



Accessing Physical Education Courses

Case study 2: Angela

What was the challenge?

One of our pupils, Angela, overcame both a physical and learning difficulty to attain an Intermediate 2, band A award. Angela had a growth disorder that resulted in one leg being shorter than the other, affecting her general mobility and skill acquisition. She also had severe dyslexia, which brought difficulty in memory retention, assimilation and interpretation skills.

Angela recognised the potential barriers to her learning and the challenges ahead. In partnership with parents, pastoral care and support staff, an additional support plan was drafted to monitor progress and attainment.

The greatest challenge for Angela was in dealing with the competitive elements of the activities — for example, changes of movement to cover court areas at full speed, marking and getting free from opponents. The demands of good timing, reaction to stimuli and anticipation proved difficult due to her lack of mobility. Activity-specific targets were set to motivate all candidates to achieve. These targets were adjusted for Angela. For example, in Badminton, during repetitive drills, all candidates had to complete 25 baseline to baseline deliveries; the target set for Angela was to complete 25 deliveries to her opponent's baseline from inside her baseline.

How did Angela access the course in class?

Although Angela required some modifications and reasonable adjustments, the same programme of activities was presented for all candidates. Practical performance activities selected were Badminton, Basketball and Swimming. The knowledge, understanding and evaluation components were delivered throughout the practical sessions and reinforced with classroom sessions which included the use of Smart board technologies.

The following contributed to ensuring effective access for Angela:

- ◆ Risk assessment was a pre-requisite to course entry to make sure that a safe learning environment would engage **all** pupils in appropriate activities.
- ◆ An Additional Support Plan was put in place to identify specific individual needs and short/long term targets. This was agreed with Angela's parents, pastoral care and Learning Support.
- ◆ Alternative teaching strategies with adapted assessment methods were used, rather than have Angela 'fit' into existing structures.
- ◆ Resources to maximise learning were used, where appropriate — for example modified equipment and personal handheld computers.
- ◆ Pupils shared their needs with the peer group at the start of the course. This helped with identifying their responsibilities for equality and integration.

Activities

Angela coped very well with most aspects of the learning and acquisition of skills, especially in swimming, where the impact of her condition was negligible. Her stroke efficiency was strong, controlled and fluent. The only direct problem was a poor execution of the 'dive & tumble turn'. A lack of explosive power and balance limited the 'flight phase' and 'push off' which affected personal best times.

Due to the nature of the activities Angela experienced greater success in badminton than in basketball. Although basketball is considered a non-contact sport, in reality there are always strong, aggressive challenges, and this presented some problems with stability, movement anticipation and balance.

In both activities, she displayed sound levels of learning and application of the simple game skills — for example, serving, hitting, passing and dribbling. However when applying the more complex game skills which demand good timing, anticipation, agility and reaction time, her lack of mobility and speed of movement prohibited controlled and consistent application. This was most evident when fulfilling and managing role-related duties and when applying strategies.

The following adaptations and modifications were considered and agreed with all pupils. Given Angela's personal determination to succeed, these adaptations and modifications allowed the practical performance Outcomes to be achieved.

Badminton

Challenge

Angela had difficulty with court coverage. When moving from front to back and laterally to cover cross-court play, her footwork was at times awkward, and this restricted the transition between attacking and defending play.

Modifications

- ◆ Used double court and opponents play to single lines
- ◆ Used feather or very slow shuttles to give pupil more time to cover the court

Adaptations

- ◆ Restricted the opponent's use of shots such as smash, cross-court drop, and net shots. This could be varied depending on the opponent's strength.
- ◆ Handicap system — depending on the opponent a two, three or four-point lead was awarded at the start.
- ◆ Angela was awarded two points for the accurate placement of the complex smash.

Basketball

Challenge

Angela had difficulty in role related duties when applying tactical moves especially in competitive situations, such as screening, cutting into space and marking an opponent. For example, when playing post-play or cutting into the key to shoot and/or gain a rebound she was often off balance and fell.

Modifications

- ◆ no modifications were applied

Adaptations

- ◆ In defensive situations, opponents were requested not to mark/press too tightly, thus affording Angela more time/options/space to decide what to do with the ball.
- ◆ When applying specific strategies Angela were allowed to stand nearer her own basket to initiate offensive plays.
- ◆ Ignored time-violation rules — when in possession, Angela could retain the ball for longer than 5 seconds; could stand in the key for longer than 3 seconds; and was allowed to use pass back and not be penalised.

- ◆ Leniency on personal fouls — when marking or changing direction to cut or assist play, if Angela made contact with opponents, play was not necessarily stopped.

