

iatse Update

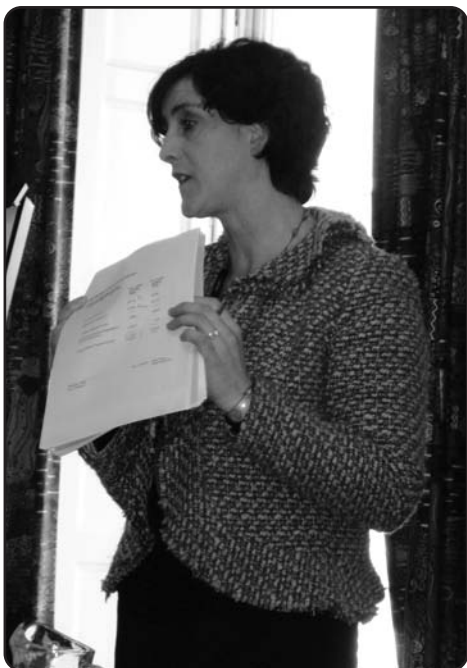
WINTER UPDATE

WINTER 06

IATSE ANNUAL AWARDS – 2006 INNOVATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

This year's IATSE Annual Award attracted submissions on a range of topics from teachers in mainstream and special schools. The variety of themes representing the work of individuals and whole school staff, reflected the commitment and creativity of teachers in their efforts to enable children with special education needs to realise their potential. Three very different projects were selected for this year's IATSE Annual Award and the authors were presented with their prizes at the AGM of IATSE which was held in Club na Muinteoiri on Saturday the 18th November last.

Susan Elliott's submission, *'Teaching Children with Autism to Play the Tin Whistle'*, describes the journey undertaken by



Treasurer Rosemary Fahey reads the financial report for the current year at the AGM.

Susan and the boys in her class as they learned to play the tin whistle together. Susan teaches children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in an outreach class in Our Lady's Boys School in Ballinteer in Dublin. The strategies employed by the teacher to enable each child to begin to play, using his own style and at his own pace makes capturing reading. Brenda Duncan and Norah Golden presented an excellent example of the holistic approach to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in Filemore National School, a two teacher school in Caherciveen, Co. Kerry. In their project, *Inclusive Practices and Diversity: Planning for Learning in Junior Infants*, they describe practice in the school whereby 'teachers can go further than merely modifying learning experiences and activities, and look for the child beyond the disability'. The project outlines how this is achieved with a junior infant group in a multi-class situation. The group includes a child with mobility and language difficulties. The introduction of 'Tea Cup Teddy', who takes turns going on a 'sleepover' to the



Susan Elliott receives her IATSE award by President Jerry Pierce

children's homes, is just one example of the imaginative strategies employed to engage the children in learning. Overall, creativity and imagination permeate the planning for inclusive teaching throughout this project.

A very different innovation from Marino School, Bray, Co. Wicklow is described in the submission from Oonagh Kenny and Siobhan de Paor titled, *Development of a New Post of Outreach Teacher at Marino School Bray – Special and Mainstream Schools Working Together*. In this, they describe the steps taken to establish a system of support for children with physical disabilities in mainstream schools in the surrounding area. These included a survey of needs in the mainstream schools, an outline of how the role of an outreach teacher might meet these needs and finally, the establishment of the post of outreach teacher on a pilot basis, with sanction from the DES.

Aine O'Neill



Oonagh Kenny and Siobhan de Paor are presented with their IATSE Award by President Jerry Pierce. Brenda Duncan and Norah Golden were unable to attend the presentation of awards at AGM 2006.

CRIBS IRELAND

Congratulations to Carmona Special School, Dun Laoghaire and St Ultan's Special School, Navan who are among four schools to have won prizes in a new and exciting competition organised by Cribs Ireland. The other winners were St Mark's Community School, Tallaght and Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Salerno, Galway.

This competition, invited students from Ireland to design and make a crib for an exhibition of cribs over Christmas 2006 in Farmleigh House in Dublin. The inspiration for the initiative comes from the Mostra 100 Presepi that has taken place in Rome each Christmas for over thirty years. Cribs Ireland is twinned with Mostra 100 Presepi. Students from all primary and post-primary schools were invited to take part as well as students from third level colleges of art and colleges of education. This is the first time that Ireland has been involved in this venture.

Carmona School's Principal, Anne Campbell says- "Everyone of the students in Carmona Special National School, from the youngest 5yrs old to the oldest 18yrs old, participated in making our crib. Our materials; old cardboard boxes, toilet rolls, scraps of fabric, glitter and bucketfuls of PVA glue!

Each class was allocated one character to make; many diverse styles and designs harmonised beautifully when they were assembled together. We can't describe the incredulity and excitement when we received a call to say that our crib was one of the four selected from the whole of Ireland to go to the International Exhibition in Rome!

