



Online Certificate/Diploma in Education (Special/Inclusive Education)

This Certificate/Diploma has been jointly developed by St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Special Education Department and ICEP Europe and funded by the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Science.

It is designed to equip mainstream teachers to respond effectively to the diverse needs of pupils in today's inclusive schools and classrooms. Serving the needs of pupils with diverse special educational needs is now the responsibility of all teachers and all schools and no longer the sole remit of specialist teachers. This flexible online course will facilitate access regardless of geographical or other constraints.

Having completed a foundation module on special and inclusive education, teachers will then choose from a range of specialist elective modules, which will include topics such as autism, dyslexia and challenging behaviour. The modules available for the coming academic year are listed below. Further modules will be available in the academic year 2009/2010.

Foundation Module in Special/Inclusive Education

The foundation module is a required module for all candidates. This module is designed to provide students with a broad foundation in the principles of Inclusive Education. Course participants will gain a knowledge of policy, legislation and practice relevant to meeting the needs of pupils with additional or special educational needs in inclusive schools and classrooms. They will explore issues relating to early identification, assessment and intervention at both primary and secondary level. They will examine a range of assessment tools and teaching strategies pertinent to learners with diverse needs. Participants will become aware of the key elements of successful inclusion at a whole-school level and will become acquainted with the roles of the main stakeholders and the essentials of collaboration and consultation. At the level of the classroom they will gain skills in differentiating for diverse learning needs. This module will also include best practice guidelines for the development and monitoring of Individual Education Plans.

Teachers will then choose a further 3 modules in the case of a Certificate; the Diploma programme requires a further module on research methods and a project of 7000-8000 words. The following courses will be provided in the academic year 2008-9.

Dyslexia

This module focuses on evidence-based approaches to identification and effective interventions for students with learning difficulties associated with dyslexia. It will include the following topics: Definitions and debates; the origins and neurological basis of this learning difficulty; current research; screening and assessment techniques; early identification and later detection. The impact of dyslexia on learning at both primary and second levels is examined. Course participants will explore the key elements of the whole school approach. Individual support strategies, evidence based interventions and specific reading programmes are described and analysed. They will gain an understanding of the social and emotional impact of dyslexia on learners. In addition this module focuses on transition issues and individual planning for dyslexia.

Autism

The emphasis in this module is on practical, evidence-based strategies to help teachers modify their instruction, structure the classroom and modify the curriculum to help maximise the learning potential of these children. The module provides participants with an overview of autistic spectrum disorders including the history of and the defining features of ASD. Participants will explore current research and theory on ASD in terms of the impact on the development of language and communication, social development, and sensory, motor and cognitive functioning. They will gain a knowledge of the principles of assessment and early identification of autism and Asperger's Syndrome and the various methods of assessment and screening. In addition to examining curriculum adaptations and specific teaching strategies this module also examines typical challenging behaviours and appropriate interventions for pupils with ASD. Finally we look beyond the label of autism to the lived experience and emotional reality of people with ASD and their families.

Challenging Behaviour

Serving the needs of students who present with challenging behaviour is a significant problem within educational settings. This course focuses on evidence-based measures that have proven effective in supporting students and responding to challenging behaviour. Among the topics covered are: Theory and models of behaviour; origins of behaviour difficulties; promoting resilience and reducing risk; whole-school policy and strategies. This module examines effective individual and group interventions for vulnerable students with a particular emphasis on positive behaviour support. The course also examines the area of emotional literacy and looks at ways of increasing academic success and engagement among these pupils. Staff support issues and teacher stress are also addressed. Preventative strategies and approaches for encouraging and fostering a positive school environment and relationships are also covered.

For further information please contact:

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