



Disabled Access Friendly campaign's newly launched website helps teachers shape the world.

by Katie Quartano

Even if there are no children with mobility disability at the foreign language centre or school where you teach, you can still do a lot to help them. Even if you rarely see people with mobility disability going about their daily business in the streets or shops, or in places of business or entertainment, you can still make their lives better. And all this without ever having to set foot outside your classroom. Plus it always feels good to put something back into the world.

By raising your students' awareness of the society in which they live and by providing them with the information necessary to allow them to put themselves in other people's shoes, to understand others and to feel what others feel, you can help pave the way for future generations to want and make changes. Let's not forget that people with mobility disability are disabled more by inaccessible infrastructure and other people's attitudes and behaviour than they are by their own physical situation. It is largely through omission and ignorance that they are isolated, disempowered and excluded from actively participating in everyday activities. So if you can show your students that people with disabilities do not have to be an invisible minority, but vibrant and valued members of society, you will be playing a part in making the future more enlightened.



The Disabled Access Friendly campaign is here to help you be the kind of teacher that makes a difference for tomorrow. The newly launched website www.disabled-accessfriendly.com provides EFL teaching material which can be used in class for skills building, projects or examination practice, but which at the same time stimulates students to put themselves in the shoes of someone with a mobility disability, for a better understanding of their needs and feelings. You can find worksheets, graded reading texts and a gallery of photos and video clips, all of which will open your students' eyes and maybe yours too! The material has no expiry date and can be used over and over again for new classes of students. It is relevant to ELT teachers worldwide as it is not culturally bound. Much more than just grammar and vocabulary are learned in the classroom. Social skills, empathy, understanding and critical thinking also play a huge role in the education process. By using the Disabled Access Friendly campaign's free online teaching material, you can help demystify the issue of disability, break down the barriers that exclude people with mobility disability from many areas of life (and these are not just physical barriers) and address society's sometimes patronising and negative attitudes towards people with physical disabilities.

The website also provides foreign language centres and schools with information explaining how they can make small changes to their premises to facilitate people with mobility disability, as well as a forum to share experiences.

Anne Frank said "*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world*". You need only a few seconds to click on www.disabled-accessfriendly.com and start doing just that.