

Who is the target?

Lesson 6



Recognise the use of stereotyping in the media

Lesson Objective

The children should be able to recognise the use of stereotyping in the media.

Learning Outcome

Describe what stereotyping is and understand how stereotyping is used in the media ie making assumptions about certain groups. Recognise the use of stereotypes and the impact of excessive use of stereotypes in the media.

Teacher's Notes

To appeal to a particular group, the people who create media and advertising decide what that group will look like and how it will behave. Labelling a group of people with a particular set of looks, personalities, likes and dislikes, is called stereotyping. The problem with creating and maintaining stereotypes is that you make assumptions about a group of people, and communicate this in the media therefore shaping how we see that group. We may form opinions based on that assumption. Stereotyped groups may shape how they see themselves. Excessive use of stereotypes in the media can impact the public perception of social groups in negative ways.

Resources

- Activity 6.1
- Activity 6.2

Methodology

- Talk and discussion: Stereotypes in the Media; Breaking Stereotypes
- Active learning: Act it out Game; Act it Out
- Collaborative learning: Stereotyping Debate
- Skills through content: The Football Match

Who is the target?

Lesson 6



Procedure

Step 1: Act it out Game

- Explain to the children that they are going to play a game.
- Explain that you will call out a profession or job and you want the children to act like a person who does that profession or job.
- They don't need to make noise or say anything, but they should make their bodies and face look how they feel these people may look to the outside world:
 - A busy mother
 - A football player
 - A teacher
 - A computer game designer
 - A fireman/woman
 - A pop star
 - A cleaner
 - A gardener
 - An office worker
 - A busy father
 - A chef
 - A superhero
 - A garda.
- After the game, ask the children to explain where they got the information that they used to create the characters?

The children may suggest that they imagined people they knew in real life, or people they'd seen on television or movies.

- Explain to the children that many of their characters were very similar – the teachers were teaching, the fireman/woman had a hose putting out a fire, the superhero was flying.
- Tell the children that the images that we have about people in society can often be stereotypes.
- Explain to the children that labelling a group of people with a particular set of looks, personalities, likes and dislikes or other characteristics are called stereotyping.
- A stereotype is a label put on a group of people based on narrow assumptions.
- Tell the children that stereotypes are often used in the media and advertising.
- Explain that the creators of media and advertising decide what that group will look like and how it will behave. It makes assumptions that may or may not be realistic.
- Ask the children:
 - Are all boys sporty?
 - Do all girls like dolls?
 - Do all babies cry and sleep?
 - Are all teenagers moody and “way too cool”?
 - Are all older people all frail and unsteady?
- Explain that media can re-enforce roles and stereotypes on television, in movie and online. For example all clever people wear glasses, stepmothers are mean, old people can't use computers and so on.

Who is the target?

Lesson 6



Procedure continued

Step 2: Stereotypes in the Media

- Ask the students to think about movies that are made for children.
- The children may suggest Frozen, Toy Story, Transformers, The Avengers, Star Wars.
- Ask the students to describe how the main characters in these movies are portrayed.
- The children may suggest characters who are princesses / witches / heroes / villains.
- Ask the children:
 - How many female characters are there in the movie?
 - How many male characters are there in the movie?
 - Are the characters younger or older?
 - Are there any disabled characters?
 - Are the characters from mixed backgrounds?
 - Are there any gay characters?
 - Are there characters from different countries?
 - Are there married, single, separated, divorced characters?
 - Who's the hero?
 - How does he/she behave?
- Ask the children to describe any stereotypes they see in movies.
- Using Activity 6.1 the children can select four characters from movies or television shows and decide if that character has stereotypical or non-stereotypical characteristics.

Activity 6.1

Step 3: Stereotyping Debate

- The teacher will suggest a class debate on any of the following motions:
 - Movies made for children are full of stereotypes
 - Boys make the best superheroes
 - Everyone should be treated the same irrespective of their background or abilities
 - People should be treated differently if they are different.
- In pairs, groups or teams the children should pick a side in favour or against the statement. They can use Activity 6.2 to help structure their debate.
- Each side should be allowed an agreed amount of talking time to put across their point of view, with an opportunity to reply at the end of the debate. Different groups may take different motions.
- Teacher can encourage the children to express their points of view. Allow disagreement, and counter arguments.
- At the end of the debate, explain that although the different teams had a different point of view, all points of view are valuable.

Activity 6.2

Who is the target?

Lesson 6



Procedure continued

Step 4: The Football Match

- Explain to the children that you are going to tell them a story about a football match.

The Football Match

Conor and Jack were leaving school together. Conor was pushing Jack's wheelchair and Jack was holding Conor's bag on his lap. They were chatting about their day in school. They had been learning about stereotypes with their teacher. "What's your plan for the evening Conor?" asked Jack. "I'm off to see my granny play a soccer match, and then we are all going for dinner at my house", answered Conor. Jack looked confused: "Your granny is playing soccer? I didn't think older people played sports?" Conor began to laugh: "Jack, that is a stereotype, just like we learned today. My granny is the best soccer player on the team. Imagine someone told you, you couldn't play basketball just because you're in a wheelchair". Jack began to join in with the laughing: "I guess you're right. I am pretty good at basketball. I guess there are way more stereotypes than I thought". As they continued their journey home Conor commented, "My granny says that stereotypes are there to be broken. I think she may be right." Hours later Jack joined Conor as he cheered on his granny in her championship soccer match, which the team won 3 - 1.

- Ask the children if there was stereotyping in this story?
- Ask the children if they have ever seen stereotyping in their own lives?
- Explain to the children that no one, including the advertising industry should tell them what they should like, or do or wear or who to be.
- Explain that stereotypes are assumptions, and assumptions can very often be wrong,
- Stereotyped groups may not recognise themselves in stereotypes – for example older people don't view themselves as old, younger people don't view themselves as young.
- Excessive use of stereotypes in the media can impact the public perception of social groups in negative ways.

Step 5: Breaking Stereotypes

- Remind the children that stereotypes are assumption made by people about other people.
- Explain that it is possible to break stereotypes.
- Ask the children how they could break different stereotypes?
- Explain to the children that the best way to break a stereotype is by getting to know someone and befriend people from different backgrounds and lifestyles.
- When you get to know someone, stereotypes lose all their influence.
- Challenge the children to break one stereotype this week.

Step 6: Act it Out

- Ask the children to consider what movies or fairy tales might look like from the point of view of the opposite gender for example if Mulan (from Disney's Mulan) or Ariel (from Disney's The Little Mermaid) were boys, or if Mughlai (from Rudyard Kipling The Jungle Book) or Spiderman were girls.
 - In pairs or groups ask the children to act out a movie, book or television show and change the role of the characters from boy to girl, girl to boy, young to old, old to young, abled bodied to differently abled.
 - Ask the children to discuss how the changes would affect the characters.
 - Encourage the children to improvise a scene from the movie, book or television show with the diversified characters.
 - When the activity is complete ask the children how they felt about breaking the stereotypes of the characters from the movie, book or television show?
-