



Accessing Physical Education Courses

Case study 1: Andrew

I am pleased to see all pupils have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of specific difficulties they may be experiencing. The department has managed successfully to ensure all pupils' needs are met.

Head Teacher

What was the challenge?

Over the last three years we have had a complete change in the way we deliver PE in our school. All pupils, when they reach S4, are now presented for National Qualifications at Intermediate 1 or 2. To ensure inclusion, we have supported a number of pupils, with a range of learning and physical disabilities, through these examinations. Specifically, we have adapted our teaching and learning to enable students with Cerebral Palsy to access the course.

The very nature of this condition means sufferers have a defined weakness in one or more limbs (hemiplegia). One of our pupils, Andrew had weakness in one arm and one leg. This meant he found it difficult to maintain his balance, particularly when changing direction, kicking, or using both arms to throw or strike.

The activities we study as part of our Intermediate 1 or 2 Courses all involve a certain amount of changes of direction and kicking, hitting or throwing. Consequently, Andrew found great difficulty being able to participate in class activities. Andrew's activities were chosen to build on his previous learning and to ensure he could progress to the Higher course. The activities were:

- ◆ Badminton
- ◆ Volleyball
- ◆ Football

- ◆ Table tennis
- ◆ Social dance
- ◆ Athletics
- ◆ Softball
- ◆ Health and fitness

Our classes are single-sex, which added another challenging dimension for Andrew, as he tried to cope with peers who were generally bigger, stronger and quicker than he was. The very inclusive nature of our school required us to find alternative ways to allow access for him.

How did Andrew access the course in class?

In the theoretical side of the course, Andrew was supported by classroom assistants who are trained in using some of the materials/resources used in PE, for example:

- ◆ Observation schedules
- ◆ Pulse rate monitors
- ◆ Stop watches
- ◆ Standardised fitness testing equipment (Sit and Reach, Sergeant Jump, Step-Up benches)

This training ensured that Andrew was given support when recording results, setting up equipment, or timing activities where a degree of fine motor skills was required. For written work, he used Alpha smart books, laptops, and readers and scribes.

In the practical aspect of the course, there were a number of health and safety considerations. The safety of all pupils is of utmost importance, so risk assessments were done for all activities and environments in our curriculum. This involved inter-agency working, with our local authority providing the services of a Risk Assessment Officer. There were no major changes for us to deal with, but it was some comfort to know we were secure in minimising any health and safety issues. Some of the steps we took to avoid potential problems were:

- ◆ Extra changing time.
- ◆ Pupil's PE kit kept in the department.
- ◆ Buddy system for bringing book, pens etc into the lesson from the dressing rooms.
- ◆ Classroom Assistant present whenever possible.

In selecting our activities, it was essential not to limit the experience of any pupil by restricting activities to such an extent that the required breadth and depth of experience could not be achieved. Rather, we incorporated Andrew's needs by making reasonable adjustments through a variety of strategies and adapting certain 'positional' decisions. For example:

Football: Andrew played as Goalkeeper. He was encouraged to see this role as a specialist position. All drills and class activity allowed him to cover a smaller area, using a size 4 instead of a size 5 ball, and to have sympathetic feeders. Our approach insisted that all pupils took responsibility to be that feeder/partner. This ensured a totally inclusive experience where the class took responsibility for training alongside all team-members.

Table Tennis: This was the ideal activity for Andrew. The limited area that needed to be covered, and general level of dexterity required to achieve a good standard, suited his needs perfectly. Again, while practising, all class members understood the importance of playing **with** and not **against** when discrete skills were being developed. This built Andrew's confidence **and** skills. The emphasis for the class at times was accuracy of feeding. This was a useful performance focus, and the resultant transference into the 'live' game was an extremely desirable dimension.

Volleyball: In all phases of the lesson, it was clearly essential that all health and safety rules were obeyed — for example, all balls not in play were stored behind the bench. Some skills, such as 'digging', were not an option for Andrew — the arm position required was not physically possible to achieve. However, predictable, sympathetic feeding allowed him to participate in the game. In 2v2 or 3v3 games, teams were balanced to provide realistic competition for him. We encouraged our pupils to see their less mobile player as the 'Liberero' — the floating **addition** to the defence who could specialise in taking responsibility for the middle of the court **alongside** another player. Another example was to play Andrew as the specialist setter who, on receiving an accurate first pass, would provide spikers with their preferred set.

