

Lesson Two: Education and Training Pays



“Beating the Odds”



Energizer

Time: 5-10 Minutes

Objective: Demonstrate to students that their odds of “hitting it big” in the work world are small, therefore, they need to look at other options to maximize their life-time earning potential.

Instructor: Calculate the “Odds of Extraordinary Success” with the class. Ask students for the number of basketball teams in the NBA. Ask for the number of players per team. Ask for the number of men’s college basketball teams in the U.S. Ask for the number of players per team. Ask for the number of boys’ high school basketball teams in the U.S. Ask for the number of players per team.

Answers:

Number of NBA teams: 29

Number of NBA players: 435 (15 players per team)

Number of college basketball teams: 980

Number of college basketball players: 15,710 (about 16 players per team)

Number of high school basketball teams: 16,852

Number of high school basketball players: 541,130

Ask students to calculate the percentage of high school players that make it onto a college team. Then ask students to calculate what percentage of college players become professional basketball players. Finally, ask students what percentage of high school players make it into the NBA.

Answers:

Percentage of high school basketball players that make it onto a college team: 2.9%

Percentage of college basketball players that make it onto an NBA team: 2.8%

Percentage of high school basketball players that make it onto an NBA team: 0.08% (much less than even 1%)

If time allows, continue the exercise using high school band members becoming professional musicians, or other occupations the students might suggest. Students may need to time to do additional research to come up with realistic numbers for other occupations.



Students: Volunteer their guesses about several pieces of information regarding basketball.

Instructor: Ask the following questions.

- ⌘ What surprises you about these numbers?
- ⌘ How does this exercise affect your beliefs about your odds of success in some of these careers in the future?
- ⌘ Other than natural talent, what other factors can influence a person's earning ability in the future?

