Forum-Protokoll:
*** Identity Politics / Race and Gender ***
Study Questions / Discussion

Discussions – Identity Politics / Race and Gender

1. slender and gender
Pinar (20.01.2011 13:25)

I think that bringing up the whole issue of body ideals in the school situation is very important. Kids and teenagers, depending on how often they watch TV, or read in fashion magazines see these photoshop bodies and faces all the time and thus have a certain ideal in their head of how they are supposed to look (and even act) like. Just making them aware of how the media presents women and men in such an unreal way is a crucial task for teachers to take on.

I would, however, definitely try to use material (movies, photos) in the classroom situation that does not frustrate students by imposing on them even more ideals they can never reach.

Also, I think it might be a good idea to separate boys and girls for discussions on the "ideal body" topic, because boys and girls SPEAK AND ACT DIFFERENTLY (and perhaps more honestly) when they are among themselves. On the other hand, this suggestion discriminates homosexually oriented students who probably have to face more gender identity problems than heterosexual students.

Regarding material: There was a very nice article about Britney Spears in the Daily Mail magazine. Britney allowed to show her "photoshopped" pictures next to her real pictures. I thought that was a really good idea and very well for usage in the classroom situation! Let me see if I can find the link!

Here you go:

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1265676/Britney-Spears-releases-airbrushed-images-digitally-altered-versions.html

1.1. AW: slender and gender
Philipp (24.01.2011 10:53)

Thank you so much for this link, that's great material (and thanks Britney for having the guts to come out like this). I think this is something that could definitely be used in a classroom, and it would be a real eye-opener for most students. Yes, they might already be aware that magazines photoshop whatever they print - but the mere extent of it, and an actual example with before / after pictures, may be new and interesting to them, and it might give them further insight into how media promote and idolize a certain body type that is completely unrealistic. So unrealistic in fact that they need to digitally alter the very icons of this body type.

1.1.1. AW: AW: slender and gender
Susanne (24.01.2011 20:44)

There are actually a lot of "photoshop makeovers" on Youtube. It's really interesting to see how much you can do with one simple program. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzm7mPS2y9c

1.1.1.1 AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Monika (01.02.2011 18:40)

The "Brigitte" took this even one step further and published a whole issue with models with a migrant background in January. This might be also interesting in our discussion about "doing race".

brigitte_18201107.pdf

2. Problem with Bordo's text
Tiziana (18.01.2011 11:49)

While reading Bordo's text her way of mixing up anorexia/ bulimia with cultural aspects of the topic struck me as very problematic. I'd very much like to keep these diseases out of the discussion. The high mortality rate in anorexia patients shows that even scientific research hasn't understood the underlying problems of this disease, so I wouldn't want to discuss this in the context Bordo does or use patients´ quotes to underline more general assumptions.

I also hoped she would shed more light on topics like the rise of the "plus size model" (e.g. Sophie Dahl). Even though these models are booked by the makers of the Pirelli calendar or Vogue, it seems they are seen as some kind of exotic exception to the rule. Bordo also describes the idea of the "muscled" body - but again she doesn't really make it clear to me why and in which context certain body shapes are used and/or preferred.

All in all I found she was just merely skipping from aspect to aspect, without really going into depth.

2.1. AW: Problem with Bordo's text
Victoria (25.01.2011 14:45)

The Bordo text was written in 1990, and as such does not, as you correctly point out, deal with eating disorders in the more nuanced way that research does now. At the time, and until recently, it has been popular to blame societal factors for these diseases, and mix them up, but a lot more is involved. I was thinking that a potential way of using this text in the classroom might be to look at narrative arcs within individual texts, so that students might match up bodies and actions- for example, muscle bound heroines react in certain ways, "girlie girls" in other ways, fat people have been either pathologically uncool and yet mysteriously together (all that marginalisation is apparently useful in developing a personality) etc etc. This works with stereotype ideas, but on a deeper level, perhaps showing how these external bodies reflect some kind of internal worldview. Also, in the transformative narrative, the thinner and fitter you are, the better you can cope with life.

What she says about how the microcosm (body) reflects the anxieties of the macrocosm (society) is possibly a good point of departure, and the idea of upward mobility and transformation- anything to get away from the fragile mortality and societal stress we experience??

2.1.1. AW: AW: Problem with Bordo's text
Tiziana (31.01.2011 10:39)

Over the weekend I took a look at some book, shows and films and found that the approach you suggested ("narrative arcs within individual texts, so that students might match up bodies and actions- for example, muscle bound heroines react in certain ways, "girlie girls" in other ways, fat people have been either pathologically uncool and yet mysteriously together") actually brought

up a few light bulb moments for myself as well.

When it comes to books, "Holes" by Louis Sachar, which is read in class a lot, presents a rather chubby hero. Nevertheless only after 'Stanley' got stronger and lost weight by digging holes every day, he is able to take matters into his own hands and bring things to a happy ending.

It also seems that characters on crime shows like 'Ziva David' (a Mossad agent and trained assassin on the team of NCIS) or 'Dr. Brennan' (a forensic pathologist and quite capable in martial arts on "Bones") rarely get the typical love story or are the romantic interest of their male counterparts. Usually, these characters are physically very strong but lack the ability to open up on an emotional level. Interestingly characters in sci-fi or fantasy seem to be capable on the physical as well as the emotional level. Characters like 'Zoe Wasburne' (a war veteran and officer on a spaceship who is happily married to the ship's pilot on "Firefly") or 'Sydney Bristow' (an agent who loses her fiancée but finds love and a family in the end) are examples of more complete characters.

