

Using Magazines and Zines to Explore Stereotypical Gender Roles

Magazines are embodied in adolescents' regular routine. In order for adolescents to comprehend how magazines have impacted their identities my curriculum will force them to analyze and critically evaluate what is portrayed to our society in this type of popular culture literature. Magazines are created to generate consumers and through this gender stereotypes are reinforced. My students will understand how their gender is represented in this media outlet and they will explore the effect this has on our society. My curriculum will also analyze what makes magazines enticing and how they can create their own anti-glamour magazine called 'zines.'

The differences between men and women magazines are visible in appearance and in content. "The media contributes to the reinforcement of gender differences and inequalities in contemporary society," as stated by Gough-Yates (2003, p.7). In this perspective, this view conspires in the advancement of capitalism and patriarchy (Gough-Yates, 2003). The media's representations of women create the feminine identities and stereotypical roles we come to be familiar with. The recent covers of magazines create images of virtually flawless, beautiful, and content women. This happens to be the contrary to the existence of most women in the real world. Magazines such as Cosmopolitan and Marie Claire catalog articles on diet recipes, ways to keep your man happy, and how to handle bad hair days. The women magazine industry distributes magazines that contain messages and signs about the nature of femininity (Gough-Yates, 2003). This form of popular culture tells us how to act and what our roles in society should be. These

promote and legitimize dominant interests. Gough-Yates (2003) exclaims:

Women's magazines are seen as a powerful force for the construction and legitimation of gender inequalities. In these terms, women's magazines do not simply offer their readers innocent pleasures- they are a key site for the development of a self-identity that undermines women's essential, real feminine identities. (p.8)

Many magazine editors have now come to the point where they no longer target just one particular age or social class. They have come to believe that, "the difference between a reader of *Cosmopolitan* and *Working Woman* is as much a function of attitude. (Gough- Yates, 2003, p. 95)." The lines between all social and age grouping have become blurred to this media outlet. It has come down to the basic stereotypical gender when it comes to appealing to women.

Men magazines are by far harder to market than women magazines. Men magazines did not capture an audience until the 1990's when it became the fastest growing consumer magazine market as commented by Benwell (2003). The first American periodical to call themselves an all male magazine was *Esquire* (Benwell, 2003). The release of *Esquire*, thought to be a cultural industry, was said to have a negative impact on the audience. It continues to generate the same criticism today. It repressed differences and fashioned sameness and conformity. Men magazines are typically titled toward the social class and in terms of content and readership. For example, *GQ* is for the upmarket audience and *Maxim* is for the downmarket audience. They also tend to address the heterosexual readership with the exception of one or two magazines that are targeted for gay men. Men magazines speak to the reader as a friend by offering hints, pointing out downfalls, and giving helpful advice. Compared to a women's

magazine the authors claim to be experts and provide their readers with factual information. A men's magazine uses familiar language that does not talk down to the audience. The overall mode of men magazines is friendly, ironic, and boyish. Men's magazines are about sex and booze presented with a beautiful half naked woman on the cover. This is displayed in a recent November issue for 2009 where Kate Beckinsale is on the cover of Esquire. She appears in black underwear and barely holding up a sheet to cover her top section. In the background it reads, "The Sexiest Woman Alive" with another article title that reads, "How to Curse." It is common for them to represent cigarette smoking, but homosexuality is rarely or never portrayed. It is essential to analyze the terms of masculinity in their representation. Men after all are believed to be stereotypically masculine. Since birth men are told they should portray an image of being strong yet emotionless. Sociological and cultural understandings of these representations have stayed constant. Men magazines have always been, past or present, for men but rarely about men. A man being interested in clothing and consumption, like a woman, is an uneasy tension. Men can only be interested in consumerism and style if they were heterosexually promiscuous and violent enough. For example a member of the mafia or a gang is permitted to be interested in style simply because they are thought to have these qualities. These stereotypes hinder our society from truly developing and this will be more apparent to my students. (Benwell, 2003).

Magazines no matter which gender they are targeted towards have always had a way to entice readers to purchase them. In my curriculum we will also analyze what makes each magazine unique. As technology moves at a fast pace, magazines are being reinvented every two or three years to keep the audience's attention (Rothstein, 2007). There are many critical questions to take into account when trying to analyze magazines. To name a few: the evolution of a magazine, the

current competition, current readership, the effect of the website on the print edition, and the design of the magazine. The type of paper stock, color, and texture are often taken for granted. It makes an overall difference on the exterior and the general feeling. Being a smaller size can be a characteristic that makes the magazine unique. There are also many basic design elements that are meant to intrigue audiences. The logo, cover, departments and features, and table of contents all play a part in creating a magazine made to lure readers. (Rothstein, 2007).

