

## **Research Space**

Journal article

**ADAPT model: Positioning inclusion at the heart of physical education, sport and physical activity**

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## ADAPT model

### *Positioning inclusion at the heart of physical education, sport and physical activity.*

*Tom Tsangarides and Kristy Howells*

#### **Introduction**

11% of children according to the Activity Alliance (2023) are disabled. They also highlighted earlier in 2020, that disabled children are less active than non-disabled children, (30% compared to 21%), only a third therefore of disabled children are taking part in 30 minutes or less of physical activity a day, yet Chief Medical Officers [CMO] (2022) suggested 20 minutes of daily physical activity for young children with disabilities. This means a third of children and young people are currently being left behind from a health perspective and this needs to change. The CMO (2022) also emphasised that for our children and young people with disabilities physical activity is important on a daily basis as it supports their social skill development, as well as supports in building confidence and concentration, as well as helping to gain a sense of achievement and improving mental health.

The Youth Sport Trust in their 2020 post COVID guidance for helping children and young people with SEND recommended that non-complex repetitive activities should be used to help develop routines and enhance motor skills. Howells (2021) emphasised the importance of music and dance to motivate children with SEND to be physically active, as well as support from using teaching assistants in all lessons, including PE to help manage effective communication patterns as well as emotions when teaching takes place outside of the often seen 'safe' classroom. However, not everyone is fully confident in supporting all children, yet PE is the only subject which is movement focused and has the potential to be a 'connective catalyst' (Jess et al. 2024) to inspire and motivate our children and young people. The need for aid with including all, is also identified in the recent Ofsted Physical Education subject review report (Ofsted, 2023). This highlighted that although some schools, despite positive attitudes to inclusion and high expectations of pupils with SEND, staff did not always have subject and pedagogical content knowledge to adapt their teaching to support all pupils to achieve ambitious end points. They also noted there was a difference in the understanding of inclusion between trained teachers and unqualified teachers and the call for a need of additional training.

The purpose of this article is in a way to offer a form of continuous professional development, by challenging current pedagogical strategies and perhaps trying a new innovative way to re-examine how we can support children within all aspects of school sport and beyond to help support all deliverers of physical education, sport and physical activity. Inclusive Sport, founder and director Tom Tsangarides has developed a new model that places inclusion at the heart of physical education, sport and physical activity. What is offered below is not only the model itself but ways in which your own teaching and coaching could be supported through this model to support life-long and life-wide participation, as this pedagogical model is a strategy for all.

The adapt model reconceptualises the traditional STEP or STTEP model and uses considerations and prompt questions for those who are teaching and planning and offers justification for each of the aspect of the model (see figure 1). There are 5 areas to consider when planning. Each of which will be unpacked and ideas shared as to what should be considered within each aspect.

A – activity

D – differentiation

A – area

P – personalities

T – tools.

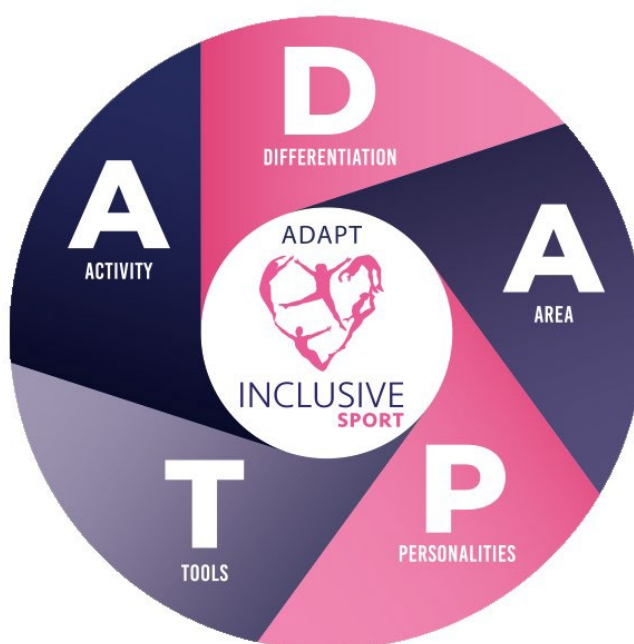


Figure 1 – ADAPT model designed and developed by Inclusive Sport.

