



The **Inclusion** Club

What Is **Inclusion?**

in sport and physical activity
for People with Disability



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This e-book has been written and produced by Peter Downs and Ken Black for The Inclusion Club.

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WHAT IS INCLUSION?

In this book we are going to explore the concept of ‘inclusion’ related to the provision of opportunities in sport and physical activity for people with disability.

Over the years the term ‘inclusion’ has been used across governments world wide to describe practices that ‘include’, or at least attempt to include, all people regardless of ability, race, culture, age, gender and a variety of other characteristics that are often regarded as being ‘disadvantaged’ when it comes to gaining access to regular services, including sport.

Taken in isolation the term itself is simple enough to understand. Wikipedia, the font of all knowledge in 2012, describes it from a disability rights perspective:

Inclusion is a term used by people with disabilities and other disability rights advocates for the idea that all people should freely, openly and without pity accommodate any person with a disability without restrictions or limitations of any kind.

Inclusion has certainly been used in relation to sport for some time and has superseded terms such as mainstreaming and integration in recent years. We are not going to define the word inclusion here or get stuck on semantics.

It's only when you start to discuss and probe a bit deeper into how inclusion works that you discover it can be quite complex. It becomes complex because it involves things like attitudes, technical skills, ideas of equal opportunity and human rights.

In *What is Inclusion?* we are simply going to explore what inclusion in sport means in a practical way by asking four very experienced and knowledgeable people. We are sure they may not like being called 'world experts' but, between us, they are!

This book is divided into four chapters. Each chapter is a transcript of an interview conducted with each of our four experts. There is a short biography of each expert at the start of their chapter, so you'll know a little about their background and experience.

The chapters are direct transcripts of the interviews with a few grammatical improvements here and there. We have not changed the content or tried to make these perfect English.

Our hope is that these interviews stimulate your thoughts and help your understanding of inclusion in sport and physical activity for people with disability. We'd like to say a big thanks to our contributors to this book - Martin, Eli, Steffi and Hamish. Please continue to make a dent in the world.

This is an Inclusion Club production. If you are not a member of The Inclusion Club you can join for free by simply going to our website at <http://theinclusionclub.com>. The Inclusion Club is all about sharing best practice in sport, physical activity and disability. We'd love to have you on board. Enjoy.

Peter Downs and Ken Black

Directors and Founders of The Inclusion Club

MARTIN MANSELL



Martin Mansell has been involved in disability sport since 1975. First as a competitor with 2 Paralympic Games, two World, two European championships and 15 other international competitions (last games 1998 Seoul, 1 gold 2 silver 1 bronze, swimming) and later as a coach. In 1990, as a result of the sports minister's report Building on Ability which was an outcome from the 1988 Seoul Paralympic Games, he was appointed as one of the first professional Sports Development Officers for People with Disabilities within a Local Education Authority in England.

In 1989 he was elected Chairperson of the British Paralympic Association Athletes' Committee and later as Chairperson of the International Paralympic Committee Athletes' Commission and was a Director of the British Paralympic Association till January 2005 when he stood down. He has been working with Paralympics GB on their work on their Schools Education program called Ability v Ability. He also works for a number of organizations and in 1998 set up MJM Associates as advisers on disability sport. He works with organizations such as the Youth Sport Trust, Paralympics GB, English Federation of Disability Sports and NASUWT as a

consultant to name just a few. In addition to this he has been involved in a number of other projects such as Floatsation (www.floatsation.com) that is now one of his companies as well as working in a self-employed capacity.

PETER

In a broad sense what do you understand by inclusion?

MARTIN

I think in a very broad sense Peter, we are looking at making sure that people with disabilities have equal opportunity to take part in sport, physical activity and physical education – or whatever environment people chose to do it in. I think that historically we tend to think of inclusion as sport that is done by the disabled alongside the non-disabled people, but that in reality it's about creating the opportunity to do whatever people choose and where they feel the most comfortable participating – and whatever level they choose.

PETER

Does that include then disability specific type activities?

MARTIN

I think it would, yes. We can look at disability sport in two ways. We can look at it as a sport that is played only by disabled people or we can look at disability sport as just a form of sport that is played by disabled and non-

disabled. But I think that historically we have this issue about non-disabled people looking at disability sport as only sports for disabled people and therefore it excludes them. So you've almost got a concept of reverse exclusion in a way.

I think the time is now that we can allow those individuals, whoever they are, to take up sports such as boccia, goalball, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, sitting volleyball – it doesn't matter. The real issue is what the competition structure allows. So as an example of that I would advocate that hypothetically, to compete in the Paralympic Games or a Disabled World Championships you have to have a disability in the same way as if you want to compete in the under 15's championships and you are 16, therefore you are not eligible.

PETER

What about have parallel activities for example, in PE lessons having separate sessions for children with disabilities. Is that still inclusion?