Theory

Angela's learning of theoretical principles was very much disadvantaged as a result of coping with dyslexia. Some difficulties emerged during practical sessions where some key concept knowledge was introduced, which at times required pupils to take their own notes:

- ◆ Interpretation and assimilation of what was being said
- ◆ Speed and accuracy of handwriting
- ◆ Evidence of stammer

To support learning:

- ◆ where possible handouts were issued
- ◆ use of 'mind maps' and a Dictaphone
- ◆ a 'buddy' system was set up whereby a classmate would allow her to copy up notes and explain them as appropriate
- ◆ use of question and answer sessions to establish understanding of content
- ◆ extra time given for homework
- ◆ learning support staff reviewed class work and acted as scribes when she had to complete NABs and exams; extra time was also given for assessments

Angela had a very strong sense of self determination and made good use of homework study packs and attended supported study regularly.

How was Angela assessed?

Strategic planning of when and how assessment should take place ensured that the pace of teaching and learning matched the assessment calendar. This had to fit in with the school calendar of prelim examinations, NAB completion, cross-verification exercises, practical performance deadlines, and the timetabled commitments of learning support and auxiliary staff.

By accepting that some pupils might have additional needs, an innovative approach to interpreting the assessment guidelines could be developed. By purposefully examining the Outcome descriptors whilst taking into account Angela's specific strengths and weaknesses in performance across a range of contexts, accurate evaluative judgements on progress and attainment were made. This provided inclusion for a pupil who had the ability to 'describe' and 'explain' a concept or skill but lacked the ability to fully demonstrate proficiency, control and consistent application.

Although a final grade for practical performance attainment was awarded at the end of each activity, a variety of qualitative types of assessment were used to highlight Angela's development of a skill and on how it was performed, rather than focussing on the whole discrete Outcome. This provided partial evidence of attainment in one or two aspects of an Outcome. Other pieces of work covering a wider range of contexts were gathered to make informed judgements about her overall performance. This provided evidence of how she demonstrated:

- ◆ basic movement patterns and actions, for example, travelling skills
- ◆ coordination and control of her body with increased range of gross, fine skills and movements
- ◆ progress in developing and applying simple to complex skills in open and closed contexts; initially repetitive drills moving onto combination/pressure drills
- ◆ application of skills in 1v1, 2v2, to full game contexts, moving from half-court to full-court challenges
- ◆ manipulative skills involving the handling and use of objects and equipment
- ◆ combination and sequenced movements, linking them fluently and showing improved timing, anticipation, decision-making

The following methods of recording progress and attainment were used:

- ◆ computerised tracking system
- ◆ end of component target sheets
- ◆ video diary and reference notes
- ◆ pupil self evaluation reports
- ◆ practical performance assessment reports were cross verified by staff not directly involved with lesson delivery
- ◆ staff evaluation reports
- ◆ learning staff support notes

- ◆ parents' opinions

How successful was the delivery of the Course?

The delivery of the course was very successful, and the experiences gained and achievements made by Angela were truly amazing. This success stemmed from encouraging interaction with other pupils as well as staff so that personal and group achievements could be shared and acknowledged.

This integrated approach benefited all pupils, who are all:

- ◆ much more accepting of the need to work co-operatively
- ◆ tolerant in accepting each others' strengths and weaknesses; evident when sharing ideas and exploring different options and possibilities
- ◆ much more capable of making informed choices

In addition to the obvious rewards of attainment in the PE Course, other indicators of wider success for Angela were:

- ◆ she was highly motivated in all aspects of her learning
- ◆ noticeable improvements in her communication and literacy skills
- ◆ improved confidence and self esteem
- ◆ she demonstrated greater knowledge and understanding of facts by offering opinion and sharing responsibilities in group work

Angela's Learning Support Teacher has noticed a real difference. 'Success in Physical Education has given Angela a real sense of achievement and improved her self confidence. It has been a pleasure mentoring Angela and seeing such noticeable improvements in her learning across curricular areas. Her communication skills are so much better, and this created a 'can do' attitude.'

As well as success for Angela, within the class as a whole participation rates were high and all pupils were motivated to take part in PE lessons. We also received many enthusiastic and praiseworthy comments from pupils, staff and parents.

Having achieved a grade A for the Intermediate 2 Course, Angela left school with sufficient entry qualifications for college, and completed an HNC in Sport and the Community. She is now employed in a local sports centre.

What advice would you give other teachers?

Remember the Scottish Executive has dictated the principle of inclusion: *'All children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have'*. I took comfort in the realisation that this required more than just the professionalism of the PE staff, but co-operation throughout the school.

Consider the whole school's policy on additional support needs. This should be interlinked — for example, connect with policies for equal opportunities; assessment; and recording, reporting, and promoting positive behaviour.

Within reason, experiment and see what works best for the disabled pupil. Try not to make assumptions about what a pupil can do or what they might need, or to underestimate their ability based on your experience of another pupil with a similar impairment or disability — each pupil has unique abilities and difficulties.

Take time to research and improve your understanding of impairment, disability equality issues, and applied motor development, and how this affects learning. I certainly gained greater insight and taught more effectively as a result. Embrace the challenge and enjoy.