

Dare to Be Different

Lesson 5: History and Heroes | Suggested Grades: 4-7

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

Students will....

- learn about Debbie Brill and the impact she had on her sport.
- Explore the meaning of "innovation".
- Reflect on how they can be innovative in their own lives.

Curricular Links:

- Language arts
- Physical Education
- Personal Planning

Materials:

- Appendix 5.1 for student reference
- Overhead copy of Appendix 5.2, 5.3

The Big Idea

Debbie Brill developed a new technique of high jumping courageously facing many doubters and going against conventional practice of her day. In doing so, her method of high jumping has been the standard for her sport ever since. Students learn how this spirit of "innovation" can be a model for independent thinking in all facets of life.

Opening Motivator in the lab (40 min)

Video Clip

- Start this lesson with your students in the computer lab.
- Read Appendix 5.1 orally to your class to introduce Debbie's story before viewing the video clip online.
- Students click on Debbie Brill's lesson five icons to view her historic world record jump.
- Instruct students to explore the images from Debbie's career. While viewing images, students will listen to her life story, her inspirational message, and jumping tips.

Classroom Activity (60 min)

After returning from the computer lab, use the discussion questions found in Appendix 5.2 as a starting point to this activity. During the discussion, try to have students focus on the notion that Debbie believed in herself, took chances, and dared to be different in a very public setting. In doing so, she made a positive change to a sport she loved. Emphasize that Debbie's success was due to her having the following beliefs:

- Be an independent thinker
- Be persistent
- Be confident and remember to learn from failures
- Be positive
- Dare to be different and try new things
- Focus and take risks

Inspired by Debbie's belief as listed above, students will now take on the role of a sport innovator.

Teaching Tip

These attributes can be made into an overhead or classroom poster.

1. Ask students to pick a sport they love, and then, group the students according to the sport they have selected. This will ensure that students have the background knowledge of the sport to be equal contributors to this activity.
2. Ask the students to:
 - Compile a list of 3 specific changes or “innovations” they think might improve their chosen sport.
 - Students will have to narrow the list to one change. Remind students that they need to have a clear explanation on why a particular change or “innovation” would improve their sport.
 - Ask students to share their ideas with the class.
 - The class as a whole could then discuss whether they agreed if the change would improve the sport in a positive way.

Conclusion and Reflections (10 min)

Debbie Brill faced a lot of criticism for doing things differently in her sport. However, because she had the confidence, positive attitude, and faith in herself she persevered and realized great success. She has adapted these attributes that allowed her to succeed in sport and applied them to her life as a whole. Ask students to complete a written composition about taking chances in life. Use the following questions to help the students structure their writing:

- When have you faced criticism for doing things differently in life?
- How did you respond to the situation?
- Did your response make a difference?
- What should you have done differently and why?
- Given your experience, would you be inclined to “dare to be different” again?

Web Links

Canadian Women & Sport

<https://womenandsport.ca/>

A website for active girls and young women by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity.

Sport BC

<https://sportbc.com>

Sport BC is non-profit society founded in 1966. The members include 82 provincial sport and related organizations, representing over 834,000 British Columbians as participants, coaches, officials, administrators and volunteers.

BC Athletics

<http://www.bcatletics.org/>

BC Athletics is a non-profit amateur sport organization whose purpose is to promote, encourage, and develop the widest participation and the highest proficiency in all Athletics events.

Appendices

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Appendix 5.1

The Brill Bend

The scene was oft repeated. In a darkened sports complex the crowd sits hushed, anticipating the outcome. Near the centre of the infield and adjacent to a foam rubber landing pit, a crosspiece is supported by two vertical supports. Off to the right, a slowly rotating electronic digital display unit indicates the bar setting to be about six feet. Further on, near the edge of the track poses the real object of their attention: a slim young woman in singlet and briefs stands trancelike, hands on hips, head cocked to one side.

A muffled cough pierces the silence. Debbie Brill takes no notice of it, but continues to stare fixedly at the bar waiting for just that precise moment when she has mustered up enough aggressiveness and hostility to attack the only obstacle preventing her from putting that number on the scoreboard in to a curved run toward the bar. An arm's length away, she launches her lithe five foot nine and one half inch frame upward like a pogo stick, twists and breezes backwards over the bar like a bent willow reed and free falls like a jackknife into the golf pit, all in a single fluid motion that belies the complexity of the mechanics of her event. Her first impulse is to look at the bar. It quivers tauntingly but stays up. Applause thunders in her ears like cannon fire. Her face breaks out into a gleeful grin . . . She had set the new high jump record and cleared 6 feet using her innovative "Brill Bend".



Appendices

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Appendix 5.2

1. What is Debbie Brill known for and why?
2. Debbie is known as being a leader and innovator in her sport, why do you think this is?
3. What did you notice about Debbie's jumping technique and why did it work better for Debbie?
4. What is the 'Brill Bend' and why did it set Debbie apart from all other jumpers?
5. Debbie thinks that "sport" is an excellent tool to measure yourself and find out who you are. What do you think she meant by this statement?
6. Why do you think that Debbie was inducted into the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame and Museum?

Appendices

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Appendix 5.3

- Be an independent thinker
- Be persistent
- Be confident
- Learn from failures
- Be positive
- Dare to be different
- Try new things
- Take risks