Using the elements that make magazines intriguing my students will be asked to make their own self-published magazine called a “zine” on a stereotypical gender topic presented in our society that interests them. Zines is term used as an abbreviation for fanzine. They are the underground, anti-glamour magazines that may run for one issue or for many years (Congdon & Blandy, 2003). They are compared to being a cross between a personal letter and a magazine. According to Congdon and Blandy “zinesters combine iconography and text to create publications that can be chaotic, disturbing, uncomfortable, sensual, complex, loud, confrontive, and often a social critique of contemporary life (2003, p. 45).” In zines many historical issues are celebrated instead of being pushed to the wayside. Gender roles, religion, familial relationships, politics, sexual orientation, the environment, academic disciplines, the arts, class structure, ethnicity, generational differences, economics, and pop culture have all been distinguished and illuminated by many zinesters (Congdon & Blandy, 2003). Zines redesign the relationship between popular culture and art. They unearth radical and utopist thought in their viewers and creators. According to Bott (2002) using zines in a lesson plan is the hope that students will write poems, stories, memoirs, represent bits and pieces of their lives, and combine these elements to create their own magazine. Zines are meant to look homemade and odd so students are able to display their imagination and

creativity. The cover, table of contents, and theme are all part of the success of any magazine either a small zine or a large publication. The zine should be evaluated on the content of creativity, thoughtfulness, and completeness of thought (Bott, 2003). Zines are used as a strategy to encourage the development and distribution of ideas and social critique through images and text (Congdon & Blandy, 2003). It would be amiss if e-zines were not mentioned. With our new technological age many adolescents are familiar with what the Internet has to offer. E-zines are the new way publishers and zinesters can reach a larger audience (Gill, 2000). The website Fool.com which is an online investing and personal finance site is designed for the novice investor (Gill, 2000). It started off as a very small zine that was photocopied to a few family and friends, which branched out to the Internet and has become a multimillion-dollar company (Gill, 2000). Zines in any form will allow my students to explore the sometimes misogynistic and stereotypical gender role popular culture portrays in our society.

Magazines tend to portray an image to our society that there is a clear division between what it means to be masculine and what it means to be feminine. Through my curriculum my students will investigate and evaluate what our society has told us is the message behind their portrayals. It is important for adolescents to understand how their identity is formed and to know that what makes them individuals should be celebrated. Once they understand the important elements that make magazines successful they will be able to create their own zine. Publishing their own zines will allow them to express themselves in ways they will begin to understand themselves. It will not only help with their artistic expression they will also begin to help build their self-esteem.

References

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Gough- Yates, A. (2003). Understanding Women's Magazines: Publishing, Markets and Readerships. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Rothstein, J. (2007). Designing Magazines: Inside Periodical Design, Redesign, and Branding. New York: Allworth Press.

Curriculum Theme: Using Magazine and Zines to Understand the Gender Stereotypical Roles

Teacher: Joane R. Laguitan

Grade Level: High School level/ Grades 9-12

State Fine Art Goals: I. A.B., II. A.B.C., III. A.B., IV. A., V. A.B.C., VI. A.B.

General goals for the curriculum (describe in 2-5 sentences): In order for adolescents to comprehend how magazines have impacted their identities my curriculum will force them to analyze and critically evaluate what is portrayed to our society in this type of popular culture literature. Magazines are created to generate consumers and through this gender stereotypes are reinforced. My students will understand how their gender is represented in this media outlet and they will explore the effect this has on our society. My curriculum will also analyze what makes magazines enticing and how they can create their own anti-glamour magazine called 'zines.'