MARTIN

I think some people would see it as not being inclusion. They might see it as not being with their other peers therefore it is not inclusive. But I think inclusion is more about how you plan and structure the lesson and I think if you want to segregate – for want of a better word – children with disabilities in a PE lesson to facilitate skill development then I think that's fine – whether they are disabled or non-disabled kids.

The real issue is whether you bring them back together socially within that lesson so they have the opportunity to exchange and interact with their peers. So yes, if a kid with a particular disability or a kid with a coordination or obesity issue is struggling then why not take that kid aside and spend some time with them on an individual basis as you would in a coaching environment.

PETER

What would you say then to people who would say that it is separation and the best choice for people with disability is to be with people who do not have a disability.

MARTIN

Maybe we have become a society then, that says 'is inclusion for everyone, not just for some disabled people' and therefore we've either always been inclusive or we have never really been inclusive because working with non-disabled people we segregate them out as well by their height, their sex, their age and, in some cases, their skills – so we segregate them out to try to get the best out of them – that's how I would look at it.

PETER

So does it come down to what is the best choice for an individual?

MARTIN

I think it does come down to that. I've always had a concept in my mind that inclusion – if there is such a thing – is about facilitating educated choice. Now, some people will say 'what is educated choice' and I'd say its about making sure that individuals are able to experience the options available. If we are professionals looking at it, our role to be inclusive is to facilitate what that

individual wants based on their educated choice and experience.

PETER

Being ‘educated’ for some people might mean being able to adapt and modify activities so that you can include people with disabilities. How far do you think we can go in terms of adapting and modifying activities?

Sometimes there’s a fine line between adapting and modifying and offering the best choice for people. So how far can we go in adapting and modifying?

MARTIN

I think we need to go as far as we possibly can to modify and adapt an activity as long as it still represents the original activity itself. What we don’t want to do is start modifying an activity that becomes so far removed from the original game or concept that it no longer has any relationship to that activity. You don’t want to modify a football game by bringing in a rugby ball and changing the rules so that you run with the ball instead of kick it.

You have to ask the question ‘why does the individual want to play football?’ Probably because they are

stimulated by the media, they are influenced by the superstars of the world. We've all got role models in our lives. We take up sport because we want to be like our role models. If we change that sport to something that no longer represents it, then you lose the motivation to take up the activity. It's no longer got a relationship to what I'm seeing on the television.

PETER

When it gets to the point where it affects the integrity of the activity for the whole group, that's where it actually breaks down, isn't it?

MARTIN

It does. I think you've hit on two very important points there. One is that the integrity of the activity itself is important and also the integrity of the whole group as a team sport. I think if it's an individual sport, like athletics or swimming, it can be a little easier. And it makes adapting a little more comfortable. I think with team sports there are some larger challenges.

PETER

Martin, I want to ask you about medical and social models. Do you think a conversation around medical and social models is still relevant in terms of inclusion?

MARTIN

No. In a word. We still hang our hats on making the differential between a medical and social model. You've got the stuff that Ken Black and Pamela Stephenson have done around the Inclusion Spectrum and the original Winnick model – so we have those models of inclusion which are good. I think these models are relevant in a social application of disability and sociology.

But I think when it comes to physical activity I think we need to take the best of both worlds and look at what I would call a 'functional' model, rather than a social or medical model. I've done some work over the last couple of years in trying to draft up a functional/sports model with a couple of colleagues in the United States. We have not yet finished and it seems like a long slog to get there. This will be a combination of the social models philosophy and the medical models stance and brings them together for a functional outcome.

PETER

Yes, its interesting whether a social/medical mindset is significant these days or whether it is more advantageous to talk about a functional model in the way that you explain. Do you think its just more of a progressive way to say the same things?

MARTIN

I think so. You know, I've talked to my coach over many years about how he perceived me when he coached me. His approach was always that he didn't know anything about disability and he didn't know anything about the social and medical model. All he knew about was swimming coaching. And what he advocated was that he looked only at what I could do as opposed to what I couldn't do. And he worked with me as an individual on that basis.

The analysis of that is, that this is him working only on a functional basis with me or any other swimmer that was in the pool.

PETER

Did you ever come across other coaches though that thought 'I couldn't coach Martin because he has a disability'?

MARTIN

In the early days, yes. I think the issue though there, is that someone like myself and other Paralympic athletes who get to a certain stage of development and semi elitism – they are dead easy to work with because all the hard work has already been done. It's the ones at the base level that are starting out. If you look at some of the top athletes in the world I think what we need to do is draw an analogy between who they were when they were 6 or 7 years old to who they became.

We all look at some of the top disabled athletes and think they should be dead easy to coach, but if you had seen them when they were only 6 years old then would your response be "I don't know anything about disabilities so I can't coach them!"

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