

The Netherhall School

Ability vs Ability – TOP Link Festival



What we wanted to do:

Having delivered several TOP Link Festivals along the same theme over recent years, we wanted our primary school students to experience something completely different.

It was around this time that we received the BPA/NASUWT Ability vs Ability Curriculum Resource pack.

We therefore decided to use this pack as the basis for our TOP Link Festival in 2007

How we did it:

We initially identified our TOP Link organisers and introduced them to the BPA/NASUWT Ability vs Ability Curriculum Resource pack. They were shown the video of the Paralympic sports in the resource pack and decided that they wanted to offer a Paralympic themed TOP Link festival to Year 5 students within Family Primary Schools.

The organiser's set about organising the festival. They initially showed the video and resource pack to fellow Sports Leadership students, who would be assisting in the delivery of the Festival, to get them on board.

The Leadership students then broke into smaller sub-groups to plan their individual sessions, focussing on the following six Paralympic activities:

- Athletics
- Goalball
- Table Tennis
- New Age Kurling
- Volleyball (Seated)
- Boccia

The students then worked on the planning and the organising of their sessions, each of which were to last twenty minutes. They also had to source equipment and decide on pitch markings etc. Whilst the Leaders were planning and preparing, the Festival organisers visited schools with the resource pack,, showing the video's of Paralympic athletes to primary children and promoting the festival. They also launched a competition for primary school children to design a logo and strapline for the festival. The Ability vs Ability resource packs were distributed to each primary school and several schools made use of the resource packs within lessons leading up to the Festival.

The Festival itself proved to be an overwhelming success with over 250 Year 5 Primary School Children enjoying the activities outlined above.

These were delivered by 50 Netherhall Sports Leadership students. Also

in attendance on the day was Paralympic Medal Winner Ian Rose, and each group in turn spent their rest session with Ian, learning more about the Paralympic Games and the process that an elite Paralympic Athlete must go through to achieve a medal at the Games.

The Festival was successful and the students enjoyed taking part in activities that they had not previously taken part in. We therefore decided to run a further Paralympic Festival for Year 4 students. It was around this time that it was announced that Dame Kelly Holmes would be visiting Netherhall as part of her role as National School Sport Champion. This announcement sat perfectly with our aims of delivering another successful festival and we made the Paralympics festival the key focus of Dame Kelly's visit.



The difference it made:

"I ache all over after all of the activities I have done today, but this school hosted an incredibly different event. They showcased some of the Paralympic sports in a TOP Link festival which helped the children realise that anybody with a disability still has the ability to be the best that can be and 'do whatever they want'."

Dame Kelly Holmes (www.doublegold.co.uk)

The biggest impact that the festival made was of raising the awareness of the Paralympics and Paralympic sports. This was for true for the Year 11 Leadership students as well as the Year 4 and 5 students. Several Primary schools made use of the ability vs ability curriculum pack during the lead up to the festival in their schools and the pack formed the basis of the planning sessions for the Netherhall Sports Leadership students as they prepared their sessions for the festival.

Many of the Sports Leaders and students had never taken part or indeed seen many of the activities in the ability vs ability resource pack. Games such as Boccia, Goalball and New Age Kurling were new to many, and also the leadership students had to think of how to adapt such activities as Athletics, Volleyball, and Table Tennis to incorporate differing disabilities

The festival did have a cross-curricular theme and the festival logo and strapline proved a popular competition, with the winning design being printed on the festival t-shirts (see right). The strapline was 'Anyone can make a difference'.

Critical Factors in why it worked:

The critical factors that made this festival a success were:

- Building on the work of previous festivals that had been a success
- A good group of sports leaders to run the festival
- Trying something new – Paralympic sports made the students change their approach to the planning and organisation of sports sessions.
- Having an easy accessible resource to use – the ability vs ability resource allowed us to access parts at times (such as the video's of Paralympic sports). This was vital, particularly in showing the leadership students top level Paralympic athletes.

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