



SAMPLE SESSION: Incorporating the lessons

7. Why do some people have more opportunities than others

After the boxing session, which follows the same format as the introductory lesson, we move into the first educational/academic session.

Key points: Institution, Structure, Resources | use sociological theories to understand social issues, debates, social changes and continuities over time

Activity: Sit them through Roy Jones Jr vs Park Si Hun (after they know of the fight already from the first session), then ask these questions:

Do you believe that to become a boxing world champion, you just have to be the best boxer?

Discuss

Narrated: If so, then you believe in an idea called Meritocracy. This concept suggests that those at the top of an industry (World Champions, CEOs, Presidents, Grammy Winners) are the best at what they do, and that they have earned it through their hard work, and therefore they deserve it. Those who did not 'make it' to the top are then people who did not earn it, whether due to a lack of ability or hard work.

Is Taylor swift the best musician? Ronaldo the best footballer? Gordon Ramsay the best chef? (More)

Discuss

Narrated: This sounds fairly reasonable, but is it as black and white?

In the history of Olympic Boxing, the USA holds the most medals, at 117 Medals, 50 of them Gold. The country that comes straight after, without surprise, is Cuba, at 78 medals, 41 of them Gold, twice the amount of Great Britain, which comes third, at 20 Gold Medals.

Activity: Show short video/documentary of Cuban boxing training: conditions they train in, highlights of some people from olympics, someone really flashy

Narrated: Cuba is also the only country that has produced two three-time Olympic champions, Teofilo Stevenson and Félix Savón.

How many professional Cuban world champions do you know of?

Alongside many other sports, Boxing was banned in 1962 in Cuba by its then Prime Minister and then President Fidel Castro, who was in power for 49 years (1959-2008). Castro considered the sport corrupt and corrupting, which led to the ban. Cuban boxing coach Nicholas Cruz, who left Cuba and coached the Irish Amateur boxing team at the 1988 and 1992 Olympics, also speculates that the ban is due to the dangerous nature of the sport.

Continue



**Activity:** Alternative History Roleplay

Students take on roles (Cuban President, Cuban boxing team, Soviet Union reps, Olympic Committee, local citizens, etc.) and negotiate under real historical constraints — e.g., food shortages, political pressure, Olympic bans. Each role has specific goals and trade-offs. Can Cuba go to the Olympics without losing Soviet support? Ends with debate, outcome reflection, and a short documentary showing what really happened.

Narration: The people in Cuba lived in a controlled society under Castro. Political dissent was not tolerated, private enterprise was restricted, and citizens had limited access to information and global goods. The U.S. embargo (An official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country), along with Cuba's dependence on the Soviet Union, led to severe shortages, especially after the Soviet Union collapsed. Many Cubans lived with rationed food, limited freedom, and tight state surveillance.

Under these circumstances, it is practically not possible for Cuban boxers to consider a professional career.

The hard-working boxer is not simply a self-made figure, they are products of systems that allowed (or forced) their work to become visible. For every fighter who becomes a household name, there are hundreds whose brilliance was never seen, whose opportunities were taken away not by lack of effort, but by circumstance.)

Can a boxer truly be "self-made" in a system that controls access to food, freedom, and opportunity, or are they always shaped by the politics and power structures around them?

Discuss

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