

Theme 1: Paralympic values

Unit 5: The case for accessibility

Learning objective:

To gain experience with accessibility



Introduction

The purpose of this unit is to enable students to welcome a visitor or group of visitors with an impairment to school/college for a specific purpose or function. While strongly encouraging a purpose for completing the unit it can be completed without the need for a visit to take place.

Suggestions for potential visits:

- Invite students with an impairment to play games of goalball, sitting volleyball or boccia with your students.
- Invite a Para athlete or Paralympic hopeful to talk about their impairment, their sport, their training and successes. As part of the visit plans, prepare a set of questions to ask the guest.
- Invite a Para athlete or Paralympian to talk about their impairment and its impact on sporting performance. This could include explaining sport classes and the way in which athletes with impairments are grouped to ensure competition is fair and equitable.
- Invite younger children with an impairment to a festival of sport at your school at which your students act as organisers and leaders.
- Invite an artist with an impairment to share their work alongside students' work in an exhibition.
- Invite a local person with an impairment to talk about their impairment, what they do and their experiences with accessibility.





Activity 1

Students need to understand what the term 'accessible' means in the context of school. You may wish to ask them to create their own definition or use this one: 'able to move around school freely and easily, and having equal access to class-based and practical learning opportunities'. Discuss this in the context of your own school/college. Is equal access possible to all class-based and practical learning for students with all types of sensory and physical impairment?

In preparation for the visit (or in answer to the scenario) students consider whether their school or college is accessible for the specific visitor or visitors with an impairment, taking into consideration any barriers presented by:

- the physical environment, including the entrance to the school grounds and school, the doors, the corridors, the classrooms, the cloakrooms, the sports facilities, the dining/café areas, the outdoor area
- Communication, including information and signage.

If the visitor uses a wheelchair find out its measurements or use these:

Width:	24 inches or 60 cm
Overall height:	36 inches or 90 cm
Seat height:	24 inches or 50 cm
Depth:	36 inches or 90 cm

In groups or as a class, they produce a report, photographic display or short video that summarises their findings and details low-cost or no-cost adaptations that can be made in and around school to make it more accessible. They put forward their findings and suggestions, including plans and designs, for improving accessibility to the principal/head teacher.

After the visit, it should be reviewed and consideration should be given to any further suggestions to improve accessibility including those suggested by the visitor(s).



Activity 2

Students experience what it might be like for a Para athlete with a vision impairment to visit school or college. They work in pairs, one wearing eyeshades and one acting as a sighted guide. Guides lead their partner gently by the elbow, shoulder or wrist around the school.

They then share experiences and consider what adaptations can be made to make school/college more accessible for visitors with a vision impairment. This could include an investigation into alternative methods of communication like braille, a tactile writing system.

Using any medium – art, music, video, creative writing, poetry, photography – students reflect their feelings when wearing eyeshades and when acting as a sighted guide. They take photos of their work and include them in a display.

Equipment

Ruler or tape measure; pens or pencils; clipboards or similar; whiteboard/chalkboard or other ways of recording student's suggestions; eyeshades; access to a variety of medium – art, music, video, creative writing, poetry, photography to allow students choice over how they present their work.



Extension activities

Send messages of support to local Paralympic hopefuls and follow their progress. Visit a Para sport venue. Watch the Para athletes training or support them at local sporting events.

Optional independent research

What sporting opportunities are available at school and in your local community for young people with an impairment? Can you suggest ideas to increase these?

Discussion questions

- 'The impairment is not the problem. The accessibility is the problem.' (Mohamed Jemni, Professor of ICT and Educational Technologies at the University of Tunis, Tunisia).
- What does this mean?