We are so proud that the work of our very special students has won this national and international recognition. Farmleigh have chosen the image of Carmona Crib to be their official Christmas Card this year. We are honoured and delighted."

St Ultan's School, Navan, designed a modern Christmas crib based on an Irish construction site in which an apartment block called Ultan's Towers is being built. St. Joseph, in keeping with his trade as a carpenter, is depicted putting the finishing touches to the crib. Inside is the Baby Jesus lying on a pallet, rather than a manger, with Mary His Mother seated beside him. The Three Wise Men are construction workers dressed in their yellow safety jackets and one of them carries a gift for the Baby Jesus. A fire is burning in a barrel and cats and dogs rest in the crib rather than donkeys and sheep as would be seen in a traditional crib. Clay, paint, wood, polystyrene, sand and lollipop sticks were used in the construction of the crib.

The four winning entries have been taken to Rome to participate in the Mostra 100 Presepi 2006 along with cribs from all over the world. The exhibition opened on 23rd November 2006 and will continue until 7th January 2007. Each winning school received the magnificent prize of 5000 as a contribution towards a trip to Rome to visit the exhibition. Cribs have also been selected from amongst the other competition entries and will be on view in the Farmleigh Gallery from 15 December 2006 to 7 January 2007. The four winning cribs can also be seen on www.veritas.ie.

REPORT ON THE NASEN CONFERENCE

Saturday October 14th. 2006: Stranmilis College, Belfast

On a beautiful autumnal morning, I travelled north to Belfast to attend the annual NASEN (Northern Ireland) Conference, which this year dealt with the themes of reading and literacy difficulties. The weather augured well for what was to be a passionate and engaging series of presentations. The keynote speaker was Gervase Phinn, former teacher and Ofsted inspector.

His address to conference considered how expectations, both positive and negative echo the Pygmalion effect. The child internalises messages from significant others at home and in school. Gervase Phinn is a published author and poet. He used his storytelling abilities to illustrate to optimum effect this self-evident truth. The hilarity that his address provoked did not in any way detract from the seriousness of his intent. This was an address that will live for a long time in people's memories.

Sue Palmer another author shared with us an outline of her latest publication "Toxic Childhood". Her basic research question was attempting to examine the increased frequency and causes of many childhood behavioural disorders e.g. ADHD. She acknowledged that improved diagnostic tools could in some ways account for the observed increase in children presenting with behavioural difficulties in the classroom. Her core assertion, however is that the rate of change in society, the effects of which can be observed in for example family life have "toxic" effects on contemporary childhood, specifically, she argued in the case of male children. She contends that these negative effects are directly related to changes in patterns of play, family interaction and amongst other things, physical activity. Sue Palmer suggests that the accelerated rate of change is happening in "cyber time" while the human brain as an evolutionary organ can only respond in "biological time". Children are spending longer periods of time in isolation in front of a TV or a PC screen where the flick of a switch produces instant relief from boredom and instant gratification: Learning on the other hand requires concentration and the deferment of gratification. A fascinating thesis that deserves to be read in full and to be explored further.

An excellent conference: Thank you NASEN Northern Ireland for the kind invitation, we look forward to further collaboration.

Jerry Pierce

Software Review

For teachers, parents and therapists working with students with more significant disabilities there is now a wide range of stimulating and imaginative software. Many of these programs can be used to support the development of cause and effect, language, choice making and pre-literacy skills. They can also be used with a wide range of access devices including switches, touch monitor and alternative mice. Some are very suitable for use with the interactive whiteboard for group or class activities.



The **Choose and Tell** series of programs encourage students to make choices and create their own stories within a simple format. They can be used to develop language skills and imagination. The series has three titles – *Nursery Rhymes*, *Fairy Tales* and *Legends*. Activities can be chosen to suit students of different ages and abilities. Students can access the programs using mouse, touch monitor and switches and there is auditory scanning support on each scene. The programs can also be used on an interactive whiteboard for use with a group or a whole class. *Legends* is particularly age-appropriate for older students needing simple language and choice making activities.



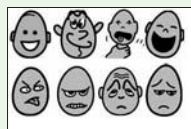
The original titles in the **SwitchIt!** series are still available and very useful for basic cause and effect and simple language practice. The new **SwitchIt! Extra** programs have been expanded to include picture building, animated stories and flashcards. In addition the new titles have extra teaching and learning resources – on-screen activities, printable worksheets and Braille worksheets. The titles in this series are *Farm*, *Hygiene*, *People*, *Weather* and *Christmas*. The topics are suitable in content for older students with significant special needs. Each program can be used with keyboard, mouse, switch, touch monitor and Intellikeys.

