

Element 2 – respect for others

Here the second element of the social justice model curriculum design proposed by Picower is applied to people with disabilities. The aims are listed below, alongside activities to bring these into your classroom.

Student aims:

- increase respect and tolerance
- deconstruct stereotypes of disabilities
- provide opportunities to share backgrounds
- build a culture of respect and desire of inclusive society.

It's important to provide opportunities for students to talk about disabilities in an open and non-judgmental way. Some people may not consider disability to be a geographical issue. However, it is inherently geographical as geographers can offer potential solutions to problems faced by disabled people, as well as understanding society and different roles within it, offering empathy to the lives of others and a way of highlighting, and possibly reducing, disadvantages and discrimination faced by some groups in society.



Image taken from <https://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/Disability%20and%20Neurodiversity%20Network>

Introduction activity

It may be worth introducing the concept of disability through some honest statistics such as, approximately 1 in 6 people have a disability. More disability statistics can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/disability-facts-and-figures/disability-facts-and-figures>. This could be done as a game of true or false, or estimation by the students.

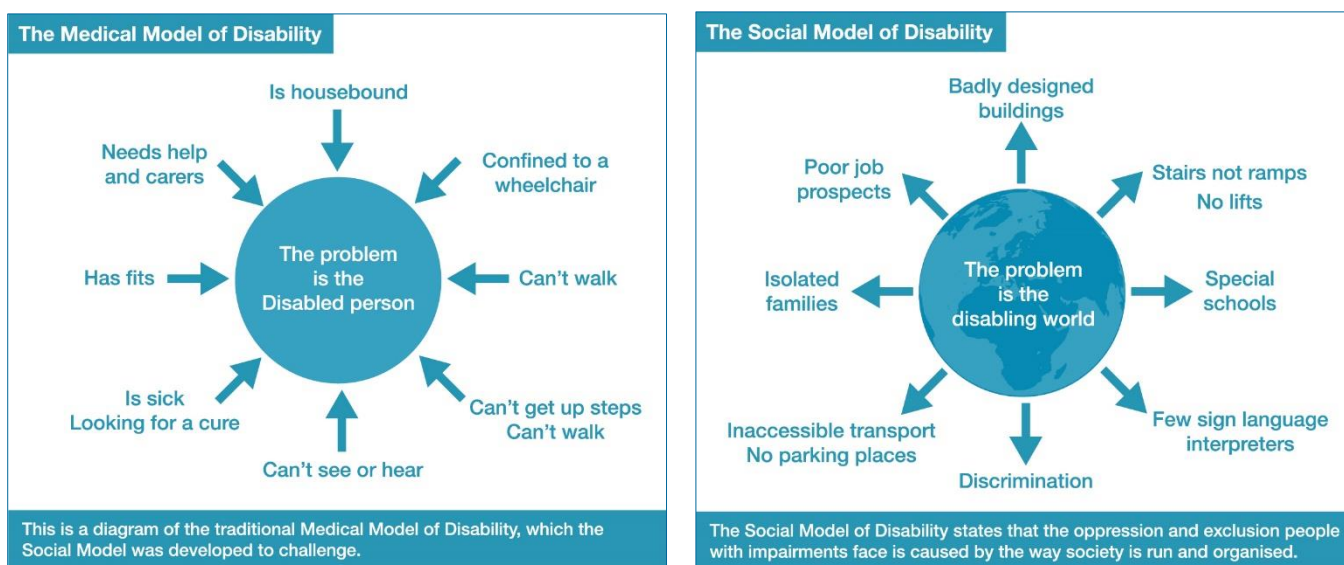
Activity 1: Models of disability

Ask the students, what makes life difficult for people who have disabilities? This could be in relation to a specific area of your community or generally. They may reply with person-centred answers, such as 'can't see' or 'can't hear' or answer with 'need access to a ramp'.

Teaching point 1

From the previous answers, ask students to sort their responses into person-centred and society-centred. From this you should introduce the models of disability – medical and social. The medical model highlights a person’s deficiencies or difficulties, whereas the social model identifies that society, buildings and culture can be changed so people are not as disadvantaged. This [video](#) from Scope explains the social model of disability.

Models of disability. Source: Factsheet: *The social model of disability*, Inclusion London, 2015.



Activity 2: Social solutions

Can students link their statements from Activity 1 looking at the problems of being disabled, or offer social solutions to problems they may face? Some examples are given in the table below.

Difficulty faced by person	Society issue
Unable to see well	Add yellow lines to steps
Need to use a wheelchair	Make surfaces flat, doors wider and use ramps

Follow up activity suggestions

As geographers it is our duty to show empathy and speak out for those who are at risk of discrimination or being disadvantaged. From looking at the social model students could carry out one of the following activities:

- Interview a local disabled activist. Find out what their biggest difficulties are and how they cope.
- Survey the school/ local shopping centre/ supermarket for adjustments for disability. Evaluate if they are enough. Is the area inclusive? Are they well maintained? What else could be done?
- Make an accessibility map – consider one disability; this doesn't have to be a visible one. Produce a map to show possible routes, access issues and recommendations.
- Consider why we have these opinions of disability. Think about when and where you see people with disabilities. This could be in your local area, television or other media forms. Is this representative of society?
- Design a community centre with access for as many people as possible. Label the adjustments and reasons for making them.

From carrying out these activities students should become more aware of the whole of society and how they can use their voices to support others when they see disadvantage.

For more information

Models of disability

- Scope – Social model of disability video. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3dC8HfO>
- Inclusion London. Available at: <https://bit.ly/39Lq6Sb>

Accessibility maps

- Quick Project: Accessibility on the London Underground (2016). Available at: <https://cambooth.net/accessibility-on-the-tube/>
- #MapMyDay – Movement for Accessibility, posted by posabilitymagazine, 3 December, 2015. Available at: <https://posabilitymagazine.co.uk/mapmyday-movement-for-accessibility/>

Designing for inclusion

- Dos and don'ts on designing for accessibility. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3utG5Mz>
- Boys, J. (no date) *Disability and ability: towards a new understanding*. The Design Council. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3dLoyc3>