

gender
media
education

emERGE

Raising
awareness
about media representation
and gender equity



Recommendations
for Teachers

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS IN ONE LOOK

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WHY IS MEDIA EDUCATION A GOOD ENTRY POINT FOR GENDER EQUITY?

The use of media and popular culture plays an important part in our children and young people's daily lives. To some extent, this very present practice influences their identity development and relationships and how they perceive gender. What they see, read or hear in the media that surround them has personal implications too.

Children learn about 'boys wear blue and girls wear pink' from very early ages. The cartoons they start watching then usually represent gender in these simplistic terms. Male and female characters, no matter their form, shape or category - animal, human etc. are distinguished from each other primarily in these simplistic blue and pink terms. With some exceptions, of course.

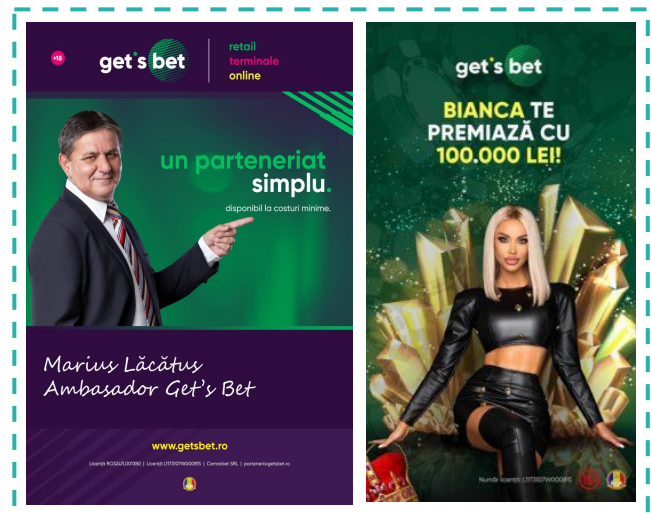


(photo: N. Fotiade)

Men are usually depicted in professional business-like or sportive terms ('a simple partnership', 'ambassador') while what counts for women is to be simply beautiful ('Bianca will offer you a 100.000 lei prize'). And the standard of beauty usually entails some very exaggerated sexual appealing representations.

Same goes for the association of emotions with gender like in the example taken from this booklet in Romanian language that teaches toddlers about contrasts. Boys usually get dirty, poke and fight, and are naughty. While girls usually cry, are tidy and behave.

Same goes for most of the professions and qualities associated with men and women in films, magazines but more obviously in advertising (please see images below of a national advertising campaign in Romania).



(screenshot captures of Romanian online gambling, 2022)

Gender fluidity is very rarely represented in mainstream media. It is seen more likely as an exotic idea at its very best. If not an abnormality. This would be the gender representation in a shell as constructed through most of the media and popular culture that our kids consume.



*Gender stereotyping is still a widespread reality in professional relationships, especially in positions of power.
Image source: Gillette commercial, 2019*