Lesson title (name each lesson to reflect a general unit theme)	Visual Exemplars (list specific images and artists, TV shows, and/or books that you plan to use for each lesson)	Motivation / dialogue (list basic issues and questions to be explored during classroom dialogue and any other motivational strategies that you plan to use for each lesson)	Media / process (list artistic processes that your students will engage in during each lesson)	Concepts and/or design principles to be learned during each lesson	Closure (list an assessment strategy that can be used at the end of each lesson)
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Lesson (class period) 1	I will bring in magazines that represent the male and female viewers. I will also bring in a magazine that has a counter magazine towards another gender, such as Men's Health and Women's Health.	<p>Part I: Questions that I will ask to form discussions will be the following: Do you see visual differences on the covers or content of the magazines? What do you think the magazines are trying to portray about gender stereotypes? Do you think the specific audiences are looking into this for pleasure or insight? What do you think the underlying messages are?</p> <p>Part II: Questions that I will ask to form discussions will be the following: What do you think stands out about magazines in general? Is there a specific characteristic, like size, that makes this magazine stand out? Does this characteristic make you more intrigued? Does the design of the magazine make sense for the overall feeling? What do you think about the elements like logo, cover, departments and features, and table of contents?</p>	<p>Part I: Lesson 1 is just a critical analysis day on the aesthetics of magazines. Students will discuss how they see the gender stereotypical roles portrayed in these types of magazines and how this affects our culture.</p> <p>Part II: Students will then analyze the basic elements that make the principles of design. Logos, the cover, the features, and the table of contents will all be part of discussion.</p>	The concept that will be learned is that magazines help our society reinforce stereotypical gender roles. Students will learn where magazines display the emphasis, the balance, the harmony and the unity.	Through discussion my students will begin to investigate, understand and recall the concepts and ideas portrayed by popular culture by listening, asking questions, and recognizing symbolism.
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<p>Lesson (class period) 2</p>	<p>I will bring in fanzines or zines that have been created by self-productions. I will also show them e-zines on the Internet. I will bring in the previous magazines for comparisons.</p>	<p>Part I: Questions that I will ask to form discussions will be the following: Do you already notice a huge difference between the two types of magazines? Which are you more inclined to read? How do you feel like when you look at a zine? Do you feel like each magazine has the same amount of expression? Can you think of anything on this mass-produced magazine that has been hindered? Part II: Questions that I will ask to form discussions will be the following: What topics are you interested in towards gender stereotypes? Do you think you'll be able to express this in your own zine? What are things you want to express? How do you want your logo, cover, features, and table of contents displayed?</p>	<p>Part I: Students will interpret the symbolism used in zines and how the elements used makes them intriguing. They will also compare and contrast the two genres of magazines. Part II: The second part of this lesson is to start brainstorming on ways they want to create their own zine by sketching ideas. The students will come up with ideas that deal with gender stereotypes within the guidelines for zines (See last page for guidelines). They will begin to think of themes, poems, and pieces of themselves they want to represent.</p>	<p>Concept learned in Lesson 2 will be that zines are the anti-glamour version of magazines. They are meant to evoke thoughts and emotions. Students will learn how to compare and contrast the two genres. They will also learn how to brainstorm their concepts of cultural issues through symbolism in art. Students will learn where zines display the emphasis, the balance, the harmony and the unity.</p>	<p>Part I: Through discussion my students again will investigate, remember and recall the concepts portrayed through zines by listening, asking questions, and recognizing symbolism. Part II: My students will apply the concepts they have learned by sketching ideas.</p>
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Lesson (class period) 3	Students will be asked to bring in their sketches on their ideas for their zines.	Questions that I will ask will be the following: Is there anything you can improve on your zine? Does your logo set the tone of the magazine? Does the cover relate to the content of the magazine? Is your zine well organized? Does the table of content lead the reader to the correct locations?	Lesson 3 will be the start of putting their ideas on paper. They will use the media of their choice. They can paste images on paper or draw each image. They will make personal choices that will interpret their ideas on stereotypical gender roles.	Using the media of their choice each student will have to take into consideration the following design principles in their work: Emphasis, Balance, Harmony, Variety, Movement, Rhythm, Proportion, and Unity.	Students will begin to create a new product from the concepts they have learned. They will express the new ways they view gender roles.
Lesson (class period) 4	Students will be asked to bring in the zines they have started and work they've done outside of class.	Questions that I will ask will be the following: Does your zine seem complete? Does it symbolize what you want to portray? Is there anything you think can be improved?	Students will continue to complete their zines. They will use any method they prefer to create a zine using their creativity.	Using the media of their choice each student will have to take into consideration the following design principles in their work: Emphasis, Balance, Harmony, Variety, Movement, Rhythm, Proportion, and Unity.	Students will continue to create their products.

Lesson (class period) 5	Students will be asked to bring in the zines they have started and what they've done outside of class.	Students are completing their project. Same questions as the Lesson 4.	Lesson 5 is another day to allow students to continue work on their zines.	Using the media of their choice each student will have to take into consideration the following design principles in their work: Emphasis, Balance, Harmony, Variety, Movement, Rhythm, Proportion, and Unity.	Students will continue to create their products.
Lesson (class period) 6	Students will bring completed zines.	Questions that I will ask will be the following on each student's personal zine: What do you think of this person's underlying message? Do you have any questions for this person? How many of you would read each other's zine?	Lesson 6 is a sharing day. Students will present their zine to the class. They will share their concepts and what they wanted to portray through their zine. Everyone will pass around their zines so everyone can see their work.	Students will have to evaluate and interpret each other's concept on their zines. The following design principles are considered: Emphasis, Balance, Harmony, Variety, Movement, Rhythm, Proportion, and Unity.	Everyone's zine will be evaluated through oral critiques. I will provide them with a written critique from me.

