



STRENGTH THROUGH FOCUS

The 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games will be Tamm Thibeault's first, but this doesn't mean that she is a novice boxer. Competing in the 75 kg category, she won bronze at the 2019 World Championships, silver at the 2019 Pan American Games, and bronze at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. At 24 years old, she has a long career ahead of her.

Boxing demands supreme physical fitness and mental strength. Facing an opponent that wants to hit you is fear inducing, and a boxer must keep their focus.

This resource explains how Tamm's focus is a critical part of her success. By focusing on her preparation, strategy, and what she can do to make herself a better boxer, she avoids the distractions, doubts, and fears that could undermine her success.

Note: Some educators may feel reluctant to use a story about a boxer because of concerns that their students may act out boxing on the playground or at home. The Canadian Olympic School Program suggests that a pre-discussion about how boxing is a sport to be done in supervised sporting environments and not at school or home. Boxers wear gloves and head protection that prevent them from dangerous injuries. They are trained how to box and how to protect themselves.

A fight in a boxing ring is part of a referee supervised sport. A fight outside the boxing ring is not allowed, and in many schools can result in suspension.



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

1. Goal Journaling (All Grades)

Ask students to write a sentence about three of their goals. One goal should be something they want to improve this month. One goal should be something they want to master this year. One goal should be something they want to achieve when they are adults.

2. Partner Share (All Grades)

In pairs, students share their goals.

3. Class Discussion (All Grades)

Make a class list of some of the things that can keep us from reaching our goals. Examples might include circumstances beyond our control, fears, negative thoughts, focus on other people or things, lack of hard work, or competing priorities.

PROCESSING

USING STRATEGIES TO ACQUIRE AND USE KNOWLEDGE

Read Tamm Thibeault's story (All Grades)

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

Reread the story with the students.

Reaching our goals requires hard work and focus. There are so many things that distract us that can keep us from our goals. Some of these things are well beyond our control, but many involve the way we think.

As a class, make a list of the things in Tamm's story that could keep her from winning an Olympic medal. Next, discuss which of these are within her control and which are out of her control. What did Tamm do to manage the things in her control?

TRANSFORMING

SHOWING UNDERSTANDING IN A NEW WAY

Graphic Organizer (All Grades)

Ask the students to choose one of their goals from the Connecting exercise. Using the graphic organizer, ask them to identify the things they can control, things they can't control, focusing thoughts and distracting thoughts.

Journal Writing (Grades 4-7)

In their writing journals, students respond to the prompt: What types of thinking might be keeping you from reaching your goals and dreams?



TAMM THIBEAULT

GR.2-3

BOXING

When Tamm Thibeault was only nine years old, she went with her dad to his boxing club. She loved how powerful he looked when he hit the punching bag. It was inspiring. Maybe she could try boxing too.

Once she tried it, she knew right away that boxing was her sport. Tamm was tall and fast. She felt like she was made to be a boxer.

She loved learning how to punch. She loved learning the footwork. She loved competing, and she loved winning. Each time she won a fight, it fueled her dreams of being a champion boxer.

She watched boxing at the 2012 London Olympics. It was exciting. Could she someday fight in the Olympics? It became her dream.

She was determined to one day compete at the Olympics. She kept training and learning more about boxing.

She had to be focused. She focused on beating her opponents. She focused on winning fights.

For three years, she won every fight. It began to feel like she couldn't be beaten. But boxing is a sport that is just as much mental as it is physical.

This truth started to sink in when Tamm first lost a match. She was shocked and upset.

She lost a hard fight in Ireland. It made her see that she had to change her focus. She had to focus on being her best and not just beating other boxers.

"I thought, 'I don't want to focus on being the best. I want to focus on being the best that I can be. It's a small difference, but a big one at the same time. So, I learned how to shift my focus.'"

Training her mind was as important as training her body. She was critical of herself and upset by her mistakes. She began writing herself positive messages on sticky notes. She kept a journal about her thoughts. She focused on becoming stronger mentally.

Tamm worked hard to stay focused. She learned to think about what she could do and not be distracted by the fear of losing.

The chance to test her new skills came. She had a big tournament to qualify for the 2019 Pan American Games. Tamm was so nervous before the final fight that she tripped

on her way into the boxing ring. But she didn't let her worries take over. She kept her focus on doing her best.

A women's boxing match has three rounds lasting three minutes each. She had won the first round. Then she lost the second. The match would be decided in the final round. She had to stay focused and be patient. She had to stick to her plan and hold herself back. She couldn't rush into punches that could leave her open to her opponent.

Then it happened—she saw the opportunity. Her opponent lowered their guard. Tamm saw the opening and punched hard. At the end of the match the referee lifted her hand, but she was already satisfied.

"It was very proud of that moment. Not because I won, but because of how I kept my cool and focus."

