Cross-Country Skiing

History:
This particular event was included at the very first Paralympic Winter Games in 1976, at Ornskoldsvik. The word “ski” is a Norwegian word which comes from the Old Norse word, “skid,” a split length of wood.

Competition:
Competitions are open to athletes with a physical disability and blindness/visual impairment. A competitor may or may not use a sit-ski, a chair equipped with a pair of skis. Athletes with visual impairment compete in the event with a sighted guide.

Events:
Male and female athletes compete in short distance, middle distance, and long distance (ranging from 2.5km to 20km) events or participate in a team relay across three categories: standing, sitting, and visual impairments.

Description:
In cross-country skiing, racers use two basic techniques: classical (the skis move parallel to each other through machine tracks in the snow) and free (the skiers propel themselves in a manner similar to speed-skating, pushing off the edge of their skis).

Photo courtesy of Paralympic Athlete, Cindy Ouellet
Create a cross-country ski course using cones, polka-dots, mats, jump ropes, or any other object that might help create boundaries.

Use your creativity to include turns, elevation, and obstacles to your course. Allow the students to design the course.

Use paper plates, scarves, or allow the students to slide around the course while wearing socks.

Use scooter boards or a trash can dolly as sledges and toilet plungers as ski poles.

Students can lie on their stomach on the scooter board and use their arms to propel themselves instead of using the toilet plungers.

Make sure that students are familiar with the ski course by marking it with bright colors and providing visual and voice cues to direct the students.

Decorate the classroom with a winter theme and encourage the students to wear winter accessories such as hats, goggles, scarves, and gloves.