

all eyes on us Learning Resource

all eyes on us: exploring the London 2012 Paralympic Games

A New Direction has devised a set of resource materials to accompany the film all eyes on us. The materials target Key Stages 3 + 4 and can be used to support the new National Curriculum Citizenship programme of study. The film explores the political and social issues of disability against the backdrop of the Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

The aim of this resource is to provide prompts for classroom discussions, facts and figures about disability, historical context about the games and disability in the arts more widely. Though our target is Key Stages 3 + 4, the resource may also be useful for other Key Stages, including primary, in which case some of the proposed activities may need adapting.

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Section 1: Synopsis



Photo credit Tim & Barry

A. Film Summary

During the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games, Stephen Hawking told an audience of millions to look to the stars. When they looked up they saw an entire cast of disabled performers high in the sky on trapezes, ropes and perched upon gravity-defying poles. They saw Paralympian Tanni Grey-Thompson fly overhead in a gold wheelchair and amputee Afghan war veteran Joe Townsend come hurtling into the stadium on a zip wire.

all eyes on us follows the journey of four inspirational performers as they prepare to perform in the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Stephen, Lauren, Johnnie and David trained for four months in preparation for this 'once in a lifetime' experience.

With a voiceover from well-known British actor, Mat Fraser, all eyes on us sees 22 year old Jacqui Adeniji-Williams meeting each of the performers during their training to discuss how their involvement had an impact on their lives. Relating her own experience of disability to theirs, personal stories are revealed, raising key questions about access and changes in perception.

B. Background to the film

A New Direction connects children, young people and education with the best of arts and culture in London.

With the aim of developing young people's skills and providing access to cultural experiences, and using London 2012 as their inspiration, A New Direction commissioned Eelyn Lee Productions to produce a film exploring disability and access to cultural participation, working with a group of talented young film makers from the Olympic host boroughs (Barking & Dagenham, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest).



Photo credit Benjahmen Smith

The young team, made up of Jacqui Adeniji-Williams (the film's presenter) and other young people working as sound recordists, camera operators and photographers, were granted unique access to film the rehearsals of the Paralympic opening ceremony, giving the film its unique perspective.

The production of the film created a unique sense of belonging and respect among the young people, producing very high quality work including a photography exhibition curated by <u>Tim & Barry</u> and the film itself.

all eyes on us comes at a time when the UK's disabled and non-able bodied young people have reduced access to transport, education, and the arts. As a London based organisation whose remit is to connect young people with arts and culture, A New Direction wanted to ensure that young Londoners had the opportunity to experience the Olympic and Paralympic Games on their own terms.

One of the key aims of this resource is to ensure that the legacy of the Paralympic moment is not forgotten. The Paralympic Games offered the best chance in a generation to help people in the UK learn about being disabled. The Games were important because they rubbished the idea that being disabled means 'less'.

C. Director's Statement

The Power of Participation

After months of trying to gain access to make a film about the opening ceremony, LOCOG finally gave us three filming days in rehearsals. With that green light, any fears that this world event might just come and go without us taking part suddenly disappeared. Eelyn Lee Productions and a crew of young filmmakers from East London had meaningful roles to play during the summer of 2012! We were active participants in the London Olympic and Paralympic Games...

With only one month to the event itself we had to fire up the production machine and be smart about finding our characters and story. We had access to 35 members of the professional cast who had already been rehearsing for four months. Their finely honed bodies, brash banter and camaraderie were testament to a rigorous training regime and hours of hanging out. The bond between them was striking.

As a film crew we too made a formidable bunch. Young filmmakers and professional filmmakers, complete with our own photographers and journalists we were often a team of eight but with a year's experience of working together we too created our own harmony.

Much of my film work involves active participation and I like to work collaboratively. The process of working with a group of people to make a film is a great shared experience but for the performers, the added adrenalin of working together to put on a live show for an audience of 80,000, their journey was intensified.

For Stephen our main character, the experience was to be life changing. On my first research visit to rehearsals Stephen was the first person to introduce himself, telling me what an 'amazing experience' he was having. Participating with an entire cast of deaf and disabled performers meant seeing himself in a new context and discovering new confidence. Using his body as a form of expression, performing atop a thirty-foot pole had triggered a newly affirmed body image.