Tamm has won medals at big tournaments. She won bronze at the World Championships and silver at the Pan American Games.

She was thinking about how to win gold at the 2020 Olympics. But then came COVID-19. Countries everywhere were shutting down businesses and schools. Then the news she was dreading: the Olympics were postponed.

She couldn't believe her ears. Could it be true? The Olympic dreams she had worked so hard for were about to be gone. Many people in around her home in Montreal were getting sick from the virus. The gym where she trained was closed, and people were told to stay home. Suddenly she felt like she had no purpose.

Tamm kept her focus on what she could do to be excellent. She moved back to live with her parents for their support. She set up a home gym, so she could keep training. She did yoga and meditation to help her stay positive.

When she went back to Montreal, she was ready to train hard. Her new coach had different training ideas. She followed all the COVID-19 rules to stay healthy and protect those around her.

Tamm now sees COVID-19 as "a blessing in disguise." She didn't want to miss the Olympics, but she made the best of the time.

"The year has allowed me to practice being patient, calm, and focused. I'm more confident than I've ever been. Whenever the Olympics happen, I'm going to be ready."



SCHOOL PROGRAM

FOCUS

TAMM THIBEAULT

GR.4-5

BOXING

When Tamm Thibeault was only nine years old, she went with her dad to his boxing club. Watching him powerfully hit the punching bag was inspiring, and soon she found herself asking to give it a try. Once she tried it, she knew right away that boxing was her sport.

Tamm was tall and fast, and she felt like she was made to be a boxer. She loved learning how to punch and how to move her feet without crossing them over.

When she started having fights, she won. For three years, she never lost a bout. Seeing the women boxers at the 2012 London Olympics, only made her more determined to fight at the Olympics.

With that dream in mind, she kept training and learning more about boxing. It's a sport that is as much mental as it is physical. The first time she lost a match, she was devastated.

After losing a hard fight in Ireland, she knew that she had to change her focus. She had to focus on being her best and not just beating other boxers.

"I thought, 'I don't want to focus on being the best. I want to focus on being the best that I can be. It's a small difference, but a big one at the same time. So, I learned how to shift my focus.'"

Training her mind became as important as training her body. She had always been critical of herself and upset by her mistakes. She began writing herself positive messages on sticky notes. She kept a journal about her thoughts. She focused on becoming stronger mentally. Her mindset started to change, and she was determined to take this new approach into competition.

The chance to test her new skills came. She had a big tournament to qualify for the 2019 Pan American Games. Tamm was so nervous before the final fight that she tripped on her way into the boxing ring. But she didn't let her doubts take over. She kept her focus on doing her best.

A women's boxing match has three rounds lasting three minutes each. She had won the first round. Then she lost the second. The match would be decided in the final round. She had to stay focused and be patient. She had to stick to her plan and hold herself back. She couldn't rush into punches that could leave her open to her opponent.

Then it happened—she saw the opportunity. Her opponent lowered their guard. Tamm saw the opening and punched hard. At the end of the match the referee lifted her hand, but she was already satisfied.

"It was probably the moment I would be most proud of, not because I won, but because of how I kept my composure and focus throughout the fight."

Tamm has won medals at big tournaments, including a bronze at the World Championships. Her eyes were fixed on winning gold at the 2020 Olympic Games. But just months before she would have packed her bags for Tokyo, the COVID-19 pandemic struck hard. It shut down businesses, moved schooling online, and canceled sporting events. Then came the news she was dreading. The Olympics were postponed.

Her first thought was that it couldn't possibly be true. She felt like everything she had worked for was gone. Many people in Montreal, where she lived, were getting sick from the virus. The gym where she trained was closed, and everybody was told to stay home. Suddenly she felt like she had no purpose.

Tamm realized she needed to shift her mindset. She moved back to live with her parents for their support and set up a home gym, so she could keep training. She did yoga and meditation to help her stay positive. She had to be patient and wait for her opportunity.

When the COVID-19 rules were put in place for training, she went back to Montreal ready to train. Her new coach had different techniques and ideas to take her to the top of the Olympic podium. She was careful to follow the COVID-19 rules to keep herself and others safe and healthy.

Tamm came to see the year as "a blessing in disguise." She didn't want to delay her Olympic dreams, but she made the best of the time.

"The year has allowed me to practice being patient and staying calm and in control. I'm more confident than I've ever been. Whenever the Olympics happen, I'm going to be ready."

FOCUS


SCHOOL PROGRAM

TAMM THIBEAULT

GR.6-7

BOXING

When Tamm Thibeault was only nine years old, she tagged along with her dad when he went to the boxing club. Watching him powerfully hit the punching bag was inspiring, and soon she found herself asking to give it a try.

Once she did, she knew from the start that this was the sport for her. Her height and reach kept distance between her and her opponents and she was quick on her feet. She loved learning how to punch and how to move her feet without crossing them over.

