



## *Picture Pedagogy* Online Resources – Lesson Examples

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### Lesson Example 2.1 Realistic-Style Elements

Subject: Art/Media Education

Level: Middle School

Country: United States

A class teacher, assisted by a student teacher, taught lessons that focused on how celebrities are represented in popular magazines by the use of photographic elements such as camera angles, lighting and different kinds of body language. The focus on celebrities arose from an awareness of celebrity power to sell products to youth.

The lessons grew out of the teacher's photography class with students who had previously had some experience with conventional analogue photography. This had included the use of school-provided 35mm cameras, black-and-white film, paper, and other support materials. The teacher began by handing out preliminary worksheets and magazine advertisements that included celebrity endorsements. The students reproduced the advertisements as thumbnail sketches, noting the placement of text, objects, and people. This ensured that the students did not simply glance at the advertisement; they were required to take their time to look carefully.

Class discussion followed as the students reviewed advertisements in a number of magazines with their attention drawn to camera angles, lighting and composition. And what did the celebrities look like? Did they appear to be themselves or were they performing? How did each of these elements convey a message about the product advertised? Was it to simply sell a product or did it also involve an attitude or a lifestyle? With prompts from the teachers, the students began to learn how to articulate how they thought the advertisement had been constructed, including how the photographs had been altered to enhance their subject.

The students then began a studio project in which they were to emphasize someone's facial features or, as the lead teacher phrased the issue, 'aspects of their personality that may or may not be true'. She asked the students to become celebrities. At first, no one in the class was prepared to be photographed as a celebrity but one boy, who self-described as 'overachieving', eventually stepped forward and other members of the class took a variety of photographs of him. They deliberately used different framing shots, lighting techniques, camera angles and posed him in different positions. They were particularly interested in using body language and apparel to transform the personality of the sitter whom they had come to know throughout the semester.

The students then linked their photograph with a product and then stated whether their photograph showed the personality of the sitter that they knew from class or not. What they were trying to tell us about the person? Tasked with addressing this question, each student presented their paragraph as to why they had chosen certain photographic elements and not others.

All the students sought to convey what one called 'wealthiness.' Below are a few examples of their written (unedited) summations as to how they attempted to convey the association of celebrity to wealth. One student wrote,



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The camera looking up at him and his eyes aren't looking at the viewers. He is standing off into the distance as if he is looking down upon others. Also to pose with the jacket over his shoulder makes him seem wealthy along with the wristbands he is wearing. He thinks he's hot. The original picture had part of the ceiling at the top; that took away from part of his importance. When I cropped it, it made his head higher on the paper for him to seem taller and better than others.

Another student wrote, 'I made him look like a sex symbol by grabbing his crotch. The lighting on his face makes him look a slight bit evil or mean. The camera angle and how he is looking at the camera makes him look better than everyone'. Still another student commented, 'I had a flood light directly on him from the left side and one light right on the background from the right side. I had him wear the hat sideways to give his face a strong, mysterious shadow'.

In reflecting on the lessons, the teachers believed that their students' analyses of media manipulation were quite direct and often missed nuances that could have led to more in depth critique. Nevertheless, they still felt that the students were able to visually convey the transformative power of an image. Perhaps a more prescriptive approach to the assignment, in which they had outlined poses, camera angles, and products for students to use, would have led to a better grasp of celebrity culture. However, by offering the students the agency to create their own focus of interest, they were not only able to note the authentic transference that took place after the verbal discussion, but were able to discern what students felt was visually important about the project.

Briggs, J. (2007). 'Celebrity, Illusion, and Middle School Culture', *Art Education*, 60 (3): 39-44.



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### Lesson Example 2.2 The Elements of Moving Images

Subject: Media Arts/Science

Level: Year 4

Country: Australia

Justine and Rosemary, generalist teachers, collaborated with Katherine, a media specialist teacher, to integrate media arts with science. Together they integrated some of the basic, age-appropriate building blocks of visual culture with the basics of scientific procedures. They each taught in a lower socioeconomic primary school on the outskirts of a large city with students who were not much interested in science. Justine and Rosemary were able to build upon, and develop further, knowledge and skills their students had acquired from half a school year of video production with Katherine.

