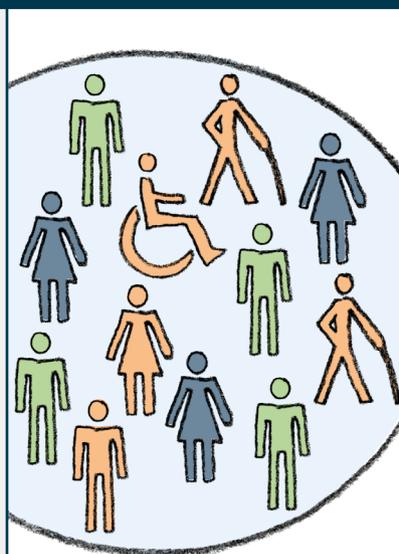
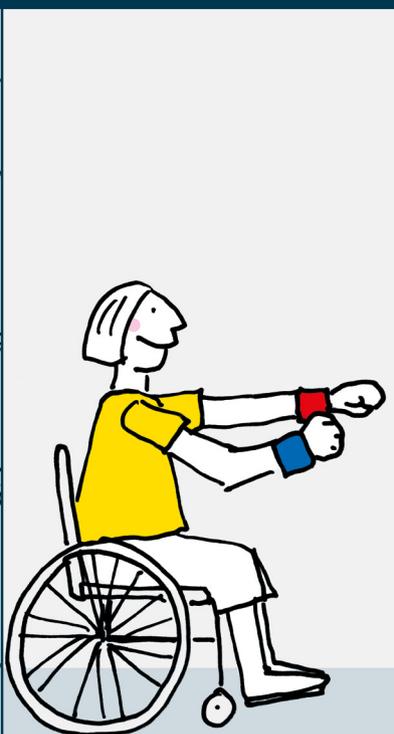
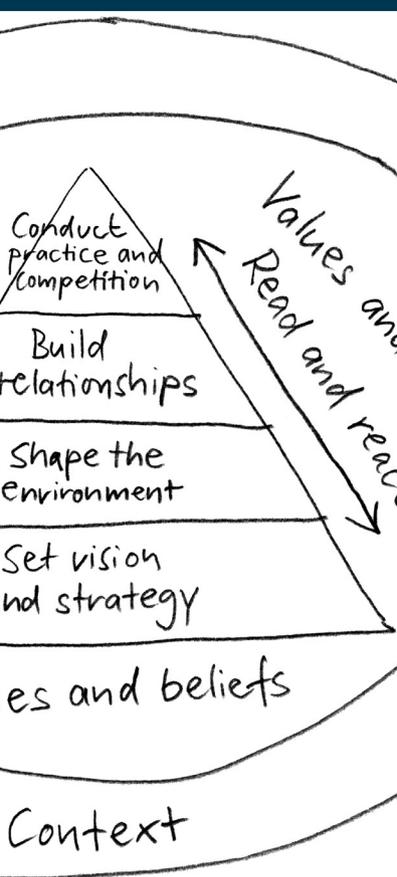
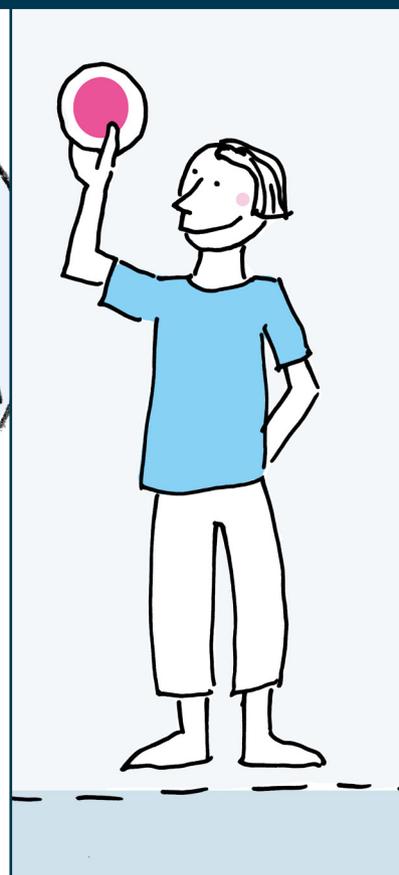


Participation, Recreation and Inclusion through Martial Arts Education

A Practical Guide for Coaches



... and:
MAKE IT FUN!



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



PRIME
Participation, Recreation and Inclusion through Martial Arts Education

Contents

What is PRIME?	5
What is coaching and why does it matter?	7
Introduction 7 / Coaching Matters 7 / What is coaching? 8 / A student-centred vision 8 / Coaching outcomes 9 / What do coaches do? 10 / Code of conduct – The responsible coach 14 / Summary 16	
What are the basics of coaching?	17
Introduction 17 / Giving instructions 17 / Explanations 18 / Demonstrations 19 / Presenting demonstrations 19 / Questioning 21 / Safe practices 23 / Summary 24	
Strategies to improve your coaching	25
Introduction 25 / Aims 25 / Planning 26 / Style 28 / Observation 30 / Feedback 30 / Learning 33 / Summary 34	
What are the martial arts and why do they matter?	35
Introduction 35 / The martial arts 35 / Benefits of the martial arts 37 / Summary 41	
What should I know about inclusion?	42
Introduction 42 / Models of disability 42 / Language 45 / Fostering participation through inclusive policies – A Pathway to Diversity 46 / An approach to inclusive coaching 47 / How do we start inclusivizing? 49 / The STEP model 52 / Using games 59 / Summary 60	
What are inclusive martial arts and why do they matter?	61
Introduction 61 / The Way – Continuous development 62 / The Way – Inclusion 62 / The Way – A traditional but ever-changing martial art 62 / Summary 64	
Including women and girls with disabilities	65
Introduction 65 / Women and girls with disabilities 65 / Article 6 – Women with disabilities 68 / Summary 68	

Improving inclusive coaching?	69
Introduction 69 / Coaching qualities 69 / Retaining your students 70 / Summary 75	
Practical ideas for inclusive martial arts	76
10 tips 76 / Communication 77 / Engaging participants – Good marketing 77 / Summary 79	
Disability awareness	80
Introduction 80 / Disabilities 80 / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) 81 / Amputation(s) 82 / Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 83 / Brain injuries 86 / Epilepsy 88 / Growth disabilities 90 / Hearing Impairment (HI) 91 / Intellectual disabilities 93 / Learning Disabilities (LD) 95 / Visual Impairments (VI) 96 / Wheelchair dependency 98 / Summary 100	



What is PRIME?

PRIME – Participation, Recreation and Inclusion through Martial Arts Education – is a unique venture co-funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme of the European Union. Its function is to develop a high-quality coaching framework to support the promotion of healthy martial arts participation among people with disabilities in Europe. This framework is the first of its kind and is written within the context of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and similar international standards like the European Sport Coaching Framework.

The martial arts are an unusually diverse and adaptable group of movement and sport forms, offering popular contexts for engaging and supporting the healthy development of people with disabilities. In addition, martial arts can introduce through this framework a range of self-defence learning experiences and – in the light of evidence that people with disabilities in Europe are often targets for violent crimes including domestic violence, homicide, assault, rape, and robbery – these experiences will also make important contributions to participants' confidence, safety and well-being.

So, the **objectives** of PRIME and this coaching framework are:

- to promote inclusion and easier access to martial arts for people with disabilities;
- to increase confidence, physical competence and physical activity levels among people with disabilities in Europe by fostering high quality coach education in the martial arts;
- to bring martial arts coaching accreditation in line with international best practice standards.

The **motivation** behind the objectives is:

- to support the dissemination and application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which are all concerned with developing policies and events to support the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity;
- to develop the basis for a first comparable EQF-compatible framework for martial arts coaching education and accreditation;
- to offer a popular context for engaging and supporting the healthy development of people with disabilities;

- to increase access to self-defence for people with disabilities by training in martial arts to react to violent crimes, including domestic violence, homicide, assault, rape, and robbery;
- to support the following Sustainable Development Goals:



The **content** for the framework was developed through:

- qualitative data gathering and analysis, desk reviews and examination of existing learning material; identification of motivations and opportunities for participation and barriers to it; consolidation of existing evidence, qualifications and coaching education frameworks; production of good practice reports; framework development;
- piloting with national and international martial arts organisations and coaches;
- display of resources for coaches and others on a designated website in addition to the framework.

The PRIME partnership brought together a unique consortium of organisations from different EU Member States. In addition to four groups at the forefront of inclusive practices in the martial arts (namely the Ikkaido, the Association of Wado Karate Do Kai Shin Gi Tai Italy, the International Taekwondo Federation and Hayashi Karatecenter e.V.) the partnership included the International Council for Coaching Excellence; the UNESCO Chair in Transforming the Lives of People with Disabilities, their Families and Communities, through Physical Education, Sport, Recreation and Fitness at Tralee Institute of Technology, Ireland; The Association For International Sport for All; and, as project manager, the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education. All partners gave their knowledge, input and support to pull together this unique framework. The Project was strongly supported by The Inclusion Club and the Lydia Zijdel Foundation, International Aikido Federation.

Mastery is the art of setting your foot on the path.

George Leonard

What is coaching and why does it matter?

*Success comes from knowing that you did your best
to become the best that you are capable of becoming.*

John Wooden

► Introduction

There are many names for someone who leads a club or session – teacher, instructor, master, sifu, sensei, sabom, and so on. In this document, we talk about the ‘coach’ because it is the term that is most widely understood, and connects most readily with other activities.

Quality coaching is the most important factor for successful participation in the martial arts, whether in competition or lifelong engagement. The vision of coaching introduced in this document is student-centred, by which we mean a strong interest in and commitment to providing a positive martial arts experience and promoting welfare for all students. There are many possible outcomes of coaching, the most important of which include physical skills, improved mental and physical well-being, personal competences, empowerment and life experience. There are a number of objectives and roles in coaching, based on a code of conduct and affirming a commitment to responsibility, trust, respect, professionalism, safety, honesty and equity. Nevertheless, they are all centred on providing a high quality, positive experience for each individual student, and to ensure success.

► Coaching Matters

Coaches play a central role in promoting martial arts participation and enhancing the learning and development of students and clubs. In addition to sharing the martial arts, coaches contribute to the development of students as people, teams as cohesive units and communities with a shared interest. Coaching can also contribute to social aims by promoting activity and health; coalescing citizens behind a common cause; and generating economic activity through employment, education, purchase of equipment, use of facilities and attendance at events.

Coaches work with increasingly diverse populations and often face increasing demands from students, students' parents, administrators and fans. Even in voluntary positions, coaches are required to fulfil a variety of roles that may include educator, guide, psychologist and business manager. At higher levels of competition, coaches are asked to emphasise positive interaction and overall development of students rather than simply winning. All these factors make coaching both more exciting and more challenging than ever before.

► **What is coaching?**

The PRIME Coaching Framework embraces the definition of coaching provided in the International and European Sport Coaching Frameworks:

Coaching is a process of guided improvement and development in a single sport and at identifiable stages of development.

This definition emphasises the on-going nurturing and educational support by coaches of participants, and the notable signs of progress expected as a result of that experience. Coaches must recognise, however, that the needs and goals of students vary across the different activities and participant development stages.

► **A student-centred vision**

This framework advocates a student-centred vision of coaching. Coaches face many distractions and pressures that can affect their practice and impact. By having a clear focus, they are able to direct their attention and energy appropriately towards meeting the needs of their students, optimise their well-being, and improve their performance in specific martial arts contexts. A prerequisite of coaching should, therefore, be a strong interest in and commitment to the positive experience and development of each student. Research has shown that successful coaches operate from a coherent and robust set of values and beliefs, anchored in a genuine desire to do well for others, which provides them with a reference point which facilitates ethical decision-making.

The premise of a student-centred approach is to respect and protect the integrity and individuality of those with whom coaches work. Thus, every coach should adhere to a code of conduct preventing violence, including sexual violence, against their students and use this code of conduct to safeguard everyone within their martial arts school and organisation.

To achieve a truly student-centred approach, a coach's philosophy, knowledge and capabilities need to reflect and match the changing needs of participants and students at different stages of their engagement in martial arts. Coaching education must therefore take into account the different groups with whom coaches work. This is likely to entail the provision of specialist training in how to fulfil the needs of participants in any specific group. Coaches must continually improve and expand their capability. The organisations that employ them owe it to coaches to ensure they have sufficient educational footing, philosophical orientation and resources to fulfil the duties expected of them.

► Coaching outcomes

The outcomes associated with effective martial arts coaching can be grouped into three main categories:



- **Martial arts competences:** physical, technical, tactical and cognitive capabilities required to take part at different levels. These competences form the traditional core business of the mar-

tial arts and occur within the context where participants strive for and deal with the consequences of training;

- **Personal competences:** capabilities that relate to the development of the whole person and which may be supported/developed through participation in martial arts. These can be grouped into self-development, cognitive, emotional, moral, and social outcomes;
- **Life experience:** the personal life experiences lived through martial arts which may positively contribute to the individual life course of the participant (for example, the adoption of a healthy lifestyle; the development of a strong personal and professional network of contacts; a professional career as a player and/or coach; or a disposition to give back to the community).

► What do coaches do?

The variety of objectives and the number of factors that impact on coaching make it a complex and challenging activity. Coaching entails a series of functions and related tasks that, if effectively and consistently executed, can make it not only a doable and effective job, but a rewarding one as well.

Both the International and the European Sport Coaching Frameworks specify six primary functions for guiding student development and improvement. These essentially define the daily work of the coach. It is interesting to consider how these functions translate into the martial arts context.

1. Set the vision and strategy. The coach, in partnership with students, creates a vision and a strategy based on the needs and stage of development of the students and the organisational and social context of the programme. The coach develops a specific plan outlining the steps required to bring the strategy to life and realise the vision.

Questions for the martial arts coach:

- What is your vision for your students and your club?
- What steps will you take to make it happen?

2. Shape the environment. The coach works with a group of students and takes responsibility for both common and individual objectives as well as those of the institution. In order to do so, the coach seeks to optimise the environment in which the programme occurs, through the

procurement and maximisation of personnel, facilities, resources, working practices and the management of other coaches and support personnel.

Questions for the martial arts coach:

- What does an optimal environment – the physical space, the social atmosphere, the learning climate – look and feel like?
- How can you enlist the cooperation of your students and other coaches in realising this goal?

3. Build relationships. The coach builds positive and effective relationships with students and others associated with the programme. This includes personnel at the club, school, federation and other levels. The coach is responsible for engaging in, contributing to and influencing the organisational context through the creation of respectful and effective working relationships with those to whom s/he is accountable.

Relationships may also be built with parents or carers in the case of children or young people with disabilities. Relationships may need to be developed with medical staff who can provide key information or assist in the *management* of injury. Relationships with other professionals such as a nutritionist, strength and conditioning coach or psychologist may also be important in helping students to achieve. Such relationships should be professional, positive and based on fairness, honesty and trust, with clear boundaries in order to safeguard all participants. The coach should encourage everyone to champion the rights of others to encourage fairness, equality and diversity in martial arts.

Questions for the martial arts coach:

- Are there particular considerations you should take into account when working with people with disabilities?
- How can you ensure that coach-student relationships respect clear boundaries?

4. Conduct practices and prepare and manage competitions. The coach organises suitable and challenging practices using effective pedagogy and methodology to promote learning and improvement. The coach may also prepare supplementary training and development opportu-

nities such as workshops, seminars, joint-club-sessions and, competitions. The coach creates additional relevant internal and external competitive opportunities where appropriate, to promote individual and team development.

Questions for the martial arts coach:

- In what ways can you broaden your coaching skills to ensure suitable and challenging practices for all students?
- How can clubs or students who are not interested in competition promote individual and team development?

5. Read and react to the field. The coach observes and responds to events appropriately, including all on- and off-field matters. Effective decision-making is essential to fulfil this function and is a cross-cutting capability that should be developed in all coaches at each stage of their development.

Questions for the martial arts coach:

- How do you balance the coaching/non-coaching demands on your time and energy?
- In what ways can you ensure your decision-making really is effective?

6. Reflect and learn. The coach evaluates and seeks improvements, not only in the programme as a whole, but also in each practice. In addition, personal evaluation and reflection underpin a process of ongoing learning and professional development. An important element of this process is the coach's efforts to support the education and development of other coaches.

Questions for the martial arts coach:

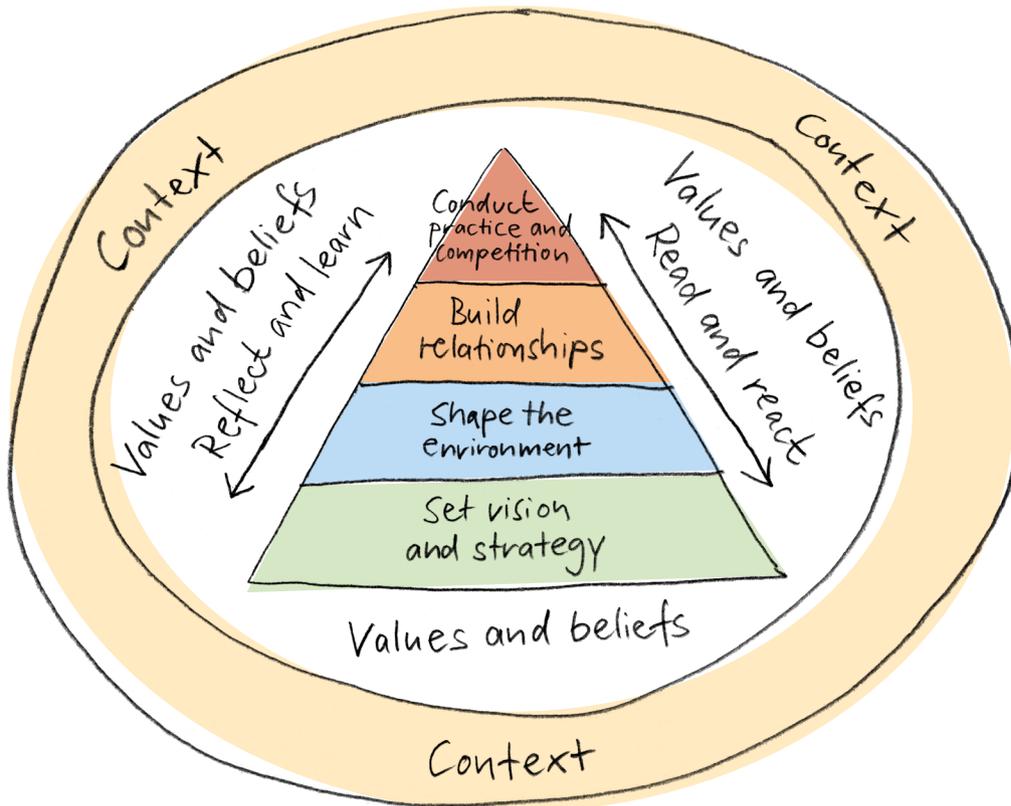
- Do you reflect on and evaluate your coaching and how it influences the development of your students?
- Do you encourage reflection and evaluation among your students?

