

Sociology case study and lesson plan

Sociology

Within Sociology students are required to critically assess the power that is held by different social groups within society and the way that social intuitions, such as the media, are utilised to socialise people into specific forms of behaviour.

Critical literacy link to A Level specification

Media (optional unit)

- The relationship between ownership and control of the media. Students need to compare how dominant groups in society use the media to control content in order to influence the audience and the increasing power of the audience through new media.
- The effects of globalisation on popular culture and the role of the media, including debates about cultural imperialism.
- The processes of selection and presentation of the content of the news including the way that stories are chosen based upon the influence of audience, advertisers, the new media, media professionals and government.
- Media representations of age, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability and the impact on the groups (symbolic and social annihilation).
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Case study – Year 12 Media unit lessons at Grey Court School, Richmond

In Sociology we spend a lot of time looking at the impact that media has on an individual's identity and also where they fit into society – mostly through the use of stereotypes. I make a point of getting students to engage with media and begin discussing current events in lessons, while also trying to highlight to them that the news 'updates' coming through their phones will only be a small snapshot of the issues that are going on in the world and that what they are seeing comes through the lens of Western media and consequently the issues that they deem most important.

One of the most important ways that I get them to understand the impact of the media is by getting them to research and plan a lesson that they will have to deliver to the rest of the class. This is a lesson that was broadly planned by a mixed-race boy who became very passionate about the representation of ethnic minorities in the media and the impact that he felt that this had on his social experience. While we created the learning objectives and outcomes of the lesson together, he sourced all examples and news articles independently. He felt that the new media representation of the Muslim woman at the Westminster terror attack was a response to the symbolic annihilation of ethnic minorities through the media and stigmatisation of Islam more broadly. Through researching this more broadly he also constructed the argument that this could be seen in the #oscarssowwhite movement.

What is the impact of social media?



Muslim women stand 'in solidarity' with London terror attack victims on Westminster Bridge

When an attack happens in London, it is an attack on me. It is an attack on all of us.



Muslim woman pays no mind to the terror attack, casually walks by a dying man while checking phone


#PrayForLondon #Westminster #BanIslam


★ Challenge: How can you critically analyse these articles? (Think about author, political bias, time of publication)

TASK: In your pair read one news article each and then structure your discussion around the following questions:

1. How has social media impacted the stereotypes surrounding Islam?
2. How does this link to patterns of ethnicity in general?
3. Do you agree with what's being argued? Why?

What is the impact of these representations?





However the pivotal moment was when he was able to lead a class through the narrative that he had constructed by feeding them a series of different news articles and then pushing his peers to unpick the reliability and credibility of the articles that they had been presented with. He tasked the class to critically unpick who had written them and what the intended outcome was.

“Being an ethnic minority, I am aware that the media often portrays people like me negatively, especially if you’re a young man. 80% of what I see on the news annoys me because there’s a disconnect between news outlets and the situation that they report on, for example the portrayal of Muslims as being a threat to the Western values.

When I made this lesson I wanted to highlight how we can easily be a passive audience however we are able to access a far wider range of information that can educate us about contemporary topics of debate in society: knife crime, Islamophobia and Brexit for example! New media is enabling individuals to become opinion leaders, which means that we are no longer a passive audience; however it has also allowed extreme groups from both sides to voice their opinions with authority. By having to sift through the news and select different articles that report on the same issue I was able to get a wider understanding of how news influences the way in which we view certain topics and how powerful this is in society. The lesson gave me a platform to express my passion about the impact of the reporting of fake news and how

influential it can be on society, especially those who are most vulnerable.” (Student)

Feedback from the rest of the class included:

“It was good to include contemporary issues and articles to help us to promote critical thinking when assessing our media. It was also good to look at the media through a different perspective because through doing this we learned the possible racial agenda that fake news might have.” (Student)

Contributed by Jane Higham, Head of Year 12 and Sociology Teacher at Grey Court School.

Sociology example lesson plan

Topic

How is ethnicity portrayed in the media?

By the end of the lesson students will....

C - Explain the way that stereotypes are represented in the media using contemporary examples.

B - Analyse the impact that these stereotypes have on different ethnic groups.

A - Evaluate the extent to which these stereotypes have been manipulated through the use of fake news.

What will the teacher do?

What will the learner do?

Starter

Starter slide up for students.

Task: What are the Stereotypes attached to different ethnic groups? groups that you see presented in the media?

E.g. Muslim - terrorist.

Students to draw on own knowledge of Culture and Identity and apply to the media in order to come up with representations of different ethnic groups.

- Students to deliver starter and take feedback.

Main part of the lesson

1) **General features of the representation of ethnicity.** Students will be given a handout with the different studies on and then need to give an example (AO2) and a criticism/analysis point (AO3)

Extension: What is the impact of these stereotypes?

2) Show students some of the ways that these representations appear in the media. Student to show a video clip and prompt discussion with students about the impact that this has in society more broadly.

3) #oscarssowhite. Students to explain the case study that we will be assessing. Students to watch a video about the boycott and then are provided with two articles to analyse how this links to representations of ethnicity in the media.

4) Presentation of Islamophobia within the media led by students who planned the lesson. Students assess with recent examples of when ethnicity has gone viral over social media and the way that this has been impacted by fake

1) Students to annotate the studies that they have been given. All must have AO2 and AO3 for the studies and can link to their own knowledge. Delivered by students who will also be expected to support others as they have already done the research for these studies.

2) Students to identify the representations that they can see in the video clip. Students to engage in discussion about the way that the media represents different ethnicities and analyse the impact that this can have.

3) Students to critically engage with two newspaper articles. They are expected to annotate the articles with Sociological links as this will make up part of the wider reading aspect of their folders. They need to make links between the two articles to explain the application to contemporary British society.

4) Students to engage with news articles about the impact that fake news stories has on perception of Islam. Students need to also unpick the articles and assess their validity and reliability as a source in their own right.

news. Lead discussion about the way that this impacts stereotypes and perceptions of ethnicity.

Plenary

TASK: In pairs you need to plan two PERCY paragraphs that answer the following question:
Outline and explain two ways that the media reinforces stereotypical representations of ethnicity.

All students to complete the plan for two paragraphs and can work together to support with information that they will add.

The challenge will allow students to access an A* grade.

Resources used:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2da2L4TayY4>

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/feb/25/oscarssowwhite-right-and-wrong-academy-awards-audience>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFJhNUwGysQ>

<https://amp.theguardian.com/media/2017/oct/01/television-bame-campaign-sadiq-khan-ofcom-lenny-henry>

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/spreading-islamophobia-consequences-of-negative-media-representations_us_58fe682de4b06b9cb91963fb

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/nov/26/anti-muslim-online-bots-fake-accounts>