### **Activity**

The purpose of focusing on the activity within the model, is to ensure that the activity is designed to accommodate the needs, abilities and background of all learners using understanding of the needs, abilities and backgrounds to maximise enjoyment and participation. The following prompt questions are offered as ways to think about the activity:

- What is the intended outcome of the activity?
- Will the activity/activities be suitable for all abilities, needs and backgrounds?
- Will the activity be an open one?
- Will the activity be modified?
- Will there be a parallel activity?
- Will there be a specific activity for some children?

- Is the activity engaging?
- Does the activity have scope for adaptation?

The following ways are adapted pragmatics for the activity, these are shared as illustrative ways to adapt to your learners' needs:

1. Offer a selection of activities to cover a wide range of needs and abilities.
2. Allow all participants to experience all the different activities.
3. Offer tailored outcomes based on the ability and needs of the participants.
4. Offer a core activity complimented with either a modified, parallel or a specific activity.
5. Use an outcome based on attitudes and behaviours rather than performance.
6. Break down more complex skills to allow participants to develop at a manageable pace.

### **Differentiation**

The purpose of focusing on differentiation within the model, is to ensure that the activities can be modified to cater for the range of needs, abilities or backgrounds, this is an evolving and dynamic modification of activities to cater for an array of needs, abilities and backgrounds.

The following prompt questions are offered as ways to think about the differentiation:

- How will you adapt the activities to cater for all abilities and needs?
- Will you differentiate by changing or adding an activity?
- Will you differentiate by offering additional support?
- Will you differentiate by providing additional equipment or resources?
- Will you differentiate by tailoring your expectations?
- Will you use passive or active adaptations?
- Are you differentiating based on skill development, engagement, or social/emotional development?

When you're thinking about adapting differentiation, you will need to decide on what your intended outcome of the activity is and then consider how you will differentiate to best achieve it, as there are multiple ways in which you could differentiate.

Here are some examples:

- Intended Outcome- Skill development

*Differentiating the activity by changing, modifying or adding a parallel activity.*

- Intended Outcome – Engagement

*Differentiating the activity by tailoring your expectations*

- Intended Outcome – Social/emotional development

*Differentiating the activity using additional support such as support staff.*

- Intended Outcome – Physical Inclusion

*Use additional equipment and resources tailored to the participant as an ongoing differentiation strategy.*

- Intended Outcome – Self esteem

*Passive or active differentiation?*

Consider whether the participants will benefit from knowing that an activity has been adapted for them and the impact on the self-esteem and confidence.

## **Area**

The purpose of focusing on area within the model, is to ensure that the area is an accessible environment with the potential to adapt the learning and working areas within the session / lesson. All environmental factors and affordances need to be considered ensuring the location and setting is flexible, adaptive and suitable for all learners.

The following prompt questions are offered as ways to think about the area:

- Is the environment accessible for all needs, abilities, and backgrounds?
- Is the activity indoors or outdoors?
- Can the space be adapted to maximise engagement?
- How many activities will you have in the area?
- Is the environment clear and tidy with the equipment easily accessible?
- How does the environment feel and sound?
- What are the sensory needs of your group?

There are two elements to consider when deciding on the area you are going to use and how you will use it. The first is the general area you decide to use such as hall, playground or studio and the second is the way you will use the area during the activity. Here are some points to consider for both elements:

General Area and Environment:

- Ensure the area is clear and tidy to minimise distractions.
- Ensure the lighting, acoustics and temperature of the room considers the sensory needs of your group.
- Can you post on the wall sensory aids such as visual timetables within the lesson or social stories for children to follow within the lesson?
- If the room is used for other activities such as assemblies or lunchtime it would be helpful to clarify the expectations of how you will be using the area for a PE lesson

Adapting the area during the session:

- Use a smaller or larger area depending on whether you are adding challenge or making an activity more accessible.
- Use coloured/marked areas to ease understanding of activity.
- Use different areas for modified, parallel or specific activities.

- Create a self-regulation area to support behavioural, emotional and social development.