So there are a lot of ideals hidden in all kinds of works of popular culture which I hadn't seen as such before.

2.2. AW: Problem with Bordo's text
Wolfgang Hochbruck (19.01.2011 15:06)

Speaking of the "muscled body" -- would it help in the classroom context if one used the Bordo text as a background (NOT as student reading!) and gave them a variety of photographs, f. i. of Keira Knightley and Michelle Obama?

Wolfgang Hochbruck

2.2.1. AW: AW: Problem with Bordo's text
Tiziana (20.01.2011 12:57)

I actually thought more of the modern heroine characters like Charlize Theron in "Aeon Flux", Linda Hamilton in "Terminator" or Jennifer Garner in "Alias", representing a very certain type of heroine who has a lot of "male" features (e.g. physical and psychological strength, fighting skills, arms proficiency)added to a more or less muscled but very feminine body. What I'm wondering about is whether these women are seen differently in different context, along the lines of "Who would you take shopping", "go out to a club" or "ask to accompany you when you have to deal someone you dislike" or something like that.

2.2.1.1. AW: AW: AW: Problem with Bordo's text
Pinar (20.01.2011 13:16)

Don't you think that using such unrealistic heroine examples would make the girls (and boys) in the classroom feel weak and inferior? In my mind, it would be one unreachable goal more added

to their lists of unreachable things....and that's frustrating, especially for teenagers.

2.2.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: AW: Problem with Bordo's text
Tiziana (21.01.2011 12:02)

My goal is not to make my students more self-confident or get a better image of their own bodies. With all respect, that is not my idea of what my job as a teacher is. What I'm interested in is what my students like about certain ideals or why they dislike others.

3. genre and gender: The case of Soap Opera
Julia (06.01.2011 09:28)

Thank you, group 2.1 for the well-written summary and comment. I also found it irritating that the changed and changing role of women in the world of work is ignored.

I think the topics of soaps have changed as well and it is not true anymore that "an issue like homosexuality ... is simply ignored." (385)
(see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_television_shows_with_LGBT_characters)

Homosexuality is also a topic in the mentioned western films as male genre (as in *Brokeback Mountain*).

Really useful are the suggested activities. A lot of them can be applied in class.

3.1. AW: genre and gender: The case of Soap Opera
Xi (10.01.2011 12:24)

It is a very good point in the group's response to say Gledhill's evaluation of the women's changed role as an audience is actually not adequate when offering the explanation to the development of soap opera. However, I do not think Gledhill's attributing the development of soap opera as a genre to a reassertion of male cultural dominance is contradictory to the "rising gender equality" (group 2.1). Although women's life have much more possibilities than before, or to say, their status as a specific identified group (female) is rising, it does not mean that the male's cultural dominance is inverted. Just as there are more men who cook or take care of the housework than before (taking the example given by the previous response in this thread) does not mean doing housework has become a "masculine" activity, the changing definition of femininity (more independence or going to fields traditionally dominated by male) does not necessarily indicate the power of masculinity no longer dominates. So I would say the conclusion of the text is still legitimate.

3.2. AW: genre and gender: The case of Soap Opera
Tim K. (06.01.2011 16:16)

I'd like to make a point about the issue of how to explain the increasing number of male characters in soap operas. Gledhill comes to the conclusion, that this process is evidence of a reassertion of male cultural dominance. The group pointed out that rising gender equality is another explanation.

Maybe these two explanations / interpretations are interrelated. In the working world, women increasingly behave in a way that was traditionally considered to be "male" (earn money… make ones career…). So the "traditional male way of life" seems to "invade" the "traditional female world". To be sure, this process is not only a one way process – today, we also find Daddies who go on "Elternzeit"… but I would argue that the number of women who now adopt a "traditionally

male" way of life is larger than the number of men with a "traditionally female" way of life. So the concept of the "traditional" male life increasingly seems to dominate the lives of both men and women.

This is definitely not to say that the "old" traditions should be kept. I'm in favor of gender equality and I think everybody should have the right and opportunity to choose the job they want. The basic problem I see here is that in our culture tasks like housework, raising children, caring for the elderly… are not appreciated. We define our identity very much via our jobs (Stichwort "Arbeitsgesellschaft") and what is not considered as a "proper" job is of less value…

3.2.1. AW: AW: genre and gender: The case of Soap Opera
Susanne (20.01.2011 10:14)

Your comment about stay at home daddies made me curious and I found some interesting statistical data that reflects the development concerning women or men staying at home with the kids:

"According to a U.S. Bureau of the Census report released in May 2006, there were 143,000 stay-at-home dads versus 5.6 million stay-at-home moms in 2005 ("Americans Marrying Older, Living Alone More, See Households Shrinking" U.S. Census Bureau, May 25, 2006, visited on the Internet on August 10, 2006). However, the number of stay-at-home dads has been increasing. In 2003, there were 98,000 stay-at-home dads out of a total of 5.5 million stay-at-home parents ("Stay-at-Home Parents Top 5 Million" U.S. Census Bureau, November 30, 2004, visited on the Internet on August 10, 2006)."

SOURCE: http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/altoptgenl/a/stay_home_dads.htm

I also found a humorous video from the Colbert Report (see link) that makes fun of stay at home dads claiming that they lose their "manhood"/masculinity and go against nature in staying at home. While this is of course not a serious report, it certainly reflects the prejudices against stay at home dads.

