

SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Lesson 3

7
GRADE

LEARNER OUTCOME¹ W-7.12:

Identify the effects of social influences on sexuality and gender roles and equity; e.g., media, culture.



MATERIALS:

Magazines for clipping, scissors and glue, newsprint, markers, masking tape.



INTRODUCTION:

Body image is affected greatly by different social influences on sexuality. This lesson deals with raising student awareness of the influence various sources can have on body image and behaviour.



APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

NOTES:

A. Ground Rules

(5 min)

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.

B. Body Image Opener

(5 min)

Students can reexamine their image of themselves.

1. Ask each student to take a blank piece of paper and a pen, and place them on the desk.
2. Have students place the pen in the center of the paper, look up and close their eyes. The remainder of this exercise should be completed with eyes closed.
3. Instruct students that they will need to listen to your instructions while you walk them through a self-portrait.

4. Follow this script:
 - Draw your head toward the top of the page, somewhere in the middle.
 - Underneath this, draw your neck and body.
 - Now, attach arms and hands to both sides of your body.
 - Next come the legs. Don't forget feet!
 - Going back up to your head, draw your hair.
 - Finally, add your eyes, mouth, ears and nose.
 - To complete this picture, draw your navel (belly button).
 - Open your eyes, and see what you've drawn.
5. Encourage students to share their self-portraits with neighboring classmates.
6. Debrief this activity using the following questions:
 - Do your self-portraits look anything like your mirror image?
 - Do you think your mental image of yourself is an accurate reflection of what you look like?
 - What influences the way we see ourselves?

C. If I Could Be²

(10 min)

Students explore the "ideals" they hold regarding personal attributes.

1. Ask each student to complete the statement, "If I could be anyone, I would be... because..."
2. One by one, have students share their answer with the large group.
3. Debrief this activity using the following questions:
 - How many examples provided by the group emphasize wanting to share personal traits such as personality? Such as physical appearance?
 - Why do you think personal attributes seem so important?
 - Would your answer be different if the question had been, "If I could look like anyone, I would

be... because...”?

- What are the dangers of selecting appearance as a desired quality in someone you admire?

D. Body Image³

(30 min)

Students increase awareness of physical self and of media influences on self-image and behaviour.

1. Point out that many people do not feel proud and confident about how they look. Some people don't feel good about their bodies.
2. Form groups of 4 to 6 students. Give each group two sheets of newsprint and a marker.
3. Ask each group to write the title, "Body Parts People Often Dislike" on one piece of newsprint and list of the parts of the body that people often feel dissatisfied with underneath.
4. Ask each group to write the title, "Images of Beauty" on the other piece of newsprint, and using magazines, find pictures of people your group agrees are attractive. Have each group make a collage of these pictures underneath the title. Ask groups to add words or phrases that describe an attractive person.
5. When groups are finished, have them post both pieces of newsprint side by side on the board or wall.
6. When all groups are done posting their lists and collages, have students walk around the room reading the lists and looking at the collages.
7. Ask everyone to take a seat.
8. Debrief this activity using the following questions:
 - Based on the images presented in the collages, what are some standards that are set by the media regarding beauty?
 - Is the media's ideal image of beauty realistic for most people? Why or why not?
 - What are some attractive qualities people can have that are not based on appearance? Are these qualities reflected in the collages?
 - What images of beauty are difficult to find?
 - Why do you think people might have a self-image that is more critical than reality?
 - How do media influence the image we have of

- ourselves? Family? Friends?
- What are some ways we can combat negative perceptions we have of ourselves?



QUESTION BOX:

(10 min)

If time permits, address student questions.



SELF REFLECTION:

- During the lesson, were:
- Ground rules being followed?
 - Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?



STUDENT ASSESSMENT:

During the lesson, did students:

- Knowledge:**
- Recall healthy body image messages?
 - Examine the effects of media on self-image and behaviour?
- Skills:**
- Challenge negative influences regarding body image?
 - Create a positive, realistic picture of themselves?
- Attitudes:**
- Begin to articulate self acceptance?

¹ Alberta Education. (2002). *Health and life skills guide to implementation: Kindergarten to grade 9*. Retrieved from <http://education.alberta.ca/media/352993/pos.pdf>

² Adapted from Body Image Coalition of Peel. *Every BODY is a Somebody: An active learning program to promote healthy body image, positive self-esteem, healthy eating and an active lifestyle for adolescent females*. No longer available.

³ Advocates for Youth. (2009). *Body Image*. Retrieved from: <http://advocatesforyouth.org/for-professionals/lesson-plans-professionals/197?task=view>