

# Home Economics Matters

A MAGAZINE FOR SECOND LEVEL TEACHERS OF HOME ECONOMICS

September 2007 Issue 1

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you all had an enjoyable summer break.

Welcome to the first edition of "Home Economics Matters" magazine. The magazine will be issued once a year and will provide specific information on curricular issues and general information on areas of interest to home economics teachers. This edition contains updates on the support available, courses offered, feature articles from the Inspectorate, the State Examinations Commission, St. Angela's College of Education and other contributors.

In January 2007, the Home Economics Support Service formally became part of the Second Level Support Service (SLSS). Under SLSS, support for teachers will focus on continued curricular support and the professional development of home economics teachers.

Our website offers teachers information on courses, teaching resources, programme planning and practical coursework. In addition, it has an interactive forum so that teachers can share ideas and communicate with one another. This website is bilingual to cater for the needs of teachers who teach as gaeilge. The website can be accessed at [www.slss.ie/homeeconomics](http://www.slss.ie/homeeconomics)

An induction course (two days, with the second day to be held in the second term) on the revised leaving certificate home economics syllabus is planned for this term, for newly qualified teachers. The first day will focus on curricular planning, food studies practical coursework and active learning methodologies. It will take place in two venues as follows:

Date:	Tuesday 2nd October	or	Date:	Tuesday 9th October
Venue:	Dublin West Education Centre		Venue:	Athlone Education Centre

Local courses organised by groups of teachers will be facilitated, where resources permit, in response to requests. Local courses to date have been developed on the following themes - differentiation in home economics, assessment for learning and active learning methodologies. Further details on the content of these courses, is available on our website.

If you wish to attend one of the induction days or organise a local course in your area, please contact Angela Thompson, Administrator for details.

I would like to thank all of those who contributed articles for this edition. Submissions are most welcome for the next edition and these can be emailed to [homeeconomics@slss.ie](mailto:homeeconomics@slss.ie)

Wishing you every success in your work this term in school.

*Anna Marie Ryan, National Co-ordinator Home Economics*

## SLSS Home Economics Support

- The magazine '*Home Economics Matters*' is circulated to all teachers teaching in second level schools.
- A **consultation service** by phone or email is available.
- **Local courses** requested by teacher groups will be facilitated. Contact Angela Thompson, Support Service Administrator for further details and booking forms.
- A limited number of **school visits** will be provided, resources permitting.
- The **Home Economics website**, [www.slss.ie/homeeconomics](http://www.slss.ie/homeeconomics) contains useful resources, details on courses available and also has an interactive forum where teachers can discuss issues and share ideas with one another.

Supported by



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## A Word from the Director of Wexford Education Centre, Paula Carolan



In April 2001 Co. Wexford Education Centre was invited by the In-Career Development Unit of the Department of Education & Science to administer, nationally, a Support Service for the introduction of a revised syllabus in home economics. Since then the development of the Home Economic Support Service has been linked to Co. Wexford Education Centre. Personnel from the Support Service Team have spent much time in our Education Centre in Enniscorthy planning, during training and as trainers.

Over the years the original team has dispersed but, as often happens in educational circles, members still visit Co. Wexford Education Centre wearing other hats! Since September 2005 I have been fortunate to work alongside Anna Marie Ryan, the present National Co Ordinator. Undoubtedly, we have the same supportive working relationship that has been characteristic over the years, between the Home Economics Support Service and the Centre. Anna Marie does an excellent job and home economics support continues to progress under her capable guidance.

In December 2006 the Home Economics Support Service formally became a member of the Second Level Support Service (SLSS). Co Wexford Education Centre is now the administrative base for SLSS work in the region and for home economics. Angela Thompson is the SLSS regional administrator with specific responsibility for home economics. Her contribution to home economics and the work of the education centre is invaluable.

This year induction in-service was provided here in Co Wexford Education Centre for newly qualified home economics teachers and teachers who had been unable to attend previous in-service. In addition training days for part time associates, who facilitated a series of practical coursework workshops in Education Centres throughout the country, took place in this Education Centre.

Teacher Professional Networks (TPNs) are being established in all subject areas and home economics teachers are to the fore in this new development. Their TPN is well established. At present, through Co. Wexford Education Centre, the nucleus of a TPN for local home economics teachers is developing. As we move into the next phase for home economics we look forward in a very positive way to the challenges that lie ahead.



## News from the Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE)

The ATHE aims to promote home economics across society and represent the collective views of home economics teachers. The membership of the ATHE has increased significantly over the past two years and the association aims to double this over the next two years. Our strength is in our numbers and the more members we have, the louder and stronger our voice.

Joining the Association is very easy. Please contact either of the following people who will send you a membership form and put you in contact with your local branch.

- Edwina Nolan      087-9094199 (ATHE President email: [athepresident@hotmail.com](mailto:athepresident@hotmail.com))
- Jeanne Dowling      087-6830689 (Vice-president/PRO email: [athe-pro@hotmail.com](mailto:athe-pro@hotmail.com))

The ATHE is currently looking at the re-branding of home economics within society and the media with the help of a PR company called "Fresh Design". The views of home economics teachers are being sought as to how they wish home economics to be perceived in society. This information will be used to draft a policy document "Mapping the Future of Home Economics". Please email your views and suggestions to [athe-pro@hotmail.com](mailto:athe-pro@hotmail.com).

**Web-site:** The current web-site is out of order but we are in the process of re-designing a new web-site. It is hoped this web-site will be up and running before September 2007. The proposed web-site will have a news section, discussion forum, branch news and a section which paid up members only will have access to via usernames and passwords to information/documents etc from past meetings/conferences. The web-site will have the new ATHE logo on it and we are also looking for suggestions on the logo's design ([athe-pro@hotmail.com](mailto:athe-pro@hotmail.com))

The National Spring Meeting of the ATHE was held in Dundalk on the 24th March 2007 in the Fairways hotel. The meeting hosted a discussion on "Mapping the Future of Home Economics" facilitated by "Fresh Design", a presentation on family law by a family law solicitor, and a presentation from Glanbia on food product development. Paula Mee (nutritionist) opened the meeting with a short presentation on children's nutrition. A very productive and informative day was had by all those in attendance.



## Opening Address of the ATHE Spring Conference 2006 Given by Mary White, T.D., Green Party

*Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE)*

I would like to thank your association of teachers of home economics for this wonderful opportunity to open your conference and to address it.

I have to smile to myself at this point, because I am sure, in fact I am certain, my former home economics teacher, Mother Carmel from the Ursuline Convent in Waterford must be turning in her grave, at the fact that I am here today. I was possibly the worst student ever in Waterford, not in all facets of the subject, but particularly in dressmaking. I don't know what it was about those old treadle sewing machines, but any one that I ever used, had a mind of its own and a capacity for speed and destruction that Singer could never have imagined. My homemade summer dress was always at the back of the display, someone else's lovely beautifully finished garment at the front. But I did have a certain extraordinary flair, which my home economics teacher could never fathom. It was the capacity to produce perfect sponges! 3 eggs, 4oz flour, 3oz castor sugar. Those fatless sponges, with their springy texture dumbfounded her. To this day, I do not know how I did it, but it certainly was a counterpoint to the dismal dressmaking. So it is with a certain sense of coming to terms with my home economics past that I am here today and it's great!

On a more serious note I believe that the study of home economics is possibly one of the most important subjects taught today in our schools - with its broad range of topics, its absolute relevance for health of mind and body and for its opportunity for creative and dynamic change in peoples' lives. Today's course is a revelation in terms of its breadth and scope both in the junior certificate cycle and for the leaving certificate.