Raised self-esteem; newly found confidence; a creative journey, all these things sounded familiar to me. Of course, these are the things we hope to achieve when running participatory arts projects in schools, with young people and in other settings. Stephen was experiencing a shared creative process, facilitated by skilled leaders all working towards a common goal loaded with exceptionally high-stakes.

This made me think about how the Olympic and Paralympic Games offer opportunities for many people to participate in different ways. From the sportsmen and women and their teams of coaches, dieticians and national entourage to the opening ceremony performers and their directors, choreographers, musicians and stage crew. From the audiences in the stadiums and their living rooms to the film crews, journalists and photographers relaying the images.

During London 2012 there was another layer of participation which seemed to encapsulate the spirit of taking part and that was the Games Makers. Hundreds of volunteers helped 'make the games happen' and were uncharacteristically British in their gregarious friendliness. Young and old, they took the role and ran with it, making it their own.

With the 'Games' providing so many opportunities for taking part, either as active participants, audience members or storytellers, and all on a global scale, the Olympic and Paralympic Games are possibly the largest participatory sports and arts projects ever to have been conceived.

As a host nation, 'taking part' was tangible. With the event on our doorsteps, for us, the filmmakers of East London, it was particularly significant to have a role to play. For the young people working on the film, some of whom them selves are deaf and disabled, the experience has informed and validated their identities as world-playing local filmmakers.

Stephen's story demonstrates the power of participation as a means of transformation. Whether a youth club drama project, a national sports event or an international cultural exchange, projects led by participation, together with expertise and a meaningful goal can instill a sense of purpose for those taking part. If we extend these lessons to wider participatory settings such as the school; the workplace; the streets maybe we could create a more inclusive society.

Eelyn Lee, June 2013

Section 2: Classroom activities



Photo credit Rosalyn Barnett

A. The film and interviews

all eyes on us is available for free at www.anewdirection.org.uk/all-eyes-on-us). It lasts 26 minutes. If you are unable to access the film through the website, please contact A New Direction (info@anewdirection.org.uk) to request a DVD version of the film.

In addition to the film you can download stories and interviews about the people involved in the making of the film here. Reading them will make understanding the film easier and provide useful context for how and why the film was produced.

B. Discussions

Here are three ways of discussing the film with your class.

I. Explore the barriers disabled people can face

all eyes on us invites us to think about what can make life difficult for the people in the film - is it their disability? The way they view their disability?

The way we view their disability? Or is it more to do with getting around day to day and whether they can get on a bus? It's probably a combination of all these things.

One way into this discussion could be to talk about:

- how having a disability can make life harder and then to talk about how David, Stephen, Lauren and Johnnie have developed their own ways to deal with it.
- Consider whether they still face barriers. If so what are they? And is it up to them to overcome them?

II. Discuss differences in the main characters

The film hints at a common 'journey' that all disabled people have to go on as they cope and come to terms with their disability. But it also shows that there are so many different ways to be disabled and different ways to live with being disabled. Is the label 'disabled' a useful way of understanding what people with disabilities might be like? Or does it just tell us that they might have some needs that able-bodied people don't?

One way into talking about this might be to ask your class:

- What David, Stephen, Lauren and Johnnie have in common and what makes them different?
- Discuss how the characters in the film view their disabilities differently and whether being in the opening ceremony meant different things to them.
- Is the film raising issues about people with different disabilities or is it more about people of different life-stages?

III. Changing how we see ourselves and each other

all eyes on us touches on a moment - the Paralympic Games - which aimed to change the way we view disabled people. It also shows Stephen starting to see himself differently.

- Ask your class to try discussing whether our perceptions of David,
 Stephen, Lauren and Johnnie change through the course of the film.
- Ask whether watching the film (and the Paralympics) has changed how they see disabled people.

Encourage your group to share important moments from their own life when they did something they never thought they would be able to.

C. Disability in the UK Facts

There are over 11 million people with a limiting long term illness, impairment or disability in Great Britain

19% of working age disabled people do not hold any formal qualification, compared to 6.5% of working age non-disabled people.

