

How are women in sport represented by the media?

This inquiry unit focuses on the role of the media in shaping the way women are perceived by society, and how this may affect the perceptions, goals and choices that students may have in their own lives. Students will collect and examine a selection of print media that compares the representation of women and men. Students will deconstruct newspaper articles in order to understand that the media can shape the perceptions of the reader.

Using critical literacy skills to examine a range of texts, students will further explore the way society perceives women in sport and how this viewpoint is reflected and influenced by the media. Students will then use this understanding to question how this perception impacts on the profile of women in sport and in turn affects goal setting and goal achieving. Students will use the information gathered throughout the unit to help shape decisions about their own lives.

Year Level 10 Standard 5 Duration of Unit: 5 weeks

Focus Essential:

Personal Futures – Creating and pursuing goals

Key Element Outcome

Understands how to create, set and review goals for life and how to work with others to achieve own and shared goals.

Standard 5 Description

Understands how to effectively prioritise, implement and adjust plans in ways that reflect changing world views and the impact these have on self and others. (Outcomes and Standards pg 10.)

Supporting Essentials:

Communicating – Being literate

Key Element Outcome

Understands, uses and critically evaluates non-verbal, spoken, visual and print communication practices of the world in which they live.

Standard 5 Description

Understands the sophisticated ways in which communications may be varied to fulfil a range of requirements for learning, life and work. (Outcomes and Standards pg 3)

Thinking – Inquiry

Key Element Outcome

Understands the process of inquiry and uses appropriate techniques for posing questions, defining problems, processing and evaluating data, drawing conclusions and flexibly applying findings to further learning and to creating new solutions.

Standard 5 Description

Understands how to design and conduct investigations through deliberate research, drawing on the understanding processes and skills derived from disciplines and reflecting upon the quality of conclusions and methodologies used. (Outcomes and Standards pg 1)

Overarching Understanding Goals or Throughlines:

- Understands that communications vary in order to fulfill a range of requirements
- Understands how to create, set and review goals and how to work with others to achieve own and shared goals
- Understands the process of inquiry and apply it to further learning and creating new solutions

Unit Long Understanding Goals:

1. Students will understand that media can shape the way we view women in sport.
How does media shape the way we view women in sport?
2. Students will understand that minority groups depend on the support of mainstream society in order to fulfill their potential.
How can a minority group become accepted in society?
3. Students will understand that an individual's achievement of goals greatly depends on personal determination and resilience.
What personal attributes will help us to achieve our goals?
4. Students will understand that identity is shaped by cultural heritage and environment.
What factors influence our personal identity?

| UGs | Introductory Performances | Notes to the Teacher and Ongoing Assessment |
|---------|---|--|
| 2, 3, 4 | <p>Activity 1: Film Study</p> <p>Introduce the unit by having students view the film <i>Bend It Like Beckham</i>.</p> <p>After viewing ask students to use think/pair/share to discuss the following questions and then record their responses in their reflective journals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jess' father complains bitterly | <p>The film is set in the UK and centres on a girl (Jess) who is from a family of Indian heritage. She is a keen and talented football player who wishes to pursue her sport. She is faced with cultural and societal pressures that make it difficult for her to achieve her goal of playing football professionally.</p> <p>Codevelop with students criteria for</p> |

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| <p>2, 3, 4</p> | <p>about an experience of discrimination he experienced in sport. What was this experience and how does he use it to justify his decisions during the film?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how Jess, Jules and Tony are under pressure to conform to certain ideals. Who do you think has got the most difficult challenge in being who they want to be and why? • ‘If you have a frisky horse, you put him in a race. You don’t put him behind a plow.’ How does this quote relate to the main character in the film and how wise do you think this idea is? • Why do you think that Jess’ parents are so reluctant for her to play football? <p>Ask students to reflect on the following questions in journal writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever played a sport? If so, which one(s)? • What did you enjoy about the sport? • In what ways have/are your choices affected by media, family or friends/ <p>Activity 2: Famous Faces in Sport</p> <p>Ask students to think of as many famous sporting people as possible. List these on the whiteboard.</p> <p>Ask students to list these suggestions in their workbook.</p> <p>Structure a class discussion around the key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What observations can you make about the people represented? • What are some of the possible reasons that explain why we have listed more men than women on | <p>effective group work. Refer to <i>Where Heart Meets Mind</i>, Bennett, for co-operative learning strategies and criteria.</p> <p>Assess students’ ability to work effectively in group situations. Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute ideas in order to develop understanding • actively listen • encourage others <p>Assess students’ ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and convey the attitudes and values displayed by the characters in the film • support opinions with evidence from the text <p>Assess students’ ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify patterns emerging about the ratio of men and women • use observations to write opinions and justify responses |
|----------------|---|---|