Lesson#1 Magazines: Catalyst for Gender Stereotyping

Grade: 9-12th

Teacher: Joane Laguitan

Teaching Date: December 3, 2009

Length: 40-45 min.

State fine arts goals met by the lesson objectives:

I. A.B., II. A.B.C., III. A.B., IV. A., V. A.B.C., VI. A.B.

Objectives:

Creative/productive objectives:

In groups of four my students will discuss the following magazines: Two magazines representing women and two magazines representing men. One pair of magazines will be the counter gender of one another, such as Women's health and Men's health. In their groups I will ask them to write down the differences they notice between the men and women magazines and gender stereotypes they find. Then they will analyze each

magazine on the basic design elements such as logo, features, cover and table of contents. After gathering insight we will discuss these topics as a class.

Multicultural/historical objectives:

Adolescents will discuss the role magazines have on reinforcing gender stereotypes in our culture and how it affects our society. They will use examples of two men and two women magazines as examples.

Affective/expressive:

Students will use experiences from their own life and what they see in our popular culture as an insight into gender stereotypes.

Concepts and vocabulary:

Creative/productive:

Logo- Sets the tone of the magazine and should inspire the design of both the cover and the interior.

Features- Magazines should have consistent openers and dedicated layouts for columns and departments that distinguish features.

Cover- It is the front of the magazine that has a strong focal point expressing the main feature article or the overall theme of the issue.

Table of Contents- Readers should be able to easily locate

everything they are looking for in the table of contents.

Multicultural/historical:

Gender stereotype- Conforming genders to a fixed or general pattern.

Affective/expressive:

Popular culture- Mainstream of a given culture.

Teacher materials:

- 4 magazines: 2- men magazines and 2- women magazines. A pair is are counter gender magazines, such as Women's health and Men's health.

Student materials:

- Pencil or pen
- Paper

Motivation:

1. Students will be placed into groups of four where they will discuss gender stereotypes found in the magazines presented to them.
2. Students will use what they know from life experience and

what they see in popular culture to discuss how gender stereotypes have affected our culture.

3. Students will discuss the basic design elements of the magazines that make them marketable and enticing.

Procedure:

1. Discussion on gender stereotypes (20 min.):

- Students will be placed in groups of four.
- I will ask them to list the stereotypes they find in both the men and women's magazine. I will also ask them to discuss as a group how this has affected our culture's image of gender roles.
- I will then get them to talk about the issues they found in groups as a class. The discussion will include questions such as the following:
 - What are some general stereotypes you found?
 - Do you see visual differences on the covers or content of the magazines?
 - Font usage, colors, images?
 - The magazines that are the counter gendered partners are also very different. Do you know any differences?
 - Themes, ideas of health or living, or anything else thought provoking?
 - What do you think the magazines are trying to portray about gender stereotypes?
 - Are men magazines more masculine and women magazines more feminine? Do they seem scared to blur the lines between the two?
 - Are there different tones in each gender's magazine?
 - Is the men's magazine friendlier and is the language they use more familiar?

- Do you notice a theme?
 - Give me some examples that you found? Do you see many images of girls and violence in the men's magazine? On the women's do you see representations of diets and how to be thin?
- Do you think the specific audiences are looking into this for pleasure or insight?
- What do you think the underlying messages are?
- What are ways gender stereotypes have affected our culture?
 - Do you think it's difficult for male and female boundaries to merge or connect?

2. Discussion on basic design elements of magazines (20 min.)

- I will then ask my students to take what they learned on how magazines have affected our society and now analyze how these magazines are marketable and how they entice us to buy them.
- They will write down what they find and again talk about the elements as a class. I will lead discussions with the following dialogue:

o What do you think stands out about magazines in general?

- Is it the font they use, the articles they have on the headlines, or something else?

o Is there a specific characteristic, like size, that makes this magazine stand out?

- Does this characteristic make you more intrigued?

o Does the design of the magazine make sense for the overall feeling?

o What do you think about the elements like logo, cover,

departments and features, and table of contents?

- What are the logos?
- What does the cover emphasize?
- What do the departments and features in magazines have to do with organization?
- Is the table of contents helpful?

o Is there something else that stands out that makes you stop at the grocery store or make you take a second glance?

3. Pack up (5 min.)

Students will return to their regular seats and pack up for the next class before the bell rings.

Learning center/ back up activity:

Students can opt not to work in groups and write down the discussion topics individually. Then as a class we can discuss our findings and I will write down the topics on the board for the class to discuss.

Preparation time:

- Research and resource gathering- 3 hours
- Gathering magazines to use in class- 45 min.
- Lesson plan writing- 2 hours

Estimated time for activity (Discussion on both topics): 40

minutes

Room set up: