

Lesson Plan on Construction of Female Beauty

Rationale:

The students will learn about the construction of female beauty and how it relates to them. The aim is to give the students an understanding how media controls the construction of beauty and how society ensures these ideals remain prevalent. The “ideal” female body is unrealistic and unattainable for the vast majority and should not be seen in a positive light. Marketing and advertising targets females so they will want to buy their product in order to be beautiful and attain perfection. The image of female beauty is now so skewed that in order to fit the ideal you have to almost suffer from malnutrition and have photos airbrushed to hide any flaws or imperfections – perceived or otherwise. Students must realize they are being targeted by companies and find a way to promote a realistic body image for all women rather than fall prey to an unattainable image.

Activity One:

The following picture of a plus size model will appear on the screen and the students will be asked to answer the following question anonymously and hand them in to the teacher



Questions for females:

1. Is this woman pretty?
2. Do you think she is a good role model?
3. Should there be more women like her in the media?
4. Would you be content to look like her?

Questions for males:

1. Is this woman attractive?
2. Do you think she is a good role model?
3. Should there be more women like her in the media?
4. Would you be content to date her?

The teacher will tally up the results for both the female and male answers and reveal the results to the students, many of whom will find the results shocking.

(20 minutes)

The class will be asked to brainstorm with a partner regarding the reasons why they believe the answers tallied as they did. Where did the construction of female beauty come from? How do males contribute to the construction and how does it affect them as a male?

(15 minutes)

Activity 2:

Debrief with the class in a group discussion on their thoughts and concerns. Corporations target females because they are the biggest target audience. Females can not go anywhere, look at any magazine, or watch television without being targeted. The construction of female beauty causes females to internalize these images and this causes low self esteem, depression, and eating disorder for those who can not live up to the ideal. A 2005 study revealed that about 40%–45% of girls and young women are trying to lose weight through various means and the numbers have only increased since then (Priron & Cormier, p, 549).

Western societal standards of beauty are spreading throughout the world via television, print, and the internet. At one time females were considered beautiful if they had a bit of extra weight on them because that meant they were healthy and looked after well. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case.

(15 minutes)

Activity 3:

The students will watch the video *America the Beautiful*.

(105 minutes)

Activity 4:

The students will watch a short video about an anti-bullying project started by a Canadian writer. The project is striving to encourage schools and communities to come together and give students the tools needed to deal with bullying. Projects like this one are ways in which the students can become active and give themselves a voice that can help stop the bullying.

<http://tothisdayproject.com/>

(10 minutes)

Assignment:

The students will complete a creative project on female beauty. The first piece or part will be on the images of female beauty portrayed in the media. The second piece or part will represent the student's perception of female beauty and methods to speak out and stand against those images that contradict what the student considers realistic. The students will then create one of the following and present it to the class with an explanation of their project:

- A collage from images seen on the internet, in magazines, or in pictures taken in their own community.
- A video, Powerpoint, or artwork piece(s).
- A song to perform live or a recording of themselves.

The students will be asked to consider the following questions while doing research and completing their project:

- How and why do you consider the images portrayed in the media as inaccurate?
- How has the construction of female beauty effected you?
- Should the media and advertisers use more plus size models so all types are represented?
- How can you fight these images on a daily basis?
- Is anyone safe from being targeted?
- What do you think will happen to these images in the future? Will they change or get even more unrealistic?
- Do these images affect males and females differently? If so, describe how.

Sources:

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