

How Was School?

Disabled People's Experiences of Education in the last Century



Background

It is only in the last 30 years that disabled people have had an opportunity to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in mainstream education settings. In the first half of the 20th Century disabled children and young people were routinely sent to residential institutions, often many miles from their families and communities. Some of these institutions provided an educational element, but the focus of the placement was to 'fix' the disabled child. This approach was driven by the traditional Medical Model of Disability which identifies the person with the impairment/health condition as the problem, rather than the society we live in that creates barriers to disabled people participating and contributing as equal citizens.



The aim of this pack is to help children and young people learn about the changing experience of education for disabled people in the last 100 years. Many of those early experiences left disabled people feeling devalued as well as isolated from their peers, their families and their communities. That disconnection of generations of disabled people from mainstream life has fuelled a culture of 'them & us' which has led to discrimination, bullying and hate crime. The work to change the inequality between disabled and nondisabled people, has already started with some excellent inclusive approaches adopted by some schools. However, this has to be increased by encouraging children and young people to think differently about the world in which they live.

Using the Pack

The main emphasis of this pack is to encourage children and young people to think about the range of different experiences children and young people have of education with a particular focus on disabled children and young people, thus encouraging children and young people to understand and appreciate the value of difference with the goal of changing the nature and culture of school and of society for the better. By encouraging children and young people to appreciate and value the differences in others they are far more likely to recognise, accept and value their own difference.

Age Groups

We have deliberately not linked activities to specific Key Stages so that teachers have the freedom to use and adapt the materials to as wide a group of students as possible. If guidance is required we consider the materials to be most appropriate for Key Stages 2 to 3, Years 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Use of Language

We have used language in this pack that we hope reflects the broad learning abilities of a wide age range of students. However you may find on occasion that you have to adapt the language in some of the activities to better accommodate your groups of learners. On the last page of these notes there are a list of important definitions that may assist you with this. Alternatively we would be happy for you to contact us to discuss changes to language.



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Worksheets

There are six themed worksheets that focus on different aspects of education and disabled people:

- ▶ Everyone's Different
- ▶ Friendship
- ▶ What Helps Us to Learn?
- ▶ Getting Around
- ▶ Looking Out for Each Other
- ▶ Joining In - Sports and Games



For each themed worksheet you will find:

- ▶ A brief introduction
- ▶ Interview quotes highlighting different aspects of the theme.
- ▶ Links to the relevant audio or video clips
- ▶ Discussion and Activity Ideas.
- ▶ Relevant Curriculum areas.
- ▶ Guidance notes for teachers if appropriate.
- ▶ Links to other resources to support or extend the session.

The themed worksheets have been designed so they can be used either individually for one off sessions in relation to specific curriculum subjects, or over a number of sessions as part of awareness raising events such as Disability History Month (22 November - 22 December).

For more information about Disability History Month visit: <http://ukdisabilityhistorymonth.com>

We recommend that you end each session by asking the class to reflect on what they have learnt from the session you have just delivered and how they could apply that understanding in their own lives.



This pack is to be used in conjunction with the How Was School website - howwasschool.org.uk - which contains additional materials including photos, audio and film clips and a Timeline. The intention is that teachers may use a combination of printed and web based materials to create a 'tailor-made' resource for different groups of students.

For some worksheets we have suggested audio clips relevant to specific activities, however the website has a much wider selection of film and audio clips that you might want to also incorporate into lesson activities to further develop ideas and discussions.



Four more worksheets are being developed:

- ▶ **Changing Attitudes**
- ▶ **World War 2 - Disabled People in a Changing World**
- ▶ **Being Away from Home**
- ▶ **Bullying** (to link with Anti Bullying Week)

Please check the website howwasschool.org.uk for the latest available worksheets.

Aims of the 'How Was School?' Pack

1. To explore the different perceptions, stereotypes and changes over time to equality, other ways of being different, cultural or geographical differences in relation to disabled people.
2. To learn how young disabled people experience the world and relate their experiences to their own.
3. To learn about the timeline of changing educational experiences and to understand the impact of this on the lives of disabled people.
4. For disabled young people to have a greater understanding of their history.
5. To help foster relationships between disabled and nondisabled young people.



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Definitions

The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model was developed by disabled people. It takes the view that society creates barriers that 'disable' people from participating fully and on an equal basis with others and that these barriers must be removed. By creating barriers in buildings and structures or by not producing information in different formats such as Braille or Easy Read, people with impairments/health conditions are 'disabled'. This way of thinking takes the focus away from what is 'wrong' with a disabled person (their impairment or condition) and puts the emphasis on what we should all do, in alliance to identify and remove barriers.

For example: Using different means of communications to match the requirements of the individuals in the class will enable all children the right to communication.

The Medical Model of Disability

The Medical Model sees the disabled person's impairment or health condition as the 'problem'. The focus is therefore on 'fixing' or 'curing' the individual. This is the Medical Model of Disability.

For example: A disabled person may use a wheel chair - this is NOT a 'problem', the problem is the lack of a ramp!

Segregation

Disabled people of all ages and/or those learners with 'Special Educational Needs' labels being placed in any form of segregated education setting. This tends to force disabled people to lead a separate life.

For example: Separate special school, college or separate unit within school/college or on separate segregated courses within mainstream education settings.

Integration

Disabled people of all ages and/or those learners with 'Special Educational Needs' labels being placed in mainstream education settings with some adaptations and resources, but on condition that the disabled person and/or the learner with 'Special Educational Needs' labels can fit in with pre-existing structures, attitudes and an unaltered environment.

For example: The child is required to "fit in" to what already exists in the school.

Inclusion

Disabled people of all ages and/or those learners with 'Special Educational Needs' labels being educated in mainstream education settings alongside their nondisabled peers, where there is a commitment to removing all barriers to the full participation of everyone as equally valued and unique individuals.

For example: Education for ALL

Inclusive Practice

Inclusive practice can be defined as attitudes, approaches and strategies that we take to ensure that no learners are excluded or isolated from the education on offer.

In other words, we all work to create a culture where all learners feel welcome, accepted, safe, valued and confident that they will get the right support to assist them to develop their talent and achieve their goals.

For more information on the Alliance for Inclusive Education go to: www.allfie.org.uk

www.howwasschool.org.uk

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