Both, the statistics and the video, combined show exactly what, I think, was commented on before in this thread: The more or less unspoken rules created by common, traditional gender roles might not be followed anymore but that does not mean that they are not in our heads anymore - unfortunately.

http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/82935/february-28-2007/problems-without-solutions--stay-at-home-dads

3.2.1.1. Re: AW: AW: genre and gender: The case of Soap Opera
Angela (21.01.2011 16:23)

This comment is in relation to both Gledhill and Butler's articles.

Hearing the phrase "stay-at-home dads" immediately reminded me of the 1983 movie "Mr. Mom" (not that I would recommend it for a fun-filled 80's movie night, but hear me out...). The movie is based on a middle class family in 1983. Dad has a job as an engineer working for an automobile manufacturer. Mom is a stay-at-home mom with their three kids. Dad loses his job as the automobile industry faces a major economic slump in the early 80s. The tables turn; mom goes back to work as the breadwinner, and dad stays home with the kids.

I can't help but think about today's society, 25ish years later, when once again history repeated itself as the automobile industry hit a MAJOR low (along with plenty of other industries), and unemployment skyrocketed, forcing families to make atypical changes to their "normal, socially acceptable" lives; i.e.: moms and dads switching roles in the household.

Firstly, I found an article by Aaron Rochlen from the University of Texas-Austin from 7 Jan 2008. It featured some of the same statistics from the Census as mentioned before, but also explained a study on "stay-at-home dads" and the psychological aspects based on the fundamental perceptions of parents' roles in the household. The article states:

"The results of our study offered a very positive representation of changes in gender roles and parenting. More people are doing what makes them happy and determining what's best for their families rather than worrying about society's expectations. An increasing amount of men are shifting their ideas about what it means to be a 'provider' and most of those we surveyed seemed very content in their new role."

It seems from the results of this study that stay-at-home dads aren't necessarily conforming to society's views on traditional male characteristics/values, and they are okay with it. I wasn't sold, so I looked a little further. NPR posted in article in March 2010 on stay-at-home dads. The article also gives the stats from the Census, and guesses that in 2010, "there are about 2 million at-home dads" and "that number has also likely risen during the recession because about 70 percent of the lost jobs affected men." The article also referred to Rochlen's study maintaining that, "Rochlen ... says many dads with working wives try to work part time or consider themselves 'consultants'. But many are, in fact, the primary caregivers to their children."

My first point: A number of new stay-at-home dads are former career men. They are both academically and experientially educated. It brings up the age-old phrase of "if the cool kids are doing it ... then so can we." Perhaps it's not so taboo anymore, or becoming more socially acceptable, simply because of sheer numbers of the people who are unknowingly changing the social norm; middle class families (they are ones setting the precedence of social norms in the first place, right?). We can look at it from the other side as well, if more men are staying home, that means more women are at work. Obviously that norm of gender roles is changing as well. This relates to Butlers idea of gender as a performative act - it has the ability to transform based on who is performing.

Second point: Even though these stay-at-home dads are fulfilled and happy with their new lifestyle, they still "try to work part-time ... But many are, in fact, the primary caregivers to their

children." What is the motivation for working part-time? Is it financial? Is it the fulfillment of still being able to bring something to the table at home? Or is it the idea that these men can still fit in with traditional societal values for males? Is the insecurity of what others might think getting the best of them? Going off of what was said before, traditional gender roles may not be consistently followed (very well may be changing), but that doesn't mean they aren't sitting on the back burner in our heads.

http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125057317
http://www.utexas.edu/features/2008/01/07/fathers/

3.2.1.1.1. AW: Re: AW: AW: genre and gender: The case of Soap Opera
Tim K. (21.01.2011 23:18)

Susanne, thanks for providing the figures! They could be used as a basis for an interesting cross-cultural comparison (if there are similar statistics from other regions). The video would be a great teaser for a discussion of gender roles with advanced students.

Angela, I think you're making an interesting point there. Societies seem to be more inclined to accept a change in gender roles in times of crisis: WWI -> the roaring twenties; WWII -> rubble women in Germany (would that be a correct translation of "Trümmerfrauen"?). If crisis incite change one question comes up: How sustainable is this change – will things change back as soon as the crisis is over? (in the fifties & sixties there was a conservative backlash in Germany…)

What is mostly referred to as "gender equality" (i.e. women increasingly adopting traditionally male roles) can also be seen as a form of imperialism – the culture of traditional masculinity is becoming the dominant lifestyle for both men and women. As the number of stay-at-home daddies is increasing, there seems to be some sort of balancing effect. However, this effect appears to be rather weak. So we probably have to get used to the fact that the idea of the core family, in which children grow up, is becoming less and less important… and institutions like daycare facilities for children and all day schools are getting more and more important.

3.2.2. AW: AW: genre and gender: The case of Soap Opera
Kathrin (08.01.2011 16:17)

I'd find it interesting not only to look at the mutual influence of concepts of male and female, but also to relate Gledhill's text to Morris' and ask in how far our / the pupils' reality is influenced by soap opera stereotypes.

For sure it would be really interesting to have students analyze gender stereotypes in more recent and "traditional" soaps, but I think the aim should be to make them aware of ways their own gender concepts might be influenced by these.

To prevent this topic / discussion from getting too close to students' private sphere, one could first work on the question in how far there is a relation between gender and culture (Bordo) and if

they feel influenced by media in their constructions of reality (Morris).

Looking at the role our gender plays for our cultural identity could help to take on a more abstract perspective. I suppose this might help with the problems addressed below in this thread (i.e. superficial discussions because gender issues are a difficult topic to address when working with adolescents).

Thanks to all for the various great teaching resources and ideas proposed in this thread!

4. Doing Race
Anna S. (31.12.2010 13:04)

I wonder why you are criticizing the statistical analysis. Since they found that black referees also call fouls on white players more frequently than on black players, they must have taken the obvious facts of over- and underrepresentation, that you pointed out, into account. I doubt that such an obvious bias in the data was not factored out in the study.

I also do not agree with your conclusion on the heart treatment study. Since the test is set up in a way that the collected data on diagnosis and treatment decisions differs only in the patient's race, the physician's race can be included as a covariant later on.

I see your concerns about statistics, but such obvious sources of bias can and must be excluded mathematically in prominent and published studies like these two.

4.1. AW: Doing Race
Xi (19.01.2011 16:02)

The problem I have with the text is that it does not give an adequate evaluation of the cultural differences and clashes behind the so-called "doing race" and "doing ethnicity". Moya and Markus criticize the "melting pot" metaphor by saying that the metaphor is problematic only because "it did not consider that many people could not conform- either because that they were actively excluded on the basis of race or because they lacked the economic or cultural capital to do so" (57). This claim, to me, ignores that "doing race" (or ethnicity, when dealt without prejudice) is not only about whether you can or cannot "assimilate", but also about the understanding between different cultures.

One example would be a Chinese movie called "The Treatment" (2001). Based on a real case, it tells about a Chinese family, living in the US, is mistaken by American authorities for child abuse because the grandpa uses Guasha (or skin scraping), a harmless traditional Chinese medical treatment, to cure his grandson's fever (if you have interest, you can read the story under the link http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Treatment_(2001_film)). No matter it is "race" or "ethnicity", when different cultures meet, ignorance of each other always becomes the source of bias and resentment.

4.2. AW: Doing Race
Tim Elmo (05.01.2011 16:26)

While we are talking about "Doing Race", I slightly disagree with the emphasis on the procedural nature of race. While there are obviously human practices involved, and while race may not be exactly a thing, I find it unhelpful to say that it is completely unlike a thing either. Saying that it is only a process, only an action seems about as helpful as talking about "doing furniture". Obviously there are cultural practices and meanings involved, but that does not mean that something as a "chair" does not exist.

4.2.1. AW: AW: Doing Race
Pinar (19.01.2011 11:59)

Hi Tim,

yes, I do agree that racism is NOT solely a procedural thing. Although I think that it is true how we "do race" consciously and unconsciously everyday, I still think that at the very heart of our existence there is a biological principle behind the phenomenon called racism.

I would call this principle or as you nicely put it "the chair" the FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN that originates from the survival instinct that any given animate creature has. In how far, though, people are able to overcome this fear by using their intellect and following their "fearless" instincts like curiosity and the playing instinct is dependent on societal influences starting with their parents and continuing later on at school or work.

Many people have luckily learned to overcome their instinctive fear of the unknown, because they have had the luck to be shown how to use their intellects to differentiate what is a potential danger to their lives and especially WHAT NOT. It is, however, crucial people learn this starting early on in their childhoods. That is why I think that school must be a place where children also learn about racism, how it comes about and how to overcome it.

What do you think?
Pinar

4.2.1.1. AW: AW: AW: Doing Race
Anna H. (26.01.2011 12:49)

The idea of the "fear of the unknown" is interesting and it is true that the parents are the first people in a child's life who influence his or her attitude towards other ethnicities. The school is an institution which can compensate the inclination of judging groups according to negative and perceived innate characteristics. I think the newer schoolbooks are doing a great job in order to make school children aware of and also familiar with different ethnical groups. Most story lines of English schoolbooks have several characters with various cultural backgrounds. These characters help children to regard various ethnicities as different considering their traditions, but not in any way lower than their own ethnicity. The student can even infer from the stories that he or she shares his or her feelings and problems with the characters with different cultural backgrounds.

I can only agree that parts of Moya and Markus' essay can be used in an English lesson and the topic they are dealing with is highly relevant for school. When covering the topic, the Avenue Q song "Everyone is a bit racist sometimes" (I like the song and saw it in London) could be used to provoke (as earlier mentioned) or to state that it is really a bit tricky to talk about races or ethnicity. The section about "doing race differently" was enlightening to me and could be talked about in class. The activity "a step forward" suggested by the group goes along well with the students' development of cultural and intercultural awareness (Bildungsplan). In a role-play the students

are put in a situation in which they get to know how it feels like being of another ethnicity.

4.2.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: AW: Doing Race
Carina (06.02.2011 19:21)

I totally agree with your statements that parents and educators shape children's attitudes towards other ethnicities from an early age. When I read the group's texts, one particular game I used to play in our local sports club immediately came to my mind. Most of you might also remember it: "Wer hat Angst vor'm schwarzen Mann?" I think this game was (maybe still is) often played in sports classes. The game is a nice example to show once again that we (subconsciously) "do race" and "teach racism" without even really thinking about it. Little children were in fact "taught" that they should beware of, in this instance, black people.

In the last few years, however, sports instructors have been asked to alter this question so it would not contain racist connotations any more. In my opinion, small changes like this are a step forward; a step towards less racism ("doing difference differently") and more tolerance.

Talking about blacks and racism, there's an interesting film I've watched recently: *A Time to Kill* by Joel Schumacher. It shows a US trial in which a court has to decide on the case of black Carl Lee Hailey who murdered the rapists of his daughter.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Time_to_Kill_%28film%29

While looking at the material the group provided, I especially turned out to like the UK Channel 4 documentary "Race: Science's Last Taboo". It is in connection with the topic "race and intelligence" that Rageh Omaar examines research material which suggests that black people were less intelligent than other races. Those kinds of claims of course led to a big controversy. UK Channel 4 also provides material on other issues, such as the theory that there was a biological advantage to have parents of different ethnic backgrounds. A quite interesting thought!

Thanks to the group for the great links and the material!

4.2.1.2. AW: AW: AW: Doing Race
Tim Elmo (20.01.2011 11:47)

My earlier post was somewhat polemical. I think that racism is an important topic that should by all means be addressed in schools. My only problem is with the conceptualization of "doing race". I fully agree that categorizing human beings into individual races is somewhat arbitrary and lacks any biological foundation, as well as being politically and socially harmful and contrary to humanism (as in human rights). I only disagree with the idea that this artificial categorization takes solely the form of an action. I do not see why "race" should be less of a concept and more of a process than any other abstract category.

4.3. AW: Doing Race
Pinar (04.01.2011 12:51)

Dear Anna,

I just want to make clear that we did not criticise the statistical analysis of the two studies mentioned in the text 'Doing Race', because we did not read the original work. Our point was to be generally careful with statistical analyses, especially when there is such a big difference in the representation of the compared groups. So, to really assess the validity of the statistics of the two studies (basketball fouls and medical treatment on heart patients), one would need to read the originals and examine what kind of statistical analysis they used on what kind of data.

Of course, what the Moya and Markus' text claims about racism in the U.S. sports world might be entirely true, but it also might not. I have done scientific research myself for 6 years and I know how statistics can create biases and how biases can create statistics, also in published work. The only way I can believe in statistical data of this kind is one where at least two politically neutral scientific parties analyse the same data set independent of each other. The authors of 'Doing Race' were obviously NOT politically neutral and I do not know what political attitude the authors of the two discussed studies had.

At this point I want to also make clear that I totally believe that there are many people in the U.S. and all over the world who are consciously or unconsciously prejudiced against minorities in their country (and also outside of their country). But, I do not like propaganda texts and in some ways I think the Moya and Markus text has propagandistic traits, because it does create a certain "anti-American" feeling in me as a reader.

I still think, however, that the text is good for classroom purposes and offers interesting and true ideas of how racism is deeply rooted in human societies and of how it is kept alive through unconscious everyday behavior.

Cheers,
Pinar

4.4. AW: Doing Race
Julia (02.01.2011 12:16)

I also think that the mentioned data are reliable and the main point is: "the racial preference (in foul-calling) is a result of unconscious or implicit bias and is NOT matter of the referees disliking certain players (73-74). The unconscious bias of especially people with European background is one main point stated again and again in the essay.

In group response 2.2 it is said that "the authors are clearly on the side of the ethnic groups to such a degree that they create a pretty negative picture of the perceived norm - which at the same time constitutes the majority of U.S. citizens - throughout the text." (4) - Well, yes, of course be-

cause this is the core of the essay "doing race". A lot of WASPS still believe in white supremacy (not only) in the USA and racism is alive and kicking. One should take into consideration that Paula M.L.Moya, one of the authors is "a Latina raising two young daughters on her own, (and) she ...was confronted with the reality of her own experience. In 1996, Moya had ...been recruited to Stanford to teach Chicana/o cultural studies and feminist theory. (http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2003/sepoct/farm/news/think.html). So, definitely and admittedly she does her research work against the background of her life story and her own (negative) experiences with inequality but that doesn't mean that her research results are partial or biased.

I agree that the text can be used in parts for the classroom as well as by teachers for self-investigation.

Besides it was absolutely revealing to watch a panel discussion on the book (http://humanexperience.stanford.edu/doingrace) because among other things a stage performance by Avenue Q - Everyone's A Little Bit Racist (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9CSnlb-ymA) can be seen and Stephen Colbert is having a stunning performance on "Neutral Man's Burden" (http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/238783/july-16-2009/the-word---neutral-man-s-burden). Both performances can be used in class because they are highly provocative and thus particularly suited for discussions (e.g. in "Global Studies", Grade 11, 12, 13).

I found a concise summary of the panel discussion as PP on the internet (see link)

moya_markus_scope_17395236.pdf

5. Gender traits
Anna S. (29.12.2010 23:06)

I like the group's idea to discuss the gender traits that the students can think of. I guess the results will depend on the atmosphere in the classroom and the inner workings of the class. I would predict that unless the students feel safe in their situation they will only come up with the stereotypes, but would never admit to crossing "the line."

But it might be very helpful to students to not only talk about the body issues mentioned in the previous thread but to also talk about constructing your own gender. It is extremely hard to cross "the line" of gender appropriate behavior or interests. The constructs and gender traits that seem to be so deeply ingrained in our society, but don't seem to matter to little kids, if they have the free, unbiased choice whether to play with Barbie dolls or climb trees, but as they grow older societal influences grow stronger, bullying those that seem too different starts and falls back on untypical gender traits.

