



Activity n°7: Where are the women?

Identification
Italy / France / Romania / Finland

Key words: *Representations / Gender / Discourse*



Target groups:

- Journalism students
- Professional journalists
- Media literacy trainers

Duration: 3 to 4 hours

Context: Does the sports press treat men's and women's sport alike? Discourse analysis is often suggested as the first approach to gender and non-discrimination issues, and it is a useful tool for working on media representations.

Objectives:

- **To raise awareness about non-discrimination and gender issues**
- **To analyse how sports news is processed and the way it represents people**
- **To learn to apply discourse analysis when reading the press**

Equipment: Pens and paper

Media resources: A significant amount of press material:

- one or more daily newspapers dated the same day.
- several editions of newspapers collected over a given period containing reports of competitive sports (men's and women's).

Observations: This activity could be partial, focusing on a specific area of analysis. The collection of a comprehensive set of material is important, in order to avoid over-hasty interpretations or excessive generalisations.

Organisation:

Class configuration	Time in minutes	Sequence of activities
GR	10'	Introduce the activity and ask participants to share their initial assumptions about the different gender-related representations that may appear in sports news.
GR	5'	Distribute the media material (prepared in advance) and present the different themes (layout, illustrations, article content) which will be considered in the analysis of the articles on women's sports.
PRS	20'	<p>Layout: In pairs, observe the way the articles identified are arranged: <i>What newspaper are they in? On which page? Where are they on the page? Under which heading? Surrounded by what other news? Are there photos/pictures? What typography is used for headlines? etc.</i></p>
PRS	20'	<p>Headlines and illustrations: In pairs, take the headlines of the articles identified and pinpoint the items of information and the processes used to set out an argument. Analyse the pictures (composition, angle, detail, subjects, etc) and their captions. Examples of questions: <i>Who features in these pictures? What do they look like? What are they doing? Taking these pictures as the starting point, what does the world look like? What does the world of sport look like? What do sportspersons look like?</i></p>
GR	30'	Bring the sub-groups together and ask them to share their observations and their initial interpretations.
PRS	20'	<p>The content of the articles: In pairs, analyse the types of narratives, representations, angles chosen, the persons writing (journalists, experts, sportspersons, etc) and fields of vocabulary used in the selected articles. Examples of questions: <i>Who are the authors? Experts? Sportspersons? What is part of the emotional and/or of the informational dimension?</i></p>

Organisation (next):

Class configuration	Time in minutes	Sequence of activities
GR	30'	Bring the group together and exchange observations, strengthening or qualifying the initial interpretations.
GR	30'	Compare the observations made with articles dealing with the same sport played by men.
GR	20'	Compare the various interpretations with the initial assumptions and draw the main conclusions about gender representations in sports news.

Variants: Media treatment of men's and women's sports could be analysed in parallel before being pooled for comparative analysis. This activity could be developed using other media materials (video reports, on-line media, advertising, etc). For media education purposes, the interrelationship between representations and types of media could be analysed from a comparative viewpoint. Other news fields may be subjected to this type of discourse analysis (politics, the environment, etc).

Suggested follow-up activities:

- **Language and words** Unit: Activity n°11. Choosing images
- **Images** Unit: Activity n° 11. Choosing images
- **Gender** Unit: Activity n°24. Off to the Olympics!