These primary functions are interrelated, interdependent and occur within a cyclical process of continuous improvement that includes planning, implementation, review and adjustment. The essential role of a clear and robust set of values and beliefs cannot be overemphasised, along

with a sound vision and strategy informed by the objectives of students and the organisational and institutional context.

Coach students to move through martial arts and they will throw off their chains.

Ray Sweeney



The primary functions of the coach
(reproduced from European Sport Coaching Framework)

These primary functions describe how coaches accomplish their aims in general terms. There may be substantial variations depending on the nature of specific coaching roles and circumstances. Experienced coaches are typically more engaged in all of the functions than early-stage coaches. However, all coaches should be aware of these primary functions, regardless of experience, and strive to fulfil them. In doing so, coaches demonstrate task-related competence. Coaching qualifications and development opportunities should go beyond the acquisition of knowledge and foster its integration and application to effectively develop this competence.

► **Code of conduct – The responsible coach**

As defined by the Collins Dictionary, the code of conduct for a group or organisation is an agreement on rules of behaviour for members of that group or organisation. In coaching it affirms a coach's commitment to responsibility, trust, respect, professionalism, safety, honesty, and equity. Such a code also affirms the appropriate standards for which a coach and her/his club stands. In the majority of cases, codes of conduct cover similar topics but may differ in wording and length.

It is worth investing some time in developing an appropriate code for yourself, your fellow coaches, and the members of your club. Important topics might include:

- **Human rights:** e.g. to respect and champion the rights and worth of every person regardless of age, sex or gender, ability, cultural background, sexual orientation or religion, and to treat each person as an individual;
- **Welfare and safety:** e.g. to place the importance of welfare and safety above performance level or skill, and to ensure that the practice area is always safe, secure, and welcoming to all;
- **Appropriate behaviour:** e.g. to adopt appropriate and responsible behaviour in all interactions, and in relation to alcohol, drugs and doping;
- **Spirit of the martial arts:** e.g. to operate within the spirit of your martial art, promoting friendship, respect, etc.; to act with integrity and objectivity, accept responsibility for your decisions and actions, and ensure your decisions and actions contribute to a harassment free environment; not to tolerate harmful or abusive behaviours;
- **Competition:** e.g. to respect the decisions of officials, coaches and administrators in the conduct of the martial art;

- **Boundaries:** e.g. to maintain a clear boundary between friendship and intimacy with athletes and not to conduct inappropriate relationships with them; to act with dignity, courtesy and good manners towards others; to avoid swearing and abusive language and behaviour that is dangerous to yourself or others, including bullying, harassment and sexual abuse;
- **Appropriateness:** e.g. to ensure that activities you direct or guide are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of each individual athlete.

As an example, here is the code of conduct from IKKAIDO:

Code of conduct

Ikkaido is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all its members, ensuring a positive and enjoyable experience for all. We believe that it is important that members, coaches, administrators and parents associated with the club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others. Therefore, members are encouraged to be open at all times and to share any concerns or complaints that they may have about any aspect of the club with their Coach or the Welfare Officer.

As a member of Ikkaido, you are expected to abide by the following Code of Practice:

All members must take responsibility in ensuring they are up to date with the rules and understand and adhere to them.

All members must respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity.

Members should recognise the valuable contribution made by coaches and officials who are usually volunteers. They give their time and resources to provide martial arts for you.

All members must respect officials and publicly accept their decisions.

All members should be positive role models, treat other students and officials with the same level of respect as they would expect to be shown to them.

Members should use correct and proper language at all times.

Members are not allowed to smoke, consume alcohol or drugs on club premises or whilst representing the club.

Members should keep to agreed timings for training and competitions or inform their coach if they are going to be late.

Members must wear suitable kit for training and competitions, as agreed with the coach.

Members must pay any fees for training or events promptly.

Bullying of any sort will not be tolerated.

Encourage everyone to enjoy martial arts and understand that people have different motivations for taking part.

► **Summary**

- Quality coaching is fundamental to positive martial arts experiences.
- Coaches have a profound impact on the lives of millions of children, young people and adults in every area of society, every day.
- Understanding the wide range of objectives, roles and outcomes lays down a pathway towards quality coaching.
- “With great power comes great responsibility” (Uncle Ben, in Spiderman),
- Therefore, coaches should follow a code of conduct which helps to create a safe, high-quality and inclusive environment.

What are the basics of coaching?

*Research your own experience. Absorb what is useful,
reject what is useless, add what is essentially your own.*

Bruce Lee

► Introduction

Coaches need many different skills to promote student learning, participation and achievement. This chapter considers specific strategies for the coach's toolkit, such as giving instructions, questioning, explaining, and demonstrating. However, coaching is fundamentally about relationships, and each coach-student relationship is unique. Good coaches are able to draw upon a wide range of teaching styles, and it is essential that coaches make every effort to develop their repertoire. The greater your variety of skills, the better you will be able to meet the different challenges that will arise.

► Giving instructions

In order to maximise learning in the martial art lesson and to minimise the likelihood of inappropriate behaviour, it is important that students have a clear idea of the activities they are being asked to do. A coach should be concise and to the point, to allow students as much time as possible to engage in the activities. However, there is a danger of rushing through instructions, which can easily result in students feeling unsure of the tasks in which they are expected to engage. The little time saved in giving overly brief instructions can be lost through frequent queries and requests for clarification from bewildered students.

There is little point in giving instructions to students who are not listening, so ensuring that all students are silent and attentive is fundamental. The coach should not speak until everyone is paying attention. Factors that interfere with attention in martial arts classes include:

- speaking and chatting;
- handling equipment;

- being distracted by events elsewhere in the area;
- excitement caused by a previous or coming activity.

It is useful to employ a recognisable phrase to gain attention. Through its repetition, students become conditioned to stop doing whatever they are doing and listen to the instructions. The tone in which instruction is given is important, and coaches should be careful not to come across as either aggressive or indecisive.

However, the simple act of listening does not necessarily mean the students understand what they are being asked to do. The clarity of instructions can be improved by referring to specific points in the lesson plan. Difficult content might warrant word-for-word planning. At the very least, it is important to check understanding before sending students off to work with phrases such as: “Is there anyone who does not understand?” Their understanding can then be checked by asking them to perform a relevant task.

► Explanations

Many of the elements of effective instructions, such as conciseness and clarity, also apply to explanations. Clarity is an especially important quality of explanations. Three elements may be identified that contribute to the effectiveness in explanations:

- **continuity** – a strong connecting thread should be maintained and evident through a lesson;
- **simplicity** – simple, intelligible, and grammatical sentences should be used; too much information in sentences can lead to confusion and failure. The language used should be simple, and subject-specific vocabulary should always be defined and understood;
- **explicitness** – one common cause of misunderstanding is the assumption that students understand more than they really do.

Giving examples can aid students’ understanding, provided that they are well-chosen and well-presented. They can be particularly useful when introducing new material.

► **Demonstrations**

The ability to provide clear, appropriate demonstrations in martial arts lessons is an essential skill for a coach. Explanations are important and can help students understand the concepts and skills being taught, but some information is better communicated visually. Demonstrations can serve a number of different purposes in martial arts lessons (examples are provided later regarding demonstrations for persons with specific disabilities):

- They provide a clear picture of the skill or task to be performed. Many learners, especially the young or inexperienced, benefit when verbal explanation is supplemented by a visual model. People are more likely to understand and remember a task when they are shown what to do as well as told;
- Demonstrations are particularly useful when the coach needs to highlight a specific technical point. Many physical skills are made up of a host of smaller actions; a demonstration encapsulates these actions as a whole, and provides students with a model for their performance;
- They can also be a valuable motivational tool, celebrating the work of the members of the class by demonstrating what has been learned in the class;
- Demonstration can be used to share ideas among the class. This is particularly useful where students or groups create their own moments or routines; for example, setting up a new kata/forms sequence;
- Some concepts in martial arts are easier to understand visually than verbally, such as kata/forms;
- Sometimes a visual demonstration of a task is quicker as well as more effective;
- Students can show off their completed work and present what they have learned.

► **Presenting demonstrations**

Demonstrations rely upon the sharing of visual information, so it is absolutely essential that they are as accessible as possible to the greatest number of students. There are many ways of arranging a group of observers, such as semi circles, straight lines, etc. Older students can usually arrange themselves around the demonstrator, either standing or sitting, but younger children will often need to be organised by the coach. It is important to check whether all students can clearly see the demonstration before proceeding.

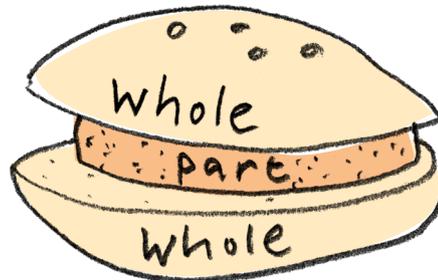
It is also worth considering whether the observers can see all of the important aspects of the skill from just one angle. Many tasks are best presented from more than one angle, and enabling a variety of viewpoints allows students to build up a fuller image of the skill.

When giving demonstrations to a class, a coach needs to ensure that the students focus on the relevant content. An effective way of ensuring this is through the use of learning cues, or words or phrases that highlight the key features of a skill or task. Good cues are accurate, essential to the task being presented, few in number, and appropriate to the students' age and stage of learning. Learning cues can take many forms. Some may simply be a description of key features of a movement, such as "Feet parallel," or "Follow through," but you might come up with more exciting phrases that spark the students' imagination such as, "Exploding kicks," "Move like a Jedi," and "Smooth like a dancer."

The notion of accuracy in demonstration goes beyond the simple performance of the mechanics of the skill. The demonstration should reflect, as nearly as possible, the context in which the observers will be performing the skill. It is unwise to offer only one element of the task, or to perform the skill at a different speed or rhythm from the correct one. If a coach needs to emphasise a specific aspect of the task, it is worth ensuring that the students clearly understand the overall skill they are to practise, not only that individual detail. The simplest way to ensure this is to 'sandwich' the detail between two complete performances:

1. performance of whole skill/task;
2. breakdown of skill/task, and demonstration of detail;
3. performance of whole skill/task again.

The whole - part - whole
'sandwich'



There are three main times to use demonstrations:

1. Before the students perform the skill. Demonstrations are usually intended to present a model of the skill for students to reproduce in the initial phase of learning, but can also serve as a reminder as to how to perform the skill;
2. Throughout the practice session. Once the session is under way, it may be worthwhile to break it up with another demonstration, to help students focus again upon key features of the skills.
3. As a conclusion to the practice. Demonstrations are often used to celebrate students' work and achievement. A concluding demonstration can also act as a reinforcement of the learning cues and key points, in preparation for future lessons.
4. If the use of demonstrations need to be adapted – e.g. in the case of students with visual or other impairments – examples are given later in this guide.

► Questioning

Questions can be asked of individual students, groups or whole classes. They can be used for a variety of purposes, including arousing curiosity, focusing attention, identifying problems, communicating expectations, encouraging reflection and assessing. Types of questions in martial arts classes can include:

Questions that focus attention

When students are required to pay attention to a specific feature of an action or a performance, questions can check that they have noticed or understood it, or solicit a specific answer or a range of answers about it, e.g.

- “Which kick is this hand technique meant to replace?”
- “What is the main difference between a well-executed punch and a poorly executed one?”

Questions that lead students to be mindful

These can be used to make students think about what they are doing, or to reflect upon their actions, e.g.

- “Why did you perform the sequence in that way, rather than the way you planned before?”
- “What do you think was good about your previous attempt, and what could you improve?”

Questions that assess knowledge and understanding

This is a simple and effective way of informally assessing students' understanding of a topic, perhaps to revise something covered previously, to check basic subject knowledge or to test understanding of a new concept, e.g.

- "What is the Japanese expression for that move?"
- "What key points do you remember from the last week's lesson?"

Questions that invite inquiry

As well as consolidating knowledge, questions should challenge students to think more deeply about the principles and issues underpinning martial arts. This might involve challenging students to think more diversely, to posit solutions to meaningful problems or to discuss values:

- "Why do people in martial arts bow?"
- "How could you adapt your techniques against opponents of different sizes?"

Questions that develop self- and peer-assessment skills

Martial arts can play an active role in skills development, and carefully selected questions can help students identify relevant cues:

- "Why do you think this was a good sequence?"
- "How could you improve on your performance next time?"

Here are some principles that will help with effective questioning:

- Ask clear and concise questions;
- Use appropriate vocabulary;
- Ensure that all students can hear;
- Forbid mass calling out of the answers;
- Allow more than one answer to be given before responding;
- Give everyone in the class an opportunity to answer;
- Address the full range of abilities in a class;
- Ask questions in a logical order;
- Allow some time for students to think and answer;
- Be tolerant of incorrect answers.

► **Safe practices**

Students' safety should be one of the priorities for all coaches. By being aware of potential dangers and paying attention to them throughout the training, the risk of accident is greatly minimised. It is important to remember that there are two sides to safety: students need to be physically safe during lessons, and they also need to feel safe and secure in themselves. Ultimately the coach is responsible for both.

This section will highlight the main areas of consideration for the safety of students in martial arts lessons.

Indoor Areas

- Inspect the floor for dirt, liquid or damage before the students arrive. Also, check for wet, over-polished or otherwise slippery floors.
- Make sure you know where the first-aid kit is.

Clothing, jewellery and hair

- Children are more sensitive to extremes of heat and cold than adults. They should wear sufficient layers in cold weather to keep warm, and loose, lightweight clothing in hot temperature.
- There is no place for jewellery in martial arts classes.
- Long hair should be securely tied back.

Safe environment

- The coach should be able to see all students at all times and continuously scan for potential issues.
- The training space should be thoroughly checked before the session, especially for sharp objects, gaps in the mat, and objects near the edge of the practice area.
- No outdoor footwear should be allowed in the practice area and mobility aids should be cleaned before entering.
- It is vital to know about your students' health and any impairments, disabilities or conditions.
- Teach all students safety procedures, so that in case of an emergency they know the rules and procedures,
- It is important to have necessary medical aids to hand at all times.

The question of what makes a great coach has been around for a long time. It is complicated because there is no set recipe for success, and different approaches work for different coaches and students. However, research and the accumulated wisdom of experienced coaches have helped us identify some useful strategies that have a great impact on coaching practice.

► **Summary**

- There should be many tools within the coach's toolkit to cater for individual needs and situations.
- Good coaching requires a variety of coaching skills, such as giving instructions and explanations, demonstrating, questioning and keeping students safe during training.
- The ability to deliver clear and precise instructions is critical for students to have an accurate idea of the activities they are required to do.
- Effective explanations are concise, simple and explicit.
- Visual demonstrations complement other forms of coaching by offering a clear image of what needs to be learned.
- Questioning arouses curiosity, focuses attention, helps identify problems, communicates expectations, encourages reflection and assesses knowledge.
- The coach must always make sure that the students are safe and feel safe during practice.

Strategies to improve your coaching

Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?

That depends a good deal on where you want to get to. I don't much care where...

Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

► Introduction

This section offers practical advice for improving coaching practice. It suggests ways of clarifying and using the power of aims and planning as part of quality coaching of the martial arts, especially with people with disabilities. It also shows that coaching styles are not set in stone but should be adapted to different circumstances. Effective coaches are also effective observers of their students' learning and development. There are endless ways to continue learning and improving. The coach's journey is never complete.

► Aims

Aims are important. They help coaches focus on the purpose of sessions and give a sense of purpose and direction to their work. They will also help to decide the most appropriate session content, teaching methods, ways of inclusion and materials.

There are lots of potential aims for coaches of people with and without disabilities in the martial arts. For example:

- to teach self-defence;
- to support martial arts techniques learning;
- to encourage communication;

- to promote martial arts values;
- to increase fitness or conditioning;
- to improve social skills and cooperation;
- to increase a sense of empowerment;
- to have fun;
- to prepare for competition;
- to improve movement skills;
- to build self-confidence and body confidence;
- to prepare for grading or assessments;
- to prepare for inclusive (inter/national) seminars.

Different aims require different activities and methods, so the selection of aims matters!

► Planning

Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying, “Fail to prepare and you prepare to fail”. This advice is worth remembering. Coaching is a ‘thinking’ activity, and planning helps coaches think through their sessions. Actually, writing down session plans can be particularly valuable, as it offers an overview of the planned session and provides a simple memory aid during the lesson. At the same time, it makes you think in more depth about how to structure your lesson. Inclusive sessions typically include participants from different backgrounds and abilities, so proper planning will help the coach prepare for such diversity (including cultural and gender differences in one session).

Some of the questions to consider when planning include:

- What is the aim/objective of the session?
- What is the aim of the techniques to be taught?
- How can I show the relevance/importance of that aim?
- Which activities can help me achieve that aim?
- Which teaching methods best suit the aim?
- What persons with various disabilities/medical conditions are going to be present in the session? How should I prepare for them? What resources will I need? How can I best use the space available for the session?

- How can I integrate all (conditional and grade) levels in my session?
- What vocabulary should I use? Do I need to adapt my communication for some of the students?

Lesson planning templates can be useful starting points. An example is given below.

