which the researcher as the teacher; the students as active learners and the IWB as a tool for learning were joint and integral to creating a complete learning experience.

## **'Learning from Experience': What Stakeholders Can Teach Us About Including Students with ADHD**

*Kate Carr-Fanning & Dr Conor Mc Guckin*

This solution-focused student voice research project explored the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders (student, teacher, and parent) coping with young people aged 8-18 years with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The study of stress and coping emphasised 'needs' instead of 'labels', using a strength-based perspective. Multiple qualitative case studies included a triangulation of stakeholders voices, visual methodologies, and other evidence-based data. Constructing this contextualized account of their lives in their ecological niche (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), was done in order to contribute to an understanding of 'what works' in practice in inclusion in Ireland. Findings will be discussed with a particular emphasis on their practical implications, but also in terms of theory and methodology.

## **Precision Teaching: Supporting Pupils' Mastery of Basic Skills in Literacy and Numeracy**

*Siobhán O'Sullivan & Claire Griffin*

This presentation will provide an overview of the methods involved in Precision Teaching. Practical examples of its implementation within mainstream and learning support classrooms will be offered and illustrated with short video clips. Precision Teaching provides a framework for planning, monitoring and evaluating a programme to suit the individual needs of pupils. It emphasises the role of intense practice at the sub-skill level in the development of fluency. It is ideally suited for pupils who are making little or no progress in acquiring basic literacy and/or numeracy skills and who would benefit from increased motivation and self-confidence in their learning.

## **Second Level Teachers Knowledge of the Law Relating to Special Education**

*Lisa Barnes*

The findings from this study indicate that many teachers are not aware that it is their professional and legal responsibility to facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classes. The majority of teachers surveyed knew little or nothing about the laws relating to SEN. Teacher training in the area of SEN must be adapted to enable teachers to feel more confident in including students with SEN rather than simply integrating them; what this requires from the teacher must be clearly defined and understood since they are the ones who will ultimately be accountable before the law.

## **Managing Anxiety for Children and Young People with Autism**

*Dr Fiona McCaffrey*

Research indicates that anxiety is a significant difficulty for children and young people with ASD, particularly as children get older their experience of anxiety can impede their ability to successfully participate in the school day. This workshop will examine the difficult behaviours that a child can present with as a result of their experience of anxiety. Participants will then be presented with a range of 'on the spot' and longer term cognitively based strategies that can be used to manage anxiety and promote more positive behaviours. This session is particularly relevant for resource teachers.

## **Dyspraxia - Practical Strategies for the Classroom**

*Trevor O'Brien*

This session will focus on understanding dyspraxia and will explore ways in which teachers can use this knowledge to support children with dyspraxia in the classroom. Definitions, terminology and characteristics outlined in the literature will be considered. Assessment procedures will also be described. Practical, evidence-based strategies will be offered which, when planned appropriately, may prove beneficial in including children with dyspraxia. The presenter will also highlight the importance of early identification and offer suggestions in this regard.

## **An Investigation of the Effectiveness of a Computerised Memory Intervention Programme for Pupils with Working Memory Deficits**

*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). The research was an experimental design multiple groups (Treatment and Delayed Treatment group) pre-test, post-test design with a within-group and between-group comparison and analysis. The aims of the research was to establish the (cognitive) working memory profiles in participants (two groups) who have been previously identified as presenting with working memory deficits, so that appropriate interventions can be established to improve their chances of school success for each of these groups. Also, the effect of a computerised Working Memory intervention (Jungle Memory) on the Working Memory Capacity of the participants was examined. Another aim was to investigate if any improvements were noted in either literacy or numeracy or both in each of the two groups by accessing the results of routine school tests.

## **Building Success in Concept Development of Students with Sensory Impairments Through Individualised Communication Strategies**

*Deirdre Leech*

Children with hearing and vision impairments have unique needs with regard to all aspects of their learning. Due to their lack of early hearing and visual experiences, enhancing their communication skills is the key to developing concepts such as early literacy, numeracy, and socialization. Whether they use sign language (ISL or LÁMH), objects of reference, photographs, or line drawings to communicate, all students can learn these concepts in his or her own unique way and succeed. This presentation gives participants an opportunity to get "Back to Basics" and to learn new ways to teach children with dual sensory impairments the skills they need to achieve success in all academic areas.

## **Working Memory in Children with Autism**

*Dr. Fiona McCaffrey & Sheila Cross*

Working Memory has been shown to be critical for: reading comprehension; mental arithmetic; word problems and a predictor of learning success (Alloway, 2007) ie. areas of basic learning in the school environment. In 2012, Middletown Centre for Autism undertook a pilot study to examine whether children with autism have difficulties with Working Memory compared to their typically developing peers. Analysis from data indicated that significant differences in Working Memory are present amongst the autism population. This workshop will provide an insight into the variances found amongst the two populations and the impact difficulties in working memory will have on children with autism.

## **Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction? There's an App for That!**

*Shane Gallagher*

"When fluency instruction is compared to traditional instruction...the results seem clear--fluency instruction seems to improve children's fluency and comprehension" (Kuhn & Stahl, 2000). Learning phonics is a means to an end. Systematic, high quality phonics teaching is essential, but more is needed for children to achieve the goal of reading, which is comprehension. The Expanded Rehearsal Technique (ERT) is an evidence-based model which has recently undergone research and development in Cambridgeshire. ERT has been shown to be a very effective individual technique for teaching struggling learners how to read. It works on the principle of encouraging a child to retain information for increasingly longer periods, then developing rapid and automatic identification of phonemes, graphemes, blends and words. The goal of the technique is rapid word recognition. We argue that a learner has not reached fluency until they can recognise a grapheme, blend or word in 1.5 seconds. Tucker (1989) used a similar rule for his research into developing fluency in learners. Advantages of the programme are that it is evidence-based, focuses on developing reading fluency, can be tailored to a child's individual needs, is delivered little and often (10 mins, 2/3 times a day), develops segmentation skills and increases motivation in learners. Our research has shown significant improvement in literacy skills of learners across all ages from Reception to Key Stage 4. In co-operation with Cambridge University this technique has also been developed as an app for both the iPad and iPhone and is currently available in the iTunes store.

## **“On a Shoestring” - Providing for Potential through Personal Learning Networks (PLNs) and Creative Collaboration**

*Leslie S. Graves*

As the worlds' shrinking economies place greater and greater pressure on gifted and talented programmes and the reduction of financial assistance for same becomes more and more prevalent, it is more important than ever to look for creative cost effective ways to provide. This workshop will focus on facilitating the collaborative creativity of the participants. In the pursuit of producing ideas and potentially affordable resources and/ or enrichment activities for use with Gifted & Talented, High/Hidden Potential and Twice Exceptional Children; it will tap into the development of Personal Learning Networks. Through brainstorming, sharing experiences/information and working through a number of fruitful and fun hands-on activities, as well as discussing information on how to use internet/web based resources and activities, participants should acquire new and useful contacts, ideas and knowledge of/for use in their workplace and/ or homes.

## **Basic Handwriting Skills- Where Teachers Sharpen Up On Their Handwriting Intervention!**

*Frances Kinnane*

Stop! Look no further! This workshop is for you: a workshop specifically focussed on combating poor handwriting. This workshop will provide theory combined with 'hands-on' strategies for teachers to assist children who have difficulties with basic handwriting skills.

Workshop objectives:

1. Understand the basic skills in handwriting
2. Learn the developmental stages in writing and the importance of developing fine motor skills
3. Learn to recognise difficulties and implement strategies to improve performance specific to a child's needs.

Do you know a child who

- looks awkward when writing
- has poor pencil grip
- has messy writing
- applies incorrect pressure to paper and wondered what you could do to help?



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

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