I would like to focus on a couple of aspects of the subject which I am particularly interested in - food, nutrition and consumer studies. I believe both are linked and have a direct impact on the health of our young people and ultimately the health of future generations.

Food is something everyone, everywhere, needs every day. From time to time we have had food scares and consumers are conscious that food safety is an issue. We have learnt the lessons of the BSE crisis and the recent foot and mouth outbreak in Ireland. We know that food and

safe food, is a hot topic. We need to guard our reputation as a clean food producer. How we buy and grow our food can change the food dynamics of this country. A shift in the way people buy their food can have a huge effect on regional economies. People are learning that global food is too costly - socially, environmentally and economically. Consumers are beginning to seek out local food, and a new local food movement is gaining ground.

But what exactly is 'local food'? If the essence of 'global food' is a plastic-wrapped, highly processed food product that has been transported thousands of miles, a local food system means fresh produce grown on local farms and sold at farmers' markets and in independent local shops. Consequently, the 'food miles' (the distance food travels from farm to plate) are relatively small, which greatly reduces fossil fuel use and pollution. Packaging is also reduced. As professionals in this area, you are all well aware of the benefits to the human body of good food.

Unfortunately in today's busy, busy world, parents are often out, when school going children come home and it is a quick, high energy, sugary snack that is often the first choice for hungry young people and when parents come home after, perhaps, a long commute or a stressful day, there is little time to prepare a lovely family meal with fresh ingredients. Very often it is something whipped from the freezer, banged into the microwave and then a slump before the television.



We are living in a madcap consumer's paradise of immediate gratification with the express delivery of hot images and cool gadgets of designer foods and designer genes and I mean genes spelt with a G!

Our global food choices nowadays are staggering. French beans from Kenya, apples from China, strawberries from Tenerife, beef from Argentina and chickens from Thailand. I went into a summer market the other day and I could have bought twenty perhaps thirty types of bread, from focaccia to paninis, soda to ciabatta. Our world is global now and our choices are unlimited. But the most important criterion is good safe food that hasn't travelled the earth and is produced in the quality conditions we enjoy here in Ireland. I believe that the energy, zip and passion that young people have could be increased and multiplied by the choice of foods they consume and the manner in which that food is prepared.



I believe your organisation is at the cutting edge of driving this change forward in a global world where fast food, dashboard dining and speed have relegated family meals in many homes to a somewhat archaic custom indulged by all in the past. I also believe that a family which comes together around the kitchen table, at the end of the day, is the place where you hear all that is going on in students' lives and where many anxieties, reassurances, praise, love and affection can be bestowed. Unfortunately for many young people, there is no such place or time, so much befalls the skills of the home economics teachers. You have such an important role to play in this area and more so as our society becomes richer, less happy and more stressed.

All it needed in Britain to change a culinary culture was a high profile TV series where Jamie Oliver got young people interested in "yucky greens" and who, when presented with delicious food not from a food dispenser changed the eating habits of school dinners possibly for the foreseeable future. One of my pet hates when I visit schools is the lumpish drink and chocolate bar dispensers sited in the most obvious place and a temptation to all and sundry. I believe they have no place in our schools. However that's a personal little whim.

I would like to talk for a brief few minutes on consumer studies and the role of advertising - the silver bullet of our age, where TV ads hit hardest at vulnerable and impressionable young people and where designer labels and the striving for the right gear is so important to young adults. The downside of this is peer pressure to conform to the street uniforms of labels and designer goods, often made at the hands of poorly paid young children in less developed democracies. I believe that your Association can do much to free up this pressure and while everyone wants to look cool, I believe that the sense of justice in young people is already in place and if they knew how some of this clothing was made they would think twice of wearing the coveted swoosh or label. Like the Fair Trade initiative to support a fair deal for coffee, tea and banana growers I believe a movement, which is now afoot to support clothing not made in sweat shops and produced in a quality environment could be very attractive for young people and not cost either the earth in terms of environmental pollution or financially impoverish the wearer. All it needs is a few high profile people like Ali Hewson, Bono and the Boys and the sweatshop could be gone forever.

As a student I once worked in a supermarket and in the short time that I spent on that premises I learnt more about consumer behaviour, customer habits and the power, that huge power of advertising. You all probably know that if you want to shift goods that are slow to move off the shelves then you put them inside the door on the left. Pile them high and sell them as cheap as your margins permit you. Watching customers as they rush in with their trolleys or baskets and actually observe how they pick the goods you want them to buy, is quite frightening. As a bookseller myself I have my own little techniques and I know the power of advertising, display and lay out. This is all legal but it is still frightening to think that if you run an ad on the TV and then place that product in a highly visual way on the correct spot in your shop you will buy it nine times out of ten! Often we buy things we don't want because the subliminal message of the ad is that our lives will be better with this product that we cannot do without it. So subtle is the message, that we are all driven to have clothes smelling of a spring breeze, that if you grind coffee beans in the store you will sell more coffee if you have the lovely smell of baking bread wafting up your nostrils then you will buy that loaf. We are, as humans a gullible lot.

Flash back to when we were younger and the ads were beamed at us and the intensity of needing to belong to the group was reinforced by the clothes you wear, the food you eat and your social worth reflected in the type of house you lived in. Very quickly you have a society that has been



manipulated by TV ads, global food and clothes companies... perhaps seven giant companies control the way we live, eat, and behave... now that is a scary thought. I believe that young people need to know how powerful advertising and consumer pressure is, in this world that they are part of. It is very hard when you are young, vulnerable and dying to belong to resist peer pressure and the insidious daily bombardment of the TV ads, but I believe that we must inform young people of the power of advertising so that our lives and their lives do not become a commodity for the global giants.

It is undeniable that Ireland is experiencing an economic spring brought about by the entrepreneurs of this country. Our country is part of a business civilization that spans the globe. This was not always so. In earlier days Ireland was a predominantly rural country in which large numbers of people earned their living from the land. Today's prosperity has pushed our standard of living beyond the European average. But this wealth has been bought at a cost. In becoming richer we have damaged the very stuff of which our island is made. We have as a nation become less friendly, we are all so busy, few people call to our homes anymore. Our houses are palaces of style and design. We are commuting more to work, we are stressed out by targets and deadlines, life is judged in bonuses and dividends and the search for material goods has I believe eroded, what we as a nation once were known for - our friendliness, come in and have a cup of tea - sure what's your hurry? In many parts of Carlow this has been replaced by answering machines, including my own - the annoyance of the ringing mobile phone and stressed out hard working Carlovians exhausted by a commute to work. I believe that this must change.



I believe in a harmony of spirit, together with a clean, safe environment and a thriving economy. It can be done. We have a duty to ensure that the Ireland we all love will in the main be preserved. We cannot and should not stop change. We must not stop economic development, but this development must be in tandem with protecting our quality of life.

Rachel Carson who wrote a groundbreaking book on our natural world called *Silent Spring* once said

*“A child’s world is fresh and new and beautiful; full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe inspiring is dimmed and lost before we reach adulthood”.*

She is right and I think that those of us who are parents and you as teachers have the opportunity to make sure that bright enthusiastic light in our children’s minds is not dimmed. If this spark is kept alight then we have a powerful antidote against the boredom and disenchantment of later years, the sterile preoccupation of things that are trivial.