Lesson plan template

Persons with disabilities, impairments or medical conditions in the group

Aim(s) / focus of session and techniques

Session content	Adaptions to ensure Inclusion
Introduction / warm-up	
Main part (skills/games)	
Cool-down and reflection	

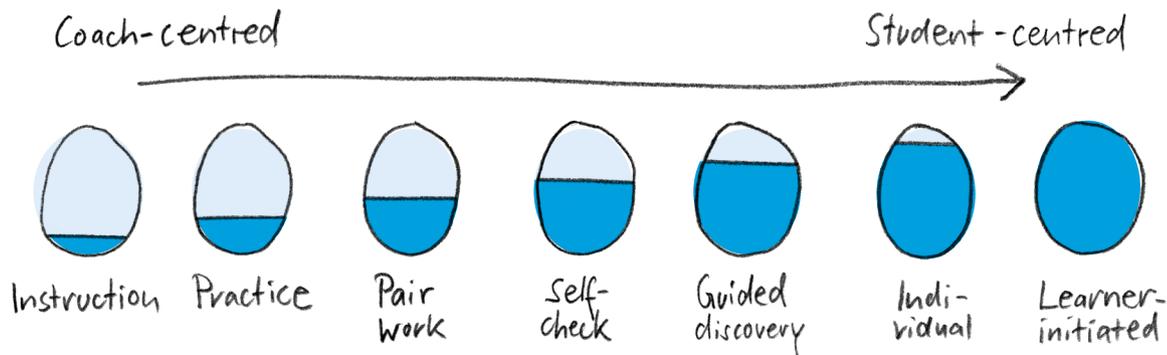
Equipment / Resources

► Style

Coaching methods are the ways in which session content is communicated or presented. Therefore teaching style determines *how* a lesson is delivered rather than *what* is delivered. All coaches have their own preferred styles and methods which they tend to rely on most of the time. Also, the martial arts often rely on coach-centred approaches, where the students follow instructions and learn by trying to copy more experienced students. Research suggests, however, that good coaching will adapt methodology to suit different sessions. Some groups might require the coach to instruct and lead, but others might require less direction and more opportunities for students to discover for themselves.

Take a look at the section of this document that considers inclusive practices, including the STEP model. It is worthwhile spending some time thinking about how best to adapt your teaching style to best meet the needs of the students.

There is an almost endless number of coaching methods. One way of thinking about this variety is as a continuum between coach-centred and student-centred approaches:



Style	Possible Aims	Coaching Example
Instruction	Fitness Technique practice Skill learning	Following coach's instructions for performing specific techniques
Practice	Fitness Technique practice Skill learning	In groups of four, practise skills and drills set by the coach
Pair work	Social skills Observation skills Analysing techniques	In pairs, practise specific skills, following key points made by the coach
Self-check	Cooperative skills Observation skills Analysing techniques	Coach gives pairs/groups a card with criteria for skills and techniques
Guided discovery	Cognitive skills Analysing techniques Problem-solving	Students work on self-defence scenarios, each starting from a different position
Individual	Cognitive skills Planning skills Technique practice	Each student composes a kata/form
Learner-initiated	Cognitive skills Planning skills Autonomous working	Individual students research a martial arts topic, such as the history of a style

► **Observation**

One of the best things coaches can do to improve their own practice is to look beyond their own clubs, and spend some time observing others. Expert and very experienced coaches reveal new skills and standards, but even new coaches can be a source of inspiration and insight. You can also learn from other experts, such as martial arts coaches with disabilities themselves. And experts from different backgrounds, such as school teachers and coaches of different sports, can show new ways of working that can be genuinely new and exciting.

Observation becomes even more valuable when a coach works with a friend or colleague, so each can regularly observe the other's teaching and discuss strategies for improvement. As well as learning by watching and talking to experts it is helpful to watch films and read relevant material. If inclusivity is important to you, it is useful to spend some time getting to know participants with physical and other disabilities. This will help you feel confident that you have the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to offer them a really positive martial arts experience.

► **Feedback**

Research shows that feedback is one of the most valuable methods of helping students to learn. It lets them know how well they have performed a particular task, along with ways in which they can improve. Unlike praise, which focuses on the student rather than the task, feedback provides your students with a tangible understanding of what they did well, where they are at, and how they can improve.

There may be a temptation to avoid giving feedback to martial artists with disabilities, fearing that it might damage their self-esteem or confidence. But there is absolutely no evidence that feedback harms esteem or confidence. On the contrary, it builds these qualities because it shows that the coach values the martial artist, and wants to help her/him to progress and improve. Evidence suggests that helpful feedback is:

Goal-referenced

Goal-referenced feedback means that the individual receiving feedback has an established goal and is taking action towards reaching it. These goals should be based on the aims of the session

(see above). Students can be unclear about the specific goals of a task or lesson, so it is crucial to remind them of those and also of the criteria by which they will be assessed and can assess themselves.

Two questions that can be asked when checking to see if your feedback is goal-referenced are: “What are my specific goals?” and “What must I do to reach my goal?”

Transparent

Effective feedback is concrete, specific and useful; it provides actionable information. “Well done!” or “You did that wrong” are not useful feedback, as they do not tell the students what they specifically need to do or change, and how. Unclear guidance creates ambiguity and hazy understanding.

Actionable

Effective coaches know that actionable feedback on what went right is as important as feedback on what didn't. Feedback that doesn't lead to a change in behaviour is redundant – there must be a point to it. What do you want them to do differently? What do they need to do to improve? The more detailed and specific the action points, the better.

Feedback during the session is especially important for visually-impaired students. They can be encouraged by having other students describe to them how the rest of the group is performing, including their mistakes.

User-friendly

Even if feedback is goal-referenced, transparent and actionable, it is not of much value if students cannot understand it or are overwhelmed by it. Effective feedback needs to be given in an accessible form, especially if students have learning or communication difficulties. Very technical feedback will be confusing to a beginner. Too much feedback is also counterproductive. It is better to support the students in concentrating on one or two key elements of performance than to provide a torrent of information.



The information provided elsewhere in this document will help you adapt your communication approaches to suit different abilities. It is important not to over-generalise about impairments and assume that one approach is enough. For example, some deaf or hearing-impaired students might benefit from the presence of a sign language interpreter (but not every person is able to use sign language and also remember there are as many sign languages as there are spoken ones) and others by you simply looking at them when speaking (most lip-readers do not sign, and vice versa). Also, be aware that a sign language interpreter might not know anything about martial arts. Therefore, learn some signs yourself to help the student focus on you and your technique. Either way, spending a moment to check comprehension with any participant with limited sensory or communication ability is usually time well-spent.

Timely

Generally speaking, the sooner students receive feedback on their performance, the more effective it is for their learning. In particular, students are most likely to benefit from feedback if they receive it before moving on to the next task. Don't wait until the end of a lesson: feedback will be of little value if a specific task or activity is not fresh in the memory. Of course, it is not always possible to provide students with feedback right on the spot, but sooner is definitely better than later.

The benefits of this sort of feedback are especially obvious in the case of students with cognitive impairments and learning difficulties, but everyone will gain the most from feedback when it is timely.

On-going

Feedback is inseparable from learning, and the better the quality of a coach's feedback the better the students' performance will be. Feeding back on learning behaviour and thought processes requires a level of individualised attention that coaches in a traditional session (with the class lined up, all performing the same task) are unable to provide. You will need to explore alternative ways of observing, talking to and feeding back to your students.

Consistent

Students can only adjust their performance successfully if the information fed back to them all is consistent, accurate and trustworthy. This consistency applies to communication both with

individuals and with the class as a whole. This is particularly important when teaching participants with different abilities in an inclusive setting, when a coach may be tempted to 'talk down' to some (in the misguided belief that less should be demanded of people with disabilities), or worry that feeding back to a few may seem like favouritism or that being overly critical of some might discourage others.

Providing consistent feedback opens up communication and trust between student and coach, and the resulting benefits go both ways. Students gain a better understanding of where they're succeeding and what requires more attention; coaches get an insight into students' general strengths and weaknesses as well as what a particular individual may find challenging.

The same applies to people with disabilities. You might need to simplify your wording, or use pictures or a more descriptive vocabulary, but your feedback will remain one of the most important ways to make participation enjoyable and to improve performance.

► Learning

Research shows that the best coaches have a deep knowledge of their subject, and if that knowledge is lacking it can have a significant impact on students' learning. Targeted help for coaches can be effective in giving them greater understanding of areas where their knowledge is weak.

Here are some helpful online coaching resources that will be particularly relevant to inclusive coaching:

- The Inclusion Club: <http://theinclusionclub.com/>
- Sutton Trust – What makes great teaching?
<https://www.suttontrust.com/research-paper/great-teaching/>
- UK Coaching – Research Summaries for Coaches
<http://www.ukcoaching.org/resource/research-summaries-coaches>
- Sport Science Collective – Coaching Science Series. <https://youtu.be/-hwGsw7n3TI>
- Royal Society of Arts – ANIMATE. <https://youtu.be/u6XAPnuFjJc>
- TED – Education. <https://youtu.be/iG9CE55wbtY>

- ICSSPE – Physical Education Free Resources
<http://www.icsspe.org/content/physical-education>
- <https://www.sportpartnershiphw.co.uk/uploads/socially-inclusive-coaching-9.pdf>
- Women in Sport/UK Coaching. Socially Inclusive Coaching
<http://www.ukcoaching.org/resource/coaching-women-socially-inclusive-coaching>
- iCoachKids – A Truly Inclusive Society needs Fully Inclusive Sport
<http://www.icoachkids.eu/diversity-and-inclusion-in-sport.html>
- Lydia Zijdel Foundation – Specialised in Teachers Training Courses for Martial Arts and Psycho-physical Empowerment trainers in teaching people with disabilities
<http://lydiazijdelfoundation.com>

► Summary

- Being clear about your aims and intentions gives a sense of direction and purpose; it instils confidence in both students and coaches.
- Planning helps coaches to realise their aims and identifies what is necessary to achieve them.
- Coaching styles may vary depending on individuals and contexts but the goal is always the same: to promote learning. There is no such thing as an overall best coaching style: the best one reflects the needs of the specific situation.
- Therefore, important judgements made during a session are based on careful and informed observation.
- Effective feedback is constructive feedback.
- There are endless ways to continue learning and improving. A coach's own education is never complete.

What are the martial arts and why do they matter?

At their most basic level, the martial arts are nothing more than ways to prevent someone from harming or killing you. At their highest aspiration, the martial arts are paths to self-knowledge and the expression of beauty.

George Petrotta

► Introduction

The term 'martial arts' is notoriously difficult to define, and consensus about which activities count and which do not seems impossible to reach. In popular culture, the term typically refers to combat systems that originated in Asia. This is due partly to the variety and sophistication of styles in the Far East (probably greater than anywhere else in the world), and partly to their frequent representation in films and television. Martial arts have their origins in fighting, but many people believe they are about much more: that they make a valuable contribution to a person's overall development. Many martial arts are explicitly linked to religious and spiritual practices, especially Zen-Buddhism and Daoism, and this continues to shape how they are taught today. The PRIME project makes a bolder claim: the martial arts can promote the inclusion and participation of all people, whatever their abilities.

► The martial arts

Strictly speaking, 'martial arts' can refer to any codified fighting system, regardless of its origin. This might be overly inclusive but it does mean that a diverse group of practices can be considered under one heading that might appeal to a wide range of people.

It may be useful to make distinctions between different approaches so that we are clear about the activities we are discussing. We could, for instance, group martial arts by countries. For example:

Tai Chi, Kung Fu & Wushu	>	China
Judo, Karate & Aikido	>	Japan
Boxing	>	Great Britain
Escrima/Arnis/Kali	>	Philippines
Taekwon-Do/Taekwondo	>	Korea
Sambo	>	Russia
Savate	>	France
Capoeira	>	Brazil
Krav Maga	>	Israel
Muay Thai	>	Thailand
Penjak Silat	>	Indonesia

Or we could classify them by tradition. For example, Tai Chi and Qigong are usually called 'soft' or internal styles, which focus on the practice of things like chi/qi/ki (breath, or energy flow), meditative states of mind, and the use of relaxed leverage rather than muscular force. Karate, Taekwon-Do/Taekwondo and Judo, in contrast, are characterised by fast and explosive movements and by a focus on physical strength and agility. Aikido could be considered as an in-between style, not competitive but with a similar focus on strength, condition and agility.

Another way of classifying the martial arts (based on the ideas of the Italian writer Daniele Bolelli) is in terms of five main styles:

- **Performance arts**, such as Chinese Wushu and Brazilian Capoeira, which focus the majority of their attention on the aesthetic aspects of the art;
- **Internal arts**, which emphasise learning the basic movements and knowing yourself, often practised individually with no opponent. Examples of this approach are Chinese Tai Chi and Qigong, which emphasise correct breathing and balance;
- **Self-defence arts**, which focus on personal defence against physical attack. While almost all martial arts include self-defence as one of their goals, these arts emphasise it. Examples of self-defence arts are Israeli Krav Maga, Japanese Jiu-jitsu, and Aikido;

- **Combat arts**, which use fighting techniques for military defence. All armed forces study basic martial arts movements, and some, like the Special Forces, undergo extensive training. Krav Maga and Russian Sambo Wrestling were originally designed as combat arts;
- **Weapons arts**, such as Filipino Kali, European Fencing, Chinese Sword Fighting, Japanese Naginata, Kendo, Kenjutsu and English quarterstaff.

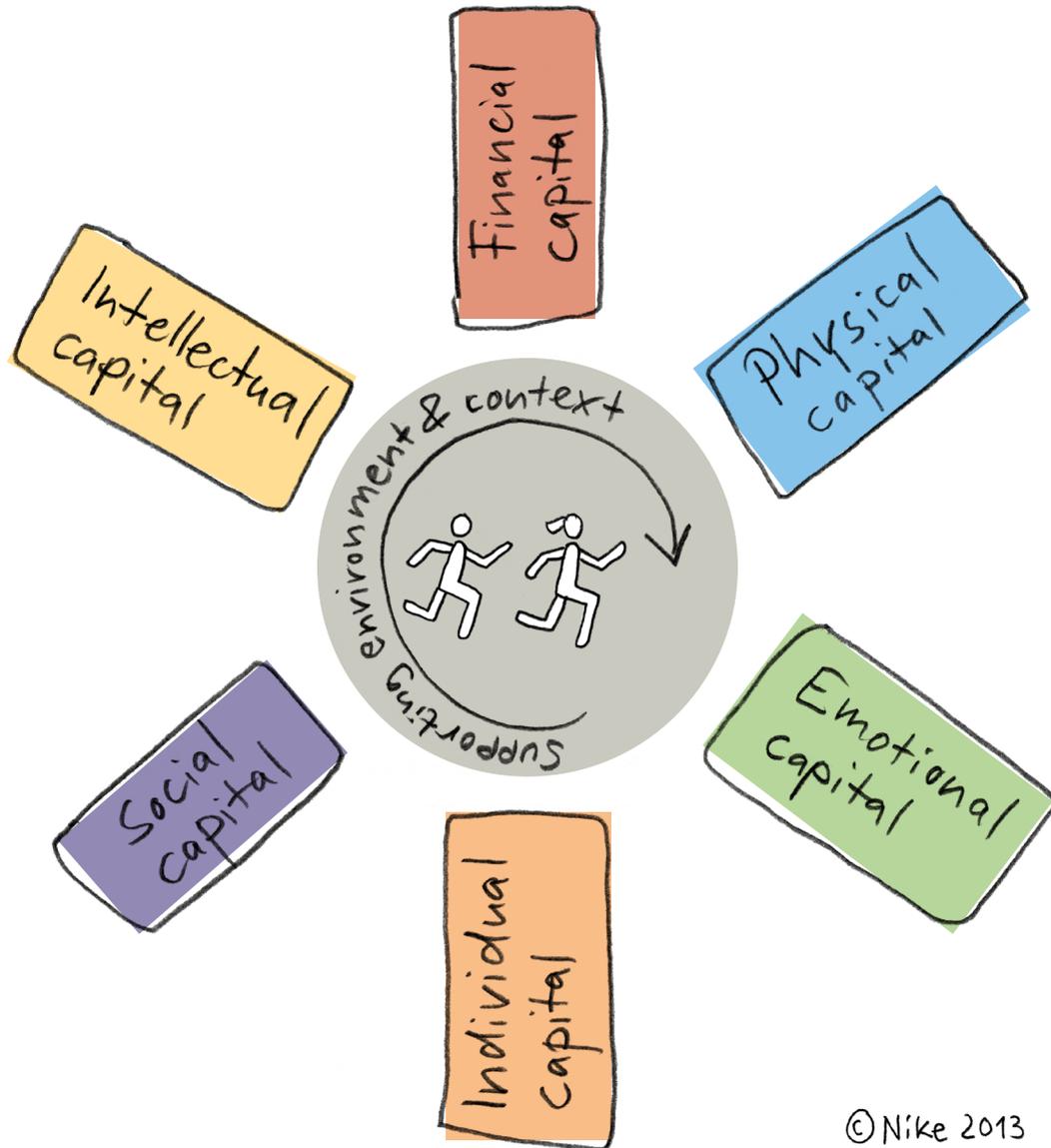
A further form of martial arts could be included in this list, namely *sporting arts*, meaning forms of combat that reflect values like competition, fair play and, in a minority of cases, professionalism. This category falls within the martial arts 'family' because it typically uses traditions, techniques and practices from the other categories, like eastern spiritual practices, graded assessments, and combat-based skills. Also, martial arts such as Karate and Taekwon-Do/Taekwondo often include sporting elements, and others such as Japanese Judo and Sumo, Boxing and Thai Boxing are explicitly concerned with competition. Since they are so diverse, it is difficult to make generalisations. However, one common goal seems to apply to most of them: to cultivate positive values and a certain quality of character. In some martial arts, especially those from Asia, this aim is made clear and explicit throughout training.

► **Benefits of the martial arts**

The importance of regular physical activity is now well-established, as are the harmful consequences of sedentary lifestyles. The trend towards inactivity in developed countries, and increasingly in developing countries as well, is of great concern. The reasons for this trend are complex, but innovations in industrial, automotive and information technology are an important factor, resulting in radical changes to the ways in which people go about their daily lives. Non-communicable diseases or lifestyle-related diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases, are increasingly common, currently accounting for nearly 60% of all deaths in the developed world: about 20 million people each year. Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor in these diseases, which makes it as life-threatening as smoking.

The health benefits of physical activities like the martial arts are probably their most obvious outcomes. Increased self-confidence is another factor that is frequently noticed. Recent research, however, has shown that the potential benefits of regular activity are much broader.

The Human Capital Model is the most comprehensive review of the outcomes of physical activity produced so far. It aims to represent the full scope of the positive contribution of regular physical activity to human development and well-being.