Many teachers find it more appropriate to personalise computer activities using their own photographs, pictures and sounds that may be more relevant and meaningful for the students. **SwitchIt! Maker 2** allows you to turn text, pictures, photographs, images, short video clips and sounds into exciting on-screen activities. Simple talking books and slideshows can be made and tailored to the needs and interests of individual students. It gives teachers a creative format for using photographs from the digital camera as well as using real recorded speech and sounds. The program is so easy to use that teachers can either make the activities themselves for use later with the student or they can easily make books and slideshow with the student(s) as part of a lesson.



Chooselt! Maker 2 facilitates the making of simple decision-making activities such as odd-one-out, find the.., categories and quizzes. Activities can be designed so that they are age-appropriate, have graded steps of progression and activities can be set up to self-correct

Both programs include a free player so that activities can be played on other computers or on the student's home



computer as well as a library of sample pictures, videos and music. They can be used with a range of access devices as well as on an

interactive whiteboard.

There are three new programmes that allow students to do simple colouring activities in an educational format. **Alphabet Paint** has over 100 simple pictures with associated sounds. Pictures can be chosen and then coloured on screen using a basic colour palette. Pictures are all associated with a letter and a sound to help reinforce visual and auditory skills at a pre-reading level.



1-2-3 Paint has the same functions and features as **Alphabet Paint** but with a focus on early number and counting. Options include four levels of difficulty, accompanying sounds and rewards as well as a high contrast mode. **Pablo** is a new switch-accessible on-screen colouring book. It contains a range of bold line drawing that students can colour using switches or the mouse. Activities are organised into six levels of difficulty. On completion of colouring there is an animation and a reward. Coloured pictures can be printed out.

All these programs are devised by *Inclusive Technology*. Information about these and other products on www.inclusive.co.uk

For older students there are 2 new options for reading, literacy and language development. The **Oxford Reading Tree for Clicker** series from *Cricksoft* is now available. Each CD contains six on-screen books from one of the first five stages of the original series as well as a range of associated Clicker activities. This allows students to reinforce vocabulary, comprehension, reading and writing skills based on the content of each story. Students can even create their own version of each story and record their own narration. The series will only run in conjunction with *Clicker 5*. For more information see www.cricksoft.com

The **Start-to-Finish** series from *Don Johnston* has been extended and new books and levels have been developed. Books in the Gold sets have a readability age of 7 to 9 years and those in the Blue sets have a

readability age of 9 to 12 years. Each title contains a paperback book, an on-screen computer book on CDRom and an audio cassette or CD. The Narrative Chapter Book series include Shakespearean plays and many titles in the classics and semi-classics range. The Core Content Informational books are a great source of supportive factual reading material. The Literacy Starters – Beginning Reading series is designed to provide support and practice for older novice readers. Each topic has three different graded level of text content. Photographs are used extensively for illustration and vocabulary cards accompany each set of stories. Many of these titles could be used by students with reading delay at senior primary level as well as those in secondary level. For a comprehensive list of titles see www.donjohnston.co.uk

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UCD PRESENTATIONS

IATSE presented its annual testimonial and award at the conferring of the Graduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs in UCD. The conferring was held in the O'Reilly Hall in UCD on Saturday, 21 October, 2006. This year the award was shared by two graduates. The joint winners of the award for excellence in Teaching Practice were Anne Loughman from Scoil Nano Nagle in

Clondalkin and Catherine Merrigan from Marino School in Bray. Ann Jackson represented the CEC of IATSE at the conferring ceremony and presented the awards. We wish both teachers our congratulations and hope that they will contribute to our conference or publications in the coming year.



*Award winners, Anne Loughman and Catherine Merrigan,
with Dr. Philip Nolan, Registrar, UCD and Ann Jackson, IATSE.*

CALL FOR PAPERS – CONFERENCE 2007

The nineteenth Annual International Conference of IATSE will be held in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra from Thursday 7 June to Saturday 9 June, 2007. The title of the conference is "Focus on the Student: In the Midst of Policy and Practice". The Conference committee invites submissions for paper presentations on this theme from our members and from colleagues in the wider community involved in the education of students with special needs both here in Ireland and abroad. A short abstract of the proposed presentation should be forwarded for consideration to the IATSE Conference Director by Friday, 19 January. Submissions and queries may also be emailed to conference@iatse.ie.

Members are requested to consider submitting a presentation proposal and also to disseminate this information to their colleagues, parents and other professional working in this field. The success of the annual conference is dependent on getting a range of speakers with a variety and balance of papers that reflect the theme of conference. At conference we want to examine and review what is happening in the learning life of our students at a time when educators are dealing with the pressure from increasing paperwork, new practices and legislation.

This information is also available on the IATSE website at our new address www.iatse.ie