An news worthy story about a first grade girl in the US with her Star Wars water bottle that was bullied for it shows that pressure to conform to these constructed gender roles still exists. (http://www.chicagonow.com/blogs/portrait_of_an_adoption/2010/11/anti-bullying-starts-in-first-grade.html)

It is probably another sensitive subject just like body image that we need to face in school, even if or because it is difficult. Maybe stories like the Star Wars girl help to show the students why these gender categories should be done away with.

5.1. AW: Gender traits
Lisa (04.01.2011 13:38)

You make a very good point here. I also think that when it comes to discussing such delicate issues with students, one of the main challenges for the teacher lies in the task of creating a safe an honest environment for students to voice their actual opinions and not fall back on stereotypical answers.

I recently came across an interesting news story which could potentially form a nice counter-example to the little girl bullied for her *Star Wars* bottle, namely the story of a little boy who at the age of 4 years has a preference for dressing up in skirts and jewelry, basically he loved to dress in a girly way. His mother wrote an anti-bullying book called "My princess boy", which deals with the issue of gender specification and the challenge of accepting and supporting your children for how they want to be - even if this may fall outside of the norm: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGdx8yPybGI

5.1.1. Re: AW: Gender traits
Angela (16.01.2011 00:49)

Coincidentally, I happened to see an interview with the author of this book "My Princess Boy" and her son on the Today Show (NBC) when I went back home to the States for the holidays. The interview is from Jan 3rd, 2011 and tells the story of this family and how the book evolved. "My Princess Boy" book brings up a LOT of questions regarding acceptance and social norms. The author claims in this interview (link attached) "Let's get to a place of acceptance."

In a classroom, are students willing to openly discuss "acceptance" - without succumbing to those stereotypical answers? There are many students from different worlds inside one classroom. The chances that all of them are friends (or even if they are not friends, that each of them accept each other for "who they are") are slim to none. Sure, I think teachers could get students to discuss the idea of acceptance, but how do they get them to practice acceptance outside (and even inside!) the classroom? Are students willing to discuss the idea of accepting what is unacceptable (outside of the social norm...)?

Sorry for going a little off topic - I was just shocked that Lisa brought up this example when I just saw the interview a couple weeks ago. I realize I asked more questions than answered anything, but as far as the classroom goes, I think "My Princess Boy" would be grounds for good discussion and honest answers from students.

http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/#40887103

5.1.1.1. AW: Re: AW: Gender traits
Tiziana (18.01.2011 11:43)

Thanks for bringing up the question of how teachers could get students to practice acceptance outside the classroom. I don't think that should be our first aim, as our influence as teachers is limited. I'd suggest aiming at students questioning their own opinions and ideas in order to get them started on their way of developing more acceptance. I agree with you when it comes to the teachers' role of creating a friendly climate in the classroom and steering such discussions clear of too personal areas, which in my opinion is a very important one.

5.1.1.1.1. AW: AW: Re: AW: Gender traits
Lisa (26.01.2011 11:15)

I also agree that a teacher's influence outside the classroom is limited, but I do believe that it's still important for a teacher to stress that certain conducts of behavior (such as practicing tolerance) should not only count for the school environment but life in general. I'm not exactly sure how this could be done, but maybe by starting a discussion about a delicate topic such as gender traits and then, together with the class, coming up with general rules of conduct such as "Listen respectfully", "Speak from your own perspective", "What is said in the classroom, stays in the classroom" or "Agree to disagree". I know that these are very basic rules, but maybe if they are

emphasized again and again - maybe even posted on a wall in the room so that everyone can see them at all times - students will start to internalize them and not only apply them to classroom discussions but discussions / disputes / disagreements / debates outside the school as well. Just my 2 cents :)

5.1.1.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: Re: AW: Gender traits
Susanne (26.01.2011 12:15)

I totally agree with you, Lisa. I think it would be very useful to learn how to lead a good discussion before talking about controversial or delicate topics. The students should develop rules for the discussion beforehand that can be referred to when needed. I remember that we had a poster like this in our classroom. In this context, useful phrases for debates could be reviewed, too.

5.1.1.1.1.1.1. Re: AW: AW: AW: Re: AW: Gender traits
Angela (27.01.2011 16:38)

I agree with you guys too. I took your idea of a "developing rules for the discussion beforehand" and rolled with it!

I think it is extremely important to reach an agreement between everyone in the classroom regarding opinions/beliefs/morals/ethics promptly; a "respect contract" so to speak. This "contract" or "rules to abide by" could be created on the first day of class by the students (with the teacher just being the facilitator). These "rules" would pertain to any kind of discussion/debate that would be used throughout the rest of the year in the classroom. Perhaps if this kind of "contract" was made by the students and for the students (again, the teacher just encouraging students for input), it would convey not only the importance of trust between peers, but also would give students the power to control their future year in the classroom. Hopefully a "contract" of this form would set a precedence of respect for the rest of the year and would immediately acknowledge the importance of respect to others' opinions, thus providing teachers with a little more critical/in depth analysis rather than the superficial answers to delicate (excellent word Lisa!) subjects such as race, gender, and body image.

I'm not a teacher - so I'm not sure if something like this is attainable... but I think this could be a good way to get a little more from students in all discussions.