Let me give you a marvellous recipe, one not in the current home economic text books:

*One-teaspoon of earth contains one million bacteria, 20 million fungi, one million protozoa, 20,000 algae, it makes you wonder as you stride along the Blackstairs or along the bank of the Barrow what life, beauty and sacredness are in the earth!*

As the late J.K Galbraith said

**“I am not quite sure what the advantage is in having a few more dollars to spend if the air is too dirty to breathe, the streets are filthy and the schools bad”.**

I think he got some of that right.

We have to balance all the good that our thriving economy has brought us with care for the quality of life of us all.

I believe that your association has the ability to cover all the quality of life indicators and if I had to choose another career, despite the dress making I think home economics is one of the most dynamic challenging and necessary on our school curriculum.

I had the luck to win a Pub Quiz with my friends recently. The winning answer was the collective noun for an assemblage of rooks - called a Parliament of rooks.

If I had to think up a collective noun for a gathering of home economic teachers it would undoubtedly be an exaltation of home economics teachers. I believe that our children’s sense of well being, citizenship and pride in themselves lies in your hands. I wish you all continued good health, enthusiasm and delight in the job you are doing.

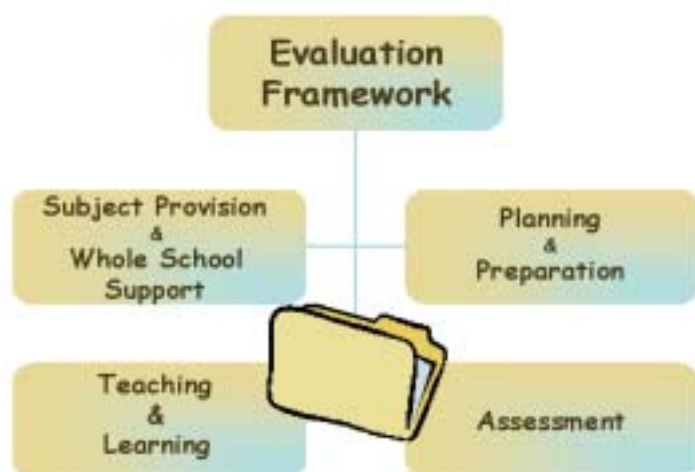
# Evaluating Home Economics: The Inspectorate Perspective

Nora Friel, Nora Nic Aodha, Grainn  Conachy, Siobhan Mc Sweeney

A subject inspection in home economics focuses on an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning of the subject. The inspection may occur as a stand-alone subject inspection or as part of a Whole School Evaluation (WSE). The aims of the evaluation are to:

- identify, acknowledge and affirm good practice
- promote continuing improvement in the quality of home economics education offered by schools
- promote self-evaluation and continuous development by schools and staff
- provide an assurance of quality in the educational system.

The evaluation framework used covers four specific areas:



- **Subject Provision and Whole School Support** includes general provision for home economics, arrangements for student access, whole-school support for the subject, the deployment of staff, timetabling of the subject, the provision of resources and, health and safety.
- **Preparation and Planning** includes planning of subject department work and planning for resources.
- **Teaching and Learning** includes methodologies used in home economics lessons, classroom management, classroom atmosphere, student engagement and overall student learning and achievement in the subject.
- **Assessment** includes summative and formative assessment modes used, assessment outcomes, systems of record-keeping and reporting procedures deployed.

In general, a subject inspection is carried out over one or two days. The number of days depends on the size of the school, the number of home economics teachers in the department, the range of curricular programmes offered and how the subject is timetabled. The procedures followed include:

- an interview with the principal
- a meeting with the home economics team
- the observation of a representative selection of lessons
- interaction with students
- a review of a cross-section of student work such as copybooks, work relating to Junior Certificate core textiles and optional study areas, Transition Year coursework, Leaving Certificate coursework journals, and work relating to Leaving Certificate Applied students' key assignments and tasks
- a review of relevant documentation and records
- individual feedback to each teacher
- feedback to the principal and members of the home economics team.

Detailed information on the process and procedures for subject inspection is available in *A Guide to Subject Inspection at Second Level*. All evaluations carried out since 6 February 2006 are published in accordance with the principles and procedures outlined in the Inspectorate booklet *Publication of School Inspection Reports*. Both of these publications can be downloaded from the Inspectorate section of the Department of Education and Science website at [www.education.gov.ie](http://www.education.gov.ie).



To date, thirty-seven inspection reports in home economics have been published and these can be accessed on the Department website. The following are some examples of good practice observed when evaluating the quality of teaching and learning of home economics:

#### With regard to subject provision and whole school support:

- Every effort is made to attract students of all abilities and, where applicable all genders, to study home economics.
- Timetabling of home economics is in accordance with syllabus guidelines, provides for a satisfactory spread of class contact time over the week, supports the practical elements of both syllabuses and, in multi-teacher departments, avoids the concurrent timetabling of double periods.
- A subject-specific health and safety statement has been devised and its content has been interpreted for inclusion in the safety rules provided to students.

#### In relation to planning and preparation:

- The home economics team is engaged in collaborative subject-department planning and a subject co-ordinator has been appointed. A subject plan has been developed and is reviewed systematically.
- Syllabus-based, common programmes of work have been devised and these are monitored, reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis. The programmes are time-bound, reflect the integrated approach promoted in the home economics syllabuses for Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate and are being developed to include provision for methodologies, resources, homework, assessment and revision.
- Planning for the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into teaching and learning is underway.

#### With reference to teaching and learning:

- A range of appropriate methodologies is effectively used in theoretical and practical lessons. Many of the methodologies observed provide for the active engagement of all students and the development of higher-order thinking skills.
- As recommended in home economics syllabuses, opportunities are created in lessons to facilitate students' application of theoretical knowledge to relevant practical processes.
- The focus of practical food studies and textile studies lessons is on the completion of a task using the design brief process and there is an appropriate balance between whole-class teaching, individual instruction, spot demonstration and student work.
- Students demonstrate an appropriate level of practical skills and competencies, and display a very good level of knowledge of the key concepts relating to work being explored.

#### In the area of assessment:

- A variety of homework exercises that reinforce, extend or apply lesson content is assigned to students on a regular basis.
- A range of assessment modes, including the assessment of related practical coursework, is utilised to check student progress and achievement. Grades issued to students at key times during the school year provide an aggregate mark that reflects achievement in all examinable components of the relevant home economics syllabus.
- The assessment criteria for home economics coursework and the chief examiners' reports for home economics that are issued by the State Examinations Commission provide the framework for the provision of constructive feedback in the monitoring of student work.

In autumn 2007, the Inspectorate will publish a composite report entitled *Looking at Home Economics*. This report will analyse the findings identified by inspectors in the teaching and learning of home economics and outline areas for development. This publication will assist home economics teachers and in-school management in the process of self-evaluation and in implementing improvements in the provision for and the teaching of the subject. It will also contribute to professional dialogue.



# Teaching in the U.K.

*Angela O Dea, Portmarnock Community School, Dublin*



In December 2002 whilst in the throes of completing final year projects and writing dissertations a representative from MPS Education (an education recruitment company) came to visit us in St. Angela's College, Sligo. He made a very good pitch for the English experience and got me thinking. The proximity of the schools to airports for getting home, to London for a social life and the fact that my

brother was already living and going to college over there also held a lot of interest. The first steps involved completing application forms and collecting references and emailing these to the schools. I didn't hear anything for a number of weeks until just before my fourth year teaching practice started and suddenly I had an interview for a school in Essex on St. Patrick's day of all days!

