

UK Disability Inclusion Training: Review of the University of Edinburgh Physical Education Students' Workshop, February 2017

Summary Report by Best and Randak Associates, March 2017

This report provides the summary results of a review for Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) by Best and Randak Associates of the first-year physical education students at the University of Edinburgh who undertook the UK Disability Inclusion Training (DIT) workshop in February 2017. The workshop was run by SDS, supported by Sainsbury's. The full report of the review is available from SDS.

All 74 students who took part in the final session completed questionnaires immediately at the conclusion of the workshop, and ten volunteered to take part in a focus group to discuss the issues in more depth. It is important to note that as these took place at the end of the workshop, the students had their learning experience fresh in their minds but had not had the opportunity to put it into practice.

The report gives information on their perceptions of the benefits of the workshop; what aspects worked well; what improvements might be made; and content that might be included in future DIT workshops. This provides Scottish Disability Sport with greater knowledge about the impact of the workshops and is intended to support the development of the workshop and disability inclusion in general.

Insights from Workshop Participants

High Standards. The students were very positive about the quality of the workshops, commenting that they were "high quality", "informative", "enjoyable", "good delivery", and "clear and precise – people taking the course have good, relatable experiences".

Training Effectiveness. The students were very positive: all thought the training had been fairly or very effective, including over half (53%) who thought it 'very effective'.

Confidence and Competence. As a result of the training, virtually all described their confidence (99%) and competence (97%) as average or good in terms of delivering opportunities to disabled young people. A little under half of these specified 'good'.

Rating and Coverage of the Three Aspects of the Workshop. The students were asked how they would rate the three aspects of the workshop (Theory, Practical elements, Resources) and how they found the balance of coverage of the three.

- The practical elements including STEPS had the highest rating of the three with over half (53%) of the students considering them to be excellent; by contrast the resources – handbook and handouts – were only rated as excellent by 14%.

The balance of coverage was seen as about right for theory and practical elements; but a quarter (27%) of the students thought there was too little emphasis on resources.

- Reflecting their views on the importance of resources, almost all (93%) of the students said that they would like to have online resources.

Meeting Disabled Athletes/Pupils and Real-life Scenarios. At the instigation of SDS, the students were asked: *In a further Disability Inclusion Training course that you might attend yourself, how useful would it be for you as a future physical education teacher to: (a) have a question and answer discussion with a disabled athlete about the impact that sport/physical education has had on their life; (b) interact with a group of pupils with varying disabilities; and (c) have real-life scenarios of how to integrate pupils with different disabilities into the physical education class?*

- All three suggestions met with strong approval from the students.

All thought they would be fairly or very useful, including two-thirds (66%) to over three-quarters (79%) who thought them potentially very useful.

Themes

The following key themes emerged from the survey and focus group:

Experience. People have experience of disability but are tentative about language, their confidence in engagement, and practical competence.

Workshop Pace. The workshop is a good starting point for the students. The tutors clearly have both passion and experience – so perhaps therefore they try to do too much in too short a time. The planned content and delivery time should be examined with a view to achieving impacts and outcomes that are even more effective than currently.

Theory. The theory elements have to be well delivered, and more simply presented. The principles of inclusion require a concise introduction and summary, and some discussion.

Practical Elements and Equipment. The practical elements of this introductory workshop need more time – and the students are keen to see that. Adapted equipment needs to be more available in schools. There is a need for adapting more mainstream sports across the physical education spectrum.

Range of Disabilities. In follow-up workshops, there was a demand to cover issues across the range of all types of disabilities, with some emphasis on autism.

Recommendations

In the context of substantial praise by the students for both the content of the workshop and the quality of teaching, the following recommendations are identified:

- 1 The practical elements of the content need to be given more focus and time.
- 2 Pre-workshop materials relating to the theory of inclusion and its principles should be reviewed and made available to participants, both online and prior to the practical workshop delivery.
- 3 This introductory workshop for physical education students should continue to focus on the practical elements that require time, supportive resources including online, and adapting mainstream sports and activities.
- 4 Whilst many schools and communities have reasonable levels of equipment for disabled pupils, the knowledge of how to use them effectively is vital. The practical element of the workshop should ensure that they are taught as comprehensively as possible within time constraints.
- 5 Autism needs to be covered more fully in the current workshop so that the students are introduced to this area and its implications.
- 6 All of the three suggestions from Scottish Disability Sport – strongly supported by the students – should be included in follow-up workshops across the broad range of disabilities. These are: a question and answer session with a disabled athlete; a discussion with disabled pupils; and real-life scenarios of how to integrate pupils with different disabilities into the physical education class.