5.1.1.1.1.1.2. AW: AW: AW: AW: Re: AW: Gender traits
Victoria (26.01.2011 18:13)

There has been some very good research done on advertising and female bodies over at the media education foundation site (great resource, but pricey to get the videos, you can watch them online though in very small format). One of the researchers used a whole bunch of pictures which show women's bodies are typically shown in certain ways (hands above head, lying down, etc.) whereas men's bodies were shown in very different ways- it was fascinating to imagine a guy in some of these poses, so ridiculous that you realise how encoded these ads are. Maybe something like

that would be an interesting point of departure- glue or photoshop a few heads and see the reactions, and then ask why it is so strange and why feminine behaviour is often so demure, sexually coquette (sp?) etc. Another good documentary is brown eyes blue eyes, about a primary school teacher who did a project about race in her class in the 70's. It deals with race rather than gender, but the idea of culturally imposed barriers is really powerful.

http://www.mediaed.org/ (killing us softly series)
http://www.janeelliott.com/ (brown/blue)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/etc/view.html

6. Subversive Bodily Acts
Tim Elmo (26.12.2010 18:20)

While Butler certainly has a point in claiming that gender identity is a performative process, I would see problems in viewing "the body as a 'blank page' for cultural inscriptions." Genderized behaviour was not invented by humans, all kinds of animals exhibit specific social patterns based on gender distinctions, which means that gender at least partly exists prior to any form of cultural inscriptions (unless one credits every animal with culture, which would however problematize the distinction between nature and culture in itself) and thus the term "blank page" is revealed as problematic.

6.1. AW: Subversive Bodily Acts
Tim K. (04.01.2011 20:22)

I agree to your criticism, Elmo. In a recent study, scholars found that chimpanzees have play patterns similar to those of human children (girls & dolls - boys & weapons). So it seems to be questionable to refer to the body as a "blank page" for cultural inscriptions…

see:
http://www.wissenschaft-aktuell.de/artikel/Schimpansenkinder_spielen_wie_Menschenkinder1771015587298.html

6.1.1. Monkey business
Victoria (25.01.2011 14:57)

Actually, this assumption is not in line with contemporary Gender studies, where a differentiation is made between sex (biological differences-sex organs etc) and Gender- the "becoming a woman" which Butler discusses. Additionally, the chimp "evidence" is itself a potentially skewed issue. Please have a look at http://www.historiann.com/?s=chimps and read the links she adds.

6.1.1.1. AW: Monkey business
Tim Elmo (25.01.2011 17:44)

It makes sense to have a distinction between the terms sex and gender, but I think it is misleading to say that Butler deals with the latter, since at least some of her texts conflate the two: "there is no reason to divide up human bodies into male and female sexes except that such a division suits the economic needs of heterosexuality and lends a naturalistic gloss to the institution of heterosexuality" (as quoted in John Storey's *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*). This passage shows that Butler is talking not about gender merely as a social/cultural construction but about sex as an artificial construct in every respect. Another problem with this quote is that the formulation of a division A suiting the needs of the institution of B is problematic if A is a necessary condition for the existence of B: Without male/female, there is no heterosexuality which could have economic needs, or an institution of which could be lent any gloss. Both verbal constructions use A as something which acts upon a preexisting B, the interdependences between

the two terms make this usage problematic.

Concerning the monkeys: The link you posted offers interesting further reading. Another study is mention which identifies female primates as leading their pack's scoreboards for tool making and killing. While it is true that this study reveals the unfair and biased reception of studies in general and weakens positions which want to argue for a "natural" distribution of gender roles, the study still finds a correlation between sex and gender: more female primates make tools and kill than their male counterparts. While the image created of the "monkey-gender" is opposed to that created by the other study posted by Tim, they are parallel in that they both identify a difference in behavior (gender) with a difference in biological sex.

6.2. Drags in: Subversive Bodily Acts
Julia (03.01.2011 11:03)

I think Butler's text is far too difficult to read it with students but what can be used in class is the topic of cultural practices like drag, cross-dressing or the topic of butch/femme lesbian couples. It could be a good means of identifying prejudices in society or discussing the feminist stance on parodist identities as being "degrading on women" (drag, cross-dressing) or "stereotyping from within the practice of heterosexuality" (butch/femme lesbian identities) (379)

Also interesting are the mentioned differences of the terms parody and pastiche (380). Pastiche seems to be very effective in revealing homophobia as well as in society.

7. Reading the slender body
Sonja (24.12.2010 13:19)

Thank you for your well-written summaries and comments, I really enjoyed reading your work.

As to the possibilities of using Bordo in class, I think you are absolutely right when you're saying:
"Looking at today's image of the ideal body and contrasting it to reality can offer a new perspective that shows that the ideal body is no reality and should not be one either."

I think a good starting point in class could be to show them one of those "Photoshop Makeover" clips, because besides make-up Photoshop is the place where this unnatural beauty is created - meaning those manipulated pictures, boys and girls automatically compare their bodies with - every day.

These are quite interesting:

link. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP31r70_QNM&feature=fvw
link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ovpd5O6M8tQ

And of course you could also show them "stars without make-up" pictures.
(e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTNjZQZMxAA)

Nonetheless, you should go beyond showing them video clips that make them feel better for just a short time. (But like I said, it might be a good way to introduce the topic in class.) Showing them how "real" bodies look like (e.g. in the Dove commercial) could help, too. But don't forget the boys! Unfortunately we tend to focus on women only, but unnatural muscles are created via Photoshop, too.

In the end, though, your pupils should be aware of the fact, that these manipulated pictures INTEND to lower their self-esteem to make them spend money on products or gym memberships etc.

7.1. AW: Reading the slender body
Julia (04.01.2011 10:59)

Thanks for your summaries and comments. I also think that the photoshop clips and the Dove ad really can contribute to this topic in class.