A Guide for Educators to Use

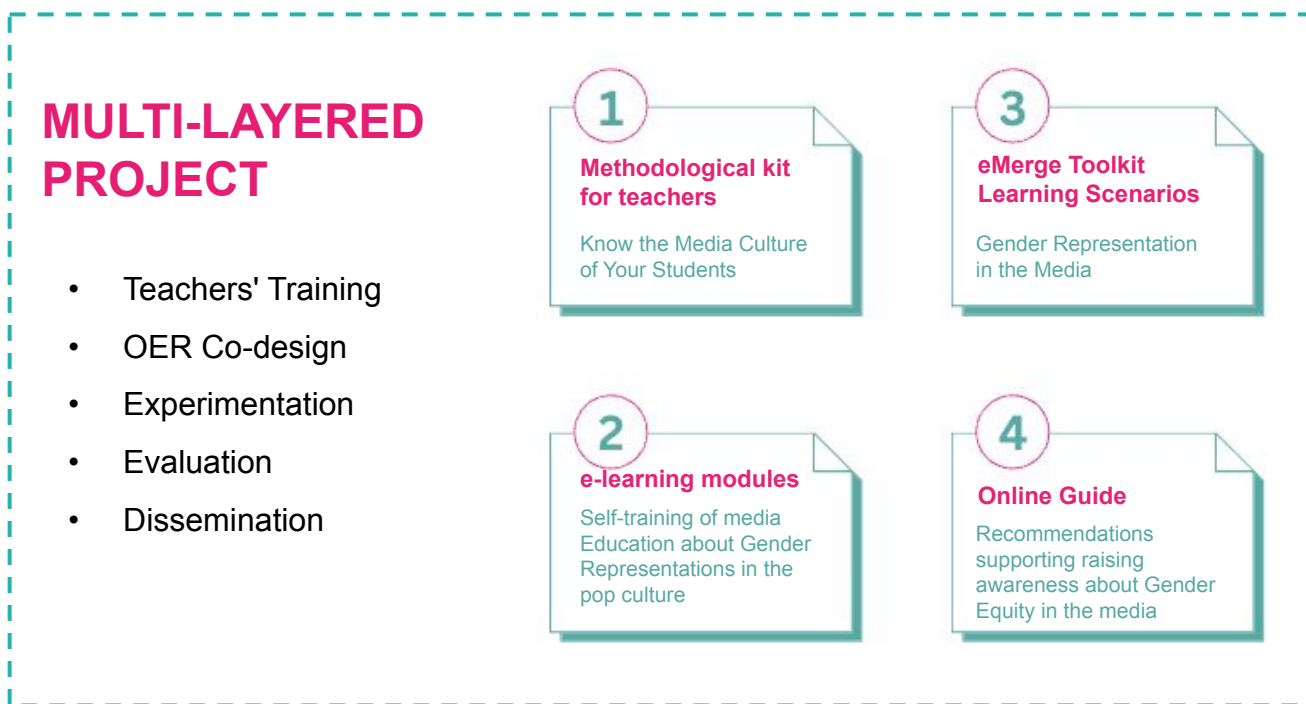
In this context media education actions can help considerably with questioning our biases and noticing how a very complex matter like gender is often pictured in very black and white terms, which belittles or limits the female or male characteristics to some very abusive generalizations.

Please see the Theory section of eLearning Module 1 for our consortium understanding of the concept of media education (learning about media).

These very generalizations maintain the prejudice that we learn in our family, at school and may hamper us to perceive gender in more equitable terms. And media education helps children and young people to contextualize the media representations and practices of gender.

In the eMerge project - 'e-Media Education about Gender Representations'- under which this material is published, our goal was to develop open educational resources and learning assessment procedures that would help educators (1) to better understand how their students relate to media and popular culture, (2) to deconstruct with their students gender representations and stereotypes rooted in their media practices and the pop culture they interact with and (3) to give their students the abilities and support to digitally create alternative media productions that would comment and critically analyze problematic gender representations.

We worked on several levels of intervention in a co-design and experimentation process with teachers and more than 2000 secondary school students during which **teachers and trainers have identified good practices and guidelines to use media literacy education for better gender equity at school.**



The eMerge educational resources are partially available in **five** languages and may be accessed freely by teachers, educators and librarians across the world on the project-emerge.eu platform.

Below we propose a set of recommendations that rounds up the entire eMerge process and which, we hope, will help you teach about gender representations in the media and popular culture without being afraid of possible implications of dealing with a sensitive topic in the classroom, caring for gender equity and open debate. Librarians and other educators interested in the topic could very well use the eMerge resources to self-train and be able to adapt activities in their contexts.

These recommendations are accompanied by some of the students' media productions created during the experimentation phase. To have access to a full gallery of media production, please go to the eMERGE platform!

Enjoy!

The eMerge team

GENDER EQUITY - A HOT TOPIC, BUT A SENSITIVE ONE?

In many of our cultural, social and institutional contexts, gender, and specifically the concept of gender identity, remains a controversial issue, an open issue. There is no general consensus in society about this issue and, because of its many social, political and cultural implications, it remains an important issue to tackle.

Teaching about gender and gender representations in the media may prove **pedagogically challenging** and **raise ethical dilemmas for teachers**. Teachers may feel insecure and not ready to actively facilitate such an exercise or may be afraid to lose their authority in the face of a sensitive topic like gender.

Various authors have researched and offered recommendations for teachers and educators on how to deal with controversial issues in the classroom. One such author is Diana Hess who has researched how teachers engage their students in discussions of controversial political issues since 1997. She argues that the political classroom — in which young people are learning to deliberate, engage, and understand any range of controversial topics — is vital to a healthy democracy. And these types of debates are vital in a growing polarized society, we believe.

Schools are sites where students should be able to practice differences of opinion in constructive and transformative ways (Van Alstein, 2019). Promoting a multi-perspective approach in the classroom may help your work.

You do not have to know everything about everything

Try to engage with your students in open discussion and learn from each other. Make sure your students understand the classroom is an open and safe space to talk about gender, free of prejudice. You need to feel comfortable with the subject you choose to teach.