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Intellectual capital

Improvements in:

- Educational attainment
- School engagement
- Processing speed
- Executive function/Inhibition/Mental flexibility
- Memory
- Academic performance
- Brain structure and function
- Concentration/Attention/Impulse control learning
- ADHD management
- Age-related cognitive decline management

Financial capital

Improvements in:

- Income
- Job success
- Productivity/Job performance
- Morale/Commitment/Turnover

Reduction in:

- Health care costs
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism

Physical capital

Improvements in:

- General motor skills
- Functional fitness/Physical appearance
- Cardio respiratory fitness
- Muscular strength
- Adiposity/Body composition
- Lipid profile
- Bone health/Osteoporosis
- Joint health
- Maternal & infant health
- Rehabilitation & recovery
- Immune system function
- Sleep patterns
- Nutrition/Diet

Prevention /treatment of:

- Metabolic syndrome/Type 2 diabetes
- Overall mortality
- Cardiovascular disease
- Coronary heart disease
- Hypertension
- Stroke
- Colon & breast cancer
- Lung, endometrial, ovarian cancers
- Back pain

Reduction of:

- Falls
- Smoking
- Teen pregnancy
- Risky sex
- Drug use
- Addiction
- Suicide

Social capital

Improvements in:

- Social norms
- Social network/Positive relationships
- Social status/Social commitment
- Social inclusion & acceptance
- Trust/Teamwork/Collaboration
- Civic participation
- Gender equality
- Equity for persons with disabilities
- Crime, juvenile delinquency & gang participation reduction
- Community cohesion
- Peace/Understanding/Recovery
- Bridging differences (socio economic status, racial, ethnic, disability, religious, sexual)
- Safety & support

Individual capital

Improvements in:

- Activity knowledge and skills
- Social skills/Life skills/Non-cognitive skills
- Sportsmanship
- Time management
- Goal-setting
- Initiative/Leadership
- Honesty/Integrity/Respect/Responsibility
- Enthusiasm/Intrinsic motivation
- Commitment/Self discipline/Self-control/Persistence
- Assertiveness & courage

Emotional capital

Improvements in:

- Fun, enjoyment, satisfaction
- Feeling good
- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy
- Body image
- Intrinsic motivation for physical activity
- Mood

Prevention /Treatment of:

- Stress
- Depression
- Anxiety

The Human Capital Model shows that martial arts and other forms of physical activity are capable of delivering valuable individual and social returns. It suggests that different physical activities develop skills, knowledge and personal attributes, and that such activities improve people's well-being and educational achievement – and even their value to the economy.

Physical capital

This means the direct benefits of physical activity to health and human function, including the prevention and mitigation of non-communicable diseases and conditions such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and obesity.

Emotional capital

This refers to the psychological and mental health benefits associated with physical activity, including increased levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, reduced depression and anxiety, less sense of social isolation, and a greater ability to process stressful events.

Individual capital

Here, the focus is on the elements of a person's character – e.g. life skills, interpersonal skills and values – that accrue via participation in martial arts and other forms of physical activity. Potential benefits in this area include better teamwork, co-operation, moral and social responsibility, and resilience.

Social capital

This is the outcome when people, groups, organisations, and civil society are brought closer together through participation in physical activity, which nurtures both pro-social behaviour and social inclusion.

Intellectual capital

This means the cognitive and educational gains that are increasingly linked to participation in physical activity, particularly its effects on cognitive functioning, on subject-specific performance at school, and on general academic achievement.

Financial capital

Here the focus is on economic sustainability, employability, earning power, job performance and productivity, along with reduced health care costs and less absenteeism and 'presenteeism' (when people at work exhibit a low level of productivity), as a result of regular physical activity.

The unique combination of activities that make up the martial arts suggests their potential to enhance each of these domains for everyone. Unfortunately, there is mounting evidence that inactive lifestyles are more common among people with disabilities than the population as a whole, and that this is associated with a wide range of health problems such as non-communicable diseases, obesity, mental illness, mobility difficulties and social exclusion. The combination of disability with such health problems can create a vicious cycle that further restricts a person's functioning and independence. This means that promoting physical activity among people with disabilities is even more important than it is for the general population.

In addition, people with disabilities are often perceived to be powerless, helpless and unable to protect themselves. They are often targets for domestic (sexual) violence (including institutional violence), bullying, discrimination and violent crimes including homicide, assault, rape and robbery. Research has found that persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of abuse and bullying than the general population, and this is especially the case for older people and children. Clearly, for groups of persons with disabilities to participate in martial arts experiences would have practical benefits both individually and socially.

► **Summary**

- Martial arts come from all over the world, and each has its own character, intention and values.
- Participating in the martial arts can lead to a wide range of benefits, including improvements to physical and mental health and the development of friendship and self-esteem.
- People with disabilities tend to be less physically active and less healthy overall than other people, so their participation in the martial arts would be particularly beneficial.

What should I know about inclusion?

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

► Introduction

Although inclusion is widely discussed in sport and society, there are still concerns, misunderstandings and anxieties about what it means for coaches. This chapter offers some background on inclusion debates. Hopefully, as coaches learn more about inclusion and its key principles, there will be less uncertainty about putting it into practice.

► Models of disability

Disability is an umbrella term that includes impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Consequently, according to The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, there are health conditions, personal conditions and environmental factors that are crucial in defining disability, however, concepts of disability vary across the world. In the following sections, we will briefly explore three influential approaches to understanding disability:

- the medical model
- the social model
- the biopsychosocial model
- the human rights model

The medical model

The medical model focused on limitation and function loss. The idea is that the individual needs to reduce the impairment.

The language used within discussions of the medical model often focused on the condition itself: words like 'paralyzed' were used to refer to individuals, and the impairment would define the person in several contexts of their lives. The terminology reflected the outlook of the medical model.

The social model

The social model succeeded the medical model and placed great emphasis on advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. This model did not focus solely on the individual but on changes required in society. Disability was no longer defined by the body of a person; it was the result of the barriers people face in their interaction with environmental and attitudinal factors. Disability was a concept caused by the way society functions when it took little or no account of people with impairments.

The social model was often associated with a 'people-first language', placing the person before the disability, reinforcing the principle that the disability should not label or define someone.

The biopsychosocial model

In 2002 the World Health Organization (WHO) published the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), a classification system that understood disability and functioning as multi-dimensional concepts related to body functions and structures, activities, participation and environmental factors.

This approach conceptualised a person's level of functioning as a dynamic interaction between her or his health conditions, environmental factors and personal factors. It is a biopsychosocial model of disability, based on an integration of both the social and the medical models of disability.

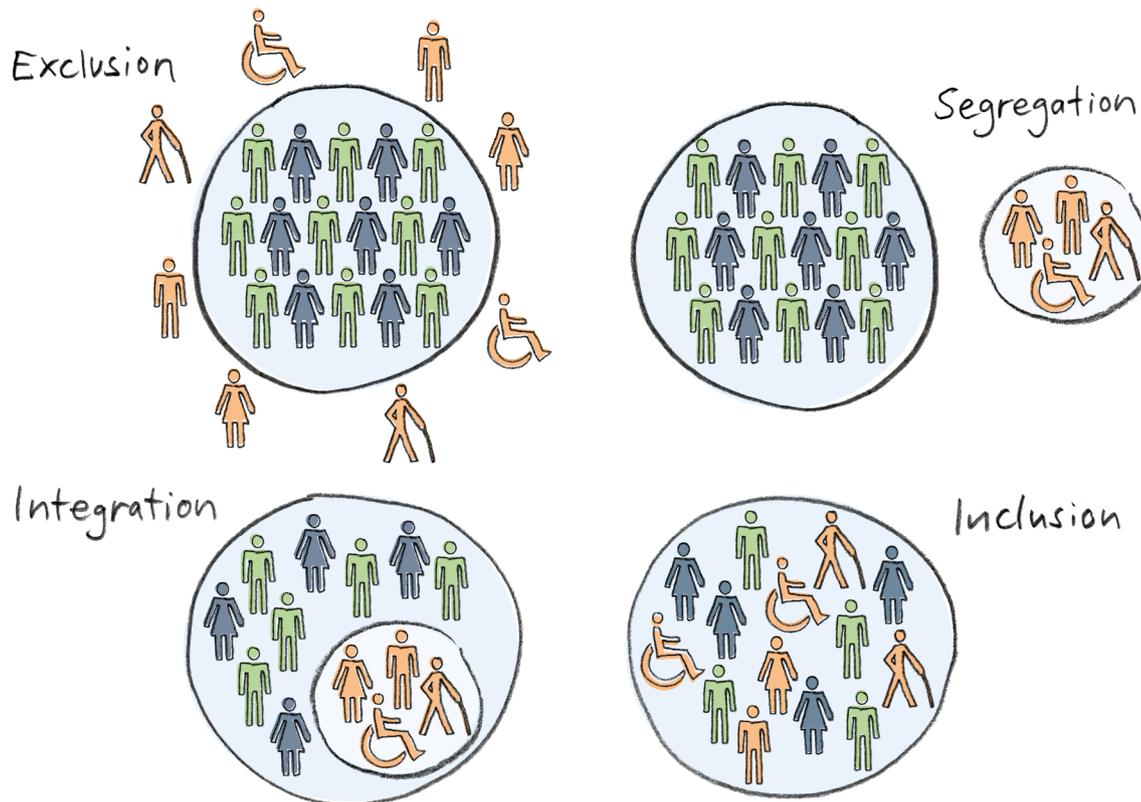
The human rights model

The human rights model was drawn from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006). This international treaty was the first to address the rights of disabled people, recognising both equality *and* diversity. Underpinned by a strong activist ideology, the human rights model builds on the foundations of the social model of disability, and places people with disabilities as subject to the disabling practices of society.

The human rights model entails a move away from viewing people as passive objects without rights, and towards an understanding of the various economic and social processes that constitute disability.

The significance of this shift towards a human rights perspective is in promoting the importance of facilitating access to basic freedoms for people with disabilities that are mostly taken-for-granted. Under the banner of the human rights model, participation in sport is a fundamental human right. Article 30 of the CRPD, which addressed 'Participation in Cultural Life, Recreation, Leisure and Sport', outlines how people with disabilities are entitled to participate in sport on an equal basis with others. This highlighted the need to provide inclusive policies and practices that support the involvement of people with disabilities in sport. Such measures include appropriate training and education for coaches to create more inclusive and high-quality coaching environments. Each of these four disability models expresses an ideology that determines how people with disabilities are perceived and also influences attitudes towards them.

Contrasting effects of exclusion, segregation, integration and inclusion



The biopsychosocial model embraces the social model and some aspects of the medical model. The social and the biopsychosocial models of disability aim to provide inclusive spaces where the environment is adapted to the needs of the individual. The human rights model could be regarded as the summing up and the new insights on disability and disability rights (a paradigm shift). This will provide equal access and opportunities to every individual, including people with disabilities, who will be able to share the same conditions, facilities and opportunities as everyone else.

► Language

Why is language important?

Some individuals may consider it unnecessary to use only language considered polite or inoffensive ('politically correct; P.C.'). However, it is important to keep in mind that language is labelled offensive for a reason; words and concepts used to describe disability all have their own histories and implications for people with disabilities.

General guidelines for talking about disability

- Refer to a person's disability only when it is relevant to what you are talking about. For example, don't ask "What's wrong with you?" (or similar) out of context. Don't refer to people in general or generic terms such as 'the girl in the wheelchair.'
- When talking about places with accommodation for people with disabilities, use the term 'accessible' rather than 'disabled' or 'handicapped.' For example, refer to an 'accessible parking space' rather than a 'disabled' or 'handicapped parking space', or an 'accessible bathroom stall rather' than a 'handicapped bathroom stall'.
- Use the term 'disability' and take the following terms out of your vocabulary when talking to or about people with disabilities: 'handicapped', 'differently-abled', 'cripple/crippled', 'victim', 'retarded', 'stricken', 'poor', 'unfortunate', or 'special needs'.
- Just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean s/he is necessarily courageous, brave, special, or superhuman. People with disabilities are the same as everyone else. It is not unusual for someone with a disability to have talents, skills and abilities.

- It is OK to use words or phrases such as 'disability' or 'people with disabilities' when talking about disability issues. If you are with such people, ask them which term they prefer.
- When talking about people without disabilities, that is what to call them. Do not refer to them as 'normal' or 'healthy'. These terms can make people with disabilities feel as though there is something wrong with them and that they are 'abnormal'. All people, with and without disabilities, can be healthy or sick at times.
- When in doubt, call a person with a disability by her/his name.

In addition, each individual language and country will also have a bearing on the terminology used.

► **Fostering participation through inclusive policies – A Pathway to Diversity**

The international human rights legal framework contains tools to combat specific forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women, indigenous peoples, migrants, minorities, people with disabilities, racial and religious groups, sexual orientation and gender identity. These are the main characteristics protected by the equity policies of most countries of the world. Equity and anti-discrimination policies are aligned with the biopsychosocial model promoted by the WHO. However, different policies exist in different countries, and therefore the protected characteristics might vary between them.

The 'Pathway to Diversity' approach details the steps that are necessary to co-create a society in which diversity is mainstream and accessibility is universal. First of all, it is essential to recognise the rights of every person; this should be the first step before inclusivizing practices and activities. Often a lack of awareness and/or social stigma needs to be addressed and transcended. The second step is inclusivize practice. 'Inclusivize' is a verb that underpins all the willingness, intentions, actions, and resources needed to increase accessibility for people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. 'Inclusivizing practice' recognises a need to revise practice or train people to adapt existing practice to include people with disabilities.

These first two steps facilitate a society in which diversity is mainstream and which is ready and willing to include everyone, regardless of factors such as ability, sex or gender, and culture. The mainstreaming of inclusive practices would improve the social status of diversity.



► **An approach to inclusive coaching**

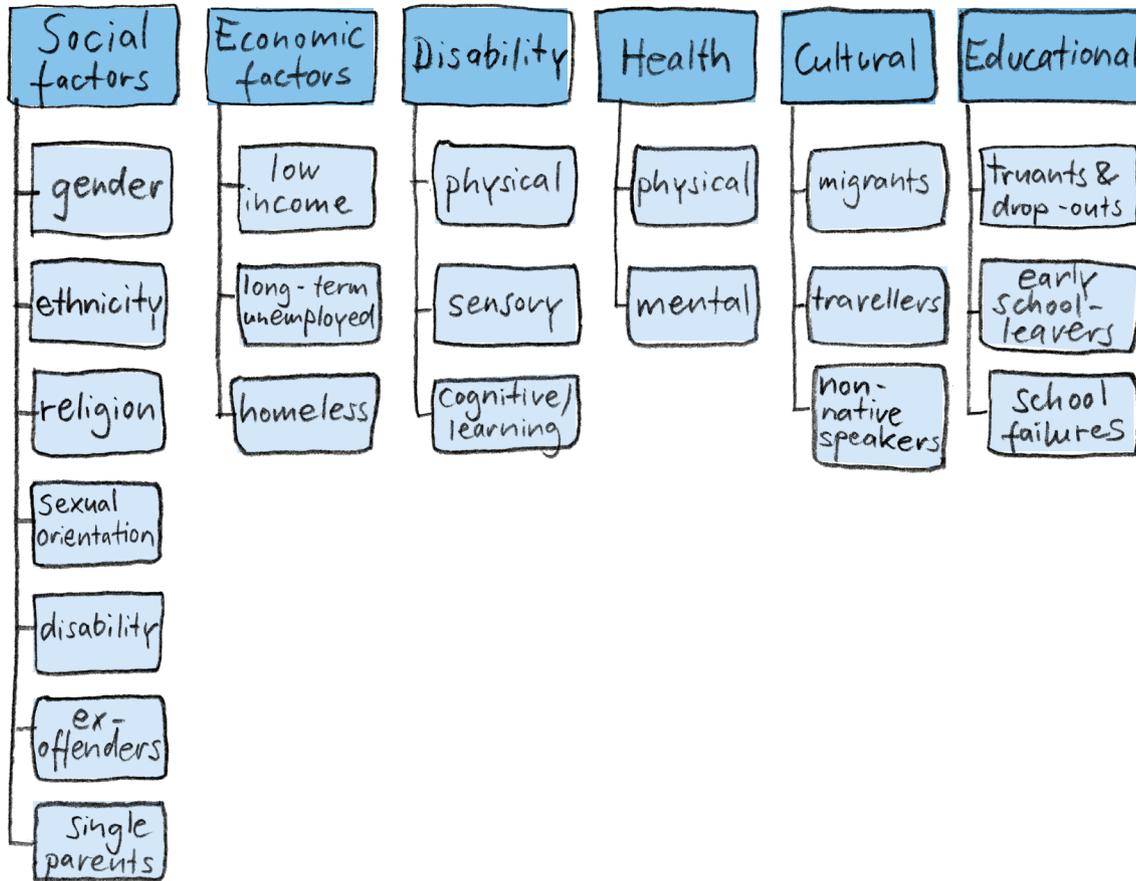
Society is comprised of a diverse range of people. According to the World Health Organisation, around 15% of the world's population has a disability. About 10% of people with disabilities are born disabled, while the majority become disabled between the ages of 18 and 65. People with disabilities are not 'other' people; they are us. But marginalisation, sometimes also called social exclusion, happens to them. This means relegation to the fringes of society due to a lack of rights, resources and opportunities. It creates vulnerability, which means exposure to a range of possible harms and being unable to deal with them adequately.

There are barriers that prevent some people participating in society on an equal basis. These people are sometimes referred to as people with fewer opportunities. They include groups within a given culture, context and history who are at risk of multiple discrimination for various reasons, including:

- personal characteristics;
- grounds such as sex, age, ethnicity, religion or belief, health status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, education or income;
- because they live in certain geographic localities.

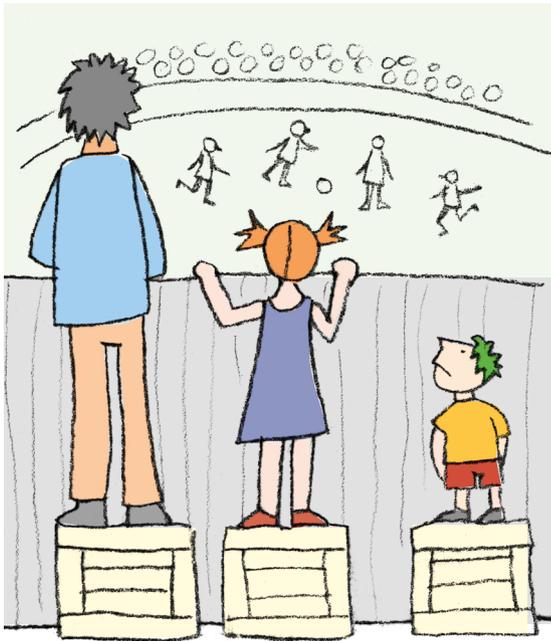
Belonging to such groups, or even being perceived to belong to them, heightens the risk of inequality of access to rights and use of services, e.g. to education, employment, health, social and housing assistance, equal pay, protection against domestic or institutional violence, and justice.

Reasons for marginalisation



It is interesting that although many participants in martial arts fit into these categories, coaches are not yet trained to include them. It is important to start changing this challenging situation by offering opportunities for participation in martial arts to people with disabilities.