The prevalence of disability rises with age. Around 6% of children are disabled, compared to 15% of working-age adults and 45% of adults over State Pension age in Great Britain.

22% of children in families with at least one disabled member are in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than the 16% of children in families with no disabled member

In 2012, 46% of working-age disabled people were in employment compared to 76% of working-age non-disabled people. The gap has reduced by 10% over the last 14 years.

In 2008, 19% of disabled people experienced unfair treatment at work compared to 13% of non-disabled people

Between 2004/05 and 2011/12, the percentage of buses with low-floor wheelchair access increased from 52% to 88%

Disabled people remain significantly less likely to participate in cultural, leisure and sporting activities than non-disabled people.

Source: Office for Disability Issues, Department for Work and Pensions

- D. Disability in the UK Quiz
- 1. Nearly 64 million people live in the United Kingdom. How many of these people report having a limiting long term illness, impairment or disability?
 - a) 32 million b) 2 million c)11 million
- 2. What percentage of disabled people in the UK use a wheelchair?
 - a) 80% b) 8% c) 18%
- 3. Are most disabled people born that way?

4.	What proportion of pensioners have a disability?				
	a) 1 in 3	b) 1 in 2	c) 4 in 5		
5.	How many carers are there in the UK?				
	a) 2 million	n b) 50	00,000	c) 6 ľ	Million
6. of	There are 270 stations on the London Underground. How many of them are step free?				
	a) 65 b) 270 c) 192				
7.	Are you more likely to be in work if you're disabled?				
	a) yes	b) no	c) It make	s no d	lifference.
8. pe	In 2005, 52% of buses had low-floor wheelchair axis. What ercentage of buses have it today?				
	a) 45%	b) 56%	c) 88%		
9. m	According to the World Health Organisation what will be the major cause of disability by 2020?				
	a) Car Accidents		b) Depression c) Flu		
Answers: 1c, 2b, 3b (just 17% of disabled people are born disabled), 4b, 5c, 6c, 7b (In 2012, 46% of working-age disabled people were in employment compared to 76% of working-age non-disabled people. The gap has					

reduced by 10% over the last 14 years.), 8c, 9b.

Statistics from The Papworth Trust: Disability in the UK 2012.

a) yes

b) no

Section 3: Paralympic information and resources



Photo credit Tahmina Rahman

The section provides a base for interested students to learn more about the history of the Paralympic Games, references within the opening ceremony and a list of famous disabled sports/arts men and women. You might consider using some of this information as a guide to completing part c of Arts Award Bronze (and part d for Silver) that asks students to research about artists.

A. A brief history of the Paralympics

The idea of a Paralympic Games was devised by Sir Ludwig Guttmann, a German born British neurosurgeon who fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s. In 1948 he staged a sporting competition involving veterans of the Second World War with spinal cord injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital near Aylesbury. This is why one of the London 2012 mascots was called Mandeville.

The first Paralympic Games proper, no long just open to war veterans, were held 12 years later in Rome in 1960 where 400 athletes from 23 countries competed. Since then the Paralympics have taken place in the same year as the Olympics. The 1976 games in Montreal were the first to

expand the games beyond athletes with wheelchairs. It was also the year of the first Paralympic Winter Olympics which were held in Örnsköldsvik in Sweden.

The 1988 Summer Games in Seoul were the first to place the Paralympic Games in the same facilities as the Olympic Games. The 2012 Paralympic Games took place between 29 August and 09 September and were the largest ever featuring 4,302 Athletes from 164 countries. You can find more information here.

Here is a list of some famous Paralympians, past and present:

Trischa Zorn of the United States is the Paralympics most decorated Paralympian. She competed in blind swimming events and won a total of 55 medals between 1980 and 2004, 41 of her medals were Gold.

Neroli Fairhall was the first wheelchair athlete to compete at the Olympics, which she did in Los Angeles in 1984. She had previously won a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in 1982. She had been paralyzed from the waist down in a motorcycle accident. Just as today some able bodied athletes have argued that blades give disabled athletes an unfair advantage over able bodied athletes, some of Fairhall's rivals suggested that shooting from a sitting position gave her an unfair advantage. She is alleged to have replied when asked if that were so 'I don't know. I've never shot standing up'.

