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Social Oppression and Transformation

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Assignment 3: Adapt a Module

**Compelling Question: What can we do to make people see and value females in sports?**

*Target Age/Grade Levels:* Late Elementary (3rd-5th grade)

Text Set:

1. McGrath, B. S. (2019). “Play for Equality”. *TIME for Kids.*
   1. <https://www.timeforkids.com/g34/play-for-equality/?rl=en-750>
   2. This article details the events surrounding the USWNT’s suing of the US Soccer Federation for equal pay. It is an age-appropriate way for students to read about a current event that is applicable to the topic at hand and explore an actual published article with their specific targeted audience. The article also introduces them to some larger key vocabulary words like “discriminate”, for which there is tools on how to pronounce the word, as well as what it means. The article also references the efforts of women in other sports and their work to attain equal pay.
2. Buzuvis, E. & Newhall, K. (2013). “Equality, Sports, and Title IX”. [Video]. *TED-Ed.*
   1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KymR6N1HT88>
   2. This video explains in detail, the inequality that existed before, and the effects of Title IX. They do so in an easy to absorb way with lots of illustrations and visual representations as well. There is one key image that I feel helps to visualize the problem that they are talking about with the boys and girls on opposite sides of the scale. Another thing that is nice about this video is that they have a section at the end which calls students to action and to hold their own schools and communities accountable for upholding the laws established by Title IX.
3. Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sports. “40% of all sport participants are female…but they receive only 4% of sports media coverage.”
   1. <http://www.chukyoeibei.org/mag/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Tucker-Center-for-Research-on-Girls-Women-in-Sport-768x384.jpg>
   2. This image I feel would be another great resource to use when talking about this issue with younger kids. The more visuals and engaging materials that can be found on the topic, the better that students will be able to retain the information, as well as their being more engaged in the lesson. This image shows the percentage of women in sports, as compared to their representation or “airtime” in the media. The circle graphs give kids an easy way to see the great disparity. It can also be used as a discussion starter within the classroom with questions like: “Why do you think that is?” or “Do you think that that is right?”
4. Nike (2019, February 24). *Dream Crazier.* [Television Commercial] YouTube.
   1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWfX5jeF6k4>
   2. This is a TV commercial put out by Nike a few years ago that many students may have seen. It was very popular and is voiced by Serena Williams herself. It fosters a sense of pride in female emotions and athleticism and starts to work to change the narrative. This piece could also be used to start discussions like “What do you think commercials like this do?” and “How does this commercial make you feel?” This is another visually engaging resource which calls students to think and can easily spark some healthy discussion within the classroom.
5. Rush, V. (@victoriahrush) (2022, February, 28) “Words associated with female athletes.” [#womeninsport](https://www.tiktok.com/tag/womeninsport) [#womeninsportmedia](https://www.tiktok.com/tag/womeninsportmedia) [#womensports](https://www.tiktok.com/tag/womensports). [Video]. TikTok.
   1. <https://vm.tiktok.com/TTPdqE34rQ/>
   2. This is a TikTok that talks about the words that are associated with men versus women in sports in the media. It is something that I talked about in my lecture and as part of the readings, but when presented in the form of a Tiktok, becomes instantly more engaging and captivating to students, especially students this young. Some scaffolding and explanation may be necessary to help younger students understand, so the video should be shown to kids in a whole class setting and paused on the frames where all the words to describe men and the words to describe women are shown. Going through the words and trying to decide why the disparity exists would be a helpful exercise to help educate students on the topic.
6. Gonzales, D. (2019). “Girls with Guts”. *Charlesbridge*.
   1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOkfFXFIo30>
   2. This is a children’s book that could be read by students independently or in a whole class setting. It talks about women in sports before the creation and implementation of Title IX and their efforts to bring about change. It also shows the great strength of women as well as the diversity of sports that women fought to play. It is a way for students to learn about some more history and allow them to connect the world they know today to the progress that has been made. It is also a way for them to see how far we still have to go, when discussed with the other resources.

