



SAPERRE Resources

The Perfect 10 Nick Chandley

Share a stimulus

The perfect 10 was witnessed for the first time in (modern, at least) Olympic gymnastic history at the Montreal games in 1976 and was achieved by the young gymnast, Nadia Comaneci. Her first 'perfect' score was for her routine on the uneven bars but she went on to a further 6 in other disciplines, making her one of the most celebrated Olympic competitors ever. You can find lots of videos of her routines on YouTube, but you can find the one that made history [here](#).

There's also an interesting article from The Guardian, part of a series called '50 stunning Olympic moments' [here](#). This article mentions how Omega, responsible for the timekeeping and scoring equipment, approached the Olympic committee and suggested they add an extra digit to the electronic scorecard, which could only display 3 digits. The committee refused, saying that a perfect score of 10.00 was impossible so there was no point. Comaneci's score was therefore displayed as 1.00 rather than the 10 she was awarded.

Ask questions

So, we have some really rich territory here for our children to explore. The first, and most obvious, would be the concept of **perfect** and I might help the exploration by asking questions such as:

- Has anyone done anything that was 'perfect'?
- If so, could it not have been any better?
- If not, does that mean perfection is impossible?
- Can everything be improved?
- Could something be perfect but still be improved?

Another area that might crop up from the children's questioning is that of being **dedicated**. Comaneci was obviously dedicated to her sport to be able to be so successful, but everyone in the class will be good at something. Children could share the things they're good at, or even better maybe, the things they know other children are good at, and they might then explore what makes them good at it.

Questions around this might include:

- Do you have to work hard to get better at something?
- Can you be good at something without even trying?
- Should we choose just one thing to be good at and then work at just that?
- What does being 'talented' mean?
- Is hard work always worth it?

Other thoughts

I wonder what some folk in education might say to an exploration of whether hard work always pays off, but it's precisely this kind of thing that makes for great enquiries, as children are often told to work hard and are therefore able to bring their experience of this to the dialogue. There are lots of other aspects of children's lives in this stimulus too, such as **winning, losing, fame, glory, achievement** and **impossibility**, to name a few.

Author bio and links

Nick, a qualified teacher, has been a SAPERE trainer since 2006. He formed Philosophy for Schools Ltd in 2012 and has since trained countless teachers and helped many schools achieve Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. He edited one edition of SAPERE's Level 1 handbook, co-edited (with Lizzy Lewis) Philosophy for Children through the Secondary Curriculum (Continuum, 2012) and has written a huge number of resources. He also helped create, for CBeebies, What's the Big Idea?, the ground-breaking and Children's BAFTA- nominated philosophy show, and Feeling Better, focused on children's emotional development. He was also consultant to the BBC2 documentary, The world according to kids. In 2017, Nick, Bob House and Roger Sutcliffe combined forces to start DialogueWorks Ltd which promotes P4C and Thinking Moves A-Z, Roger's innovative framework for metacognition, worldwide. Nick lives on the West Coast of Scotland and particularly enjoys being out on the sea when he manages to be at home.

www.philosophyforschools.co.uk

www.dialogueworks.co.uk

X: @NickChandley

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SAPERE

SAPERE c/o Menzies LLP Heathrow,
Centrum House, 36 Station Road
Egham, Surrey, TW20 9LF

+44 (0) 1784 906899



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enquiries@sapere.org.uk



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