David Weir won 6 gold medals at the 2008 and 2012 Paralympics and has won the London marathon 6 times. He was born without the use of his legs and competes in a wheelchair. He holds the British record at all track distances up to 5,000m as well as on the road at 10km, half marathon and marathon.

Sarah Storey has 22 Paralympic medals, eleven of which are gold. Initially she competed in swimming (1992, 1996, 2000, 2004), before switching to cycling in 2008 and 2012. She was born without a functioning left hand. Last year she was a finalist for the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year award.

Ellie Simmonds was the youngest Briton to win a gold Medal at 13 years and 9 months at the Beijing Olympics. Awarded an MBE aged 14 - the youngest ever recipient of an MBE.

Jonnie Peacock holds the 100m world record in his classification and one the gold medal at the Paralympics. Contracted meningitis aged 5 and had his right leg amputated. Derek Derenalagi lost his legs to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan in 2007. He is the IPC Athletics European Championships Discus champion. He also competed at the London 2012 Olympics.

For more, see the Get Set website for a comprehensive list.

B. The Opening Ceremony dissected

The Paralympic Opening Ceremony sought to visually and artistically challenge preconceptions about disabled people. It provides a fantastic range of ways into discussing disability.

You can view the whole thing on the ParalympicSport TV YouTube channel from start to finish <u>here</u>, and there are good pictures on the BBC website <u>here</u>.

I. Background to the Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony was directed by Jenny Sealey and Bradley Hemmings and performed in front of a capacity crowd in the Olympic Stadium and an estimated global TV audience of around a billion people. It was arguably the most prominent moment for disabled people in human history.

It featured a volunteer cast of 3,250 people who performed with 100 professional performers of whom 73 were deaf and disabled. During the ceremony, thousands of athletes from the 164 nations taking part in the Paralympics paraded into the stadium. Children and young people from local schools in East London were also involved including Millfields Community School in Hackney, Eastlea Community School in Newham and Trinity School in Barking and Dagenham.

The ceremony explored the theme of 'enlightenment' - of seeing afresh with new eyes. In a spectacular show bringing together music, dance, performance and some of the world's best known disabled people, the ceremony showed how science, social movements and powerful ideas have changed the way we understand the world and see one another.

The message was clear - seeing the world in new ways and seeing one another in new ways are equally important to the creation of a better, more equal world. In asking us to 'look to the stars and be curious' the ceremony expressed a hope for a better future where disabled people can live free from prejudice.

II. Key Moments

Here are some of the key moments. The numbers tell you where you need to wind the cursor on the <u>video of the ceremony</u>.

7.45 Stephen Hawking

Professor Stephen Hawking, one of the world's most pre-eminent theoretical physicists and possibly the most famous disabled person alive, co-narrated the opening ceremony with Sir Ian McKellen. He reminded the audience, 'we live in a universe governed by rational laws that we can discover and understand' and compelled them to 'Look up at the stars, and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious.' Stephen Hawking is 71 and has been living with the increasing affects of motor neuron disease since the early 1960s. He uses a machine which translates the movements of his cheeks into words. A feature film about his life is slated for release in September 2013. Here's the trailer.

16.00 The Enlightenment

The ceremony features many of the scientific and philosophical achievements of The Enlightenment - a movement of intellectual thought in the 17th and 18th Centuries. Enlightenment thinkers emphasized scientific method, reason and intellectual debate over the received wisdom, superstition and dogma - often handed down by the Catholic Church. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), paraded in the centre of the stadium has its origins in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789) - a key text of the French Revolution, which has its own origins in enlightenment thinking. An animated video of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be viewed <a href="https://example.com/here-new-mailed-leaf-to-scientific and philosophical achievement thinking and philosophical achievement thinking and philosophical achievement thinking.

25:50 The National Anthem/Benjamin Britten

The version of the National Anthem sung at the start of the opening ceremony was an arrangement by Benjamin Britten - a well known 20th Century British classical composer and conductor. The version has a quieter, more somber tone than the one we are used to hearing. It seemed a fitting choice for the Paralympics - which arguably, even more than the Olympics, celebrates individuals and our common humanity before nations and national pride.

