

## **Role of the Subject Teacher in Post-Primary Schools**

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all students, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all students are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. Subject teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. Accordingly, subject teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. They may need to adapt their teaching approaches for some students whose application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes of concern. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs. Students should be provided with opportunities to be active participants in their own learning through lessons that are carefully planned to include independent and collaborative tasks and reinforcement of skills' development. All subject teachers should implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of students with special educational needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

For information on training and support for interventions, please see section on Continuing Professional Development.

Students' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and consolidated, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, subject teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons. This can be achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons for students' interests
- Matching tasks and processes to students' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of students through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require appropriate environmental adaptations to promote curricular access. Every student should be taught a curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. In matching programmes to students' needs, school

leaders are encouraged to examine the range of curriculum options available, including

- Junior Certificate Schools Programme
- Junior Certificate Level 2 Learning Programmes
- Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

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