The English interview experience was very different to that which I subsequently experienced in Ireland. You are given a guided tour of the school by students as the interviews are always held during term time and you meet with the department staff before the interviews are held. You are also expected to teach a 20 minute lesson which is observed by the head of the department and often also by the principal! Generally you find out the result of the interview on the day. Interviews are conducted by the Principal, Vice Principal and the head of the subject department. The hiring of teaching staff operates on a slightly different system to here. A full terms notice must be given when leaving a school e.g. to leave at the end of the summer term, notice must be given on or before the last day prior to the Easter holidays. The main reason for this is to have a full staff in place before the summer holidays. This also has the advantage of having newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and new staff benefit from the Early Start Scheme, which I did in Essex. The scheme allows you to join the school for the last few weeks of the summer term to help get used to the school environment and plan for the new school year. After completing my finals I went to the school in Essex for the last 5 weeks of term. I spent those 5 weeks observing classes, writing schemes of work and just generally getting used to the way of life in Chafford Hundred Campus and of course as student the offer of getting paid for the holidays was very enticing!

I went to the U.K. in September 2003 and spent the next 2 years teaching there. My first school was Chafford Hundred Campus (CHC) in Essex- a very forward thinking school and quite a unique experience. Every student and teacher had their own laptop and so lessons were very much IT based. The local council, Thurrock Council, invested heavily in this school. It was full of new ideas and so attracted a lot of local and national attention. There were also three people employed full time working in the resources and IT Department. As each room was equipped with a projector and an interactive whiteboard we were very much encouraged to build these resources into our lessons. This was a new school and was only in its 3rd year when I started so there was a relatively small intake of students. What was particularly enjoyable about CHC was the huge mix of staff - teaching with Welsh, English, Americans, Australians and South Africans meant there was a variety of ideas and teaching strategies.



As I was a recent graduate I entered the NQT programme. This meant I was on a reduced timetable but spent my free classes observing other teachers and having weekly meetings with my mentor. My mentor observed my classes once a week and once a term the Vice Principal observed. This sure did keep me on my toes! I was required by the NQT programme to keep a portfolio charting my progress throughout the year and was also entitled to attend courses and to spend a day observing in another school. This was generally arranged with another school in the area and as I had a college classmate teaching in another school in Essex I spent a day observing in her school. I spent time with other teachers in their staffroom, spoke with the head of department and observed classes being taught. The most beneficial aspect of the NQT programme from a personal point of view was that Thurrock Council provided houses for NQT teachers at a reduced rent so that when I went to Essex first I moved in with Canadian and Australian girls who were also teaching in the locality.



The second school I worked in was Gosford Hill School in Oxford. This school was not quite as well resourced as CHC however it was much more established. I gained much from working in a department with teachers who had a wealth of experience both in industry and education. The subjects I taught included food technology, health and social care and hospitality and catering all to GCSE level. These subjects are largely based on coursework which worked well for the students. The assessment system is very different to Ireland where the Department of Education and State Examinations Commission are responsible for all curricula and exams. In the U.K. there are a number of different exam boards and each department in a school decides for themselves which board they will register with. The main boards are Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts, Assessments and Qualifications Alliance, Edexcel and the Welsh Joint Education Committee.

The **Health and Social Care Course** (Edexcel) that I taught consisted of three modules which were equally weighted.

**Unit 1 - Health, Social Care and Early Years Provision** - was assessed by coursework which was based on a local health care provider e.g. a nursing home.

**Unit 2 - Promoting Health and Well-Being** - was also assessed by coursework and this involved profiling an individual over a number of months and advising changes to be made to their lifestyle.

**Unit 3 - Understanding Personal Development and Relationships** - was assessed by a 1.5 hour exam. This was taken in January of Year 11 and if students felt wished to repeat the exam, this option was available the following June. This course was very much a vocational subject and worth 2 GCSE's.

I taught the **Hospitality and Catering Course** from Welsh Joint Education Committee.

**Units 1 and 4 - The Hospitality and Catering Industry** - were both assessed by 1 hour exams (33.33%).

**Unit 2 - Skills within the Hospitality and Catering Industry** - was assessed by the students planning and preparing an event (33.33%).

**Unit 3 - Working Practices in Hospitality and Catering Establishments** - was assessed by a portfolio of evidence from their time on work experience (33.33%). Students went out on work experience for 2 weeks and I had the opportunity to go and visit them. I was particularly fortunate as a number of my students were based in Oxford University, so I got an inside view of this world famous university. This was also a double award and so worth 2 GCSE's.

The food technology course that I taught was from Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts. This was based on an exam worth 40% and coursework worth 60%. The coursework consisted of a project where candidates were expected to design and make a quality food technology product. The project could be linked to a student's own interests, industrial practice or the



community. The students had to use appropriate ICT in completing their project e.g. computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) software, data analysis and ICT based sources for research. In all cases coursework was marked by the teacher of that subject and samples would be sent away for moderation.

There are many differences in the school day in the UK - the day could be made up of 5 x 1 hour classes. While teachers still only teach 22 hours a week it feels like a lot more as there would often be full days. In many schools they operate off 2 week timetables (Week A and Week B) to allow for all subject demands on teachers and resources to be met. Tutor time is separate to the 22 hours - you meet your class group for 10 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon for registration. This did have its advantages as a tutor as you were better able to deal with discipline issues meeting the group twice daily. A feature of the system which did cause a lot of discussion was the 2 x 20 minutes outside supervision period and the 2 x 1 hrs substitution a week which did take up a lot of time which could have been used for planning lessons. Teachers are also expected to have a lesson plan prepared for every lesson and in CHC these had to be available on the school website so they could be accessed by parents at home. The threat of an OFSTED inspection was always imminent and indeed in the term after I left Oxford they got one! This encouraged people to keep regular updates on lesson plans and schemes of work.

After two years in the UK I felt I had learned a huge amount and gained valuable experience. I was very conscious that the revised leaving certificate syllabus had come into effect here at home and I wanted to keep in touch with that. Also on a personal level I was ready to come home. In June 2004 I applied for an interview for Portmarnock Community School and was successful. In June 2006 I was made permanent in this well established school with a very good reputation and excellent staff.

Fifteen months later and I am still very much in touch with the lifelong friends I have made. I have returned to the UK for weekends on many occasions and indeed have attended the wedding of one of my former colleagues. I am very happy personally and professionally in Portmarnock but still look back fondly on my time in the U.K. The knowledge and experience gained there was invaluable and I draw from it on a regular basis. But all-in-all, 'there's no place like home'.



# HOME ECONOMICS: A NECESSARY SUBJECT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

*Dr Mary Magee, Head of Home Economics , St Angela's College, Lough Gill, Sligo*

Home economics is an inter-disciplinary subject which concerns itself with the empowerment of individuals and families for the betterment of family and community life. The skills inherent in home economics, i.e. critical thinking, decision making, management, design processes, empowerment, social critique, and so on, are the tools of thinking required by our future workplaces and living environments. The centrality of family is core to the mission of home economics. It is unique in being the only school subject which concerns itself with teaching and learning about human relationships and development, resource management, diet, nutrition and health, culinary skills, clothing and shelter, food choices and the influences and trends in consumer behaviour. In the context of promoting diet and physical activity, students acquire a sound understanding of the relationship between diet and healthy lifestyles and develop skills in the effective and efficient management of resources. The uniqueness of the subject is the relationship of theory to the solution of practical daily issues confronting individuals and families. This paper specifically focuses on one component of home economics i.e. nutrition, diet and health. Subsequent articles will reflect on family resource management and textiles, fashion and design and the key contribution these areas make to the education of young people in Ireland today.

There is rapid change in our society, in particular of how young people perceive food. The increasing markets and funding for research in the area of functional foods as food companies develop the next generation of consumer foods requires empowering young people with nutritional knowledge and consumer skills in order to make wise consumer choices. Are we moving to creating a nation, where our daily nutritional requirements will be obtained from a bottle, small packet or tablet? Social and technological advances in Ireland have left young people devoid of traditional family values, in particular an understanding of, and an appreciation for, good wholesome home cooking, fresh garden produce, shopping and traditional family meals. Home economics, with its focus on the individual and family is a powerful medium for empowering and enabling young people make informed choices regarding health and lifestyles. The food studies component deals specifically with the relationship between diet and health, preparing balanced meals, energy intake and output, food choices and consumption that lower the risks associated with chronic diseases. A considerable amount of curriculum time is directed to the integration of consumer education into food studies. It is set in economic contexts with appropriate coverage of consumer spending, trends in food choices, consumer behaviour and marketing. The theory is related to practice through carefully structured practical activities which are relevant, academically challenging and motivational and which encourage students to become critically aware and discerning in the evaluation of home made meals, comparing their nutritional status and sensory attributes with their commercial equivalent. Although home economics can act as a powerful intervention in promoting positive attitudes to food and health among young people, to support this requires regulations to harmonise advertising on nutrition and health claims on food products. Dietary communication that takes account of adolescents' motivation for food choices based on taste, may have greater effect on dietary behaviour than those targeted at knowledge, and therefore, could be a valuable tool in changing dietary behaviour.

In Ireland, home economics is an optional subject on the national curriculum. The benefits and relevance of this subject are well recognised. In a recent survey undertaken nationally by St Angela's College and St Catherine's College



in association with the Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE), 71% of respondents expressed a deep desire to see home economics become a compulsory subject to junior certificate level for all second-level students. As important health and lifestyle choices are made during childhood and adolescence, it is essential that children and young people are guided towards healthy lifestyles. Schools are an important setting for health promoting interventions and can contribute to the future protection of young people's health by promoting positive attitudes to diet, health and lifestyles, as risk factors for obesity are known to begin in early childhood.

Is it a coincidence that in countries such as Iceland and Finland where nutrition and food skills are taught as core or compulsory modules in the curriculum of all schools, the health of these nations is far superior to that in most other countries in the developed world? In Iceland, food skills and home economics are high status subjects in the national curriculum from age six. Traditional cookery lessons and sound nutrition form the basis of home economics classes, with the emphasis on the preparation, serving and eating of family meals. In Finland, at the upper stage of education (aged 14 – 16), home economics must be taken for a minimum of 114 hours over the three years. In that country, the firm emphasis on the cooking skills aspect of home economics is well recognised and acknowledged by teachers, students and parents alike, as being of benefit to participants both during school and beyond.

Nutrition Intervention Programmes are often put in place to fill the gap left when home economics is removed from the curriculum. In the U.K., the decline of cooking skills among young people has been directly attributed to the decline of home economics as a subject within the national curriculum there in 1992, a fact which is now widely lamented by Health Professionals in the U.K. More recently in 2004, in the U.K. a significant groundswell of public concern arose about obesity, diet and food safety for both children and adults. Related concerns have been raised about the extent to which students are given adequate life-skills preparation in second-level curriculum provision in order to develop the skills and



knowledge to organise and prepare nutritious food for personal or family consumption. In addition, school inspections in the U.K. in 2006 also revealed grounds for this concern. The lack of knowledge of practical cookery skills and healthy eating is frequently and understandably criticised by head teachers in the U.K. who see a failure to meet a fundamental need in their schools by not teaching students how to cook and eat sensibly and provide them with a sound understanding of nutrition together with the development of appropriate consumer skills for making wise food choices.

We should learn from the resulting impact in other countries where home economics is devalued and its true potential not fully recognised. St. Angela's College are currently involved in a Pilot Primary School Initiative to assess the impact of a healthy eating and lifestyles programme on the eating habits and exercise patterns of primary school children. This should provide valuable research evidence to inform policy in this area.

The home economics department of St. Angela's College would welcome the opportunity to discuss further the issues raised in this document and to assist in whatever way possible with the formulation of programmes in collaboration with other agencies, in the delivery of programmes of training and education as required. The subject home economics is uniquely and powerfully poised to address diet, nutrition and health, lifestyle and societal factors which have contributed to the growing problem with obesity, especially among school going children.



## EXAMINATION STATISTICS & FEEDBACK

### LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

## HOME ECONOMICS - SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL

A revised syllabus for Home Economics - Scientific and Social was introduced to the Senior Cycle curriculum in September 2002 and was first examined in the Leaving Certificate 2004. The syllabus is offered at two levels, Higher and Ordinary. The revised syllabus replaced the existing courses in Home Economics (Scientific and Social) and Home Economics (General).

The revised syllabus structure comprises:

- a mandatory core (80%)
- an elective, from a choice of three (20%).

The core consists of three areas with the following weightings:

- Food Studies (45%)
- Resource Management and Consumer Studies (25%)
- Social Studies (10%).

The three electives are:

- Home Design and Management (20%)
- Textiles, Fashion and Design (20%)
- Social Studies (20%)



### The Examination

The examination for both Higher and Ordinary levels is comprised of the following components:

- (a) Candidates who select the Home Design and Management or Social Studies elective
- Written examination (80%)
  - Food Studies Coursework (20%)
- (b) Candidates who select Textiles, Fashion and Design Elective
- Written examination (70%)
  - Food Studies Coursework (20%)
  - Textile, Fashion and Design Elective Coursework (10%)

The written examination, of 2 hours and 30 minutes duration, takes place in June.

**Food Studies Coursework**, which comprises an account of five practical assignments recorded in a pro-forma journal, is required to be completed by early November of the year preceding the written examination. This work is submitted to the State Examinations Commission for examination.

The **Textiles, Fashion and Design Elective Coursework** is required to be completed by the end of April of the examination year and is examined in the candidate's school by an examiner appointed by the State Examination Commission.

Reports for each examination component should be read in conjunction with the relevant published marking scheme which can be accessed on the State Examinations Commission website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)

### Candidature

*Number and Percentage of Candidates taking Leaving Certificate Home Economics for the 3 year period 2004 to 2006*

Year	Leaving Certificate Candidates	Home Economics Candidates	% taking Home Economics	Higher Level		Ordinary Level	
				Candidates	%	Candidates	%
2004	55,228	15,482	28.0	10,524	68.0	4,958	32.0
2005	54,069	14,492	26.7	9,724	67.0	4,768	33.0
2006	50,955	12,302	24.1	8,199	66.6	4,103	33.4

Leaving Certificate Home Economics candidature as a percentage of Leaving Certificate candidature shows a decline in the percentage of candidates opting for Home Economics from 28% in 2004 to 24% in 2006.

## Performance of Candidates

Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Ordinary Level Home Economics - Scientific and Social 2004 to 2006

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	N.G.
2004	4958	0.1	0.8	2.6	5.6	9.9	12.7	14.1	13.8	11.9	10.3	8.5	7.4	2.2	0.2
2005	4768	0.30	1.80	4.20	8.50	11.70	13.10	12.40	11.70	10.10	8.70	8.20	7.10	2.20	0.10
2006	4103	0.10	0.80	2.40	5.50	11.20	12.90	15.70	14.70	11.80	8.50	7.80	6.60	1.70	0.30

- Approximately 63% of candidates obtained a Grade C or higher in 2006 which is broadly similar to the mean A+B+C grades obtained in 2004-2003.
- The % of A grades obtained in 2006 at just under 1% represents a slight decrease when compared with the A grades obtained in 2004 and 2005.

Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Higher Level Home Economics - Scientific and Social 2004 to 2006

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	N.G.
2004	10524	1.2	3.7	6.4	10.2	12.6	13.5	14.3	12.8	10.1	6.9	5.2	2.6	0.4	0.0
2005	9724	2.20	5.00	7.30	10.30	12.50	13.60	13.80	11.80	9.40	6.70	4.90	2.30	0.20	0.0
2006	8199	2.20	4.90	6.90	10.10	12.00	13.20	13.20	10.90	9.80	7.60	5.20	3.60	0.40	0.0

- 74.4 % of candidates obtained a grade C or higher in 2006 which represents an increase of 7% when compared with the mean A+B+C grades obtained in 2004-2005.
- The combined E/F/N.G. in 2006 was 4% which is 1% higher than the mean E/F/N.G grades obtained in 2004-2005.
- The percentage of A grades obtained in 2006, is broadly similar to 2005 and more than 2% higher than 2004.

## FOOD STUDIES PRACTICAL COURSEWORK

Food Studies Practical Coursework is a mandatory component of the Revised Leaving Certificate Syllabus in Home Economics - Scientific and Social and accounts for 20% of the marks of the examination.

## Performance of Candidates

Food Studies Practical Coursework Grades (%) 2004 - 2006

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	15570	17.4	37.1	27.1	81.6	11.3	4.2	2.2	0.8	7.2
2005	14665	20.7	38.2	23.5	82.4	10.4	4.1	2.3	0.9	7.3
2006	12479	21.1	37.4	24.1	82.6	10.0	4.2	2.5	0.7	7.4

- The grades show that more than half (58.5%) of the candidature attained a Grade A or B while approximately four fifths (82.6%) attained a grade C or higher.
- It was disappointing to note that 1125 (7.4%) candidates presented work that merited less than a Grade D.

## Analysis of Candidate Performance - 2006

The following table shows the Average Mark and the Frequency of Attempts per Assignment based on an analysis of the results of a random Sample of 1,200 (9.62%) of Journals.

Average Mark and Frequency of Attempts per Assignment

Assignment	Frequency of Attempts		Popularity Rank Order	Average Mark %	Average Mark Rank Order
	No	%			
1	1133	94.4	4	72.0	1
2	988	82.3	6	67.4	4
3	1114	92.8	5	65.4	6
4	1178	98.2	1	69.6	3
5	1170	97.5	2	66.8	5
6	1160	96.7	3	69.8	2
7	334	27.8	7	56.2	7

As assignments 4, 5 and 6 were compulsory, it is to be expected that these are the three most popular assignments. Of the optional assignments, assignment 1 was the most popular being attempted by 94.4% of candidates while assignment 7 was least popular with just 27.8 % of candidates attempting it. The average mark attained for Assignments 1- 6 shows a mark variation of 6.6 marks. Assignment 7 elicited an average mark which was approximately 9 marks less than Assignment 3 which had the 2nd lowest average mark.

## TEXTILES, FASHION AND DESIGN ELECTIVE COURSEWORK

Textiles, Fashion and Design is one of three electives on the Home Economics - Scientific and Social syllabus. The assessment format for this elective comprises

- Practical Coursework 10%
- Written Examination 10%

### Performance of Candidates

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	84	45.5	37.0	15.0	97.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2005	58	60.3	27.6	8.6	96.5	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006	104	23.1	40.4	23.1	86.5	8.7	2.9	1.9	0.0	4.8

- The candidate numbers for this elective are very low less than 1%. In 2006 the candidature grew from 58 to 104.
- Results have varied considerably year on year. The standard in both 2004 and 2005 was excellent as is evidenced by the high percentage of A grades attained.
- The results obtained in 2006 are reflective of a more varied standard; this was particularly evident in centres taking this elective for the first time.

## WRITTEN EXAMINATION - ORDINARY AND HIGHER LEVELS

The written examination paper comprises three sections.

### Section A (60 marks)

This section contains 12 short answer questions based on the Food Studies and the Resource Management and Consumer Studies areas of the syllabus core. Candidates are required to answer 10 questions in the spaces provided on the examination paper. All questions in this section carry equal marks.

### Section B (180 marks)

This section is comprised of five long answer questions based on the three core areas of the syllabus. Candidates are required to answer Question 1 and any other two questions from this section. Question 1 is worth 80 marks, Question 2, 3, 4 and 5 are worth 50 marks each.

### Section C (80 / 40 marks)

This section contains three questions reflective of the three elective areas of the syllabus. Each question has three parts. Candidates are required to answer part (a) and either part (b) or part (c) of the selected question. Questions 1 and 3 are worth 80 marks, while question 2 (Textiles, Fashion and Design) is worth 40 marks. Candidates who submitted Textiles, Fashion and Design coursework are required to attempt Question 2 from this section.

### Performance of Candidates

*Home Economics - Scientific and Social, Ordinary Level grades obtained in written examination*

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	4974	2.7	23.1	38.1	63.9	26.5	7.4	1.9	0.4	9.7
2005	4776	4.8	27.7	33.9	66.4	24.0	7.2	2.1	0.3	9.6
2006	4109	2.9	23.1	36.6	62.6	28.6	6.5	1.9	0.4	8.8

Results for 2006, while not as high as 2005, are generally comparable with 2004.

### Analysis of Candidate Performance - Ordinary Level

*Average Mark and the Frequency of Attempts per Question / Section A based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 560 scripts.*

Section/ Question	No. of Attempts/%	Popularity Rank order	Average Mark %
A	560/100%		66%
B1	555/99%		61%
B2	71/13%	4	50%
B3	419/75%	2	60%
B4	176/31%	3	46%
B5	431/77%	1	62%
C1	117/21%	2	54%
C2	19/3%	3	40%
C3	407/73%	1	54%

- All candidates attempted Section A; the average mark 66% was the highest mean mark for the paper.
- From the total random sample of 560 candidates, five did not attempted the compulsory question; this question elicited an above average mean mark % of 61.
- Questions B3 and B5 was by far the most popular of the optional questions and were selected by at least three quarters of candidates
- 17 candidates did not attempt any elective question.
- The Social Studies elective (Question C3) is most popular and was selected by 73% of candidates.
- In Section A (short answer questions) almost all candidates attempted 10 questions as required; many attempted all 12 questions. This section showed an improvement in performance when compared with 2005.
- The compulsory question and the two required optional questions were generally attempted in Section B. Questions B2 and B4 were not well answered with many poor quality / incomplete answers presented. This accounted for substantial mark loss for some candidates.
- A number of candidates omitted to answer any Section C / elective question while others attempted two or even three elective questions. Candidates who attempted more than one elective question frequently omitted parts of questions and subsequently attained low marks for the section.
- Questions which require candidates to apply information from tables / charts / case studies were generally well answered particularly by candidates who achieved well in the examination.