A gender gap still exists to some extent in schools. Girls and femininities may experience bias from teachers. Research shows that girls might receive less attention from teachers and more comments for their appearance rather than their school performance and academic skills. Challenges and stereotypes are more present when related to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation (Andrus, et al, 2018). Taking that into consideration, it also raises the question how much of the difficulty to approach these topics stem also into the teachers' own prejudice.

According to the Romanian teachers, in most of the classrooms the boys seemed to engage with the topic of gender equality and use of stereotypes in ironical and sometimes aggressive ways. This attitude upset some of the girls.

Teachers should ensure that the classroom remains **open and safe** for all students. Such discussions about gender can cause uncertainty, irony and even fear among students. This is why it is important that they are reassured that differences of opinion and controversies are 'okay' and part of what it means to live together in a democratic society (Van Alstein, 2019). This is not to say that any opinion is acceptable and the teacher should choose how to set the boundaries of the discussion. But it will be a great opportunity to critically investigate controversial issues like gender equity from a variety of different perspectives.

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'A requirement when making the magazine covers was that each student make the cover critical to the gender they identify with. Since the number of boys is very small we insisted that boys actively participate in the discussions' (Romanian Art Education teacher).

How can media education support teachers tackling this issue?

Promoting a multi-perspective approach in the classroom. Controversial issues like gender equity inevitably entail a wide range of points of view and perspectives. Using media education methods like **critically analyzing and commenting on problematic media content and practices** offer the students the opportunity to work collaboratively to ask questions and deconstruct stereotypical media representations.



criticizing the standard of beauty promoted in magazine covers through digital creative methods producing alternative media, Romanian students' media production

One Romanian Social Sciences teacher said that the Learning Scenario she co-designed and tested to analyze gender representations in popular culture proposed concepts that are rarely discussed in the classroom. It increases the students' interest, and also ways in which teachers can surface and facilitate self-reflection, awareness about the use of stereotypes and possible prejudices the students may have. She believed that the activities tested offer life skills in the end.

'I noticed that in this activity we were more relaxed than in other classes, in which more stereotyping usually takes place' (Romanian student)

This could also be a great opportunity to teach your students to exercise empathy, to exchange the roles that boys and girls are automatically associated with in society, to encourage collaboration and open exchange of opinions, which implies listening to the others' opinions too.

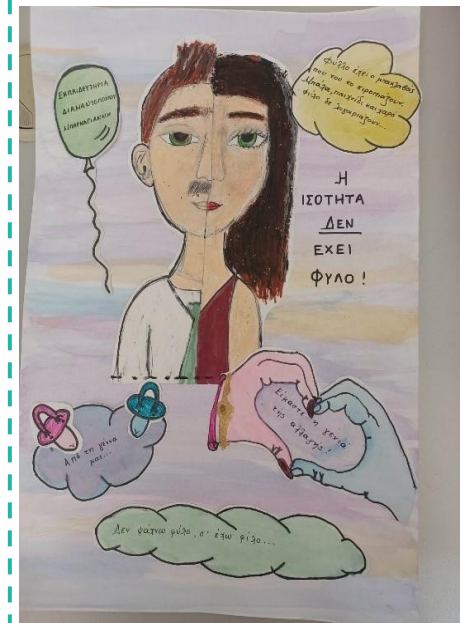
'No special arrangements were made, except that girls were not allowed to act as secretaries in group work! This measure was taken fairly quickly because we were horrified (!) to find that in each group, it was a girl who spontaneously took on this role, even though we had just tackled gender issues in an enthusiastic manner!' (Belgian teacher)

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Good preparation and active facilitation on the part of the teacher are important prerequisites (Van Alstein, 2019) for a successful class on gender representations in the media. Good preparation and active facilitation prevent the exercise and the discussions from going in too many irrelevant directions.

Teachers and students should discuss a particular topic **in a structured and organized way** (Van Alstein, 2019), and that's the role of active facilitation. It is also important to use **active questioning** to encourage students to give reasons for their opinions and to 'critically examine their own views' (idem).

In Italy, during the peer evaluation phase of media production on the influence of media education on gender equality issues, one of the students felt that *'the whole class has opened their eyes to the gender disparities that we find, unfortunately, still today.'*



The poster was made by 5th and 6th Grade students in Athens, Greece. 'Equality doesn't have gender' is the phrase they are using in order to raise awareness and promote gender equality.

The drawing also includes two pacifiers, one blue and one pink, representing the stereotypical colours used for boys and girls mentioning the phrase 'From our birth...' meaning that gender stereotypes begin from a really young age when we cannot even talk.

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'In reading the audiovisual text it was possible to identify various levels of reading and interpretation; the class itself, activating a small metacognition, found that it had used the skills normally applied to written texts in a new context.' (Italian teacher)

Finally, creating digital alternative representations will help students understand how the use of gender stereotypes in the media may influence their own perception about gender.

HOW TO ENGAGE STUDENTS ?

In Romania, to ensure gender equality in the classroom, some of the teachers used the fair distribution of seats in the classroom and to use gender-sensitive language (see Module 2 of the eLearning course for this concept).

It is possible that attitudes of embarrassment and shyness may appear in addressing gender issues in the classroom. But if you offer your students the opportunity to carry out a constructive dialogue, you may notice that they assume a role of mediation in the debate in a respectful confrontation.

The eMerge team chose to use scenario-based learning as a main working tool because it supports active learning strategies such as problem-based, case-based, and collaborative learning. Active learning is based on the idea that knowledge is best acquired and fully understood when situated within its context (Mariappan, et al., 2004; Jonassen, & Hernandez-Serrano, 2022). Such teaching and learning methods however suppose some degree of effort from the teacher's part. Especially as the topic taught may prove in some instances sensitive and controversial to some students.

In general, teachers act more as facilitators when approaching scenario-based learning. Give yourself time to prepare and give your students time to reflect and create as much as possible. You may start by making your students feel comfortable with ice-breaking activities that will familiarize them with the issues presented at the same time. You should also consider using your students' experiences to introduce or analyze concepts and ideas that might not be familiar to them gradually. This way your students may engage better in the different activities and take ownership of the new knowledge presented to them.

When teaching the learning scenarios, your students should be active and hold a major role in the learning process. You may create a learning environment which promotes your students' choice, for example. Student choice is about empowering your students to have a say on what they want to learn and how. It involves a paradigm shift of inspiring possibilities. It allows them some degree of autonomy on the learning route and the opportunity to choose from the materials and resources presented. You may explore together what they want to learn about and expand their interests.

You may encourage your students to choose the format for their projects, work at their own pace, and provide mentoring and facilitation. Activities that promote communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving are ideal to enhance students' engagement.

Videos, case studies, role play, and interactive tools such as Kahoot and Mentimeter could be also used. (Mariappan, et al., 2004). The experimentation phase showed the importance of involving students directly in the decision-making. Their choice of the themes, the materials, methodologies and tools for media production made the process more effective. According to some teachers' general evaluation, the students were collaborative, open to debate and free discussions. They were also receptive to the material presented and were interested in debating controversial issues.



Poster produced by Romanian students in the civic education class (eMerge project, experimentation phase in Romania, 2022)

As you may already know by now, constructive feedback is a strategy that may increase your students' self-efficacy and raise their motivation to take part in the task that takes place. The eMerge learning scenarios encourage constructive criticism, practicing it with the students. However, some of your students may interpret your or their peers' feedback as plain criticism and become defensive. If that's the case, you may take into consideration a short discussion about constructive feedback/criticism and its benefits. You may insist on the idea of describing the performance and offering guidance for improvement without judging.

After the experimentation phase of the learning scenarios, a teacher noticed that one of the aims of the scenario she used in the classroom was to get the young people out of their comfort zone, to practice criticism and feedback. During the peer-review evaluation, at first, her students were too shy to express criticism of their colleagues' media productions (memes that deconstructed gender stereotypes found in their pop culture). But gradually, with their teacher's support and encouragement, they managed to peer review the media productions and learn from the experience.

According to some evaluation of the experimentation, the active participation of the students often involved animated discussions in which experiences with different positions were reported: sometimes too tied to stereotypes, sometimes decidedly open to dialogue and without stereotypes. Some students reported experiences related to closest friends or family and some embarrassment emerged in the comparison between peers. The discussions, even if animated, never resulted in real conflicts as they were mediated by the students themselves.

The students' **involvement in the digital creative part** to produce alternative media representations may prove challenging in the absence of the students' digital creative skills or because of *limited access to the computer lab*. Discuss with your students their limits and try to ask for other teachers/professionals' help. We talked about the importance of institutional support in Chapter 5 of this guide. The creative process needs more time so take that into consideration. You may also want to approach **the copyright issue** of the use of images. If you do not feel comfortable with the subject, you may try to invite a professional to talk about it.



'Students became more aware of gender representation issues in the media, as they were able to identify and analyse stereotypes and prejudices in literary texts studied in the classroom or in films/social media/different situations from their personal experience.' (Romanian teacher)

Romanian students' evaluation after the experimentation phase (selection):

I noticed...