Here is some <u>youtube footage</u> of the anthem, shot from inside the stadium - <u>this video</u> has better sound quality.

3.05.30 The Tempest

The Opening Ceremony refers to The Tempest, a play written by William Shakespeare in the early 17th Century - concerned with themes of magic, nature and the soul. The audience is guided by Sir Ian Mckellen in the role of Prospero a wizen magician, who asks the audience to see through the eyes of Miranda - played by Nicola Miles-Wildin, who suffers from juvenile chronic arthritis. Jenny Sealey later explained that she chose Miranda because she 'sees everything but doesn't judge' a quality Sealey identifies as 'fundamental to our personal and political ethos.' In the ceremony, Miranda tours enlightenment thinking, takes political action - and like Shakespeare's Miranda - ultimately reclaims 'her rightful position', symbolically breaking through a glass ceiling.

3.19.00 The Big Crunch

Everybody in the Olympic stadium was asked to bite into an apple at the same time. The apple is a symbol of Isaac Newton's discovery of gravity. The crunch refers to 'the big crunch' - an idea from cosmology that gravity will eventually draw the Universe back in on itself, to a 'big crunch'.

3.25.33 Spasticus Autisticus

'Spasticus Autisticus' was performed by the Graeae Theatre Company and electro-duo Orbital during a sequence in the ceremony which marked disabled people's struggle for recognition and equal treatment. Steven Hawking is a part of the sequence. Spasticus Autisticus was written by lan Dury a popular musician from the 70s and 80s who contracted polio in 1951 as a child which left him disabled. He released Spasticus Autisticus in 1981 as a protest against the 'International Year of Disabled Persons', which he considered patronising. At the time the song was banned for broadcast by the BBC before 6pm.

lan Dury's version - can be viewed here.

3.30.00 The Sculpture of Alison Lapper

Alison Lapper Pregnant is a sculpture by Mark Quinn which was displayed in Trafalgar Square between 2005-2007 on the fourth plinth. At the climax of the sequence which celebrated disabled people's struggle for equal treatment, a giant replica of the sculpture was unveiled. Alison Lapper is an artist who was born without arms. The sculpture was made during her pregnancy in 1999.

There is a news clip about Alison Lapper and the sculpture here.

3.34.00 The Torch Bearers

The Olympic Torch was carried into the stadium by Joe Townsend, a triathlete, double amputee and Royal Marine who arrived in a zip-wire strung from the top the Orbit Tower. Joe Townsend hopes to compete in the next Paralympic Games in Rio in 2016. The cauldron was lit by Margaret Maughan, the first British athlete to win a gold medal at the Paralympic Games - for archery at the first Summer Paralympic Games in Rome in 1960.

3.45.05 I am what I am

The ceremony closed with a performance by UK R&B singer Beverly Knight of '*I am what I am'*, a song taken from a broadway musical and popularised in the UK by disco diva Gloria Gaynor. The song was written in 1983 by Jerry Herman, who was openly gay - the song was to became a rallying cry for the gay pride movement. During the performance Paralympic athletes sang and signed along to the words.

C. Disability & Art

Apart from a few notable exceptions, disabled athletes tend not to compete against able-bodied athletes. In the arts, the dividing line between able-bodied and disabled is still there but not the same.

Even though we don't judge Paralympians by their disability, their disability is often clear to see. In contrast, everyone has heard of Beethoven - but not everyone knows that he composed some of his best known work after he had lost his hearing. Likewise Matisse is better known for his painting than for the fact that his later work was made from his bed after he has lost much of his sight. Everyone knows that Stevie Wonder is blind, but he would never be seen as a 'disabled musician'.

But it would be too simple to say that having a disability is no barrier to progress in the arts - the relationship between art and disability is a complicated one and varies from art form to art form, from disability to disability, from person to person.

The parlaympics is important because it rubbishes the idea that disabled means 'less'. Here are some examples of individuals and organisations from the arts who do the same. You may be interested to find out more about them, so where possible we have included some links.