*Home Economics - Scientific and Social, Higher Level grades obtained in written examination 2004-2006*

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	10538	5.9	25.3	36.8	68.0	25.2	6.0	0.7	0.1	6.8
2005	9724	8.5	25.6	36.1	70.1	24.2	5.1	0.5	0.1	5.7
2006	8203	8.2	25.1	34.3	67.6	24.9	6.3	1.2	0.0	7.5

## Analysis of Candidate Performance - Higher Level

*Average Mark and the Frequency of Attempts per Question / Section A based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 600 scripts.*

Section/ Question	No. of Attempts/%	Popularity Rank order	Average Mark %
A	600/100%		60%
B1	599/100%		61%
B2	189 / 31%	3	56%
B3	117/ 19.5%	4	50%
B4	419/ 69.8%	2	67%
B5	486/ 81%	1	69%
C1	148 / 24.6%	2	58%
C2	7/1.1%	3	67%
C3	445/74.1%	1	63%

Comments:

- All candidates attempted Section A
- One candidate did not attempt compulsory question B1
- Question B5 was the most popular of the optional questions in Section B, followed closely by B4 while B3 was the least popular
- All candidates attempted Section C. In Section C - the Social Studies elective is proving to be the more popular being attempted by almost three quarters of candidates.
- In Section A (short answer questions) most candidates attempted the required 10 questions with many attempting all 12; however a number of candidates answered less than the mandatory 10 questions or omitted parts of questions.
- Compulsory questions in Sections B and C were almost always attempted
- There was very little evidence of unfinished questions or sections of questions being omitted apart from some items of specific information which many candidates did not appear to know.
- There was evidence that the more varied style of questions introduced in 2004, which requires candidates to apply the information they have learned, or to use and apply information from tables / charts / case studies, continues to present difficulties for some candidates taking this level.

# Do You Differentiate When You Teach?

Research confirms what experienced teachers have always known - no two children are alike and children do not learn in identical ways. An enriched environment for one student is not necessarily enriched for another. Teachers are always conscious of this reality - that every class group is really a collection of individuals.

Students differ from one another in terms of their prior learning or knowledge, their readiness to learn, their facility with language, their particular preferences for different styles of learning and their personal interests. Irish society has become much more diverse of late and therefore a wider range of differences have come into play. Students belong to different ethnic groups, come from varying socio-economic backgrounds, come from homes where neither English nor Irish is the first language and have a widely varying range of educational needs. Therefore it is important that we think of differentiating our teaching and our students' learning in a formal way.



## What is Differentiation?

Differentiation is not new; the concept has been around for many years. As teachers we apply some basic differentiation techniques when we teach both higher and ordinary levels, when we ask higher order questions, set different tests for different abilities or when we set extra work for the more gifted students.

A “teach to the middle” or “one size fits all” teaching style, is less responsive to and less effective in meeting the needs of the diverse populations in our classrooms, than one which offers various learning opportunities designed to meet different learning needs. In this sense our day to day teaching seems to pull us in two directions at once – to teach a whole class group while supporting individual learners. When we reach out to the individual within the wider group we are engaging in differentiation, which relates at its simplest to any strategies that help a teacher to make a move away from “teaching to the middle” of a class group. The essence of differentiation is responding to and engaging with students at their level.

**The challenge for teachers - “How can I teach the same curriculum to all and at the same time teach differently to each?”**

To differentiate instruction is to recognise students with varying background knowledge, ability, language preferences and learning interest and to react responsively to each. Differentiated instruction is a blend of whole class, group and

individual instruction. It is student centred. Differentiated classrooms operate on the premise that learning experiences are most effective when they are engaging, relevant and interesting. It means creating multiple paths in teaching and learning for students of different abilities in the same class in order to maximise each student's growth and individual success.

The students in any classroom will have a range of abilities and in addition they will have different learning styles. There has been a great deal of work done on the variety of learning styles. Howard Gardner identified seven individual talents in his Multiple Intelligences Theories. As differentiated classrooms offers different approaches to teaching and learning, these approaches can be based on learning styles / talents.

### Gardner's Theory Multiple Intelligences

- 1) Linguistic
- 2) Visual / Spatial
- 3) Body - kinaesthetic
- 4) Musical
- 5) Mathematical
- 6) Interpersonal
- 7) Intrapersonal
- 8) Naturalistic

Differentiation of learning begins with student assessment, identifying the most able and those with learning difficulties or lower ability. It should be noted that differentiation within the classroom addresses not only the needs of students with disabilities or learning problems but also the needs of the most able or gifted students.

*Differentiated Instruction is not "tailoring the same suit of clothes" for all.*

### Why Differentiate?

The demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex. Society now expects schools to deal effectively with different languages and student backgrounds, to be sensitive to cultural and gender issues, to respond effectively to disadvantaged students and students with learning or behavioural problems. Our classrooms are made up of different individuals and these individuals differ in many ways. For example students have different prior knowledge or skill expertise they differ in their learning rate, their cognitive ability, their motivation, attitude and effort, interest, strength or talent and all of these students can be in the one class group!

Research suggests that differentiation can help to alleviate discipline problems and increase student motivation. Studies have shown that discipline problems reflect "a collision with an inappropriate curriculum". Two motivational states interfere with learning: one is anxiety, the other is boredom. Anxiety occurs when teachers expect too much, boredom when they expect too little. Differentiated classrooms operate on the premise that learning experiences are most effective when they are engaging, relevant and interesting.

**WHEN WE TEACH THE SAME THING  
TO ALL KIDS AT THE SAME TIME,**

1/3 ALREADY KNOW IT,

1/3 GET IT, AND

1/3 NEVER WILL.

**SO 2/3 OF THE KIDS ARE WASTING THEIR TIME.**

*Scott Willis*

### Applying Differentiation in the Classroom

There is no recipe for differentiation. Teachers construct differentiated classrooms in varying ways depending on their own personalities, subject, class group and the learning profile of their students.

However, all teachers deal with three curriculum elements. It is these curricular elements that can be adapted.

- 1) **Content** (what they will learn)
- 2) **Process** (how they will learn)
- 3) **Product** (how they will demonstrate what they have learned)

1) Adapting the **content** involves looking at the curriculum i.e. the knowledge and skills that students need to learn.

What are the key concepts that have to be taught?

Content can be differentiated at three levels as follows:

What **must** they know / be able to do?

What **should** they know / be able to do?

What **could** they know / be able to do?

2) The **process** involves varying the learning activities or strategies used in the classroom. Various learning methodologies can be used here such as discussion, brainstorming, using ICT, practical work, peer teaching, group activities and problem solving. Varying the organisation of the class should also be considered i.e. whether to use whole class instruction, group teaching, co-op groups, peer tutoring, active based learning or independent learning.

3) The **product** is the outcome or how the students demonstrate what they have learned. Some of the strategies that could be used include written homework, tests, project work, mind maps, practical work and cloze tests.

The whole process of applying differentiation in the classroom can be very daunting for teachers because so many different ways of adapting instruction and modifying curricula exist. The key message is to keep it simple.



Here are some specific examples of differentiation, many of which you implement on a daily basis in your classrooms:

- 1) **Curriculum Content** – The curriculum to be studied may be increased or decreased in terms of depth and complexity. One can focus on the core content. More content can be given to the more able students and in greater depth, less and easier content for the less able students.
- 2) **Activities** – Teachers can vary the difficulty level, the tasks and activities the students are required to undertake in the lesson e.g. ask the less able students to complete a matching up exercise (e.g. guidelines for safe food storage with reasons why) while the more able students can come up with the points themselves.
- 3) **Resource Materials** – Teachers could select different text books or instruction materials for students to use e.g. some texts require less reading. The language can be simplified (e.g. HBV protein can be known as animal protein), new vocabulary pre taught, clear diagrams given, unnecessary detail removed, information presented in bullet points, lists, instructions and questions given should be clear and simple, cues or prompts can be used and key words highlighted.
- 4) **Products** – Teachers might plan for students to produce their work in different forms from a lesson according to their abilities, interest and aptitudes e.g. practical work, projects, oral presentations etc.
- 5) **Environment** – The organisation of the classroom should be considered and arranged appropriately for individual or group work.
- 6) **Teaching strategies** – Teachers might adopt particular ways to stimulate poorly motivated students e.g. student centred activities. Different questions can be asked of different students, which require different levels of cognitive thinking and frequent revising for the less able students.
- 7) **Pace** – Vary the rate of teaching and the time students are given to produce work. A slower pace may be required for the less able students. While the less able students need more time, the more able students can move on to more advanced work.
- 8) **Amount of assistance** – vary the amount of help given to individuals. Encourage peer assistance i.e. more help to be given to the less able students or ask some students to help others who require extra assistance.
- 9) **Testing and grading** – vary the ways of assessing students' learning. Grading may be modified to reflect effort as well as standard e.g. 2 grades to be given, one for standard achieved, one for effort made. Shorter, less detailed answers required on tests for students taking the ordinary level paper.