Memo

In thinking about how I wanted to transfer my module on “Sexism in Professional Sports” to a unit for younger kids, I realized that thinking about sexism in terms of sports might be a great way to begin the larger conversation while talking about a topic that is of interest to many kids. As an elementary education major myself, I have been preparing and thinking about ways to approach having these important conversations with younger children, so they grow up and move through the world more aware and conscientious for as much of their life as possible. By beginning the important conversation about sexism within a context that many young children are interested in, students will already have more background knowledge, as well as be more invested in learning. I have chosen to adapt my module to be appropriate for late elementary school aged children (ideally between 3rd and 5th grade), not only because this is the age range with whom I am most familiar, but also because I believe this is a great age (and maybe even earlier) to start having this conversation within this context.

As a compelling question for the unit, I have chosen “What can we do to make people see and value females in sports?” I believe that this question will pique the interest of students because they will want to know more about the topic, and it also calls them to think about what their own role may be in fighting the issue. This question will get under students’ skin because they will be curious as to what it means to say that females are not being seen in sports. I also think this question will make them very curious about what they could possibly do to have an impact on an issue that seems so large at first glance. The topic will be of great interest to students, especially at this age, because professional sports are something that most children have either seen on TV or attended personally. Even if it is not a professional sport, most children have been to their local high school or college to watch older adolescents play sports in a more serious and structured setting and are more familiar with this world and the nuances than they realize. This question has the potential to generate numerous positive and healthy debates and discussions surrounding the issue, both with whatever background knowledge students bring with them into the classroom, as well as from the resources that they will be introduced to throughout the unit. Students will be able to analyze and synthesize this information (background knowledge and new information) to arrive at new conclusions. They will also be able to evaluate their findings and make decisions about ways that they themselves would be able to help the matter. The question also calls students to think outside the box and search for reasons for the problem’s existence, as well as the different ways that they can be involved. If students are more aware of sexism and the role that it plays in different areas of the world, they will hopefully grow up and make decisions, starting at a young age, which work to combat this problem and search for equality. It will also have students look back at this history surrounding this issue, evaluate decisions made, how far we have come and how far we still have to go.

The first text in the text set is “Girls with Guts”, a children’s book by Debbie Gonzales. This book would serve as a good opener for the unit with students. After the compelling question has been posed, this book does a great job of highlighting different female athlete’s (pre-Title IX) who called for change in sports gender equality and collectively brought about change in the world. As noted in our group’s discussion from Module 4A, it can often be difficult to speak up in a forceful way and go against others as a female, because people tend to perceive these women as “rude” and “pushy”, concepts rarely used for men who do the same thing (Running Log Group 6, Module 4A). It is important to think about this because having students see that this is not the case, and how speaking up for what you believe is the only way to create positive change, is immensely beneficial. This text provides some history on the topic, as well as a motivational story which highlights strong women and their ability to make a change. This text warrants student’s time and attention for just these reasons and also it is an interesting and fun way to learn about these topics, preferably in a whole class read aloud setting. It will establish a historical foundational knowledge which they can use to begin to compare to knowledge that they have gained through personal experience (Gonzales, 2019).

The second text in the set is a video from TED-Ed titled “Equality, Sports, and Title IX.” This is a video which, like the last text, touches on the history of Title IX, but also relates it not just to professional and sports played by older individuals but brings it back to local schools and how the change has or should have occurred there too. The video builds off the introductory book previously discussed and brings more of a highlight to the inequity that still exists today. Another unique facet of this book is the final part, which spends time calling students to action and giving them some ideas of ways that they can be involved and make a difference when they see inequity in their schools or communities (Buzuvis & Newhall, 2013). This text is important because it gets students thinking about a key component of the compelling question, which is their own role in making people see and value women in sports. It would also be particularly beneficial for all students as having young boys, in particular, learn about their role in combating sexism from a young age is likely going to make them more active. As Brianne Lee shared in her discussion post, it is important and impactful to have male allies who are helping to combat sexism in any domain (Lee, 2022, Module 4A Discussion Post).