- "I noticed that I judge certain types of people without knowing them"
- "Various reactions among colleagues, not quite appropriate opinions, the disinterest of some people, involvement from the majority"
- "that although some people are aware of the stereotypical way they see the world, they continue to perpetuate these behaviours and refuse to think otherwise"
- "that it was an activity in which everyone was more relaxed than at normal lessons, that more stereotypes are made than normal"

I felt...

- "a little frustrated to hear phrases like "girls have fake nails, girls wear make-up" as defining attributes associated with the female gender"
- "disappointment in relation to some attitudes observed"
- "contempt about my level of knowledge but today's lesson showed me the world I live in and what I can do to overcome certain situations especially in a man's world"
- "disappointment, empathy"

I learned...

- "about feminist movements and what they stand for, also their purpose in society"
- "that stereotyping facilitates communication, but hinders tolerance and leads to discrimination"
- "to be more tolerant and attentive to people's personal decisions in their lives, about the existence of the ME TOO movement"
- "that women and men can have the same moral and personality characteristics"

A plan for the future is... (transfer to everyday life)

- "to be more careful with generalizations"
- "to make efforts to teach those around me why stereotypes are harmful to those around us"
- "to stop applying/ identifying stereotypes to every person, not to generalize"

How can media education support teachers tackling this issue?

Using the students' interests, preferred media practices and contents is proving a useful way to engage them in reflection and open discussion or creative activities. The learning scenarios developed in the eMerge project will guide you easily on this path.

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(students) "spoke out and participated in the debate but also got involved in the final work despite difficulties, questioning which continued outside the school."

"They committed mainly in image research, discussion and play".

(Belgian teacher)



'The discussion was centered on the strong cultural 'stickiness' of the proposed contents, in particular, many students have noticed how advertising is much more conservative than the cultural horizons of the very new generations, in fact representing more the culture of adults'.

In this, some have also seen an implicit 'conservation project', which reassures adults. In short, the boys took the opportunity to express the widespread unease (we have also indicated it together as 'political' unease) of not being represented in their most innovative instances by the media.

As if their culture, more open, freer, could not break down the clichés created by previous generations'.

(Italian teacher)

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A notable involvement of the students occurred in the phase of critical analysis of commercials in search of stereotypes to break down and in the identification of commercials in which they recognized their own vision of the world or a more current approach to gender issues.

An example of media production of students that tries to eliminate the “upside down” stereotype.

Analisi dello spot

Cosa vediamo in questo spot?

Questo spot inizia con uomo che pulisce in una casa sottosopra, seguito da una donna che si cala dal soffitto con una fune, tutto ciò perché trovano molte difficoltà a pulire in dei punti della casa insidiosi. A loro viene in aiuto lo sgrassatore universale Chanteclair, il quale può essere utilizzato d’ora in avanti anche sottosopra.



Qual'è l'obiettivo dei venditori?

In questa pubblicità i venditori cercano di promuovere il prodotto, accattivando gli spettatori con la sua nuova funzione, pubblicizzandolo in un modo bizzarro, mettendo la casa letteralmente “sottosopra”, enfatizzandone il senso.



(Images 1 and 2 - Reversal of the stereotype: a man and a woman clean a house upside down to reach the most insidious points, but the degreaser comes to the rescue, which from now on can also be used upside down. Even if the goal is to promote a product, proposing a man who does the cleaning is a positive sign in today's male-dominated society)

HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS IN THE CLASSROOM?

It is not uncommon to be confronted with sexist or hostile comments on gender-related issues that challenge socially established norms. You may feel a tension in your teaching posture: on the one hand, you need to allow students to express themselves while regulating their expression, and on the other, you need to negotiate with them what is sexist in what they say and how it is harmful. Faced with students' speeches that may question or challenge the feminist reading of a media or social phenomenon, a multitude of strategies can be envisaged: **(1) argumentation, (2) semantic defense or (3) confrontation**¹.

1. Argumentation. When faced with a problematic question or position, you can argue: you can rely on the ideological foundations on which the class agrees, such as the fundamental right to non-discrimination, use a slippery slope argument (going to the end of the anti-feminist logic to invalidate it) or an argument by substitution (replacing one oppression with another to make the sexist oppression visible) to remind the younger generations of the history of feminist struggles that have led to what they have today, to invite them to take a critical distance (how would an extraterrestrial observer look at the way society works).

All these argumentative processes can also be integrated into media education activities, for example, in a process of researching information on the history of gender representations in advertising.

2. Semantic defense. Another strategy for dealing with anti-feminist discourses would be **to define the terms that are used in the debate**. This helps to nuance what is being said and is an opportunity to show the systemic aspect of sexism in our society.

3. Confrontation. The third strategy is more delicate because it is used as a last resort, when the optimal conditions for a debate that is reassuring for everyone are no longer met. It is a confrontation. Take *the example of a pupil saying that if a girl wearing a skirt is being harassed, it is because she has it coming*. It is important to respond in three stages.

1. First, ask the student to clarify what he or she wants to say. What does he/she mean by this? What is implied? In this case, he/she is implying that wearing a skirt is an invitation to boys to harass her and that this girl is therefore responsible for the harassment she is experiencing.

¹ More about these concepts in "Let's shut down antifeminism! The verbal self-defense guide for feminists", Irene Zeilinger, Garance ASBL, 2017, http://www.garance.be/IMG/pdf/selfdefenseguide_180924_low.pdf

2. Then, if you identify a sexist attitude (as in the example above), then it is a matter of showing that you do not condone it - by doing so, you also ensure that the classroom remains a safe space for those present who may potentially be uncomfortable with such sexist language or attitudes.

3. And finally, you give an educational response to it, which depends on a number of factors (the time you have to devote to it, your comfort with the issue, the presence or absence of support in your immediate environment...)¹. If you do not feel able to do so, you can also close a topic in order to preserve witnesses who might be affected by discriminatory acts, in order to consider other strategies at a later stage.

How can media education support teachers tackling this issue?

Media education can be a precious help in this educational work. Indeed, the deconstruction of gender stereotypes with a media object allows you to distance yourself sufficiently to talk about sensitive subjects in your group of students.

If we take the example above, to work on rape culture, you can deconstruct how the kissing scenes in Harrison Ford's films romanticise the scenario where the predatory man conquers a woman as prey, without her consent², how the male gaze present in films conditions our way of looking at women's bodies as if they were objects that can be taken, or again, how advertisements aimed at men promote a vision of masculinity valuing strength, predation and violence from a very early age.

'The sequence where the students really became aware of the "problem" (meaning gender media representation) was during the presentation of the "Male gaze" concept. Most of them were not aware of the term but also of its omnipresence. (...) When we presented several excerpts where male gaze was present, some were even uncomfortable.' (Belgian teacher)

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¹ In some countries, a legal framework can also be invoked: for example, if a person makes sexist acts and remarks against a woman in the public space, you can inform pupils that this is prohibited by law and therefore punishable (this is the case in Belgium following the law of 22 May 2014 to combat sexism). In January 2023 in Romania, a man was jailed for slapping a woman on her backside in the street. He received 10 months prison. He also had a history of rape. This was a premiere.
<https://spotmedia.ro/stiri/eveniment/premiera-in-romania-un-barbat-a-fost-condamnat-la-inchisoare-pentru-ca-a-lovit-o-femeie-cu-palma-este-fund> [RO]

² Predatory Romance in Harrison Ford Movies - YouTube

MEDIA PRODUCTION: A FINAL POINT OR A PROCESS?

Media educators have traditionally privileged textual analysis as the key strategy to build a critical understanding of media messages and undervalued media production as a merely technical or entertaining divertissement. By learning to decode texts students can protect themselves from media manipulation and turn to “better” cultural artifacts and practices.

This rationalistic approach, however, fails to acknowledge young people's main motivations to use media, that is mainly socialization and pleasure. To belong to peer/fan groups of popular culture and to engage emotionally (and not rationally) in certain media practices is a basic component of their daily media practices. To deny or, worse, stigmatize it may lead them to resist or “accommodate” this approach as they perceive it as patronizing and authoritarian.

The only way to prevent this from happening and to make pedagogical action truly meaningful to students is to link critical analysis to the flow of emotions and pleasures activated through creative media production. It is important, however, that both actions – critical analysis and creative media production – are developed as a strictly interconnected activity. If, on the one hand, critical analysis, by itself, does not necessarily drive change in students' behaviors and attitudes, creativity, on the other hand, does not necessarily produce critical understanding.



*Meme produced by Romanian students.
The text says “More women in politics”.*

Hence, creative media production should always lead to (and be derived from) critical analysis in a kind of circular approach where the former is reciprocally and constantly fed by the other. While students create their media production, teachers should encourage them to also distance themselves from them, to evaluate them critically, and to reflect on the consequences and motivations of their production choices.