## **Personalities**

The purpose of focusing on personalities within the model, is to ensure that the learners and those who are supporting them are grouped effectively. It is important to understand cohesion and group dynamics between learners and learners as well as deliverers and learners to facilitate enjoyment and engagement to create meaningful and positive interactions. The following prompt questions are offered as ways to think about personalities:

- Are participants grouped on ability, needs or backgrounds?
- How are supporting adults utilized?
- Are you using the strengths of your support staff effectively?
- What are the interests of the children in your group?
- Are the participants grouped based on ability?
- Are you using mixed ability groups, if so why? How are you using them to allow for peer-to-peer support?
- What are your none-doers doing within the lesson, can you provide them with a role, so they can continue to be educated within the PE lesson?

To adapt a session considering the personalities of the group both from learner to learner as well as including the staff leading the lesson will really help. Understanding the personalities of staff and their existing relationships with the children will allow you to utilise them in the most effective manner. Can you put on the act of Mr / Mrs Motivator and be the most passionate about the PE lesson as possible? Can you use your knowledge of the children to help hook them into the lesson? The personality of the learners is important to consider, do you have different interests and behaviours within the group? Can you offer activities that will be engaging? When considering groupings, you need to consider what will happen when you combine particular personalities, can you balance the group and balance the need to maintain social groups alongside any potential disruption.

Here are some examples of how you can utilise personalities during your activity:

- Use the relationship of support staff to support children who may be struggling
- Use friendships in the group to act as mentors and buddies.
- Group children based on their ability and needs.
- Group children based on their interest and behaviours.
- Use confident children to act as role models during activities.
- Use mixed ability groups to facilitate peer to peer support.

## Tools

The purpose of focusing on personalities within the model, is to utilise not only inclusive adapted resources, but also to remember the importance of communication skills and how high quality, bespoke equipment may be needed for the learners. By integrating the use of inclusive equipment and resources with a range of effective communication, from voice, to Makaton, to visual aids, to social stories this will allow for a wider participation and increased enjoyment levels.

The following prompt questions are offered as ways to think about tools:

- Is your equipment accessible and inclusive for all needs and abilities?
- How can you adjust equipment to maximise engagement?
- How do you communicate with participants?
- What is the role of your support staff?
- Do you need communication resources?
- Can you use videos and visual cards?
- How will you use your voice and body language?
- How can you use other participants in the group to act as role models?

To adapt your activity there are variety of tools you can use ranging from equipment and resources to yourself and others. The more tools you have on your toolbelt the more ways you will be able to adapt a session. Here are some examples to consider:

- Use modified equipment.
- Use visuals cards and videos to show techniques, playing areas and examples of the sport in action
- Use visual cards for those who need visual timetable of activities within the lesson or if social stories will also help and support the learning.
- Use pictures/photos/emojis/Makaton/non-verbal symbols to support communication for all.
- Use your tone of voice and body language as well as positioning of self for those who need to see your lips move.
- Use support staff / teaching assistants (or confident learners) to help model, lead parallel activities or helicopter to support with enjoyment and participation.

Howells and Sammon in the last edition of Physical Education Matters (Autumn 2023) raised the importance of 'why, how and what' to inspire change. In this article again we have emphasised the importance of why, how and what but from a teaching / coaching perspective. Within the above we have identified the 5 key areas that can be used to support all your children, including those with SEND in particular, within PE, sport and physical activity. This model is not just limited to PE lessons, but can be used within after school extra-curricular clubs and within physical activity sessions within playtimes and lunchtimes. We have offered a pragmatic practical application of help to fulfil the

purpose of getting more children and young people active. There is a large gap of children and young people with disabilities who are not accessing movement opportunities when they are wanting too. In terms of applying the Inclusive Sport ADAPT model, the questions and considerations as offered as ways to implement and potentially change your practice, and we encourage you to engage in the questions offered as pause for thought moments when you plan sessions and lessons. If you wish further support with your own or your school / coaching company's continuous school development through the ADAPT model, please contact Tom at Inclusive Sport - <https://www.inclusivesport.net/>

### **Author Bios**

Tom Tsangarides is the Founder and Director of Inclusive Sport - <https://www.inclusivesport.net/>

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