Esref Armagan

A Turkish painter who was born blind. He requires complete silence in which to paint and has been the subject of numerous TV documentaries

and scientific studies. He has painted pictures of the President, Prime Minister and first Lady of Turkey and exhibited at major art fairs.

Django Rheinhardt

A Belgian Jazz guitarist of the 1930s and 40s. He created a new way of playing guitar working around two fingers which had been badly burned in a house fire when he was 18. Instead of playing ascending notes the conventional way, by moving to different strings, he tended to slide up the strings to find the higher notes. His techniques became part of the Jazz repertoire and were copied by musicians who had the full use of their fingers.

Tony Iommi

Tony lommi was the lead guitarist in Black Sabbath, the band who invented heavy metal. When he was 17 he lost the tips of two of his fingers in an accident in a sheet metal factory. By this age lommi had already learnt to play guitar and thought he might never be able to play again, until a friend told him about Django Rheinhardt. Inspired by Rheinhardt, lommi gradually relearnt to play the guitar with caps on the ends of his fingers. Like Rheinhardt his limited fingers influenced his playing style. With less strength to work with lommi found it easier to play with slacker strings and detuned his guitar from E to D# and by 1971 had detuned it further to C#. This detuning and the slack strings which went with it created the iconic heavy metal sound and become a mainstay of heavy metal music. Here's Black Sabbath in concert in 1974.

Graeae Theatre

In all the arts, the dividing line between able bodied and disabled is perhaps most pronounced in theatre and television. Graeae Theatre is a theatre company founded in 1980 with a mission to 'dispel images of defenselessness, together with prejudices and popular myths around disabled people'. Disabled people today still find themselves cast in roles where their disability defines them. For more on this see the interview with Jenny Sealey in the accompanying interviews for all eyes on us.

Beautiful Octopus Club

A club made by and for people with learning disabilities which began after a group of musicians with learning disabilities were refused entrance to a club in Belgium. Beautiful Octopus Club has been going for 25 years and attracts around 500 people to its nights. 50 events around the UK and beyond have since been set up on the Beautiful Octopus Club model.

Shape Arts

A pressure group which aims to make it easier for deaf and disabled people to make and experience art and culture. It provides training and workshops as well as promoting and creating exhibitions deaf and disabled artists work.

British Paraorchestra

Part movement, part orchestra, the London based British Paraorchestra is entirely composed of musicians with disabilities and was created by the conductor Charles Hazlewood in 2011. The orchestra performed in the closing ceremony of the Paralympic Games with Coldplay and was the subject of a Channel 4 documentary. The orchestra includes Nicholas McCarthay, a one handed pianist who recently graduated from the Royal College of Music, Clarence Adoo who was paralysed from the shoulders down in a car accident and plays an instrument controlled by breath and head movements and Tilly Chester, a deaf Viola player, who also plays in the National Youth Orchestra.

Yinka Shonibare

A British-Nigerian artist whose work explores cultural identity. One side of his body is paralysed by a condition which worsens with age. He has exhibited at museums around the world and has been shortlisted for the Turner Prize and was shown at the landmark 'Sensation' exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1997. Between 2010 and 2012 his work 'Nelson's ship in a bottle' was exhibited in Trafalgar Square. Of his disability he says, 'I do have a physical disability and I was determined that the scope of my creativity should not be restricted purely by my physicality. It would be like an architect choosing to build only what could be physically built by hand.'

Drake Music

Is a dynamic music and technology hub, founded in 1988 by Adele Drake. For over twenty years they have pioneered the use of assistive music technology to make music accessible and have developed a wealth of innovative and imaginative approaches to teaching, learning and making music. Central to their work is the belief that everyone can fulfill their creative and musical potential given the right opportunities.

Unlimited

Unlimited was a festival at the Southbank Centre in 2012 showcasing 29 extraordinary new works by deaf and disabled artists on an unprecedented scale; spanning dance, art, music, theatre and international collaborations. Their website features the ticketed events for Unlimited including a range of outdoor performances and exhibitions as well as hands-on activities, discussions and debates. The Southbank is in discussion with Rio 2016 about what learning can be transferred.

A new direction for arts, culture and young london









