



A STORY ABOUT LEADING BY EXAMPLE

The Canadian Olympic School Program first caught up with Jennifer Abel as she was preparing for her second Olympic Games in London. She was considered a medal favourite, and students across Canada learned about how she was keen to accept the responsibility of being a role model for younger divers. She was demonstrating leadership and this value became a focus of her story.

She went on to win a bronze medal in London, and then came back four years later to place fourth in both the 3m and the synchronized 3m in Rio. Showing an amazing resiliency into her third decade of national teams, she is still winning FINA World Championships and FINA Grand Prix medals. She heads towards the Tokyo Olympics as a medal favourite...again!



TEACHING VALUES THROUGH OLYMPIC STORIES

Olympic stories of triumph and disappointment can engage learners in discussions about important value issues. Through the stories and challenges of Olympic athletes, children and youth can explore and connect values to their lives, and perhaps begin to see their world in new and different ways.



TEACHING GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Current curriculum theory emphasizes the importance of reinforcing values education messages through narratives, storytelling, art, posters, drama, and physical movement, activities based on the stories, events, ceremonies and symbols of the Olympic Games stories have school-wide relevance.

THE OLYMPIC VALUES

The core Olympic Values are identified as Excellence, Respect and Friendship. The narratives which follow highlight these values. When you engage your learners with these narratives you will be expanding their moral and physical understanding and capabilities.

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

The following principles of learning are highlighted in order to engage students actively in the values education process:

1. Learning is an active and not a passive activity. Students need to be actively engaged in discussion, sharing their ideas in small groups and exploring differing points of view.
2. People learn in different ways. Some people learn best by reading; some people learn best by listening; some people learn best by moving around. The activities associated with these narratives' present different ways of learning.
3. Learning is both an individual and a cooperative activity. Young people need opportunities to work together as well as independently. They also need to practice cooperative behaviours in order to learn competitive behaviours.

STAGES OF THE LEARNING SEQUENCE

Successful learning is built upon a carefully scaffolded series of steps that **connect** to students' prior understanding, actively **process** or practice new information, and finally **transform** their understandings into powerful demonstrations of learning.

Each values story is presented at three reading levels: Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, and Grades 6 -7. The accompanying activities are sufficiently open-ended to address a diverse range of learning styles and proficiencies. They focus on six main facets of understanding:

Explaining, Interpreting, Applying, Taking Perspective, Empathizing, and Developing Self-Knowledge. These critical thinking skills are woven into all three stages of the learning sequence in order to promote deep understanding of the values and concepts.



CONNECTING

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR NEW LEARNING

Class Share (All Grades)

In partners, discuss leadership using the grade appropriate guiding questions.

Grade 2-3 guiding questions are:

- What is a role model?
- What does a role model do?
- What does a role model say?
- How does a role model treat others?

Grades 4-5 guiding questions are:

- Who is a great role model that you know and why?
- What makes that person a role model?
- Who is a role model in your life?
- What would make you stop seeing someone as a good role model?

Grades 6-7 guiding questions are:

- What does it mean to be a good role model?
- What qualities does a role model display?
- Who is a role model in your life? Use 2 attributes named to describe your own role model?
- What would make you stop seeing someone as a good role model?

Students share answers with the class and the teacher records them on a class web.

PROCESSING

USING STRATEGIES TO ACQUIRE AND USE KNOWLEDGE

Identifying Leadership in Action (All Grades)

Before reading the story together, choose 4 key qualities from the class discussion that identify the most important qualities of a good role model. Note these to complete the quadrant on the student activity sheet below.

Ask the students to read the story silently on their own.

Reread the story with the students. Match the chosen qualities on the quadrant to examples from Jennifer's story. Students may use words or pictures to show their understanding. Grade 6-7 students should use point form note-taking skills to record the examples from the text with the qualities on the quadrant.



TRANSFORMING

SHOWING UNDERSTANDING IN A NEW WAY

Jennifer was one of Canada's youngest Olympians ever, but she led by example.

Leading by example (Grade 2-3)

Ask the class for stories of people in their lives who have led by example (e.g., parents, older siblings, coaches, teachers, etc.). Discuss with students the ways they can lead by example, even though they are young.

Ask: How can you model good leadership behaviours in your own school? Class? Hallway? Assemblies? Library? Playground?

Make a poster alone or with a partner that shows you practicing good leadership in your school.

Leading by example (Grade 4-5)

In groups, have the students create and perform a skit that demonstrates leading by example.

Leading by example (Grade 6-7)

Ask the students to discuss how an older student, friend, or adult has demonstrated leading by example. Discuss how this is a much more effective way of leading compared to just telling people what to do.

Explore what the saying "Do as I say, and not as I do" means. Why is this a bad way to lead?

Ask the students to develop a leadership slogan that will inspire their class and school to lead by example. Have the students organize a leadership campaign for a younger class of students using the slogan.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



SCHOOL PROGRAM

JENNIFER ABEL

AQUATICS - DIVING

Jennifer Abel walks to the end of the diving platform. She sees younger divers gather below by the side of the pool. They watch her practice.

“That’s Jennifer Abel. She’s an Olympian,” one of them says.

Jennifer knows that she isn’t just practicing her own dives today. She is also setting an example. She is being a leader.

She wants to show the kids how hard it is to become an Olympian.

“I practice each dive thousands of times. That way I am ready to do my best every time I stand on the platform. I don’t always feel like getting up early. I don’t always feel like training. But I do get up early and train.”

Jennifer dives. She does a perfect triple twist. She plunges into the pool. The water barely ripples.

In a way, it’s odd that Jennifer is a leader. At that time, she was barely twenty. She was the youngest diver and a veteran on the Canadian team.

Jennifer qualified for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing when she was just sixteen.

“I have always been confident. I wanted to make the team in time for 2012. I made it four years earlier. I wasn’t really prepared for the pressure.”

The Olympic Games was a completely different world. Jennifer knew she was a good diver. But she faced pressure that she’d never faced before.

“It really hit me when I walked into the pool in Beijing. That’s when I first knew that I was an Olympian. But I felt like I was just a kid! I felt nervous.”

Stress can hurt performance. The older athletes on the team knew Jennifer needed extra help. Back then, César Henderson was her coach, he took her aside.

“He had a trick. He asked me to focus on just one thing at a time. Sometimes he told me to think about the angle of my arm. Sometimes he asked me to think about how I point my feet when I enter the water. That helped calmed my nerves.”

Fellow diver Emilie Heymans was also a big help. She was at her third Olympic Games in Beijing. She was a role model for Jennifer.

“Emilie is calm. She is a real leader. She helps everyone around her become better.”

Jennifer also learned a valuable lesson. No one can be great by themselves. She got over her nerves, and finished 13th overall. That was a great result for such a young diver.

“Leadership isn’t always telling people what to do, but showing them how. I feel I can do that even better now.”

Jennifer comes out the pool. She grabs a towel. A few of the young divers come over to say hello. Some ask Jennifer for advice. Jennifer smiles and listens to their questions.

“I love it when kids ask me for advice. I say they have to believe in themselves. They have to work hard and never give up. That’s true no matter what you want to be.”

Then Jennifer says she has to get back to work. She needs more practice to win a medal in London.

Jennifer’s hard work paid off. She won a bronze medal at the 2012 London Olympics. She placed fourth at the Rio Olympics. Will she medal again in Tokyo?

GR.2-3

INSPIRATION


SCHOOL PROGRAM

JENNIFER ABEL

AQUATICS - DIVING

Jennifer Abel walks confidently to the end of the diving platform. She spies the younger divers gathered below by the side of the pool. They are intently watching her practice session, literally looking up to her. "That's Jennifer Abel, the Olympian!" one of them says.

Jennifer knows that she isn't just practicing her own dives today. She is also setting an example, being a leader.

One thing she wants the kids to see is how hard it is to get to where she's standing now.

"I practice each dive thousands of times so that I'm ready when I stand on the diving platform. There are mornings when you don't feel like getting up early or going to train, but you do it. It is an intense life."

Jennifer executes a perfect triple twist. The water barely ripples as she plunges below the surface.

In a way, it's odd that Jennifer is a leader. At that time, she was barely twenty. Although she was the youngest diver, she was a veteran on the Canadian team.

Jennifer qualified for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing when she was just sixteen.

"I have always been confident and I had hoped to make the team in time for 2012. Then I made it four years earlier. I wasn't really prepared for the pressure, for the amount of work and the reality of the situation."

The Olympic Games was a completely different world. Jennifer knew she was a good diver, but she faced pressure that she'd never faced before. It was easy to feel overwhelmed.

"It really hit me when I walked into the packed swimming venue in Beijing. That's when I first realized that I was an Olympian. I was just a kid! The stress started to build and the nerves. The Olympic Games are such a big event. You can prepare but until you lived it for the first time, you can't understand"

Stress can hurt performance. The veterans on the team knew Jennifer needed extra guidance. Back then, César Henderson was her coach, he took her aside.

"He kept me focused on my diving, on all the hard work. He also had a trick. He'd ask me to focus on just one thing, the angle of my arm or how I point my feet as I enter the water. It's different for each dive. That helped me keep my mind focused."

Fellow diver Emilie Heymans was also a big help. She was at her third Olympic Games in Beijing and was a role model for Jennifer. It wasn't always what she said, but how she acted.

"Emilie had been through all this before. She is composed and calm. To me, a real leader is someone who helps everyone around them become better. We have become very close. You have to be close to dive together."

Jennifer also learned a valuable lesson. No one can be great by themselves. She overcame her nerves and finished 13th overall, an amazing result for such a young diver.

"I gained a lot of confidence and I've grown up so much since Beijing. Leadership isn't always telling people what to do, but showing them how. I feel I can do that even better now."

Jennifer comes out the pool and grabs a towel. A few of the young divers come over to say hello and to ask Jennifer for advice. Jennifer smiles and listens to their questions.

"I love it when kids come up to ask me for advice. I tell them attitude is so important, that's why I always smile. I try to be as honest as I can. They have to believe in themselves and work hard and never give up, no matter what you want to be. Everything is easier when you have a passion, a love for what you do."

Then Jennifer says she has to get back to work. If she wants to win a medal in London she needs to practice a thousand more times.

Jennifer's hard work paid off. In the 2012 London Olympic Games, she won bronze in the synchronized 3M event. Four years later, she was fourth in both the synchro and the individual 3M events in Rio. She continues to dive and won two silver medals at the 2019 FINA World Championships.

GR.4-5

SCHOOL PROGRAM

INSPIRATION

JENNIFER ABEL

AQUATICS - DIVING

Jennifer Abel walks confidently to the end of the diving platform, and spies the younger divers gathered below by the side of the pool. They are intently watching her practice session, literally looking up to her. “That’s Jennifer Abel, the Olympian!” one of them says, pointing.

Jennifer knows that she isn’t just practicing her own dives today. She is also setting an example, being a leader, and the one thing she wants the kids to see is how hard it is to get to where she’s standing now.

“I practice each dive thousands of times so that I’m ready when I stand on the diving platform. It’s an intense life and there are mornings when you don’t feel like getting up early or going to train, but you do it. You persevere to reach your goals.”

Jennifer executes a perfect triple twist, and the water barely ripples as she plunges below the surface.

In a way, it’s odd that Jennifer is a leader. At that time, she was barely twenty. Although she was the youngest diver, she was a veteran on the Canadian team. Jennifer qualified for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing when she was just sixteen.

“I have always been confident, and I had hoped to make the team in time for 2012. When I made it four years earlier, I wasn’t really prepared for the pressure, for the amount of work and the reality of the situation.”

The Olympic Games was a completely different world. Jennifer knew she was a good diver, but when she faced the intense pressure of competing against the very best athletes in the world, she felt overwhelmed.

“It really hit me when I walked into the packed swimming venue in Beijing. That’s when I first realized that I was an Olympian. But I felt like I was just a kid! The stress started to build and I was so nervous. The Olympic Games are such a big event. You can prepare, but until you lived it for the first time, you can’t understand”

Stress can hurt performance, and the veterans on the team knew Jennifer needed extra guidance. Back then, César Henderson was her coach, he took her aside.

“He kept me focused on my diving, on all the hard work. He also had a trick where he’d ask me to focus on just one thing—like the angle of my arms or how I point my feet as I enter the water. It was different for each dive, and that helps me keep my mind focused.”

Fellow diver Emilie Heymans was at her third Olympic Games, and was also a steadying influence and role model. It wasn’t always what she said, but how she acted.

“Emilie had been through all this before, and was so composed and calm. To me, a real leader is someone who helps everyone around them become better.”

Jennifer also learned a valuable lesson, that no one can be great by themselves. She overcame her nerves and finished 13th overall, an amazing result for such a young diver.

“I gained a lot of confidence, and I’ve grown up so much since Beijing. Leadership isn’t always telling people what to do, but it is being the example for them to follow. I feel I can do that even better now.”

Jennifer scampers out the pool, and grabs a towel. A few of the young divers inch over to say hello, gathering their courage to ask her for a few words of inspiration. Jennifer smiles and listens to their questions.

“I love it when kids come up to ask me for advice. I tell them attitude is so important, that’s why I always smile. I try to be as honest as I can and I tell them that they have to believe in themselves and work hard and never give up, no matter what you want to be. Everything is easier when you have a passion, a love for what you do.”

Then Jennifer says she has to get back to work. If she wants to win a medal in London she needs to practice a thousand more times.

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GR.6-7

INSPIRATION


SCHOOL PROGRAM

ROLE MODEL QUALITY QUADRANT



SCHOOL PROGRAM



EFFORTS AND CREATIVITY

The Canadian Olympic School Program wishes to thank and acknowledge the contributions of the following people. Without their efforts, and creativity, this project would not have been possible.

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