‘Students became strongly aware of gender representations in the media : not only because they questioned some of their certainties but also because they brought examples themselves and produced their posters they identified other stereotypes.’ (Belgian teacher)

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Magazine cover produced by Romanian students. The aim of the exercise was to deconstruct the stereotypical way in which some of these magazines depict gender.

In other words, **creative work in the classroom should never be an end in itself**. Certainly, students should be encouraged to use media to express themselves, to communicate and to develop their creativity, but this must be systematically accompanied by a process of reflection and self-assessment. This circular mode of conceiving the relationship between media production and critical analysis redefines the relationship between *process* and *product*: the latter is not simply the final moment of the former, a summary of it or a demonstration of what has been learned but is rather a phase that triggers reflection and is in turn triggered by it. *Reflection* and *action*, *reading* and *writing*, in short, feed off each other in a dialectical relationship that proceeds cyclically rather than according to a linear progression.

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'In my opinion, the issue of gender equality has been addressed in an excellent way by everyone. Everyone was able to find an advertising spot containing a gender stereotype, and despite some stereotypes being repeated in different works by the various groups, each one addressed and commented on it in a different and original way.' (Italian student)



A cartoon representation of two different situations of social interaction at school imagined by one of the Romanian students. In the first one, in black and white, a girl is bullied by her colleagues with great consequences (isolation, low self-esteem, sadness, loneliness, depression) because she is different, she is not in line with the standard of beauty, of 'how a girl should look like: 'a girl should have long hair, thin waist, wear skirts, dresses and make-up, like us' one of the caption says. In the second one, in full color, the situation is reversed. The gender stereotypes do not matter for the three girls and they accept the different girl as she is. They even invite her to take her hood down so they can see her face. The final accompanying message is: Say STOP to gender stereotyping!

Examples of media production by Italian students: creation of self-produced commercials at home, in which students highlight the elimination of gender stereotypes (the boy who is happy to have found a good detergent for washing dishes, the child who finds serenity playing with dolls).

Screenshot spot advertising (eMerge project, experimentation phase in Italy, 2022)



Diamantopoulos – Mparkagianni School, located in Athens, Greece, posted on their Facebook page one of the media productions they made during the experimentation of an eMERGE Learning Scenario on advertising. The video is inspired by the ice bucket challenge, which was a trend some years ago, but instead of continuing the challenge, boys were asked by their peer to use the buckets and the water to mop up instead.



Testimonials from teachers for the experimentation:

'Students were a bit nervous when they started presenting their media production to their peers. However, the enthusiastic reactions made them relax and the discussion that followed the presentation was impressively interesting.'

'Students spent hours preparing their media productions. They were enthusiastic and the result was impressive.'

'Students presented their media production to the whole school. It was really interesting when they were answering questions from their younger peers.'

Other Italian students have chosen as media production the creation of presentations that focus on the analysis of commercials through decades, from the 80s, in which the stereotype of the doll with female tasks persists (frames 1), until the 2020s examples of commercials in which the perspective of use of the doll is changed, generating “empathy” (frames 2).

Primo spot Che cosa rappresenta?

La pubblicità si apre presentando dei nuovi mobili per l'interno della villa di Barbie, in sottofondo le voci di alcune bambine che giocano, sottolineano lo stereotipo secondo il quale, le bambine, giocano esclusivamente con le bambole. Successivamente si focalizza sui mobili da cucina e da camera da letto, definendo Barbie come “la cuoca”. Inoltre quando viene mostrato il cosiddetto “tavolino del trucco”, la voce narrante comunica agli spettatori che Barbie potrebbe usarlo per farsi bella.



(Frame 1 - The commercial presents a series of stereotypes: in the background the voices of girls to underline that it is a game preferred by the female gender; then the kitchen furniture is framed and the narrator defines Barbie as a “cook”, finally, while a dressing table is shown, reference is made to the fact that Barbie could use it to make up herself) *Raro* Spot- Mobili della VILLA DI BARBIE - 1981 (Barbie’s villa furnitures)

Gli spot moderni È cambiato qualcosa?

Come possiamo notare, al giorno d’oggi c’è molta più varietà culturale riguardo la bambola, abbiamo: Barbie di colore, Barbie paraplegica, Barbie donna in carriera e molte altre. Gli spot sono anche molto più inclusivi, troviamo sia una bambina sia un bambino, il quale sta insegnando una lezione alle sue bambole. Questo aiuta molte persone che magari erano rimaste con un passo indietro nel tempo a capire che la bambola non è per forza un gioco solo per femminucce come il trenino non sia solo un gioco per maschietti.