| | <p>the board?</p> <p>Ask students to write explain and justify their views as to why there appears to be a higher ratio of men to women in sport.</p> | |
|-----|--|--|
| UGs | Guided Inquiry Performances | Notes to the Teacher and Ongoing Assessment |
| 1 | <p>Divide class into pairs and distribute a copy of the local newspaper to each pair.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> count the total number of sporting articles count the total number of articles centred around male athletes and men in sport count the total number of articles centred around female athletes or females in sport <p>On the board display the data in a table with three columns labelled: Male, Female and Other and enough rows for each pair to show their findings.</p> <p>As a class ask students to find out:</p> <p>What is the average number of newspaper sporting articles about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Males? Females? Other? <p>What percentage of the total number of newspaper articles is about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Males? Females? Other? <p>Ask students to write reflectively under the heading 'Newspaper Article Data' and answer the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What statements can you make about the proportion of sporting articles about males compared to females? | <p>The teacher will need to supply copies of newspapers. It is suggested that teachers provide a range of different newspapers, although this is not essential and multiple copies of one newspaper would be suitable.</p> <p>Assess group work using established criteria. This assessment should be ongoing throughout the unit and may be done using a negotiated proforma or through anecdotal observations and note keeping by the teacher.</p> <p>Finding the Average – A simple average or mean is the sum of the values divided by the number of values summed.</p> <p>Finding the Percentage – Multiply by 100, or move the decimal point two places to the right to get the rate per hundred.</p> <p>Assessment criteria for reflective journal writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entries contain sufficient detail to demonstrate understanding Poses questions in order to clarify issues and thinking |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>1</p> | <p>Structure a class discussion around the key issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think that the statistics show a fair representation of women in sport? Why/Why not? <p>Distribute the handout 'What's Your View?' and ask students to read the statistics and record their opinion in their journals.</p> <p>Direct students to work in pairs to select one sporting article about males and one about females.</p> <p>Distribute two copies of 'Deconstructing A Newspaper Article' to each pair. Have students cut out and paste onto the left-hand side of the sheet the following parts of the article:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heading content photo and caption <p>Have students use the right-hand side to make comments about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heading body position in the paper size of the article photo and caption <p>Repeat this activity with the other newspaper article.</p> <p>Ask students to use the cooperative learning strategy think/pair/share to explore the issue further.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <p>Think about the findings from the analysis. What observations can be made from the analysis?</p> <p>Pair two groups together. Ask students</p> | <p>Findings for class discussion may be inconclusive but the discussion should be interesting and will lead to students wanting to find out more information or see if their opinions are correct.</p> <p>Assess students against reflective journal criteria.</p> <p>It is important that the teacher models how to deconstruct a newspaper article with students. The teacher should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a sport article from the newspaper that features a female, preferably with a photo. Photocopy and hand out to each group. Divide class into groups of four and show students how to deconstruct the text using the 'Four Resources Document' <p>Use established assessment criteria for group work.</p> |
|-------------------|---|--|

| | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| <p>1, 3, 4</p> | <p>to work as a group to discuss gender-based differences and similarities between the articles.</p> <p>Share by reporting these findings back to the class.</p> <p>Encourage students to design and use a graphic organiser to facilitate the comparison between the articles. This may be a Venn diagram for example, or a simple chart.</p> <p>Ask students to write a report addressing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the similarities and differences between female and male sport articles? Comment on the quantity and content. <p>As a class, make a list of names of people who would be able to make well-informed comments about the status of women in sport and/or their portrayal in the media.</p> <p>Place students into groups of five and assign them a possible sporting personality (this may be a person who is associated with sport rather than an actual athlete). Ask them to develop a list of questions that they would like to ask.</p> <p>Have students email or invite the personality to speak about women in sport and the media.</p> <p>Once personalities have emailed back, share observations with the class.</p> <p>Ask students to complete an evaluation report by completing the following task:</p> | <p>Assess students' ability to collect and process data. Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construct a data organiser, using appropriate structures and features • analyse and use data to form opinions • communicate conclusions to a wider audience verbally and diagrammatically <p>Assess students' ability to write a report. Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use appropriate structures and features of a report • clearly communicate findings • justify conclusions <p>Give students the opportunity to make as many suggestions as possible. As a class refine the list to about five candidates (one per five students).</p> <p>Students will need to refer to their findings in order to pose appropriate questions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think the media portray women in sport? • What affect does this portrayal have on our attitude to women in sport? <p>The teacher will need to make contact with the personality and let them know that the students would like to contact them. Email may be easiest but in person would be ideal.</p> <p>Assess students' ability to collect data: Students will:</p> |
|----------------|--|--|