- 10) **Classroom grouping** – various ways of grouping students within the class to allow for different activities to take place e.g. sometimes organise groups by ability, sometimes let students choose their own groups based on interest or friendships. Co-operative learning and peer assistance should be encouraged.
- 11) **Homework assignments** – give some students homework that involve additional practice or others more demanding homework (called extension work for the more able students).

### The Role of the Teacher

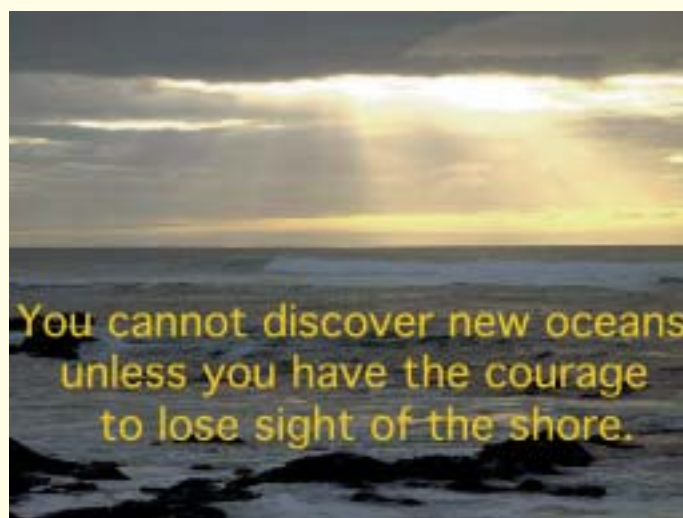
The teacher's role in a differentiated classroom can be compared to that of a sports coach. A good coach has clear goals for the team, but also for every individual on the team. Practice will likely involve some common activities, but will also be likely to call on each player to improve areas of weakness and perfect areas of strength. The coach has to understand what motivates each player and use that understanding to get the player to develop his/ her skills. The coach must also build team spirit. During the game, the coach is very active, giving instructions, praise or encouragement. The coach, however, does not play the game!

If you want to feel safe and secure,  
Continue to do what you have always done.  
If you want to grow, go to the cutting edge of our profession,  
Just know that when you do so, there will be a  
temporary loss of sanity.  
So know that when you don't quite know what you are doing  
You are probably growing!

*Madeline Hunter*

### References

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Special Education Support Service website [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)  
Tomlinson, Carol Ann (1998) *How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms*. New York: ASCD  
Westwood, Peter (2003) *Common Sense Methods*. New York: Routledge Falmer





### [www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)

This is the British Nutrition Foundation website and it provides information on healthy eating and news items. The section "Teacher Centre" offers a vast array of resources on food and nutrition. Posters, worksheets, powerpoint presentations and ICT templates are available to download.

### [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)

Information leaflets to advise and help on the management of heart health can be downloaded. The section on guidelines for healthy cooking has a selection of starters, main courses and desserts where the fat content is low. This may be useful for students doing research on assignments in food studies practical coursework.



### [www.superquinn.ie](http://www.superquinn.ie)

The nutrition forum in this site offers advice on healthy eating. It deals with nutrition for all ages, special dietary needs, food profiles giving the nutritional value of meat, fish, fruit and vegetables, food safety in relation to food handling, GM foods and food labelling.



### [www.foodgloriousfood.ie](http://www.foodgloriousfood.ie)

This site is produced by Bord Bia to support the study of meat at senior cycle. Information at level 1 is

aimed at leaving certificate applied and ordinary level leaving certificate students. Level 2 information is intended for transition year students and higher level leaving certificate students involved in project or research work. The section on food matters allows users to assess their diet by an interactive quiz and offers tips to improve it. There is a game on the food pyramid, information on nutrients in food and how they work in your body. An interactive section "fact or fiction" is a useful way for students to test their food knowledge.



### [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

This has over 40,000 recipes - all tested and reviewed by site users. It is easy to navigate. The section on tips and advice offers menu ideas and includes step by step tutorials on line. You can search for recipes that use particular ingredients. There is also an encyclopaedia of cooking terms.



### [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie)

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland site offers fact sheets on topics such as various bacteria, HACCP and food legislation. Posters on food labels are also available through the web site.



### [www.paulamee.com](http://www.paulamee.com)

One of Ireland's leading nutritionists, Paula Mee, of RTÉ's *Health Squad*, has launched a website dedicated to information and news on nutrition and health. It is designed to offer people a positive roadmap when navigating their nutritional journey through life, from pregnancy to ageing well.



### [www.howstuffworks.com/nutrition](http://www.howstuffworks.com/nutrition)

A good site for student research. This site has many articles and DVD clips on nutrition and healthy eating. Students can learn about the building blocks of nutrition, low carbohydrate diets, planning menus, shopping wisely and reading labels. There is also a section on special diets.

### [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

Citizens information is an Irish Government website provided by the citizens information board. The site provides public service information and is divided into information categories. Categories of relevance to the leaving certificate syllabus include "housing", "money and tax", "social welfare" and "consumer affairs".

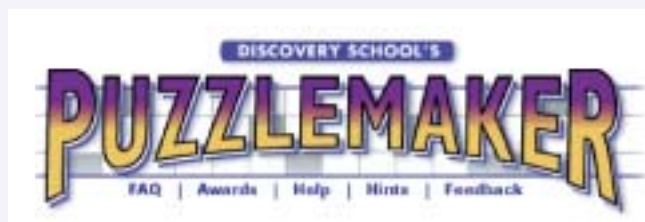


### [www.irishconsumer.ie](http://www.irishconsumer.ie)

This is the site of the National Consumer Agency. You can download guides to consumer law which explain your entitlements in different areas from buying goods and services to product safety. The "Learning Zone" has three interactive quizzes for students i.e. the clever consumer, "the great complainer" and "the on-line buying quiz". The Jargon Buster has an extensive list of consumer terms. The section on the small claims court guides you through how to make a claim and what happens when you do.

### [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com)

This site acts as a puzzle generation tool for teachers. Puzzles include word searches and criss-cross puzzles. It is a useful way of designing tests or creating revision sheets for students. It has a clip art gallery to enhance your power point presentations or for student project work. The Lesson Plan Library is worth checking out for interesting ideas.



### [www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson\\_plans/vocation\\_ed/home](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/vocation_ed/home)

Lesson plans on food, consumer issues and home design can be found here. Interesting downloads include a lesson plan on determining the nutritional value of fast food and a food label comparison chart. It has an excellent piece on how to create a web quest.

### [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize)

Choose design and technology from the list of subjects to access food technology and textiles. The food technology section has excellent revision sheets on the nutrients and the properties of food. Students can test themselves on line on these topics and get their results /scores and the correct answers. The section on textiles has revision sheets and tests on fibres and fabrics. The site also has an interesting feature that allows users to make a revision map for chosen topics.