The third text in the series is an image generated by the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sports. This image, on one side, shows the percentage of athletes who are made up of women. On the other side, there is another graph which shows the percentage of airtime and media attention devoted to discussing and reporting on these female athletes. It is an accessible image made up of two simple graphs, and easy for children to understand. This is an important issue to discuss in thinking about gender inequality in sports. It is also likely something that they will be able to comment on and notice (Tucker Center). Asking questions while looking at the image like “When you hear sports being talked about on TV, are they talking about males or females?” will help students connect the issue to their personal experiences. Questions like this will allow students to take these statistics and facts and connect them to the real world and see how they manifest. It is an important topic to discuss in the unit and presenting it as a visual and using it as a tool for discussion will be way more engaging and useful for students and less overwhelming than presenting many facts at once with no student input.

The fourth text in the set is a TikTok posted by @victoriahrush highlighting the difference between the words used to discuss male athletes and female athletes in the media. This is discussing the same information that was found in the Fox article included in my Build a Module assignment, but its presentation in a TikTok video format will be immensely easier to understand and more engaging for young elementary school aged students (Fox, 2021). There are still some advanced terms within the video and that Rush uses in her discussion, but they can be explained and scaffolded. One way I think this resource would be most beneficial to students is to have them look at the two frames of the video where she shows the words associated with men and with women and have them do some activity like a notice and wonder chart, where they can explore what they see and what they are thinking about. This resource builds off the last image discussed, and dives further into the disparity by showing that even with the minimal amount of time that female athletes are discussed in the media, much of what is being discussed about them is their personal lives and what they hope to do, not their tangible accomplishments (Rush, 2022).

The fifth resource is an article from *TIME for Kids* titled “Play for Equality”. This article talks about the USWNT suing the US Soccer Federation for equal pay back in 2019. This has been a huge current event over the past few years and likely may be something that the students are already familiar with. If not this event, then the increasing fame of the USWNT is something I am sure they know about in some capacity. This article is a key resource in this unit as it allows them to read the information from an article with their age group as the targeted audience. It also talks about contemporary women, who spoke out and stood up for change, and produced a result, even in the face of great opposition, just like the women from the book and the video. This highlights to students that ongoing change and advocacy is still necessary and that there is still much to improve within this issue (McGrath, 2019).

The last text in the set is a commercial which was part of a campaign put out by Nike in 2019. This commercial, titled “Dream Crazier” is narrated by Serena Williams and shows women accomplishing different things and demonstrating different natural emotions in athletic situations. This can be used to show what companies and people can do to highlight and bring attention to the inequity in gender in sports, and as a way to combat it by turning the word “crazy” to have a more positive connotation, as supposed to the negative one that it has had for so many years. It can also be used to start discussion where students can share how the video made them feel. This commercial is also another way to connect the issue and its presence to their own lives, as some of them may have already seen the commercial on TV (Nike, 2019). The class can talk about why a man getting frustrated and a woman getting frustrated makes us think differently of each of them. Thinking about these things can help boys in the class to begin to familiarize themselves with this privilege that they have, to not be viewed in such a way (Johnson, 1997). Thinking about this issue from a young age will help them to be more aware of this and help inform future decision and action, as in general, men hold more sexist attitudes and beliefs than women do (Seider, 2022, Module 4A Lecture). Therefore, it is important that everyone be educated about sexism and its impacts in the same way and from the same young age.

Each of these different texts brings something slightly different to the table. I think talking about history, media presence, perception of actions and roles to be taken are plenty of subtopic to discuss with this age range of children. If too much is discussed, then the meaning will be lost, and engagement will plummet. Restricting it to just these areas, as represented in the texts will still give students an in depth and diverse understanding, while also not overwhelming them. I also think that the diverse modalities of the different texts and resources will increase engagement, interest, and retention of information. Using these tools as a basis for discussion will also help in these areas and allow students to hear other thoughts and vocalize their own ideas and what they make of the information being presented. The texts almost all play off and can be related to one another in some way and will allow for overlap in student discussion and thought.

Overall, starting this discussion with students at this young age can only yield positive outcomes and results. Discussing it within the context of a field that they are already interested in and contain some background knowledge in, for the most part, will help in their understanding and allow their learning to be primarily about the issue at hand, instead of the logistical aspects of sports or any other area. Their increased attention and engagement will only further their takeaways and understanding, allowing them to hopefully transfer this knowledge and recognition to other areas of life with time and throughout development.

References

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are female…but they receive only 4% of sports media coverage.”