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the data you have collected does/does not give a fair representation of the portrayal of women in sport journalism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate ideas and information decipher meaning from a range of data use data to support opinion modify understandings in line with newly acquired information evaluate validity of data |
|--|--|---|

| UGs | Culminating Performances | Notes to the Teacher and Ongoing Assessment |
|-----|--|--|
| 1 | <p>Ask students to read the document The top 50 Sports Earners for Australia (2002 statistics) (embedded in Funding Sports Fairly [PDF]). The original list comes from Business Review Weekly. The online version of the BRW list is only available if you subscribe. The paper version appears in the December 28, 2002 issue, pp 54-59 article is called 'Kings of Pitch'.</p> <p>Ask students to respond to this article in their journals by reflecting on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> women in sport and their earning potential compared to men women and their choice of sport in relation to their earning potential whether the media has an impact on any of the above <p>Ask students to access the article 'Lack of News Coverage for Women's Athletics: A Questionable Practice of Newspaper Priorities.' See resource list for URL.</p> <p>Have students read the article and write down the six main points raised in this document. Ask them to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the connections between females and sport, their earning capacity and the way they are portrayed in the media? | <p>This task is designed for students to use the information they have collected and make connections about the way the media can shape perceptions of women in sport.</p> <p>Assess students using the established criteria for journal writing.</p> <p>Explicit teaching on note taking may be required for some students for this initial task.</p> <p>Assess students using the established criteria for journal writing.</p> <p>Assess students' ability to construct a</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective do you think your selected culminating performance will be in implementing change? • In what ways have your own goals changed as a result of this unit? • What goals would you now create for yourself as a result of this unit? | |
|--|--|--|

Resources:

Lack Of News Coverage For Women's Athletics

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=807>

Sports News Shortchanges Female Players and Fans

http://www.maynardije.org/columns/guests/030514_sportsnews

Women's Sports & Fitness Facts & Statistics

http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/binary-data/WSF_ARTICLE/pdf_file/797.pdf

Bend It Like Beckham directed by Gurinder Chadha

Nothing But The Truth – a non-fiction anthology, Cecelia Woodhouse, Longman, South Melbourne.(1998)

Pigs in Heaven, Barbara Kingsolver, Faber and Faber, London. (1993)

Where Heart Meets Mind, Barry Bennett. (1991)

The top 50 Sports Earners for Australia (2002 statistics) is embedded in this document

Funding Sports Fairly

http://www.tai.org.au/Publications_Files/Papers&Sub_Files/sportsfunding.pdf

However, the original list comes from Business Review Weekly. The online version of the BRW list is only available if you subscribe. The paper version appears in the December 28, 2002 issue, pp 54-59 article is called 'Kings of Pitch'.

What's Your View?

A 1988 analysis of sports reporting in Australian newspapers found that:

- On average, four times as many men's as women's sports were featured in the results section of newspapers
- On average, twelve times as many graphics were used with men's sports as with women's sports
- 80% of sports space was given to racing and various football codes

These figures show almost no change from an earlier survey done in 1980. A further survey in 1992 by the Australian Sports Commission found that women's sport accounted for only 4.2% of the total sports coverage in newspapers, and only 1.2% of television sports coverage.

- 1. Why do you think women's sports receive so little media coverage in comparison with men's?**
- 2. How much change, and what sorts of changes do you think a similar survey of the sports pages would now find?**

Deconstructing a Newspaper Article

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Heading and Date | Observe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• size of heading• language used• position in paper | Comments |
| Content | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• length of article• vocabulary (verbs)• subject (who, what when, how and why) | |
| Photo and Caption | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• subject (who, what, when, where and why)• colour• size• action | |

Four Resources

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Code Breaker</p> <p>How Do I Crack This Code?</p> <p>Read only the heading. What do you think the article is about? What words are interesting, tricky or difficult? Are there any synonyms? Are there any quotes? Are there any acronyms? What do they stand for? Are the pictures high angle or low angle? Are the pictures close-up or long shot? Is there any colour?</p> | <p>Text User</p> <p>What Do I Do With This Text?</p> <p>What sort of text is this? How do you know? What is the purpose of the article? How is the language modified to serve the purpose of this article? Is the article based on fact or opinion? How do you know? How is the language similar or different to other newspaper articles? Why? What changes would be made to this article if it was a feature story in a women's magazine?</p> |
| <p>Text Participant</p> <p>What Does This Text Mean To Me?</p> <p>What message is the writer presenting? What are the main ideas in the article? What does the picture tell us? Discuss body language, objects and symbols and size. Does the picture provide more information? How? Does this text remind you of any experiences that you have had in life?</p> | <p>Text Analyst</p> <p>How Does This Text Position The Reader?</p> <p>What is the writer's point of view? What does the writer want us to think and how does s/he do this? What is the photographer's point of view? What does the photographer want us to think and how does s/he do this? Why did the writer choose this heading? Are there stereotypes in the text? Who does the text reject or silence? Think about why the writer has used particular words or phrases? What would the text be like if a different gender was represented?</p> |