Their school year was broken into four semesters of 10 weeks each. During the first semester, Katherine focused instruction on basic operational skills of media production. This included operating laptops such as logging in, highlighting, dragging and dropping text and images. They used software to create text, still images, and audio and video files. She also introduced them to web design templates as well as different types of shots, camera movements, and transitions. In the second semester, students moved on to further operational skills including operating digital cameras and digital video cameras. Students conducted interviews with video cameras; recoded sound; and captured and edited footage using video editing software. All of these skills were developed through the completion of media arts projects, which included storyboarding.

In the third semester Katherine began working with Justine and Rosemary on teaching the students to represent science procedures. This project involved the creation of a storyline 'To help Billy's mum chose the right kind of pen to mark a hat so that it will not be lost?' Their focus question was 'What marker remain even in wet weather?'

The class began by examining examples of science procedures on children's television programs to see what kinds of shots were used. Students then decided that they should begin with an opening shot in which a student would introduce the experiment followed by three or four shots of the test, during which the audience would hear a voice over commentary. In a final, a closing shot, a student would explain the outcome.

The teachers stressed that the video was to demonstrate the basic scientific process of plan, predict, explore, and explain. The students drew their own storyboards, including, shot number, the types of each shot, and the content of each shot. They also practiced the experiments, which involved testing out the solubility of three different kinds of markers. Finally, they began filming and editing, undertaking their tests, discussing the tests, and drawing conclusions from the evidence gained.

Both Justine and Rosemary were impressed by the extent to which their students, usually unmotivated to learn science, were keen to participate. They noted that students voluntarily engaged in 'science talk'. Justine commented, 'The filming process brought out a lot more discussion and made them a lot more inquisitive. Media arts helped them refine ideas about science'. Both teachers agreed that the media unit had increased their students' motivation, lifted their confidence, and



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helped reinforced their knowledge of science. A crucial aspect of this subject integration was that the filming process had slowed the children down so that they were able to reflect on what they were learning. Some of the children were even experimenting with other science projects at home.

Doyle, K., and Dezuanni, M. (2014). 'Children Participating in Science through Digital-Media Literacies,' *Literacy Learning: the Middle Years* 22 (3): 42-54.



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### Lesson Example 2.3 Gender Stereotyping

Subject: Media Education

Level: Middle School

Country: United States

A team of researchers cum teachers conducted four 45 minute workshops with several classes of students aged between 12 and 14 years. Their goal was to raise awareness of how the media represents work occupations in gendered ways and how the students could be influenced by the media in making their own future career choices.

The team approached the classes with the following five assumptions: women experience discrimination in the workplace; the media influences the way people think about men and women; the media portrays stereotypical messages about women's interest in men and family, and men's interest in careers; the media portrays stereotypical images about women and men in the context of occupations; and the media influences the students' own behavior and occupational choices. But would their students agree? The teachers conducted four workshops to find out.

The first workshop began with the teachers introducing, demonstrating, and discussing gender stereotypes, causes of stereotypes, the relationship between stereotypes and performance in occupations, and the concept of critical media literacy. They also introduced the students to the concept of media disruption where both artists and ordinary people talk back to the media. Students were shown a variety of visuals, including provocative advertisements and posters. They were then organized into small and large groups and asked to discuss the pictures. Question prompts related to sexism, stereotypes, and the messages in the media. Two advertisements were for backpacks, one geared towards girls and read 'Light as a feather tough as long division'. Another was directed towards boys and read, 'Superlight, super hero tough.' Students were asked to generate stereotypes about men and women and the teachers documented the responses on charts at the front of the room.

In the second workshop, teachers discussed ideas about occupations in terms of gender, how the students' ideas could be derived from the media, and how ideas about gender can have real-life consequences. Students completed a questionnaire on their views on the media and gender, and when the responses were tabulated, the results were discussed. Finding that various jobs were typically associated with men and others with women, students then worked to cross-reference these findings with a salary sheet to find out how different occupations equated to higher salaries and whether such jobs were typically associated with men or women. Some students found the results surprising. Why, they asked.