When she started competing, she won fight after fight. For three years, she never lost a bout. Seeing the women boxers at the 2012 London Olympics, only made her more determined to be a champion and to fight at the Olympics.

With that dream in mind, she intensified her training and threw herself at learning more about the sport of boxing. It's a sport that is as much mental as it is physical, and the first time she lost a match, she was devastated. After losing a very hard fight, she realized that she needed to change her mindset. She had to focus on improving her personal best and not just beating other boxers.

"I thought, 'I don't want to focus on being the best. I want to focus on being the best that I can be. It's a small difference, but a big one at the same time. So, I learned how to shift my focus.'"

She learned that mental training takes as much effort and daily practice as physical training. She had been very critical of herself, and was unforgiving about her mistakes.

To change this negative attitude, she began writing herself positive messages on sticky notes, and kept a logbook where she recorded her thoughts. Her mindset started to change, and she was determined to take this new approach into competition.

The chance to test her new skills came at the qualification tournament for the 2019 Pan American Games. Tamm was so nervous before the final fight that she tripped on her way into the boxing ring. But she didn't let her doubts overtake her, she regathered her focus.

A women's boxing match has three rounds lasting three minutes each. She had won the first round. But the other boxer fought back and won the second round. The match would be decided in the final round. This was when all the mental training would prove its worth. She had to be patient

and restrain herself from rushing in with a flurry of punches that could leave her open to her opponent's jabs.

Then it happened—the other boxer lowered their guard and Tamm quickly attacked with a ferocious punch. At the end of the match the referee lifted her hand to indicate she was victorious. But she was already feeling satisfied.

"It was probably the moment I would be most proud of, not because I won, but because of how I kept my composure and focus throughout the fight."

Tamm subsequently won medals at big tournaments like a bronze at the World Championships and a silver medal at the Pan American Games. Her eyes were fixed on winning gold at the 2020 Olympic Games. But just months before she would have packed her bags for Tokyo, the COVID-19 pandemic struck hard. It was causing countries everywhere to shut down businesses, move schooling online, and cancel sporting events. Then came the news she was dreading. The Olympics were postponed.

The dreams she had been striving for were now in jeopardy. Many people in Montreal, where she lived, were getting sick from the virus. The gym where she trained was closed, and everybody was ordered to stay home. Her purpose and drive seemed to be ebbing away.

Again, Tamm realized she needed to shift her mindset. She went to her parents' home in another city for their company and support. She bought weights, a boxing bag and other equipment so she could train. She started doing yoga and meditation to help her stay positive and mentally strong. She had to be patient and wait for her opportunity.

When the rules eased, she went back to Montreal ready to train with a vengeance. Her new coach had different techniques and ideas to take her to the top of the Olympic podium. She was careful to follow the COVID-19 rules to keep herself and others healthy and safe.

Tamm began to see the year as "a blessing in disguise." She didn't want to have to wait another year for her Olympic dreams, but she made the best of the time.

"The year has allowed me to practice being patient and staying calm and focused. I'm more confident than I've ever been. Whenever the Olympics happen, I'm going to be ready."



SCHOOL PROGRAM

FOCUS

MY GOAL: _____

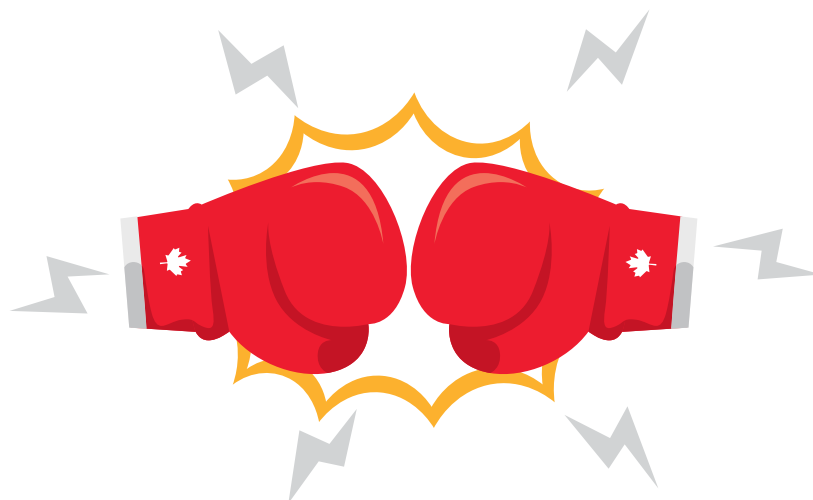
Reaching my goal means focusing on the things I can control and choosing to focus on the thoughts that help me and not the thoughts that distract me.

THINGS I CAN CONTROL

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

THINGS I CAN'T CONTROL

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



FOCUSING THOUGHTS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DISTRACTING THOUGHTS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____





EFFORTS AND CREATIVITY

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