

## **The Views of Early Career Primary Teachers on the Impact of an Undergraduate Specialism in Special Education on Their Work as Class Teachers**

**Prof. Dr. Trevor O' Brien**

*Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland*

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the perspectives of five primary school teachers who had completed a specialism in special education, as part of their initial teaching degree. Along with two core modules focusing on inclusive education for all students, these students completed an additional five modules in the area of special education. All five teachers were at the early stage of their careers and worked as class teachers. A focus group was set up and participants were invited to share their experiences and thoughts about the impact of the specialism on their practice. The findings indicate that the specialism had a positive impact on the teachers' professional practice, particularly in terms of skill development, confidence, having a whole school approach and acknowledging the need for continuing professional learning. The participants also spoke positively about the two core modules on inclusive education, which they claimed laid the foundation for subsequent learning.

**Keywords:** teacher education, special education, specialism, inclusive education