The difference between equity and equality



Equality

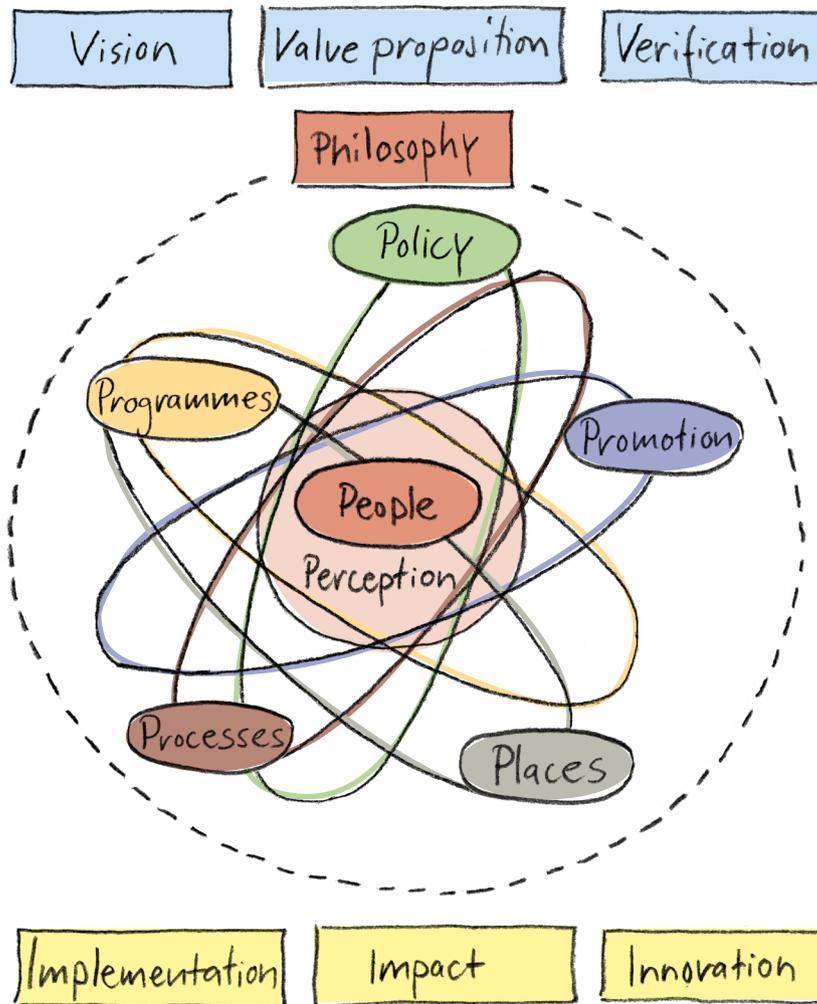


Equity

► How do we start inclusivizing?

The process of inclusivizing goes beyond raising awareness or completing a course and ticking a box. It is about shifting the ethos of the organisation to engage with its clients and to strive towards meeting the needs of all of them where practically possible. The Universal Transformational Management Framework (UTMF) below has been developed to support organisations in understanding their status and inclusivizing their services. It supports the process by encompassing 14 corporate areas and strategies for ensuring that inclusion and diversity play a central role in the organisation. The UTMF has practical application in the planning, delivering and evaluation procedures of an organisation. Its key value is in guiding development that is comprehensive and balanced.

Universal Transformation Management Framework (UTMF)



The UTMF is a management tool that aims to promote behaviour change by stimulating knowledge and enhancing reflection on attitudes and organisational practices.

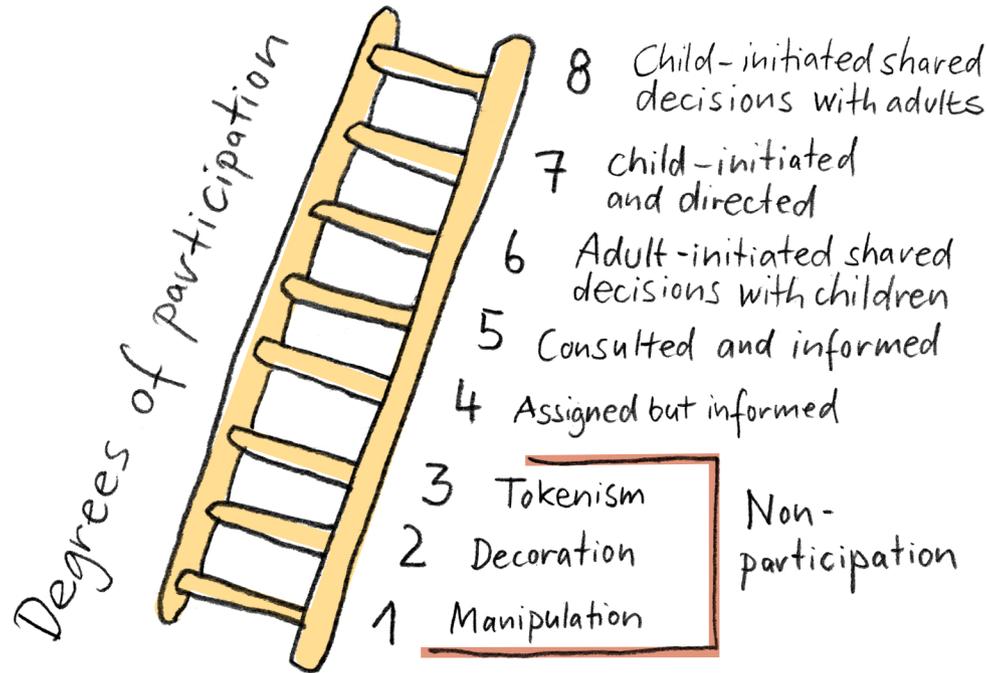
The UTMF is composed of fourteen elements, which are essential factors that martial arts trainers should acknowledge and, if necessary, address with a view to inclusivizing service provision. These fourteen elements can be divided into three stages which relate to behaviour change theory:

- **3 Vs:** Verification, value proposition and vision. These elements relate to organisations that may be at contemplation stage, reflecting on the need to be more inclusive. This prelude will ideally lead to action.
- **8 Ps:** Philosophy, processes, policies, people, perception, programmes, places and promotion. The 8 Ps follow the 3 Vs and are the action-oriented elements. These are the components that the organisation can modify and implement in order to bring change and offer a universal service.
- **3 Is:** Implementation, impact and innovation. These elements safeguard the new practices which bring inclusion to the organisation; hence they are considered as maintenance practices.

Taking into account all the principles above, the Ladder of Participation can be used to determine where your programme stands and to determine targets and goals to make it more inclusive. The ladder was developed for youth programmes but is useful to any group. It sees participation as the process of sharing.

According to Roger Hart, a sociologist for UNICEF, who originally developed the ladder, participation is a fundamental right. The key element is decision making. Participation is therefore shown as a ladder, with different levels of involvement in projects ranging from non-participation to full participation.

The ladder of participation



► The STEP model

There is no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothing!

Billy Connolly

One of the simplest and most intuitive approaches used to adapt physical activities to the needs of all participants is the STEP model – Space, Task, Equipment, and People developed by Ken Black and Pam Stevenson. For example, changes can be made to an activity where there are:

- participants of different ages;

- people with and without disabilities in the group;
- girls and boys participating together.

The STEP tool can be used to help organise thinking about activity adaptation and modification, including changes in the way martial arts are delivered. This simple system helps coaches to adapt activities for different abilities, making them simpler or more challenging.

Here are the basic general principles of the STEP tool:

STEP	Examples
Space S	Increase or decrease the size of the activity area; vary the distance to be covered to suit different abilities or mobility levels; use zoning, e.g. where students are matched by ability and therefore have more opportunity to participate.
Task T	Ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to participate, e.g. break down complex skills into smaller component parts if this helps students to develop skills more easily; ensure there is adequate opportunity for students to practise skills or components individually or with a partner before applying them in a team game.
Equipment E	Increase or decrease the size of the equipment to suit the ability or age range of the students, or depending on the kind of skill being practised; provide options that enable students to participate in different ways, e.g. using a balloon for striking, a wheelchair to move in; the use of a bell or rattle balls can assist the inclusion of some students.
People P	Match students of similar ability in small groups; balance group numbers according to the overall ability of the group, i.e. it may be preferable to play a game with teams of unequal numbers to facilitate the inclusion of some students and maximise that of others.

These principles can be applied to individual martial arts as follows:

STEP tool applied to **KARATE**:

STEP	Examples
Space S	<p>Make the activity bigger or smaller depending on the ability of the students; Organise the groups according to types of disability, and with the assistance of students without disabilities; Allow for a larger or smaller space for wheelchair users.</p>
Task T	<p>Plan activities according to the ability of the students; Train students to develop balance and coordination; Help students develop awareness on how to appropriately distance themselves from the opponent: this is of crucial importance for both self-defence and efficacy of attack; Teach simple, codified movements derived from kata/forms to maintain concentration and help memorise the complete kata/forms; Train and apply technical movements in pairs to develop mutual trust and feedback; For wheelchair users, exercise joint functions for the upper body; exercise in pairs (not necessarily two wheelchair users) to develop technical gestures.</p>
Equipment E	<p>Use boxing pads and slam balls to develop strength; Use soft mats to train coordination and balance; Use coloured bands on sleeve/trouser ends to help coordination of left and right; For blind and partially sighted students, use buzzers to help their awareness of space and direction; For students with learning disabilities, use drawings (to be hung on walls/mirrors) displaying the names of the techniques.</p>
People P	<p>Start by working in small groups composed of students with similar disabilities and subsequently enlarge the groups by integrating students with different abilities; Carry out both targeted training and general training by including students with and without disability.</p>

STEP tool applied to **JUDO**:

STEP	Examples
Space S	<p>Increase the area available for wheelchair users;</p> <p>Mark the area of randori (practice fighting), and experiment with increasing and decreasing the available space;</p> <p>Divide the practice area into zones for kata/forms, groundwork, throwing practice and randori, and have students rotate the activities.</p>
Task T	<p>Break up throwing into its elements: securing grip, unbalancing, moving into throw, full throw;</p> <p>Identify different levels of the same basic skill. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) kneeling, take turns trying to unbalance opponent; 2) kneeling, simultaneously try to unbalance each other; 3) standing, take turns trying to unbalance opponent; 4) standing, simultaneously try to unbalance each other. <p>Wheelchair users work from their chairs. Walker-users might need further support.</p>
Equipment E	<p>Use a crash mat when introducing breakfalls and throws;</p> <p>Practise 'snap' of throw using belts;</p> <p>Try doing randori without jackets to experience different ways of controlling opponents' bodies.</p>
People P	<p>Experiment with practising in pairs of similar and different abilities or levels of experience (coloured belts).</p>

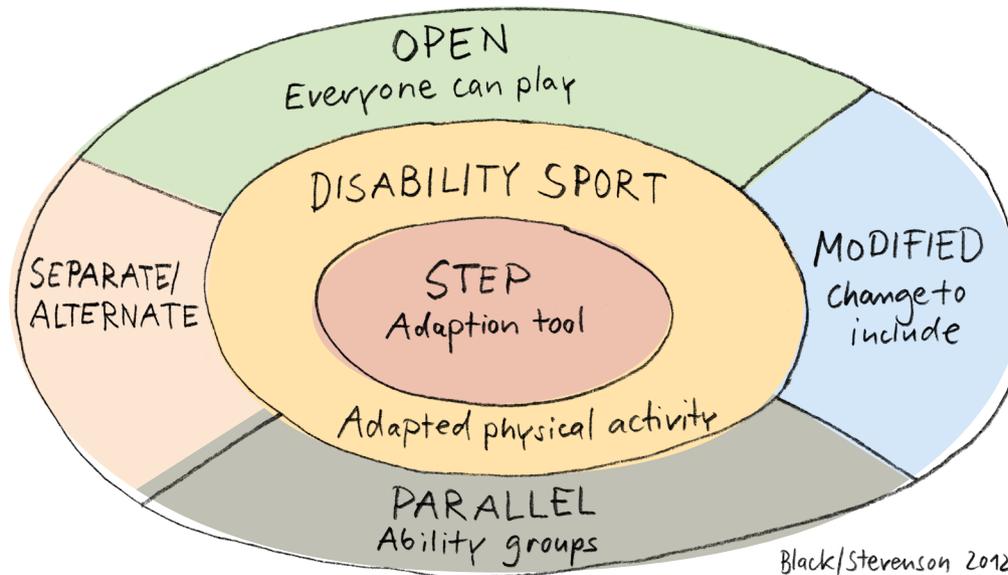
STEP tool applied to **AIKIDO**:

STEP	Examples
Space S	Take away sections of the mats to accommodate wheelchair using students, but provide mats for the students without disabilities whom they are throwing.
Task T	Have different levels work with each other. If a student with a disability is sitting on the mat have someone partner her/him who needs to work on their knee walking techniques.
Equipment E	Put bells on the Jo (medium stick) and Bokken (sword) for visually impaired students. Make shorter Bokkens and Jo's for wheelchair users or short people.
People P	Demonstrate a technique on a student with a disability and in turn have them perform the technique on you.

STEP tool applied to **TAEKWON-DO /TAEKWONDO**:

STEP	Examples
Space S	Use numbered or coloured walls, or coloured cones, to help teach and assist the student in directional turning.
Task T	Use picture mats or picture cards to visually show the layout of the planned sessions and the activities the students will be asked to carry out.
Equipment E	Use floor arrows or stepping mats to help practise stances to encourage balance and confidence in movement.
People P	Allow students who require additional support to bring their carer/support worker/coach onto the mats with them. They can verbally and visually encourage their charge to perform and complete their patterns under guidance.

The STEP model is part of the Inclusion Spectrum:



The different areas of the spectrum have the following meanings:

Open activities – Everyone can play

Everyone does the same activity with little or no adaptation of the environment or equipment; open activities are by their nature inclusive so that the activity suits every participant. For example, everyone can join in warm-ups or cool-downs, and cooperative or unstructured movement games.

Modified activities – Change to include

Everyone plays the same game or performs the same activity but the rules, equipment or area of activity are adapted to promote the inclusion of all individuals regardless of their abilities. For example, breakfall activities could be enhanced by using mats surrounded by plastic bottles, by using equipment such as coloured wrist bands (see the STEP model for ideas on modifying activities) or by using thicker mats.

Parallel activities – Ability groups

Although students follow a common activity, they do it at their own pace and level by working in groups based on their abilities. For example, a group could practise either a seated or standing version of an arm or wrist lock, or whichever version of a blocking technique is most suited to their abilities. One consideration in the parallel approach is that abilities can change according to the activity; for example, someone performing a complex version of a kicking activity may move to another group for a throwing activity, or support them with replacing hand-techniques for the kicks involved. Parallel activities provide an opportunity for the progressive development of a technique to be taught at different stations around the training hall.

Separate or alternate activities

On occasion, it may be better for a student to practise individually or with their disabled peers. One example of this might be elite squad training, or when a student is recently disabled or needs to build up confidence in a private setting with a coach before joining in with the others.

► Using games

Games, especially as an OPEN activity, give an inclusive coach the opportunity to assess the skills and abilities of each student. In an OPEN activity an inclusive coach will ensure that everyone can participate. An OPEN activity means that you do not need to ask people about their ability or disability, you assess them instead.



Some games are puzzles which require abstract thinking: the ability to see a space and envision what belongs there.

Playing team games teaches cooperation and compromise. Students can learn about how supporting their team members helps to achieve a goal, and about the interdependence of people and the patterns in their work.

Working together, whether it is in pairs or a team or in a game, helps students to learn to respect the ideas of others. They develop social skills and social competence, which are underlying goals of education. Students in cooperative play learn to contribute to joint efforts. They also learn how to solve problems by working together to find a solution.

Individual games encourage autonomy and initiative, and foster competence, independence and self-esteem. Individual games teach life skills, self-reliance, concepts of spatial relations, stability and balance.

Games present an opportunity for a student to learn social skills as s/he works in cooperation with a friend.

► **Summary**

- Understanding models of disability and issues of language will help the coach to be more confident when working with a diverse range of students.
- It is important to recognise that changing cultures and attitudes can be difficult, and to give yourself and your organisation time to change if you want to become more inclusive.
- The STEP model offers a practical framework for understanding inclusion in martial arts; it offers a continuum of ways of including students with different abilities into sessions.
- Planned activities can be open, modified, parallel or separate, depending on the needs of the students and the intentions of the coach.

What are inclusive martial arts and why do they matter?

When everyone is included, everyone wins.

Jesse Jackson

► Introduction

Asian martial arts were traditionally associated with the development of strong and wise people. They were founded on the principles known as the 'Seven Virtues of Bushido' or the Way of the Warrior: determination, benevolence and compassion, right behaviour and actions, sincerity, integrity and honesty, and responsibility. It is interesting to note that these principles run parallel to modern sporting values as well. It is these values which underpin the justification for inclusion in martial arts. These principles are strongly associated with the philosophy of education which also nurtures the development of character, values and life skills.

The seven virtues of bushido

義

GI

Integrity &
Honesty

礼

REI

Right Behaviour

勇

YU

Determination

名誉

MEIYO

Right Action

仁

JIN

Benevolence &
Compassion

真

MAKOTO

Sincerity

忠義

CHU

Responsibility

► **The Way – Continuous development**

Continuous development is fundamental to the 'Way' of martial arts, which offer the healthy benefits of physical activity for life. The coloured belt system reflects the continuous development that lies at the heart of the martial arts. Even after a student achieves the coveted black belt, the Dan system means that learning and practice are never-ending.



The coloured belts

► **The Way – Inclusion**

As in the STEP modifications, the introduction of the coloured belts and coloured sash systems was a method of identifying the skill levels of participants and grouping them by ability. From white belts to black belts and beyond, everyone can train together in lines and the coach can provide differentiation for each skill level. Different grades can perform the same technique in a different way according to their level. A coach can then make coaching interventions either by skill groups or individually. This is the essence of inclusive practice and fits very neatly with the principles of STEP.

► **The Way – A traditional but ever-changing martial art**

Martial arts are among the most practised sports all over the world. One study of countries in the European Union showed that martial arts are in the top ten of the most practised sports in

a club-related context. The martial arts are increasingly taught in school and to vulnerable young people as well as to the elderly. Although most martial arts have certain common characteristics (e.g. confrontation involving an actual or imaginary opponent), considerable variation exists in the structural qualities of different styles. In addition to well-known so-called 'traditional' styles like Judo, Karate, Kung Fu, and Taekwon-Do/Taekwondo, there are sports-orientated systems like Sambo, Kickboxing and Mixed Martial Arts, and countless lesser-known martial arts. There are distinctive technical and tactical differences between types of martial arts (e.g., grappling and throwing versus punching and kicking). The martial arts vary considerably in cultural and historical origin, and although the popular conception of martial arts is associated with Asia, most cultures can identify some indigenous fighting systems.