As time went on, we did not change teams. This allowed familiarisation to be built up and players in the team knew each other's strengths and limitations. It encouraged a very positive ethos and sense of camaraderie.

Badminton: We worked in half-courts at all times. This was a realistic option not just for Andrew's additional needs, but for the other 28 pupils in the class. Again, predictable, accurate feeding ensured that skills were developed in the initial parts of the lessons. In

games, the option of adding special conditions was used to encourage players to build accurate shots and (obviously) limit the amount of movement required from our pupil. 'No-man's land' games could be all of the court except the tramlines, or everything behind the service line, to encourage fine-touch and tight-net play. All members of the class benefitted from these games. In the 'full' half court games, players were encouraged to test each other out by playing competitively.

How was Andrew assessed?

Andrew had a degree of involvement in deciding which two activities were to be used for assessment purposes. We looked at the Case Study videos for performance to check the agreed national standard. We tried, as far as possible, to provide as many opportunities for the context to allow a degree of success. We could not set up a like for like situation but, the degree of challenge and competition was an important feature to allow Andrew the opportunity to show his ability. Rules for service in table tennis were modified to ensure that he was able to get a rally going so he could 'demonstrate and sustain for a time, a higher level of performance' (PE Arrangement Document, Appendix 2b, page 29).

The marking scale provided by SQA was applied stringently in individual and team activities. In football in particular, it was more than acceptable to observe Andrew's performance in his role of Goalkeeper in the game. In volleyball, the additional tactical demands of 'switching' on receipt of service, allowed him to demonstrate 'comfortable ease and assurance in reasonably challenging situations involving options' (PE Arrangement Document, Appendix 2b, page 29).

By ensuring he had the opportunity to work with team members who are familiar with his difficulties, the opportunity for achievement was provided.

The external exam was straightforward for Andrew to access. Reading and scribing had been a feature throughout the course and in internal assessments, so it was merely a case of continuing the same type and level of support.

How successful was the delivery of the course?

The delivery of the course was successful and enabled Andrew to be included in the class activities. His experience was both positive and worthwhile. He was very much accepted by his peers, and there were never any examples of him not being picked for teams or of him being excluded from any activity. He earned respect where others had to acknowledge he

had for example, a backhand that was hard to beat in table tennis, and that when he played in goal, accuracy was essential because he was totally fearless.

This ethos of inclusion pervades all aspects of our teaching. The staff have a very 'can do' philosophy. Finding out where a pupil's talent lie, is our focus. In effect, the intention to find out what is possible for pupils with physical difficulties, has made us examine our curriculum.

In every activity we now have differentiated materials which document how conditions can be modified, allowing achievement for all. These include advice to teachers on how a pupil might start a rally without a serve, how specialist skills required for specialist roles in games should be taught, and how teams can be balanced to allow all candidates to demonstrate their skills. It is not enough to put the strongest with the weakest — often that only manages to build resentment. Instead, by identifying strengths and acknowledging that everyone has a worthwhile contribution to make, success is possible for all.

What advice would you give other teachers?

PE staff are skilled in differentiation of tasks to ensure pupils can access the course. Delivering PE to pupils with specific physical impairment has encouraged our staff to differentiate by response. Observing Andrew in a variety of contexts, and dealing with their challenges, developed our awareness of the importance of observing the successes achieved as opposed to commenting on what could not be done.

Specifically, it was important:

- ◆ To make use of evidence of previous successful approaches in Primary and in other subject areas that may have developed strategies that PE could make use of.
- ◆ To resist comparisons between able and disabled candidates.
- ◆ To use before and after video performance as tools to measure improvement (and to increase pupil motivation).
- ◆ Above all, to assess the observed performance having first thought about how the assessment criteria can be applied. For example was there: 'clear evidence of increasing control of situations' (PE Arrangement Document, Appendix 2b, page 29).

In every situation, as you would expect, performance did improve, as did self esteem and personal confidence.