In the third workshop, the students first examined two video commercials advertising vacuum cleaners. One advertisement contained many negative occupation-related gender stereotypes while the second advertisement was counter-stereotypical. The students then worked in groups to deconstruct magazine advertisements, also with gender biased occupation content, and construct alternative, counter-stereotypical advertisements. These were presented to the class.



During this workshop, teachers observed that students were identifying sexist messages that they themselves had not noticed. An advertisement for car insurance showed a white, male mathematician having written an equation on the chalkboard. Students noticed that the formula suggested that girls were bad drivers as the pictorial graph essentially said, 'Putting on mascara plus the square root of beer on a rainy night equals car wreck'.

The fourth workshop consisted of the students showing their own counter stereotypes which generated a whole class discussion.

The workshops were evaluated by means of pre-and post-questioners as well as selected interviews with individual students. The students generally resisted the idea that they were influenced by the media to think in gendered, stereotypical ways or that the media had any influence on the occupations they would later pursue. However, the majority of the students did show a markedly more sophisticated understanding of how the media is saturated by gendered representations. For example, one girl, in examining advertisements for toys, initially noted the difference between those directed at boys and those at girls but she appeared to find them unproblematic. In the post-interview, she said of an advertisement,

Well, I'll say this is very stereotypical...They got like a boy there making crazy monsters and aliens and things, but they got the girl over here making flowers and pretty rainbows. But some girls do like the alien shows that come on...and then they don't show the boy liking flowers and they don't show the girl liking kooky things.... So they should have said both girls and boys love kooky and pretty things, that would make it less stereotypical.

When asked about what they got out of the workshops, boys as well as girls indicated that they now held more negative views of advertising. One typical comment by a boy was, 'About how badly they put like girls in like positions like as always putting men as the better gender'.

The teachers admitted that these responses may have been made to please, and even if the students believed them at the time that they might not carry over into their daily lives. They comment that short sequences like theirs need regular follow up.

Puchner, L., Markowitz, L., and Hedley, M. (1910). 'Critical Media Literacy and Gender: Teaching Middle School Children about Gender Stereotypes and Occupations', *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 7 (2): 23-34.



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### Lesson Example 2.4 Gender and Sexuality

Subject: Art  
Level: Grade 4  
Country: Taiwan

Ming-Wu intended to teach about gender stereotypes, and she did, but she was diverted to include sexuality as well. Over a period of six weeks, she encouraged her fourth-grade class of 13 boys and 13 girls to examine, reflect, critique and talk back to the stereotypes they found in both mass media and their daily life at home.

As the classes began it was evident that the students held the typical view of gender roles in a patriarchal society. The class laughed at the idea of boys playing with dolls as an utter absurdity. Ming-Wu was not unduly surprised at this since patriarchy, though currently undergoing modification, remains deeply embedded in Taiwanese culture.

Ming-Wu approached the topic with the acronym A-R-T where A stood for accumulate knowledge of gender issues, R stood for the students reflecting upon their own consciousness of gender, and T stood for treating the issue with teaching. Her program consisted of four units. In unit 1, called 'The Female Voice under Patriarchy', the class examined a painting by contemporary Taiwanese artist Juin Shieh, *All Things in their Being are Good for Something* from 1988. It represents a massive screw inside a transparent image of a woman's body. The image prompted a discussion of how patriarchy can be painful to women, with students freely discussing how at home girls were taught to be elegant, clean, tidy, and obedient, with prescribed sitting and eating postures, while boys were seldom similarly disciplined. Instead, boys were instructed to be strong, anti-feminine and derided for crying. Girls confessed that they often hid their abilities.

Discussion soon turned to career choices. The students thought that women are careful so that they are suitable for service jobs like a bride secretary, waitress, a teacher or translator. Men they saw as bold and brave, qualities they associated with leadership and so suitable to be a chairman, a doctor, architect or policemen. About this time the issue of homosexuality was raised, with most students finding it 'disgusting'. Ming-Wu notes that although the gender equality policy of her education department declares that people of different genders and sexual orientations should be respected and accepted, the mass media, and people generally, continue to interpret gender in heterosexual terms, thus limiting gender equality to binary interactions between men and women. When Ming-Wu asked her class, 'does homosexuality bother you' a student answered, 'Yes I feel he/she is stupid'.

