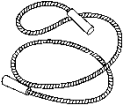


Claim, Evidence, & Interpretation

Text:

Claim: The strategies/lessons required to improve at *double-dutch* are similar to those that make one successful in all other aspects of life.



Textual Evidence (Explicit & Implicit):

Interpretation:

How does the evidence support the claim?



I can cite textual evidence to support a claim.

Double Dutch Gets Status in the Schools

By Winnie Hu

The rhythmic clicking of double-dutch ropes smacking the tennis court the other day at the Grand Street Campus High School in Bushwick drew 13-year-old Stephanie Moronta like a siren's call. She edged closer to the ropes, rocking back and forth on her heels before lunging into the whirling center.

Click, click, click, then nothing.

"I stopped doing this for a while, so I'm kind of rough," Stephanie explained as she untangled her feet from the doubled-over orange rope. "If you hear the rhythm, you just flow right into it."

Stephanie was practicing double dutch, an urban street staple that dates back centuries and, come next spring, will become the newest of 35 varsity sports played in New York City schools. As part of an effort to increase the number of students — particularly girls — participating in competitive athletics, the city will create coed double-dutch teams at 10 high schools, many in predominantly black neighborhoods like Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Harlem where the ropes have long swung on asphalt playgrounds.

Double dutch follows cricket, which was added last year and is now played by more than 400 students at 14 schools, including the elite Stuyvesant High School.

School officials said they were also considering cycling, badminton and netball for varsity sports. Nearly 33,000 students, about 10 percent of the high school population, play on varsity or junior varsity teams, compared with more than a third in many suburban districts.

"As an urban district, we need to be creative in an urban kind of way, and double dutch does that for us," said Eric Goldstein, who oversees the Public Schools Athletic League, the governing body for the city's interscholastic sports. "If you see people doing it, it looks hard and it is hard."

Kyra D. Gaunt, who wrote "The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop" (N.Y.U. Press, 2006), said that recognizing double dutch as a sport not only taps into something that many children are passionate about, but also gives a nod to the influence of black culture. "They're helping to regenerate a tradition in the black community and legitimize it in the eyes of a lot of parents," she said.

Dr. Gaunt, an associate professor of anthropology and black music studies at Baruch College, said that she avoided double dutch as a child because she was so bad at it but that she relearned it while writing her book. She said the appeal of double dutch was that anyone could do it, and that once mastered, it lent itself to individual expression through fancy footwork and dance routines.



Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

Kim Simeron, 15, jumped rope at summer camp at Grand Street Campus High School in Brooklyn. Starting next spring, double dutch will be a varsity sport at some New York City schools.

Double dutch is believed to have been first played by Dutch settlers along the Hudson River and was later given the name “double dutch” by the British, according to a history of the game written by David A. Walker, a former New York City police sergeant who was one of its biggest advocates for more than three decades.

Mr. Walker, who died last week, wrote that double dutch once thrived in the city’s neighborhoods, with children singing rhymes while turning ropes and jumping along sidewalks during World War II. But by the late 1950s, he wrote, its popularity had waned in part because of a shortage of playgrounds near apartment buildings.

Mr. Walker developed rules for competition so that double dutch could be played by girls as an intramural sport in the city schools. In 1974, the first double-dutch tournament drew nearly 600 children. Today, the Apollo Theater in Harlem hosts competitions that draw teams from around the world.

“Double dutch has always been a part of our everyday recreation,” said Mr. Walker’s daughter, Lauren. “Just as guys would go off to the schoolyard and shoot hoops and play stickball, girls would just pull out their ropes and start jumping.”

Ms. Walker is the program director for the National Double Dutch League, an organization started by her father that holds competitions, youth clinics and coaching workshops. It also has a demonstration team, called the Dynamic Diplomats of Double Dutch, that performs internationally with members ranging from teenagers to adults in their 30s.

School officials said they would work with the double-dutch league to develop rules and a scoring system for interscholastic competition. Double-dutch teams typically have two turners and one or two jumpers, and they earn points for their speed, technique in executing routines and acrobatic feats like flips and cartwheels.

Mr. Goldstein is also negotiating with the developer Forest City Ratner to sponsor the double-dutch teams by providing \$10,000 for uniforms, ropes and other equipment.

The first double-dutch team has already formed at Bedford Academy High School in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where 14 girls and 2 boys signed up even before the official announcement by the athletic league last weekend, said Shani Newsome, a physical education teacher who will coach the team.

Ms. Newsome, 32, grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant and recalled scavenging clothes – lines because they were long enough to use for double dutch and once borrowing a spare cord from a telephone repairman. “In Bed-Stuy it’s an unspoken rule that you have to learn how to jump rope,” she said. “You can’t stay outside if you don’t know how to double-dutch.”



Now Ms. Newsome is showing the ropes to a new generation, including the daughters of her friends and her own 9-year-old son, William. She said that her varsity team would not just be jumping, but also running and lifting weights to build muscles.

On Tuesday afternoon, Ms. Newsome was expertly turning ropes while a half-dozen teenage girls tried jumping at a summer camp at the Bushwick high school. “Who can jump in?” she called out as the girls peppered her with questions:

Does the rope hurt? (It can.)

Was the rope wobbling too much in the wind? (It was.)

Calixta Crowder, 10, who lives in the Flatbush neighborhood, described double dutch as “medium hard” but said she liked that “whenever you mess up, you get to try again and you get better at it.”

Stephanie, who wore a black T-shirt and cropped jeans, worked her way up to nearly a minute of uninterrupted jumping. She said that she learned to jump rope at age 8 by watching friends in her neighborhood, and that this summer, she had been trying to double-dutch every few days in a park near her family’s apartment.

“I know a lot of people who like to double-dutch and can do it,” said Stephanie, who will be in the eighth grade and is already planning to try out for the double-dutch team when she gets to high school. “It’s going to be exciting going up against other schools. I’m a competitive person, and I really hate to lose.”