



LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades K-3
About the Author: From *Responding To Media Violence: Starting Point for Classroom Practice K-6*, by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board

Favourite Sports and Athletes: An Introduction to Sports Media

Overview

This lesson develops a beginning awareness by students of how they feel towards, and respond to, different sports, and how the media represents athletics. The lesson begins with a class discussion about the sports that students enjoy playing and watching on TV. Students talk about the differences between watching sports on TV and in person, and explore the marketing of sports by looking at the sports-related clothing and toys they own. Students also broaden their understanding of sports by reflecting on how they feel when they get hurt in sports and by discussing issues such as the role of women and the disabled in sports.

Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate:

- a beginning awareness that media preferences may depend on age, sex and cultural background
- a beginning ability to identify and explain a few aesthetically pleasing media techniques, e.g., colour, shape, design, texture and pictures (symbols) used in sports logos, uniforms/costumes
- a beginning awareness that media convey value messages to the audience, e.g., women aren't as athletic as men

Preparation and Materials

- Read background information sheet *Responding to Media Violence*
- Prepare classroom *Sports Chart*.

Skills

- Discussing, Representing, Reflecting

The Key Concepts of this lesson are that media are representations of reality, and that media contain value messages. While some activities in the following unit may seem sophisticated for Kindergarten, note that all activities offer ways of engaging children, even those without particular interest, in simply talking about (their favourite) sports and sports media. They offer the teacher opportunities for early diagnostic assessment of students' viewing habits, of their social experience related to sports, their personal confidence in self expression, and their grasp of media vocabulary and concepts.



The Lesson

Discussing and Representing

Ask students what sports, if any, they like, and which ones they watch on television. Make simple paper cut-outs to represent the sports named (e.g., a puck, a baseball). In a simple graphing activity, have children line up behind the cut-out for their personal favourite. Make sure to include a symbol for "I don't like sports."

Ask students to talk about: Whether they like to watch their favourite sport in person or on TV (media representation of sport).

- What is different about each experience.
- What sports do their friends like, and why?
- What sports do their family members like, and why? (influence of cultural backgrounds, age, sex)

Have students bring in their sport badges, team shirts, caps, (e.g., T-ball, swimming) to examine conventions of sports. Ask them to talk about what they like, i.e., find attractive, appealing (aesthetics) in these items. For discussion purposes, it isn't necessary for all, or even most, students to bring examples.

Reflecting

Ask students how they feel when they get hurt in sports and what they think could be done to improve this aspect of sports. Help students to broaden their awareness of various sports and of participation by male/female and physically challenged athletes. Some young children may not recognize certain activities as sport if females are involved (e.g., figure skating, gymnastics). Talk about images and examples of women playing sports such as hockey, baseball, basketball. Some students may have only a limited awareness of women's abilities and roles in certain sports, and have concluded from media representations that women cannot perform these activities. It may also be worthwhile to ask children to think about whether certain sports appeal to males and/or females, and if so, why? They do have comments, allow some time for talking about what they think the reasons may be for such preferences.

Assessment/Evaluation

Students' progress is assessed/evaluated through:

- contributions to "talk" about different sports and sports media; graphing activities
- "talk" about pleasing (aesthetic) features of sports logos, uniforms, etc., e.g., colour, texture, design



Responding to Media Violence

Sports and sports media appeal to adults and children of all ages. Cheering on a team is an activity that even very young children can enjoy together with parents and friends.

While many sports inspire tremendous physical and emotional accomplishments of strength and stamina, some involve varying degrees of physical violence. Media representations frequently focus on and promote the physical conflicts that are inherent in these sports or, in some cases, have been staged to increase audience appeal.

It is common, for example, for sports reports and play-by-play commentary to contain metaphorical language that glorifies and promotes physical conflict- language that enthusiasts usually enjoy because it's graphic and exciting. Commentators describe plays in terms of "crushing" opponents, throwing a "bomb", and "killing" the clock. Teams are often marketed through aggressive logos depicting ferocious animals that not only identify teams, but tap into or create consumer demand for "spinoff" merchandise.

Through graphic visual and sound images, children see and hear about countless real-life examples of extreme competitiveness. Displays of temper and arguments with authority, for example, are not uncommon in televised sports. Such images can be a powerful influence on those who experience them, and may suggest "scripts" to be imitated. It's clear, therefore, that children require images to balance their media experiences of sport. These may be provided through positive modelling of cooperation, skill development and respect in community and school sports programs.

Children also need to learn how and why different media forms, especially television, have the power to increase audience excitement and entertainment by focusing on violent elements in sport; they need to be able to see through the "hype" and staged violence in texts such as televised wrestling events and hockey games. As students develop the concepts and skills required for critically appreciating media representations of sport, they also gain greater awareness of the various strategies that real-life athletes must use to cope with the actual hard work, excitement, frustration and satisfaction of competitive sport.

Source: Used with permission from *Responding To Media Violence: Starting Point for Classroom Practice K-6*, by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board.










Sports Chart

Name: _____

- Use the following chart to keep track of your student's favourite sports.

SPORTS MEDIA - Favourite TV Sports
Number

Favourite sport on television	Baseball 						
	Basketball 						
	Football 						
	Hockey 						
	Soccer 						
	Figure Skating 						
	Other 						
	Don't Watch 