(Frame 2 - This 2021 Barbie commercial features greater cultural variety and attention to the theme of inclusion, with paraplegic Barbie, career woman Barbie, a child teaching his dolls a lesson,...) Barbie – A Doll Can Help Change The World 2021

YOU CAN CHANGE THINGS BUT NOT ALONE

Better to have the support of fellow colleagues and the school. **A whole school approach engaging parents** is advisable - by clearly explaining to them why the school thinks it is important to work with students on gender equity.

Usually media education activities are not planned in the curriculum so **institutional support** is needed. The support could come in various forms. A school policy that encourages **teachers' collaboration** in the classroom. For instance, if the teacher does not hold digital creative skills and knowledge, it is advisable to work together with a person in the school that can help with that.



'I intend to present the productions created by the students to other lower classes (11th, 9th - Humanities) to vote and to explain to them what media education entails, in order to choose an optional media education in future years'. (Romanian Social Sciences Teacher)

NGOs help and support to coach you and your colleagues to teach about gender would be a good way to go ahead. In Romania, you may contact any organization part of the Coalition for Gender Equality (Coalitia de Gen).

In Belgium, related to the media education dimension, you can ask for the support of the Conseil Supérieur d'Éducation aux médias (CSEM) and the Resource Centres whose mission is to accompany schools in this matter. Média Animation ASBL, le Centre d'Auto-formation continuée (CAF) and le Centre AudioVisuel (CAV) can advise and direct you to the operators likely to meet your needs. For gender issues, you can call upon your PMS (centres psycho-médico-sociaux), the public services of your municipality, feminist associations, those working specifically on gender issues and LGBTQIA+ identities, family planning, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

In Italy several associations and training centers support teachers and educators to develop media education competencies. [MED \(Italian Association for Media Education\)](#) carries out training activities for teachers and educators and also participates in EU and national projects to implement media education in different educational contexts (both formal and non formal). Another institution promoting media education is [CREMIT \(Centro di Ricerca sull'Educazione ai Media all'Innovazione e alla Tecnologia\)](#).

For gender issues, there are the [National Guidelines Educating to respect: for gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination](#). National and European projects have produced guides and toolkits for teachers and educators, such as the [ImPARI at School lesson Plans](#) or [Mind the Gap. Building gender equality in education](#). Save the Children Italy participates in projects and networks against inequality and educational poverty and produces periodic reports, including the one on [Social and gender barriers to training and STEM education](#).

In Greece, the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP), a scientific agency that provides support to the Minister of Education, provides teachers with educational material, training and support in general to implement a variety of educational activities and projects, including topics such as media education and sex education. Teachers may receive support from IEP when they try to approach such topics.

The school librarian's support. The school librarian may help you with the selection of educational resources or offer extra space for practical activities like exhibitions of the students' media productions and peer-review meetings and debates between students in different classrooms.

Try to avoid busy periods in the school program (like exams etc.) when taking the initiative to teach the eMerge learning scenarios. And try to obtain **the school principal's support** for this activity, for equipment, space, IT teacher support.

Support from institutions (school principals and public authorities) and also parents is fundamental to legitimate media education in the classroom as a key component of the school curriculum. Teachers working interdisciplinarily on media education activities (such as those developed in the e-Merge project) feel more motivated as they clearly perceive them as part of their professional commitment, not only within the school but also as a kind of advocacy grassroots task in the public sphere of society at large.

EMERGE

The whole radio programme was on WeTransfer, and I sent it to colleagues who had the same students. But the school principal made a QR code of it and distributed it widely. I was so surprised to be legitimized like that by the school management!' (Belgian teacher)

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E-Media EDUCATION about REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER in pop culture

Pedagogical resources for secondary education

Thanks to the involvement of around 50 teachers and just over 2000 students, the European project eMerge - 'e-Media Education about Gender Representations' has developed educational resources that support educators

1. to better understand the relationship of their students with media and popular culture
2. to deconstruct with their students the gender representations and stereotypes rooted in their media practices and the pop culture with which they interact
3. to support their students' skills to create alternative media productions that critically examine problematic gender representations
4. to raise awareness through media production for a better gender equity within the school community



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Online self-learning modules to develop media literacy skills for educators on gender issues in media and pop culture



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A methodological approach that makes it possible to seek and identify the media practices of students, regardless of their background

Ready to use learning scenarios that mobilise students' analytical and media production skills on gender stereotypes in the media



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Strategic recommendations illustrated with good practices about media education for gender equity at school

Free resources available in 5 languages – English, French, Greek, Italian and Romanian.
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