

Diversity V. Stereotypes

This is a lesson plan which capstones an outside project on diversity/stereotypes in the print media. I lead up to this by showing them different slides of people. One of my favorites is of the singer Ice-T by Mark Seliger and asking them how they feel about the image or what they can tell me about the person. Usually I do this on the week of Thanksgiving since the kids don't write a lot and get to talk through this lesson. The paper is the main focus but you can add things in a myriad of ways: Why are most models thin, blond? Are blacks always portrayed in ads as being in some athletic event. Are Asians represented in our society or are they always martial artists or brainiacs? Ask students what the stereotypes are for their age groups and social classes (kickers, jocks, nerds, gothics, etc.)

Objective:

The students will critically evaluate whether the media (emphasis on photography) is doing a good job of showing diversity or furthering stereotypes.

Turn In:

Diversity v. Stereotype Paper with 3 examples: Are the media doing an accurate job of presenting cultures or are they perpetuating stereotypes?

Warm Up:

Have students fold paper into 8 squares and label them WM, WF, BM, BF, HM, HF, AM, AF. Students have five minutes to fill in the square with the names of 5 famous people who fit the descriptions (white male, black female, Hispanic male, Asian female, etc.). They cannot talk to each other or share answers.

Discussion:

What did the warm-up make you think about?
Which boxes did you have trouble filling?
Who are your famous people?
What do they do?
How does this exercise remind you of your research paper?

Activity:

Show slide of Louisville Flood Victims by Margaret Bourke-White
Students write full page evaluation of photo

Reading:

William Kunstler essay in Talking Pictures, pp.45-

Discussion:

What is being said to society as a whole?
How should you look (ideal beauty)?
Diversity v. Stereotype Paper: Are the media doing an accurate job of presenting cultures or are they perpetuating stereotypes?
Is racism as strong now as it was in the past?
(Native Americans as sports mascots *Atlanta Braves v. Brooklyn Jews*,
Arab and Muslim-Americans as terrorists,
Whites as shallow and aloof *Beverly Hills 90210*)

***Read newspaper excerpt about HUES magazine

***Class reading of Boxing Naomi

***Imagination exercise: Build a Mexican/Saddam Hussein Cancer Ad

***Think of positive ads breaking or making fun of stereotypes

Closure:

Write down one thing that you can do as a photographer and media representative to diversify coverage and eliminate stereotypes.