There is evidence of an increasing use of martial arts as vehicles for engaging and including persons with disabilities in physical and social settings. Martial arts are usually taught through a single technical grading syllabus which is taught in the same way to both children and adults.

Each student should be provided with a fun, achievable challenge. If it is not fun, or a challenge, or achievable, a student will probably give up. Each different group of students therefore requires a syllabus that is adapted to their needs. And the same applies to persons with disabilities. Students with learning disabilities tend to learn at a slower pace than others, and should be taught more slowly and in smaller chunks. Students with autism may have similar needs.

Wheelchair using students often cannot kick, so a syllabus with kicks in it would be inappropriate. However, kicks can be replaced with similar techniques such as a front or elbow strike instead of a front kick, a roundhouse elbow strike instead of a roundhouse kick, or a descending elbow strike in place of an axe kick, etc. There are many more.

Some wheelchair using students might have difficulty leaning forwards or sideways without falling. People with cerebral palsy may also find more challenges with balance and may need other ways to kick or take up long stances. People with spasticity in their limbs may be challenged to throw or perform breakfalls.

Of course, students aiming to become coaches must acquire an understanding of the whole curriculum, including techniques they may not be able to perform themselves. Therefore they will need to work closely with their coaches to develop this comprehensive understanding.

Adaptation is crucial to ensure that everyone can participate and enjoy the benefits of martial arts.

► **Summary**

- Many martial arts already have methods of training which can be very easily adapted to be inclusive.
- The principles of most martial arts are to develop character, moral behaviour and inner strength, and knowing yourself and your strengths and weaknesses.
- Lifelong learning is an integral part of martial arts.
- Like martial arts, inclusive high-quality coaching is concerned with the development of people.

Martial arts have the power to change the perceptions of persons with a disability and the power to change their lives.

Dirk van der Merwe

Including women and girls with disabilities

Disabled women struggle with both the oppression of being women in male-dominated societies and the oppression of being disabled in societies dominated by the able-bodied.

Susan Wendell

▶ **Introduction**

In the past, women were often excluded from participation in many martial arts settings, and even now women form a small minority in many clubs. For this reason, it is important that martial arts coaches focus equally on the inclusion of both sexes.

▶ **Women and girls with disabilities**

The power of martial arts as a transformative tool is particularly important for women, especially those with disabilities who can experience double discrimination. They are often addressed either as people with disabilities or as females, without recognition that they face discrimination on both counts. In recent years, the specific challenges, rights and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities have received greater attention and the concept of inclusive development has been strengthened with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its commitment to leaving no one out.

Many EU member states have developed national strategies and plans on disability for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, stand-alone policies on women and girls with disabilities remain limited. Major challenges include data collection, national capacity and the mobilisation of financial resources in promoting the rights of women and girls with disabilities.



In most countries the prevalence of disability is higher among women than men. In developing countries, women make up three quarters of the number of people with disabilities. It is estimated that only 12 percent of men have a disability as compared to 19 percent of women. Women and girls with disabilities now number 700 million globally. The higher rate among women is partially attributable to a mix of factors, including poverty or economic dependency, their longer life expectancy, the later onset of dementia and the impact of poor maternal health care, particularly in developing countries and rural areas.

At present only a small number of women and girls with disabilities are involved in martial arts, but by giving them the opportunity to participate and demonstrate their achievements, martial arts can help to reduce gender stereotypes and negative perceptions. The self-defence aspects of martial arts have a role to play in the empowerment of women, as they are more often victims of violence and more frequently represented as weak.

Data about disability, sex and age are indispensable for understanding the situation of women and girls with disabilities and for informing policies which ensure their social inclusion and human rights. However, such data remains scarce. An increasing number of countries collect data on people with disabilities but do not usually disaggregate by sex and age. Lack of reliable and high-quality data is a major obstacle to progress in policies and programmes for women and girls in sport, and in martial arts in particular.

To understand the importance of focusing on women and girls with disabilities in martial arts, some of the initiatives over the past twenty-five years are highlighted below.

The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport (1994) was the first international sport-related initiative to state that: “Equal opportunity to participate and be involved in sport whether for the purpose of leisure and recreation, health promotion or high performance, is the right of every woman, regardless of race, colour, language, religion, creed, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, political belief or affiliation, national or social origin.”

Forty-four females (only 5%) competed in the inaugural 1960 Paralympic Games in archery, athletics, swimming, table tennis and wheelchair fencing. However, the participation gap between



female and male athletes has closed over the last two Paralympics, primarily by reducing the men's field. In Rio in 2016, a record of 1,671 disabled female athletes competed across 22 sports; more than double the 700 in Barcelona in 1992. Before then, there was no sex-disaggregated data. Judo made its Paralympic debut at Seoul in 1988 and has been contested at every Games since then; women's events were added in Athens in 2004. In Rio in 2016, 47 women (35%) participated in the Paralympic Judo competition.

The particular needs and roles of women with disabilities were addressed explicitly by the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1982) which recognised them as a special group and addressed the specific barriers they face in accessing health care, education and employment. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) also called for particular attention to be given to women in achieving equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) also identified specific actions that governments should take to ensure the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities in various areas. This brought disability inclusion into the general debate on how to address the barriers to empowerment and advancement faced by women and girls.

Building on those previous commitments, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities. It addresses them both specifically (in Article 6 below) and in conjunction with other articles targeting participation in sport and recreation. Its Preamble also stipulates positive action to ensure that women and girls with disabilities can fully and equally enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It insists on: "Recognizing that women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation" and "Emphasizing the need to incorporate a gender perspective in all efforts to promote the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by people with disabilities".

▶ **Article 6 – Women with disabilities**

1. “States Parties recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”
2. “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present Convention.”

The above-mentioned EU and international initiatives do not reflect the complexity of intersectionality of gender and disability with other factors such as age, ethnicity and humanitarian crises, but they aid our awareness of the barriers for women and girls with disabilities to engage in martial arts for self-defence purposes.

▶ **Summary**

- The prevalence of disabilities is higher in women than in men.
- Women and girls with disabilities face double discrimination.
- Martial arts are particularly suited to women and girls with disabilities since participation can help reduce gender stereotypes and negative perceptions related to their disabilities.
- Women’s and girls’ rights are addressed in various international policies but the limitations of the data currently hinder further progress.

Improving inclusive coaching?

*Mistakes are always forgivable,
if one has the courage to admit them.*

Bruce Lee

▶ **Introduction**

The goal of a martial arts coach often goes beyond teaching specific skills to helping students develop as human beings. The inclusive coach tries to do this within an atmosphere and environment of inclusivity, where everyone is able to take part, learn and have fun.

▶ **Coaching qualities**

A good coach is also a leader, a facilitator, a teacher, a mentor, an assessor, an advisor, an educator, an evaluator and an ambassador for martial arts; and, above all, a professional. In addition to teaching martial arts, a coach assists students to develop and build self-confidence through their martial arts training. A coach has a plan. Essential qualities, skills and competences need to be developed to become a good inclusive martial arts coach.

Technical skills

Knowledge and experience of what you are teaching are crucial. A coach must be informative, technically correct and able to pass on important knowledge.

Professional skills and competences

Qualifications, a coaching license, first aid training, a police check if required, safeguarding and protection of vulnerable students, and continuing professional development are all vitally important. In addition, the coach can benefit by understanding the science behind coaching, coaching ability and realistic goal setting.

Personal skills

A good coach has a range of personal skills that will enhance her/his coaching. Perhaps the most important of these relate to the ability to build and maintain relationships, which is associated with clear communication, empathy and trust. A coach should also be a living example of the benefits of martial arts training, not only in the school but in society as a whole.

► Retaining your students

The principle should be that everyone can be included, can fully participate and achieve, and can enjoy the feelings that achievement brings. Fun, achievable challenges will ensure that students keep coming back.

One strategy to ensure inclusion and that students continue training is to apply the 'EAST' principles of behavioural insights. The EAST principles are that if you want to encourage particular behaviour in people then the approach should be **E**asy, **A**tttractive, **S**ocial and **T**imely – or 'EAST' – in order to motivate them. To achieve this, give information that is easy to understand, attractive to students, offers opportunities to socialise, and takes place at a suitable time for the participants.

► Physical activity through inclusive martial arts

The elements of inclusive martial arts

Part of the appeal of martial arts is the diversity of forms they take. Martial arts contain a wide range of strikes using every part of the body, often forming the hand into a shape that is reminiscent of a weapon. Common terminology includes Knife Hand, Spear Hand and Hammer Fist. Blocks and evasion are common in many martial arts. Locks and sweeps can build into throws and are often taught alongside breakfalls and floor work.



It should be noted that throws, breakfalls, chokes, and strikes can be particularly dangerous for people with certain disabilities, especially people with weak neck joints, people with dwarfism or people with Down syndrome. They are even more risky if students are not taught in an adapted, appropriate way.

The fundamental elements of martial arts are the aspects common to most types or styles. They are divided into three main areas:

Basic principles

The basics of martial arts are about the use of whole body mechanics to develop speed and power while maintaining agility, balance and coordination (ABC). The basics develop focus and increase awareness of the mind and body at the moment of attack. They also include shifting the body to gain tactical advantage, falling safely and developing an indomitable spirit.

Partner work

Working with a fellow student adds depth and understanding to distance, targeting and timing, and thereby improves control of a technique. It also increases understanding of evasion, weight and body shifting, blocks, locks, throws, suppression, entering, deflection and unbalancing.

Forms

Forms or patterns are sequences of techniques created by previous generations of masters to increase understanding of martial arts. Forms also develop understanding of the history and roots of martial arts techniques. Styles and types of martial arts are often based on these forms, or on a reinterpretation of a form.

These are the common elements of inclusive martial arts which may be used to aid the behavioural, physical, mental and emotional development of any child, young person or adult:

Basics

Activities such as full, adapted or short forms of hand techniques, front punch, reverse punch, front kick or stick techniques.

Evasion

Activities such as full, adapted or short forms of blocks, blocks with partner, blocks against pads, or body shifting.

Striking with all parts of the body

Activities such as full, adapted or short forms of striking the air, striking pads, striking towards partner students in pairs.

Locks and breakfalls

Activities such as full, adapted or short forms of lock, choke, breakfall, throw, floor work.

Creative movement

Activities such as full, adapted or short forms of basic patterns of movements or forms.

Inclusive martial arts – practical tools

The line-up – rows and ranks

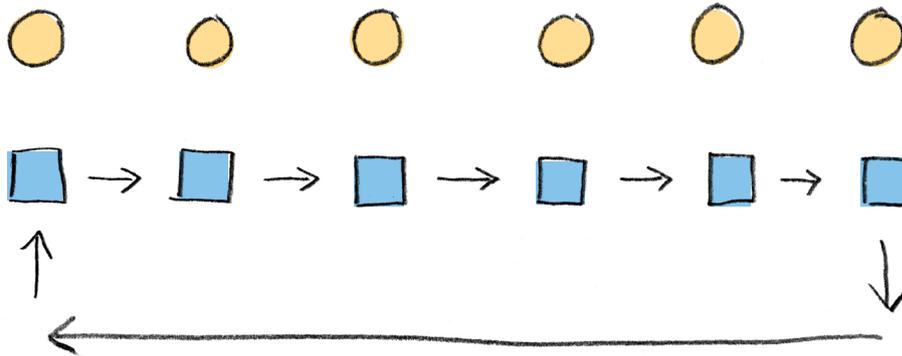
Training in rows and ranks is traditional in many martial arts. People with different abilities, from beginners right the way through to experts, stand in a line. Each student carries out the same technique in a different way according to their ability.

With a couple of minor changes, the line-up becomes a perfect vehicle for modifications and inclusive practice. Using STEP, and at the same time as everyone else, each person can perform the same technique adapted to their ability needs (modified activity), or a different technique (parallel activity). The line-up allows a coach to see every participant, which allows assessment of learning and individual coaching interventions with each student.

The line-up was a clever innovation by the old masters of martial arts. But as a coach you must be aware that line-ups can have limitations, such as inflexibility, boredom, and enforced uniformity.

Partner work – the speed date

A 'speed date' is traditional in many martial arts. Two rows of students face each other and carry out techniques using the other student as a target. The student at the end of one row then move to the other end and the rest move along one space to face a new partner student.



With a couple of minor changes, the speed date is a perfect vehicle for modifications and inclusive practice. One row could comprise students with higher skills and this is the row that moves. As with the line-up, each student performs the same technique using STEP, but adapted to their ability needs (modified activity); or each student could perform a different technique (parallel activity). The speed date allows the row with higher skills to peer-coach the other row by offering constructive feedback. The coach can see every student, which allows assessment of learning and individual coaching interventions with each student.

Building skills – work stations

Work stations are used in many traditional martial arts. Parallel activities are set up around the room and groups of students carry out different techniques at each station.

With a couple of minor changes, the work station is a perfect vehicle for modifications and inclusive practice. Each station should be set up with students carrying out the same technique but broken down into small bite-sized chunks using STEP, so that each station provides an ever greater challenge (parallel activity). The work station allows the coach to move between the stations offering constructive feedback. The coach can ask students to move to more or less challenging stations if they wish. Work stations are a great way to build up to full technique in small steps.

The practical set up of an exercise using STEP can be seen in this activity card:

Title of the card → **1 PRIME activity: Balance & movement**

Brief description of the activity → These activities enable learners to develop controlled balance with movement

What the coach needs to prepare → **What do you need?**

- Thin mats or soft floor-coverings.
- Throw-down markers (e.g., rubber spots) or plastic marker discs (note a slip risk with these).

How do you play?

- These activities challenge each learners' balance and control.

Compass points

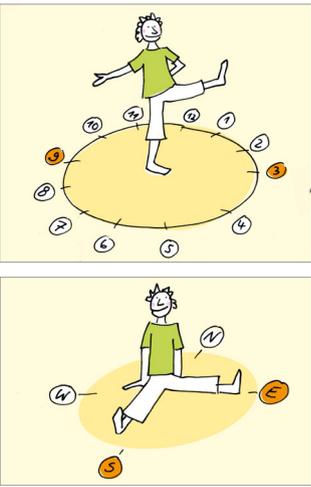
- Arrange four discs or throw-down spots in a circle around each individual representing points of the compass (or colours, or place names).
- Positioned at the centre of the compass, learners stretch/lunge to touch each point of the compass as directed by the coach or a partner; this encourages a transfer of weight.
- Vary the challenge by asking learners to keep one foot at the centre of the circle and stretch to the appropriate point with the other foot.

Clock face

- Arrange markers/spots in a circle representing a clock face.
- Learners stand, sit or kneel on a mat inside the circle.
- As directed by the coach or a partner, learners reach with hand or foot towards the appropriate disc.
- Try a sequence of numbers; learners stretch to each in turn; or use different parts of the body to indicate two/three numbers at the same time.

Who will benefit from balance & movement activities?

- All learners will establish a stable, balanced position from which movement can be generated.

Illustrations of the activities → 

How to adapt TASK to include all → **1 Balance & movement**

How to adapt EQUIPMENT to include all → Use the **STEP** adaptation tool to adapt these activities – four parts of any activity that can be modified in order to include a wider range of abilities – **Space, Task, Equipment, People**

STEP	Examples
Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with smaller spaces where the learners can easily reach the target markers; then increase to encourage more weight transfer.
Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try find a stable base position in different positions (e.g., kneeling, one knee, sitting, sitting with support, standing). • Progress to moving from each of these stable positions; (e.g., from kneeling, lean forward, sideways or back).
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use skittles or tall cones which can be reached more easily by seated learners or wheelchair users. • Incorporate target objects at different heights above the learners; e.g., attached to a wall or suspended on string from a kendo shinai held aloft by two partners.
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchair users can turn their chairs to face the appropriate disc as directed. • For vision impaired learners, the coach can issue instructions from behind the target disc/spot.

How to adapt the SPACE to include all →

How to adapt for the PEOPLE to include all →

Extension activity: Balance challenges

These activities are designed to encourage learners to develop balance and counterbalance against an opponent.

Stepping stones

- Arrange throw-down spots or strips of masking tape on the floor to create a short trail.
- Learners walk, crawl on all fours or follow the trail in their wheelchair.
- For learners using walking frames, allow more space between each spot or mark out larger 'stones' using paper and tape.
- Change the positioning of the stepping stones to create different challenges (e.g., further apart, closer together, diagonals).

Pull & push

- In pairs, two learners hold a belt or a ball between them – no direct contact; each learner tries to push or pull the ball/belt in order to force their opponent off-balance.
- This can be done in a standing or seated position, or between a standing and seated learner.
- Impose a restriction; e.g., both learners must stand on the same line or in a small circular space; they try to force their opponent off the line or out of the space by pulling or pushing on the ball/belt.

Extension activities: taking the activities further →

Additional activity cards can be found [here](#).

▶ **Summary**

- A good coach plays many different roles, and can become an important influence on students' development, both as people and as martial artists.
- Sessions characterised by fun, challenge and achievement will attract and retain students.
- The coach has a long tradition of effective practices to draw on in support of inclusive practice.
- A broad variety of elements used in lessons will motivate the students and help to keep them coming back.

Practical ideas for inclusive martial arts

The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

Mark Twain

► 10 tips

1. You may need to move a student's arm or leg when s/he cannot move by themselves. Support those students to help them perform techniques, gradually reducing the amount of support you offer, and increasing the challenge and decision making by the student.
2. Put coloured (wrist) bands on the student, red for right and blue for left. Facing her/him, wear red on your left and blue on your right, as if you are a mirror image. If you face the other way, change your bands round so you are still a mirror image. Forms and techniques can be taught very quickly and easily with these simple tools.
3. Four different coloured sheets of paper, orange, white, yellow and green, on the walls will aid the learning of forms and provide assistance in learning the direction of turns and movements. Alternatively, if you have your own facility, paint each wall in a different colour. Coloured cones or domes on the floor can also assist in learning directions of movements.
4. Give constructive feedback that includes guidance for improvement.
5. Formulate positive and negative feedback in an encouraging way.
6. Discuss the session with students and their experiences of learning the martial arts.
7. Reflect on your sessions. What went well? What would you change if you did it again? Did students learn and enjoy the session? What do you need to do to support your own continuing development?
8. Maintain a cycle of Plan – Do – Review.
9. Use grading as an opportunity for learning and reflection.
10. Coach the individual and not the martial art. It is easier to adapt a technique than a human being.

... and: MAKE IT FUN!

► **Communication**

Communication is central to the work of a coach. The way you talk, the words you use, the tone of your voice and your body language can affect others' opinion. Effective communication helps to create an environment of trust and inclusivity but ineffective communication can undermine them.

► **Engaging participants – Good marketing**

Europe has 80 million people (around 15%) with disabilities, and after the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games in London four out of five people with disabilities wanted to do more sport. As yet, however, fewer than two out of five actually participate. Poor communication seems to be one reason for that. It is often a major barrier to participation, so coaches need to consider different groups of people with different disabilities and how s/he can best communicate the opportunity to them.

To be inclusive, coaches need to consider additional factors such as ability to read or to understand spoken language. Communication should ideally be written, produced and distributed in a way that is accessible to all, e.g. when advertising your new sessions of inclusive martial arts, you need to communicate how the sessions will improve the participants' well-being. Publicity can also show how the sessions can improve mental well-being by meeting socially and participating in martial arts, thereby reducing stress and anxiety and increasing self-confidence.

Social well-being for some people might simply be about the chance to get out of the house and regularly meet people, while emotional well-being could be described as feeling good about oneself by developing self-confidence, -respect, -control, -discipline and -regulation.

If communication is delivered in one way only, it may not be able to reach everyone. People with learning difficulties are at particular risk of isolation. Think about how you might communicate the same message in different ways using social media and e-mails: for example, WhatsApp and Facebook can be used in both voice-to-text and text-to-voice modes. Consider how you can communicate in a way that is ideal for all. It is important that every communication sent, whether it is a calendar of events, promotional material or a group newsletter, will reach the widest possible audience.

The job of a communicator is also to understand the potential discrimination that could arise from overlooking the communication requirements of someone with a disability. Accessibility means ensuring that people with disabilities can access and understand communications and that there are no barriers to this. Making something accessible means providing alternative means (formats or options) for people to access what's on offer.

Inaccessible communications may include:

- For blindness/visual impairment: printed publications (magazines, flyers and reports), websites, use of images, PowerPoint presentations, PDF documents, colour contrast, posters, displays, banner stands, videos without audio commentary;
- For deafness/hearing impairment: speeches, presentations, awards ceremonies, announcements via loudspeakers and coaching sessions, videos without captioning or sign language interpretation, musical accompaniment (e.g. recorded events or ceremonies);
- For learning disabilities: complex use of language, data visualisation, layout of websites and documents, colour contrast, use of images, lengthy communications;
- For mobility problems/physical impairment: website layout and accessibility (e.g. too many clicks), positioning of signage, posters and layers, weight of printed publications.

Within the EU just over 16% of adults have literacy difficulties and are better at understanding simple texts and simple facts than more complex information.

If you are launching a new communication or campaign, consider the following:

- The person reading your communication might not necessarily be the intended recipient. It could be their parent, carer or personal assistant; be aware they could also block this;
- Make follow-up phone calls to help explain an annual membership increase or to ensure the information you send out to a member or participant also goes to their parent or carer if necessary.;
- Use inclusive images showing people with disabilities enjoying being active in martial arts;
- Use images that reflect the interaction between people in martial arts, not people with disabilities in isolation;
- Use images of coaches with disabilities encourage people's aspirations and show how they can develop;

- Use text that contrasts strongly (e.g. in colour) with the background or image behind it, so it can be read clearly;
- Use 'Easy Read' content wherever possible. Translators may be available online;
- Use a sans-serif style font (e.g. Verdana, Calibri or Arial) with a minimum size of 14pt;
- Avoid using block capitals and italic script;
- Use simple colours and design for ease of understanding by people with disabilities such as visual impairment, autism and learning disability;
- Use a single body of text rather than dividing it into columns, which some people with disabilities find more difficult to understand.

Following these simple ideas will help everyone understand your communications more easily, not only people with disabilities.

► Summary

- A good coach needs a wide range of technical, professional and personal skills, and is on a never-ending journey to improve them.
- Inclusive coaches have an additional skill-set: how to create and maintain an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcomed, challenged and valued.
- To be a good coach also means to be creative and to feel inspired by the challenge to include everyone. You should always consider the students' own ideas and welcome their support.
- The value of your communication is best judged by its effectiveness in conveying the messages you want.

It is not the impairment of the student that hampers you to teach her/him, but your limitation of teaching skills and creativity.

Lydia Zijdel

Disability awareness

*Be gentle, kind and beautiful, yet firm and strong,
Both mentally and physically.*

Keiko Fukuda

► Introduction

The following information is intended to give coaches an awareness of people with disabilities. A better-informed approach will help the coach to become more inclusive.

In general, for whatever disability your student may have:

- Ask her/him what kind of assistance s/he may need during, before and after class;
- Ask how s/he likes to be addressed. Language is very important in encouraging your students;
- Be aware that a student, whether with or without a disability, may have no idea of their potential in doing your martial art;
- Be honest about it if s/he is your first student with a particular disability: s/he is the expert in that, even though you are the expert in the martial art;
- Be prepared to see this as an adventure you all embark on together.

► Disabilities

The information given hereafter (in alphabetical order) is only a summary of some impairments/disabilities. It is not all-inclusive but it gives an idea of some, with suggestions regarding martial arts coaching. You might find additional information on the internet (e.g. via disability organisations), but the most accurate information you can receive is through your student. S/he can give you the best knowledge of her/his impairment and disability. Even two students with apparently the same condition might have different abilities and needs according to experience, environment, sex or gender, age, ethnicity, class, etc. It is worth noting all the disability groups below have produced not only martial arts students but coaches as well.

► Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a brain disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development.

- **Inattention:** wandering off task, lacking persistence, difficulty in sustaining focus, and being disorganised, where these problems are not due to defiance or lack of comprehension;
- **Hyperactivity:** moving about constantly, including in situations in which it is not appropriate; or excessive fidgeting, tapping, or talking. In adults, it may be extreme restlessness or wearing others out with constant activity;
- **Impulsivity:** making hasty actions that occur in the moment without first thinking about them, which may be potentially harmful; or a desire for immediate rewards, or an inability to delay gratification. An impulsive person may be socially intrusive and excessively interrupt others or make important decisions without considering the long-term consequences.

A student with ADHD might feel challenged by either an activity or attention control, or both. S/he might:

- Be extremely easily distracted. Frequently swap activities when working with students with ADHD;
- Not appear to be listening. Check frequently if s/he understands or give one of your senior students this task;
- Not be able to get organised. It could make your lesson more constructive if you assign her/him a Martial Arts Buddy (choose a more advanced student) during the session;
- Be hyperactive in some situations where calm is required. In time, you will know exactly how to organise your lessons to meet these differences;
- Find it difficult to participate quietly. You can sometimes build in extra 'Kiais' (shouts uttered when attacking) and/or make clear which are moments of quietness and which are not;
- Act without thinking and have difficulties taking turns. Make your instructions short and precise;
- Sometimes fidget and interrupt. Martial arts involve strictness and discipline, but try to correct the situation gently and with humour;
- Move about too much. See if you can turn these to the advantage of the exercise;
- Be disruptive. If a student is hurting someone else, for instance, be sure to take this seriously.

What might further help is to:

- Provide immediate and consistent feedback regarding positive behaviour;
- Develop a private signal system between you and the student which you can use to notify her/him when they are off-task or acting out of turn;
- Use the student's name to attract attention and look at her/him when communicating (helpful for all students);
- Be firm and consistent with rules, as is expected of martial arts coaches;
- Stay calm and always have a positive approach towards your students;
- 'Back off' if the person's frustration/anxiety begins to peak, which can happen due to frustration about a technique or a drill not working; always keep the safety of the student, the other students and yourself in mind;
- Establish a consistent and well-organised coaching environment as well as preparing your lessons well.

► **Amputation(s)**

An amputation is the surgical removal of part(s) of the body, such as an arm, leg, hand, foot (or parts thereof) because of trauma, medical illness or surgery. It is important to know how long ago the amputation took place and what (other) martial arts the student might have done already. Some students will wear a prosthesis and others not, either by choice or by necessity for medical reasons. In general, try to observe your student in their daily lives and activities and build their abilities into your martial arts techniques and exercises.

You might also come across students who were born without one or more extremities. Many of the coaching tips given here apply to teaching methods for these students as well.

What might be of help is to:

- Consider balance, coordination and strength before introducing (new) techniques;
- Discuss pain threshold and tolerance with the student;
- Monitor to prevent/reduce the risk of aggravated or potential injuries;
- Lay down solid basics first and keep it simple, which is helpful to all your students;

- Use your normal coaching techniques but with adaptations that will still challenge to this student;
- Find out if something is preventing the student from taking (full) part, e.g. a self-confidence issue, poor socket alignment or other pain).

Bear in mind that:

- If a person with an amputation lacks the muscular force to move a joint (prosthetic or not), other joints (most frequently the hips in the case of a leg amputation) have to work harder to enable the movement;
- Sometimes this might require using a chair or (turning) stool to perform techniques, or sitting on the ground;
- Repetition and reinforcement can improve coordination and mastery, but it can cause skin breakdown too, so find a balance in this with the student;
- Some students might use crutches or canes as supporting aids. Exploit the crutches and canes as martial arts tools/weapons and by such creativity you will discover many possibilities;
- These students might use a turning stool or chair, or their own wheelchair. Work with both possibilities, standing with aids or sitting as described.

Be aware that no two people with amputations are affected or deal with them in the same way. Some people with amputations can function as well as any student without disabilities, others cannot. Discuss directly with the student her/his specific needs and wishes. Sometimes it's a question of the material the student is using or the extent of the amputation. If the student is using a prosthesis which limits participation, encourage her/him to discuss the possibility of a more advanced prosthesis with a specialist. Whatever her/his needs, you and your school should give your full support.

► **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behaviour. Although autism can be diagnosed at any age, it is said to be 'developmental' because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life.

People with ASD have:

- difficulty with communication and interaction with other people;
- restricted interests and repetitive behaviours;
- symptoms that affect the person's ability to function properly in school, work, and other areas of life.

Autism is known as a 'spectrum' disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience. ASD occurs in all ethnic, racial and economic groups. Although ASD can be a lifelong disorder, treatments and services can improve a person's symptoms and ability to function, but there are no medicines to cure it.

Be aware that some students with ASD:

- Are prone to harming themselves. In a lesson where martial arts weapons are used, be extra aware, especially when performing techniques that can be harmful (e.g. sparring, hard break-falls).
- Do not always understand their role in a group, so make it clear what their role is and what is expected in this lesson or exercise;
- May be unaware of the effects of their behaviour. The same can be true for people with other disabilities (e.g. acquired brain damage, ADHD) so make clear any rules and regulations, general as well as specific to this lesson or exercise. Teach the rules and use prompts/reminders to reinforce them;
- May not be aware of other people's feelings, so if they are accidentally hurting someone, take time to deal with this;
- Tend to have poorer physical and motor skills. This is normal in many beginners anyway and some students without ASD will have difficulty with left and right and simultaneous techniques. Build schemes and repetition into your teaching during and at the end of each lesson;
- May lack motivation and have low self-esteem. You should encourage (all) students as much as possible in a positive way;
- May have an inability to transfer skills from one situation to another, so repetition is essential for all students, both during the lesson but also again at the end of it or in the next lesson;
- Are vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation, so give the student a chance to discuss this if it is happening;

- May exhibit challenging or disruptive behaviour, or may repeat/echo words or phrases, or be prone to excessive laughter. Emphasise that within martial arts there are ancient rules and regulations that can be bent but which reflect the guiding principle of the respect we have for each other within martial arts. You could display an easy-to-read version of these somewhere.
- May not respond, or even over-respond, to sound (which can happen to other students as well, for reasons such as depression or experience of violence), so make it clear when you are going to be using sounds such as 'Kiais';
- May have difficulty with oral expression and use gestures instead, so try to learn from their differences and find creative ways to accommodate this;
- May not respond to their names; try again and check that you have the student's attention;
- May not comply with general instructions when given to a whole group, or may have difficulty in understanding verbal communication. Ensure that students who need to communicate by different methods (like the hearing- or visually-impaired) stay within your field of vision, or appoint martial arts buddies to support them;
- May be over-imaginative or have limited imagination, or may not understand gestures or take things too literally. If you intend to use metaphors in your teaching be sure to explain this very clearly.

What might be of help is to:

- Change the exercise to something more comprehensive or fun if a student is having difficulties or is resistant to change;
- Let a student take the lead in an exercise if s/he is showing challenging behaviour, or to use her/him as your partner in demonstrating a technique;
- Use creative exercises or games in between other activities if a student is anxious or feeling depressed; this can assist non-ASD students as well.

Further ways to engage students with ASD (and other students who require specific attention) include:

- Using their names at the beginning of an instruction or question, and say what they should do rather than what not to do;
- Using visual communication when possible, and help them to anticipate what will happen next;

- Giving prior warnings of any change that is about to happen within the technique or the various exercises;
- Not over-stimulating them (if possible, face the student away from distractions such as a mirror), and providing a definite beginning and end to activities. Reduce anxiety by your confident and positive approach;
- Showing the participant that even if they lose control, you won't. Provide a safe place where they can go if something becomes too much and, if you need to go with them, have one of your senior students take over the class for a while.

► **Brain injuries**

We distinguish two major types of brain injury:

1. An acquired brain injury (ABI), which is an injury caused to the brain since birth, but is not related to a congenital disease. There are many possible causes, such as a stroke, near drowning, aneurism, a tumour, infections, or labour-induced (e.g. cerebral palsy, CP, or a cerebral lesion in the newborn);
2. A traumatic brain injury (TBI), which is an injury to the brain caused by trauma to the head. There are many possible causes, including road accidents, assaults, falls and accidents at home, within sport participation or at work. The effects of a traumatic brain injury can be wide-ranging and depend on several factors such as the type, location and severity of the injury.

The effects of ABI are often very similar to those of TBI, but there are key differences that make treating and coping with acquired brain injuries quite different.

Students with ABI and TBI:

- May have difficulties with balance, so create ways of working on this. Let them use a chair or stool instead of standing all the time. If they use a wheelchair, get them to try exercises while sitting on the mat instead. Use other students to support them and/or do exercises in pairs;
- Can have delayed fine or gross motor skills, so do exercises in steps to improve or trigger their different abilities;
- May not be able to control their limbs or to use one side of the body, so do not start right away with drills that include left and right movements. Concentrate on one side first; then pay atten-

tion to the 'paralysed' side and let a student use their working hand to move the not-working limb (e.g. when throwing an elbow blow). Constantly work and reinforce exercises to reduce coordination problems;

- May have restricted limb movements, so build in moments of rest to help them work at maximum capacity during the exercises;
- May have short-term memory loss, and therefore require constant and continual reinforcement of instructions.

Bear in mind that:

- Students may have challenges to motor control, including balance issues, lack of trunk control, physical slowness, and spasticity (the continual contraction of the muscle). You can help by adapting training to focus on posture and positioning during the early stages, or by changing the type of stress of a certain exercise;
- Exercising both upper and lower body at the same time can be challenging and might require extra training;
- Temperature can affect students of all abilities. Make sure to build in enough water breaks on hot days or let a student cool down with a wet towel if s/he cannot drink enough;
- The Moro reflex might occur. This reaction is present from birth and usually disappears in the first 6 months, except sometimes for people with ABI and TBI. It occurs when someone is startled by a loud noise or other environmental stimulus, or feels that s/he is falling. The reflex causes the person to extend the arms, legs and fingers and arch the back. You need to remember that sudden sounds or motions can cause this to happen. Certain drills and techniques may need to be practised on the ground or sitting on a chair, especially those which involve falls;
- Epilepsy can occur in all students with brain injuries (see *Epilepsy* below);
- Students may have mild up to severe learning difficulties (see *Learning Disabilities* below);
- Students may have difficulty moving between or around objects, or in judging sizes and shapes. Use softer objects in your space, such as strike pads;
- Students may have speech and language difficulties in conjunction with eating and drinking difficulties. Try to use body language and demonstrate techniques without speech as much as possible (as with students from different cultural backgrounds and languages), and if necessary have a martial arts buddy help them to drink water. Sometimes they will need to eat in class (as with students with diabetes) so you must give them the opportunity to do so.

Always remember:

1. No two people with brain injuries are affected in the same way. Some are very articulate, others may struggle to speak, and the mildest brain injuries may be barely noticeable;
2. However (and however severely) a student is physically affected by brain damage, whether acquired or traumatic, her/his mental abilities and intelligence may well remain intact.

► **Epilepsy**

Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological disorders and has been subject to stigma. In the past the activities of students with epilepsy are often restricted and physical exercise discouraged. Although the last few decades have seen a change in attitude, the exact role of exercise in inducing seizures or aggravating epilepsy remains unclear. However, research suggests that physical exercise might actually be beneficial for students with epilepsy in terms of improving physical and mental health parameters and social integration, and reducing markers of stress, epileptic activity and the frequency of seizures.

The consensus is that there should be no restrictions on physical exercise for people with controlled epilepsy (except for 'extreme' sports such as scuba diving or skydiving). Broader restrictions apply for people with uncontrolled epilepsy. Individual risk assessments to consider seizure types, frequency, patterns or triggers may allow students with epilepsy to enjoy a wide range of physical activities, including martial arts.

It is important to realise that:

- Seizures are rarely triggered by exercise, but make sure you know what to do if it happens. Get relevant information about a student prior to the first lesson;
- Aerobic exercises seem to be safe for most people with epilepsy and if they have controlled epilepsy they should be encouraged to exercise;
- Epilepsy can be an impairment on its own or in conjunction with other disabilities (e.g. brain injuries);
- If you notice a pattern between seizures and exercise, you should limit the type of exercise or use an alternating sequence; or try an activity for shorter periods of time with frequent rests and hydration;

- Some activities should be restricted to the coolest parts of the day in hot weather;
- The amount or intensity of exercise can be gradually increased if the student tolerates it without any problems;
- Serious injuries in students with epilepsy (young and old) are uncommon and rarely occur during participation in martial arts;
- When it comes to competition the students with epilepsy should be encouraged to take part;
- The student should be able (or taught) to recognise an activity that involves risk and to make an informed decision about performing it (this applies to all your students);
- Although the main worry with contact sports is head or bodily injury, students with epilepsy are not necessarily more likely to be hurt than other students. If seizure did occur, there is a chance of injury if someone were to tackle the student on a hard surface;
- Head armour is often advised in contact sports for all students, not only students with epilepsy;
- Martial arts, especially in competition, are among the best regulated sports that exist. Reflect this in your lessons by having higher-ranking students act as referees (a good learning process for all).

To watch someone with a seizure can be frightening. However, most seizures are not an emergency. They stop by themselves with no permanent damage. There isn't much you can do to stop a seizure once it starts but you can help protect the student from harm if you:

- Are familiar with first aid and if necessary call the emergency number (keeping the other students calm at the same time);
- Let some of your senior students take over the lesson, or if one has knowledge of first aid let her/him apply it;
- Keep other students out of the way;
- Clear away hard or sharp objects;
- Don't try to hold your student down or stop her/his movements, but if possible place her/him on one side to help keep the airway clear;
- Look at your watch at the start of the seizure and time it. This is important in case emergency help is slow to arrive;
- Don't put anything in your student's mouth. The teeth might get damaged or you might get bitten. Contrary to popular myth, it is not possible to swallow the tongue during a seizure;
- Remember that after a seizure your student will feel very tired and probably awkward about

the situation. Let her/him take time to recuperate or sit out the rest of the lesson and just watch. Keep her/him involved by asking questions about the exercises;

- Do not dwell too much on what has happened, but involve the student in your ongoing lesson as much as possible;
- Do not (ever) send the student home alone.

► **Growth disabilities**

There are about two hundred different conditions that can cause growth disabilities, each having different causes, symptoms and consequences. In most cases, this type of impairment exists from birth, although it may not be noticed until later in life. These disorders are caused by problems with the genes involved in growth. It is not possible to alter or change the genes, therefore the cause of the impairment cannot be treated. This type of growth condition can be inherited (meaning it is passed on from parent to child) or can occur for no apparent reason.

There are many examples of growth disabilities, such as Turner syndrome (only in women), Silver-Russell syndrome, Noonan syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, and brittle bone disease. The best known is achondroplasia, or dwarfism.

Dwarfism, also known as short stature, occurs when an organism is much smaller than average. In humans, it is sometimes defined as an adult height of less than 147 centimetres (4ft 10in), regardless of sex, although some individuals with dwarfism are slightly taller. Dwarfism is characterised by a normal length torso but short arms and legs: the upper arms and legs are shorter than the lower arms and legs. The pelvis is tilted forward, creating a curvature in the back so the stomach protrudes. Many people with dwarfism have back problems. The head is often large with a high and protruding forehead. In proportionate dwarfism, both the limbs and torso are unusually short, whereas disproportionate dwarfism affects either the limbs or the torso. Intelligence and lifespan are usually unaffected.

Some important points for coaches:

- People with a dwarf condition have skeletal challenges and joint instability. This means you must find solutions for (especially) joint locks and releases. Also, they are heavier than you

might expect (as skeleton weight is unaffected), so let them do certain exercises partly sitting on a lower stool or on the ground. In a mixed class, have students without disabilities sit on the floor or on their knees, to meet the height of the other student. But teach students with dwarfism to work with people of average height as well, for a sense of realism in arts that involve self-defence techniques and/or competition.

- Ask a student with dwarfism if there are aspects you need to consider that you might not see (e.g. people with achondroplasia have kyphosis (forward curving) or scoliosis (sideways curving) of the spine. Constant shocks may cause damage to the spine, so use a softer strike pad, or one filled with air. Exercise and physical activity can help to control weight gain (as for most students) but students with dwarfism are often of greater weight in relation to height, so you need to be aware of the impact their weight might have on their joints and bones. Make them sit on the mat to do certain exercises, or on a small stool.
- Be aware that students with dwarfism tire more quickly when standing or running or performing other mobility exercises and techniques. They might be moving up to four times further than students with longer arms and legs.

► **Hearing Impairment (HI)**

A Hearing Impairment is a partial or total inability to hear. Someone is said to be deaf when s/he has little to no hearing. Hearing loss may occur in one or both ears. We make a distinction between pre-lingual and post-lingual hearing impairments: the former can affect the ability to learn spoken or oral language, while the latter presents more challenges in learning sign language, especially when the hearing impairment is acquired as an adult. Do not assume that all students with HI know sign language or can read your lips accurately. While experienced lip-readers can pick up a good number of words, no more than about 60 percent can be picked up in a given sentence, leaving several words incomprehensible.

Teaching a student with HI has a number of implications:

- There are different ways to communicate with a person with HI. Learn to grasp these, but in general always make sure the HI can see you and the technique you are showing to the group. And ask your student how s/he prefers to communicate. Some might bring their own keyboard; otherwise use a notepad and pen or a tablet/iPad to explain certain things;

- Speak clearly without exaggeration of your lip movements and always stay in the student's field of vision;
- Slow down your speech, and avoid speaking too much in the first place. Demonstrate rather than explain an exercise;
- Don't stand with the sun or light behind you. You can't be seen so well;
- Don't cover your mouth with your hand or a pen or paper. If you wear protective hand gear, be careful not to raise your hands too high when speaking;
- Learn some basic sign language (SL) if your student understands this. It helps if you can refer to some of the techniques by hand movement. Basic SL can be found on the internet, as can short films showing martial arts and self-defence techniques (see final point below);
- First explain a technique or drill orally and then demonstrate it (or vice versa), always making your demonstrations clear;
- Do not speak and demonstrate at the same time. A student with HI cannot take in both at the same time.
- Avoid writing while speaking, for the same reason;
- Make sure that a student is paying attention before you speak. You could do this with a gentle tap on the shoulder or a wave, or ask another student to indicate s/he needs to pay attention;
- New words for martial arts techniques, especially words in a different language (e.g. Japanese, Thai, Korean), can be difficult to learn. Write them down and display them clearly;
- Ensure that a student with HI is aware of changes, such as to a session time. You could create a WhatsApp circle (or similar) to pass on new information to your class, and it can also inform them of other events within your martial arts organisation;
- On the internet, especially YouTube, you will find videos explaining different martial arts techniques in SL. Browse for signing in your native language.

If you want to work with an interpreter (SLI) make sure s/he knows enough words in SL about your martial art. Establish prior to your lesson that the SLI should leave the technical part entirely to you. Always wait until the SLI is ready to sign before you continue and do not assume that a student with HI is now quite clear about what is expected. To help the SLI, make a list of all the techniques in your language with a description of what each entails.

► Intellectual disabilities

The term *intellectual disability* refers to a condition which restricts intellectual functions like communicating and taking care of oneself, and which impairs social skills. Such limitations cause children to develop intellectually more slowly than others. They may take longer to walk, talk, and perform basic functions. It is probable that children with intellectual disabilities will have difficulty learning in school. They do learn; it just takes them longer. Even so, certain things may prove impossible for some of them.

The best-known intellectual disability is *Down Syndrome* (DS), which is a genetic disorder typically associated with physical growth delays, distinctive facial features and mild to moderate intellectual disabilities

Some degree of developmental disability is usual, but it is often mild to moderate. However, mental and social development may be impaired, and a student with DS could exhibit:

- Impulsive behaviour, so make sure that you have a clear lesson plan and set boundaries to what you allow or do not allow;
- A tendency to touch or hug others, so set rules about when this is allowed and when not;
- Poor judgment. Make each exercise or drill clear and precise; let the student with DS know what is expected; and make sure s/he knows what to do and how to keep things safe for her/himself and any partner;
- Short attention span. Change exercises frequently; do not make the drills too long or too exciting, especially not for beginners; build each exercise up bit by bit and repeat frequently, with some games for fun in between;
- Restricted learning capabilities. It will take time to develop certain drills in your martial arts style. In principle a student with DS can learn everything if it is adapted to meet her/his physical challenges. For example, use colours to mark the sides of the room (east, west, south, north) to help learning the directions of kata/forms; write down the names of techniques on big cards, preferably with a picture of it; give a student with DS a personal notebook in which both you and the student keep notes about what you did in the lesson and what to learn for next time.

Medical complications often accompany DS. Here is a list of some which may also apply to people without DS and as a coach you need to know:

1. Congenital heart defects

If your student has a congenital heart defect, you should:

- Find out if when s/he was operated on and what challenges s/he might have;
- Pace your exercises for this student and keep an eye on the colour of her/his lips, if they turn blue, or s/he is out of breath, allow a break. Have the student drink some water and sit down if necessary but do not dwell on it. As soon as the student regains her/his breath, continue;
- Be familiar with basic first aid for heart problems and/or incidents.

2. Hearing loss; poor vision; cataracts (clouded eyes)

See *Hearing impairments* and *Visual impairments*.

3. Hip and joint problems, such as dislocations

As for all students with skeletal impairments, it is important to strike a balance between active and relaxed movements. Ehlers Danlos Syndromes (EDS) are a group of inherited conditions that affect connective tissue such as skin, ligaments, tendons, blood vessels, internal organs and bones. The different types of EDS may share characteristics such as stretchy or fragile skin that breaks or bruises easily. People with EDS may also experience hypermobility or dislocation of their joints. Provide a small stool (preferably a revolving one) on which the student can do the various exercises, and avoid high kicks or impact kicks on strike pads. Use air-filled strike pads.

4. Chronic constipation

This can cause unexpected stomach/abdominal pain during your lesson. It can be an especial problem if someone hits the abdominal part, e.g. when doing impact drills. Make sure your student has told you what s/he needs in terms of using the facilities during a class.

5. Dementia (thought and memory problems)

Although this is more common in older people with DS, it can also occur earlier. If you have a student with DS, refer to the sections *Autistic spectrum disorder*, *Brain injuries* and *Learning disabilities* in this chapter. In any case, be precise about what you want the student to do and give clear instructions for each part of the drill or technique to be learned.

6. Obesity

Students with DS have an increased likelihood of being obese, although it is not inevitable, and they can benefit from regular physical activity as much as everyone else. If students with DS are obese, remember to introduce them to the martial arts gradually and with sensitivity.

► **Learning Disabilities (LD)**

Learning Disabilities are neurologically-based processing problems. These processing problems affect the learning of skills such as reading, writing and/or maths. They can also interfere with higher level skills such as organisation, time planning, abstract reasoning, long- or short-term memory and attention. It is important to realise that learning disabilities can affect an individual's life beyond academics and can impact relationships with family and friends and in the workplace. A learning disability cannot be cured or fixed; it is a lifelong challenge. It is often called a 'hidden disability'.

There are many levels of LD from mild to profound, distracting to various extents from daily activities or learning capabilities. Some people with LD need explanation of simple tasks and others need support and full-time assistance with all aspects of their lives. Some have other disabilities too, such as dyslexia and autism, though in some countries these are considered to be learning difficulties not disabilities.

Martial arts provide people with LD with a social environment and life skills, just as for many students with or without disabilities.

Students with LD:

- Often take longer to learn things and might need extra support in learning new skills; they might not understand complex information, so try to keep things simple and explicit to include everyone;
- May need support to communicate and/or socialise, as will some other students with disabilities;
- Need a coach to be consistent, organised and patient.

Therefore you should:

- Give clear and simple instructions;
- Break down techniques into small bite-sized chunks;
- Demonstrate small skills and build up slowly;
- Repeat techniques regularly;
- Appoint a 'Martial Arts Buddy' to assist the person with LD and other students with disabilities who might find it helpful. The Martial Arts Buddy can assist these students to learn and understand the various techniques or drills. But avoid over-dependence on one person and change the role regularly, unless this will confuse the student with LD.

► **Visual Impairments (VI)**

Visual Impairment, also known as vision impairment or vision loss, affects the ability to see in a way that is not remediable by usual means such as glasses, lenses or operations. There is a distinct difference between congenital or early visual impairments and those acquired much later in life.

In general, people with VI learn how to use sound and touch to help interpret their environment. Some students may:

- See nothing while some may see only outlines;
- See a small area in detail but nothing around that area;
- See best in good light and some in poor light;
- Have seen in the past and have a memory of how people move;
- Never have been able to see and must learn from description;
- See better at different times of the day or on different days, so always check for this;
- Not be able to learn by imitation, so after demonstrating your exercises, check if the student understands.
- Need to be asked what s/he needs in terms of assistance, such as using her/his name to ensure attention and perhaps use touching as well – but always ask the student if that's ok beforehand;
- Lack gross motor skills, so work on these as well as balance, left/right movements, etc.

Further things that can help you as the VI students' coach:

- Use duct tape so that students with VI can feel the floor, and on mats you can use removable pieces of Velcro with the rough side up;
- Use coins taped to the floor (if possible) to make a guide-path, or again use Velcro;
- Keep the floor clear and avoid low-hanging items (e.g. punch bags);
- Keep explanations clear and create a quiet and focussed learning environment, so do not give explanations while students are working out, especially not when 'Kiais' (shouts) are required;
- Use the 'hands of the clock' (12 o'clock, 3 o'clock, etc.) to refer to the training area, but first check if your student uses a different method;
- If you are working in pairs, create space around the VI student so s/he cannot get hurt or harm others, especially when involving weapons, throws or multiple attackers, and make her/his partner co-responsible for safety in the lesson;
- When demonstrating something, sometimes use your VI student as your partner so s/he can feel the technique; and/or let her/him perform the technique on you, to check if s/he has grasped it;
- Use appropriate touch, but first ask the student if they object to you moving them into position.

A note about canes:

Some students may use a cane with which to scan for obstacles or orientation marks. Canes are of different lengths and have rubber bungs on the end, which might vary according to individual preference.

Canes can be used with different colour bands. A red band is a reflective strip for being visible at night; alternate red and white bands are used by people who are deaf and blind; there are also pink or patterned canes, again according to preference.

A note about guide dogs:

Guide dogs are not the eyes and ears of the VI person, and should only be considered as an aid. The dog does not lead but will guide the person around obstacles. Ask the student where s/he wants the guide dog to stay during the class. The student is solely responsible for the dog and should explain to everyone else in the class how they should behave towards it.

Not all people with VI have guide dogs. There are many reasons for this including personal preference and cost. Guide dogs can sometimes be excluded under insurance terms.

Familiarising a VI student with the teaching space:

When a student comes to your lesson/school for the first time, guide her/him around the classroom. Let the student hold your elbow, if s/he is used to that way of being guided. Walk towards the door, telling the student what s/he is doing: "We are walking across a wooden floor – coming to a doorway – there is a change in the light – there is a step coming up – here you can feel the mat," etc. Or ask the student to stand behind you with their hands on your shoulders. As you move round the room, say "If you reach out with your left hand you can feel the door jamb – we are going through the door – now feel the wall – we are turning left – now we're going to turn right round and go back through the door," etc. Never pull or drag the student; let her/him be gently guided.

► **Wheelchair dependency**

A wheelchair is a moveable chair with wheels that a person can control manually or electronically. A wheelchair is used by people unable to walk on their own. This condition may be temporary or (e.g. people with multiple sclerosis or other muscle impairments) or permanent (e.g. paraplegia or quadriplegia). There are many conditions which may result in the need for a wheelchair. This means that some of your wheelchair-using students might need it throughout the lesson and others only occasionally; some may use a manual wheelchair and others an electric one.

The martial arts have a long tradition of working with wheelchair-using students and for decades now some coaches are wheelchair users, too.

Advice for working with wheelchair-using students:

- Don't assume that they can't move their legs at all;
- Some permanent users may have problems regulating their temperature and get cold quickly, or they may not perspire and so overheat (e.g. people who are quadriplegic, or people with immobility);
- While every student should drink plenty of fluid before and during your class, especially on

warm days, this is especially so for people who do not walk. Sometimes they might even need spraying with water;

- Some students are challenged in raising their arms up high, so check every student's range of movement and balance;
- They may get hand problems such as blisters when wheeling on a mat. Let their partners in a drill come to them, not the other way round;
- make sure that other students take turns to partner a wheelchair user;
- When using a mat the wheels should be clean, especially if other students are barefoot. Some might possess a second wheelchair for sport;
- Tyres that are flat will cause considerable loss of mobility;
- By using a strap around the waist and the wheelchair a student might enhance her/his balance and reach;
- If they have a bladder control challenge (perhaps using a colostomy bag/catheter) give them space and time to regulate this during the class (and where applicable this could be the case for older students without disabilities too);
- Some might have spina bifida (born with an open spine) or a shunt. Ask these students specifically where they see their limitations regarding breakfalls and blows and kicks to the head;
- Work with them on their range of movement and try to shift borders in their abilities. Sometimes limitations are caused by earlier operations or deterioration, but never underestimate a beginner's anxieties and hurdles;
- If they can do ground work out of the chair, be sure that the mats don't separate, and take care no obstacles are lying around;
- Sports wheelchairs might have an anti-tip system fitted to them. This can make off-mat exercises with a lot of movement safer but might cause problems on mats or a soft floor. More confident students might want to take off the anti-tip system;
- Reduce the height of punch bags so students can always punch within their own body reach.

General points to remember:

- Wheelchairs can be manual or electronic; they have different back-rests to support the user depending on how well s/he can sit up straight; and some wheelchairs have push-handles. Not all students like or need to be pushed;
- Some users are flexible and can bend or lean forwards or sideways; those who are not can use

- a strap around the legs, feet or waist to improve their balance and turn more easily;
- Students without disabilities are sometimes inclined to lean on the wheelchair, or to rest something on the back or on the push-handle. Teach your students not to use the wheelchair as storage, as well as not to use it without asking first;
 - Other students might want to try performing martial arts techniques in a wheelchair too! If possible, and if it is not insensitive to allow it, keep a spare one for them to experience this. Do this in a safe way (preferably on a mat) and let the person with the wheelchair guide them;
 - Any personal assistant (PA) of a wheelchair user should not normally be present during your lessons. Appoint other students to assist instead. If the PA must be in the lesson, or comes in before or after it, always include the wheelchair user in any conversation. Never ignore the student with the disability;
 - Ensure the surface is suitable for wheelchairs to move properly or take out some sections of the mat if possible;
 - Check that your classroom is suitably equipped and accessible, with lifts if required and preferably with accessible changing rooms, showers and toilets; and involve all your students in making the lessons suitable for wheelchair users;
 - Make adequate space and time available for changing clothes or using the bathroom facilities. Sometimes just hanging a curtain or screen in front of a toilet or dressing room will give adequate privacy and space.

► Summary

- It is useful to have an understanding of the impairments and disabilities of your students.
- But it is more important to remember that students are not their disabilities!
- Disability awareness always involves generalisations and simplifications. So remember to talk and listen to your students as individuals.

*There is no finish line. When you reach one goal,
find a new one.*

Chuck Norris