In the second unit, called 'Gender Diversity', Ming-Wu had her students study two contrasting western images, Jacques-louis David's *Oath of the Horatii* from 1784 that shows men heroically declaring allegiance unto death while women sit as mere observers, and a lithograph by Goya, from his *The Disasters of War* series from 1810-20, that shows women aggressively fighting men. The particular image chosen was subtitled 'They are Like Wild Beasts.' The two pictures offered strikingly different images of gender roles, traditional and counter traditional. Discussion ensued. The students



could identify the gender roles in the David's painting, but was not the idea of woman as wild beasts also another kind of stereotype?

The third unit was called 'You are Tired Mom'. Ming-Wu guided her students to feel the pain that women feel as second-class citizens as well as people of alternative sexualities who are marginalized. She conceived this as a pedagogy of empathy. She also used a time-honored way to develop a critical consciousness by referring to gender roles in a different culture. The students were introduced to the lifestyles of different tribes in New Guinea where it is common for women to be lauded as powerful and men to be compliant. Mothers go out to work and men stay at home to cook. A number of couples, famous in Taiwan, were also used as case studies of reversing traditional gender roles. The students came to agree that there was no inherent reason why their gender should determine their roles in life.

Students then drew pictures intended by Ming Wu to indicate why at times mothers might want to scream. Each student used the main figure in Munch's *Scream* to represent a mother in a particular distressing situation. Many of the children developed elaborate scenarios involving crime and only screaming for help, and others showed being overloaded with housework. Ming Wu intervened suggesting these students turn passive postures into active ones with a counter narrative. Words were added such as 'Clean up time everybody.' And in one drawing, a girl reprimands a boy taking photographs with hidden camera, 'Girls are not weak. They cannot be bullied.' As homework, the students were required to study how men and women acted and interacted in daily life.

Ming-Wu called her fourth unit, 'Happy Male and Restricted Female at Work'. Students began by examining a painting by Emily Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless*, that presented a young woman demurely presenting her artwork for the inspection of a rather condescending man. Ming-Wu explained that even in the art world, women face discrimination, which led to a general discussion of the problems women face in the workplace.

By the conclusion of the lessons, Ming-Wu thought that her student's views had changed. Most students thought that house chores should be shared by both genders, and that career choices should be open to both genders. They even thought that it was acceptable for boys to play with dolls. Whether there had been any shift of opinion on sexual orientation was unclear.

Chuo, M-W. (2015). 'Action Research on Introducing Gender Equality into Fourth Graders' Visual Education', *The International Journal of Arts Education*, 13 (1): 131-162.





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### Lesson Example 2.5 Geographic Stereotypes

Subject: Social Studies

Level: Grades 3 & 4

Country: United States

As both a needs assessment and an introduction to a unit on the continent of Africa, elementary classroom teacher Carrie showed her students a diverse range of photographs, some of which were stereotypical and others that could have been taken almost anywhere. For example, pictures showed a dark skinned young man drinking Coca Cola, giraffes, but also a modern city scape and men working with hard hats.

Carrie began by explaining that the class was going to study Africa and she handed out a worksheet with twelve thumbnail photographs and space underneath for her students to write comments. She then showed each picture on a screen in color and asked the class to work independently noting which pictures they thought could be from Africa and which not as well as a brief comment explaining their choice. When Carrie had shown the slides through twice and students had completed their worksheets, she asked them to raise their hands on which pictures they thought were from Africa. What specific clues did they rely upon? One student thought a picture had to be from Africa because the people represented were poor and dirty. Discussion ensued in which Carrie explained about the diversity of Africa as a continent made up as it is of many countries with diverse climates, traditions, and lifestyles. Some Africans are poor, but not everyone. She also encouraged the students to draw connections between the photographs and their own lives.

Having canvassed her student's views on Africa, which not surprisingly involved many stereotypes, she asked the students to consider where their ideas had come from? Was it from television or movies? They brainstormed together to make a list of all the sources they might have absorbed. Carrie explained the nature of stereotypes and went on to discuss the need to be skeptical of the information they watched and read about other people. She stressed that any group of people are diverse. She also noted that this exercise could be done with photographs of any group of people.

Scheibe, C., and Rogow, F. (2012). *The Teacher's Guide to Media Literacy: Critical Thinking in a Multimedia World*, London: Sage.

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### Lesson Example 2.6 Missing Representations

Subject: Media Arts

Level: Senior High School

Country: India

Nadine, a history and civics International Baccalaureate teacher in India, chose the 2010 film *Do Dooni Chaar*. Her intention was to help her students better understand globalization, in particular the intersection between culture and capitalism. The film was the first Disney International film produced in India, yet it embodied the general western tendency to assume cultural binaries rather than cultural hybridity. The basic plot involves the patriarch of a middle-class family in India trying to buy a new car while balancing family honor and multiple jobs. Life in Delhi is represented as hard, made more complex as characters compromise, to an extent, on traditional Indian virtues by becoming more western.

Nadine began by asking her students to consider such questions as: How are issues of class and inequality depicted or ignored in the film? How does global capitalism directly or indirectly affect the characters and plot lines? What myths regarding capitalism are portrayed and/or disrupted in the film. Who is represented in, and absent from, the film? What statuses and identities are privileged and/or marginalized in the film? What sources and new information are needed to develop a more well-rounded perspective on the issues depicted? Nadine also wanted her students to reflect on themselves as viewers so she further asked: What roles do viewers play in perpetuating how the issues are minimized in the film?

After viewing the film, Nadine related the attempt at upward mobility represented in the film to a local entrepreneur whose rags to riches story was well known to the students. This led to students discussing to what extent upward mobility is possible in India or only for a few. Some students thought the film was essentially a representation of how globalization destroys local communities and economies. Most students thought that while capitalism allows some people to advance their position in society, the film did not address issues of social hierarchy and cultural traditions related to class, gender and religion in India that prevent people from rising above their station. There was much that was missing.

Harshman, J. (2017). 'Developing Globally Minded, Critical Media Literacy Skills', *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 8 (1): 69-92.



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### Lesson Example 2.7 Fake News

Subject: Library Studies

Level: Middle School

Country: United States

A group of school Liberians in a middle school in Kentucky, the United States reworked their website evaluation lessons to address ‘fake news.’ They began by questioning the term *fake news*. Realizing that the term had been not only co-opted to sell T shirts, but also that it had become weaponized in political discourse in which adults on television were arguing over the term, the librarians did not want to appear to their students as just another group of adults ‘piling on’ about the media. While they chose not to avoid the term altogether, they set out to stress specific concepts like propaganda, click bait, hoax, and sponsored content. Because fake news presents itself in many formats, they widened their focus from conventional websites to include memes, online comments, links posted on social media, and advertising.

In class, the librarians first showed their students a number of memes and asked them to find evidence to support them, refute them, or a mixture of the two. Then, the librarians switched roles, asking the students to show them memes from their own news feed for the librarians to evaluate for accuracy. Finally, the librarians showed the students memes they had generated using a meme generator, which demonstrated how easy it is to make and spread on-line content.

As a follow up, the students were provided with worksheets based on a Stanford University study to determine if any particular problems stood out on their ability to identify problematic content. The study had found that statistical information in the form of charts, tables and graphs was unduly relied upon as factual. The study can be found at: <https://sheg.stanford.edu/civic-online-reasoning>. It offers an extensive range of free online assessments that the librarians went on to use as bell-ringers, activities within lessons, and jumping-off points for class discussions.

Students were also provided with a variety of sources that fact check information, including from National Public Radio, the Meriam Library’s CRAAP test, and FactCheck.org. Some of this material was politically sensitive, requiring the librarians to stress the need for a respectful learning culture while discussing real-world topics. Some of this material hit home with students when they discovered that the opposite appeared to be true of information they have seen or heard, and had previously believed.

Additionally, using game show formats, students created a fake news game for other classes. They called it BreakoutEDU.

Johnson, M. (2018). ‘Fighting Fake News: How We Overhauled Our Website Evaluation Lessons’, *Knowledge Quest*, 47 (1): 32-36.