I think it should be pointed out that the quotation "A woman can never be too rich or to thin" was the most famous one of Bessie Wallis aka Spencer aka Simpson aka Duchess of Windsor. By means of the biography of this woman the superficial lives and aims of socialites in the cause of history (for today see: Paris Hilton :-)) can be studied and analysed in class coming to the conclusion that:

"In fact, the size and shape of our bodies are as genetically determined as skin and eye color." (http://feminism.eserver.org/real-and-ideal-body-image.txt)

7.1.1. AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Tim Elmo (05.01.2011 15:34)

While I agree that it is important especially for teenagers to question the beauty ideals for both females and males transmitted in the media (because they are highly artificial and would be unhealthy for most people), I strongly disagree with the quote you used. Saying that "the size and shape of our bodies are as genetically determined as skin and eye color" is a blatant lie. Human eye color is subject to change, but only over time or as a result of certain diseases. Shape and size of the human body however can be manipulated by diet and exercise, most people in Middle European countries will be able to attest to this from personal experience. The propagandistic falsity is complemented by the prefix "In fact", which is not only an unfounded claim but quite demonstrably untrue.

7.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Julia (06.01.2011 10:26)

I would normally agree with your statement that a human body can be shaped to a certain degree but only with an individual workout plan and a strict diet.

You cannot change any physical feature e.g. the colour or structure of your hair or the size of your feet, hands etc. without manipulation.

With a little exercise and diet (according to your statement) Angela Merkel could swap clothes with Paris Hilton, or Danny DeVito with Schwarzenegger.

Instead of having this discussion we should focus on our students and the problems they are confronted with due to the beauty standards of our society. We should teach them to accept and respect themselves and their bodies. (not like Michael Jackson did)...

7.1.1.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Susanne (06.01.2011 11:15)

I agree that students should learn about accepting and respecting their body the way it is. The point I was trying to make is that they should also understand that other people might choose to look different but that this should not automatically be understood as a good excuse for their exclusion. If someone wants to die their hair, gain or lose weight, wear clothing from the Gothic scene, it does not make them less intelligent or less worthy of respectful social interaction. I think those are two different angles to look at this topic which can make it even more interesting to talk about.

7.1.1.1.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Carina (15.01.2011 16:58)

I totally agree with the fact that talking openly about perfect body shapes and physical ideals in class might be hard and embarrassing, especially because many students do not match the ideal body presented in the media. Nevertheless, I think we should not avoid the topic. Leaving it out or just talking about it superficially is, in my opinion, not a solution. We should not choose the easy way out but try to change something in the students' minds.

In order to deal with the topic in a more moderate way, we can maybe use methods that do not involve too many open classroom discussions where every student who says something will immediately be screened closely by the others. This can be a quite intimidating situation and I am pretty sure that the rather corpulent students will not say a word in the discussion. Therefore, it might help to have students write a little essay on the topic, i.e. a letter to the teacher, telling how they feel about their own body and how the ideal bodies presented in the world of media make them feel. Afterwards I would give them the task to take the point of view of another person (another student in class, someone they know, a famous celebrity ...) and write about how those people must feel about their bodies.

I think that going through the conflict and having to deal with the topic is definitely worth it because it might help students (at least some) to understand that, firstly, even the world of celebrities is not as perfect and ideal as it looks like, and secondly, students might also become aware of their classmates' problems. I think this could especially help in terms of mobbing. As there are often one or two overweighed pupils in class, this little exercise could well contribute to a good climate in the classroom.

7.1.1.1.1.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Susanne (20.01.2011 10:34)

I agree that this topic should not be avoided altogether, but opening up to your teacher like you proposed does not seem like something the average student would feel comfortable with. It would require a very good teacher-student relationship that is hard to maintain in today's classroom where there are often about 30 students in one class. This type of exercise would only be possible

in very special classes, I suppose. However, you are right that students need to deal with the topic of body image on a less superficial level than pointing their fingers at celebrities that starve themselves or shave their heads. Maybe they could write the essay for themselves (which is pretty optimistic of me, I know). As you can see, I cannot find a solution for this issue either.

7.1.1.1.1.1.1.1. AW: AW: AW: AW: AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Johannes (20.01.2011 11:26)

It "does not seem like something the average student would feel comfortable with" Susanne Herzog

I totally agree with Susanne concerning the comfort of the pupils. I suppose most teenage girls (and boys) do not want to talk about their clothing size or if they feel comfortable with their weight or not. This topic might be discussed with their closest friends but not in front of other people some pupils might avoid outside of school. One should keep in mind that the boys-girls relation is not always easy when they reach puberty.

It is, of course, a very interesting topic and a teacher might use it to discuss false reality in today's media coverage but I would rather not go into depth of the pupils' feelings. Kids can be brutal and will pick on each other if one says something wrong and this might result in serious bullying problems.

I like the idea of having them write essays in or outside of class about the topic once they are provided with the necessary basic facts. They should have a selection of ideas and comments on the topic and then provide the teacher with their own opinion.

7.1.1.2. AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Susanne (06.01.2011 10:00)

I agree that shape and size of the human body aren't genetically determined - at least not completely. And I don't think that the message in the classroom should be: "One can't help what he or she looks like" but rather that it is okay to look different and to feel comfortable in your own skin even and especially if you don't conform to mainstream beauty ideals. Because everyone expresses some kind of lifestyle or at least their taste with their outer appearance, one could talk about "freedom of looks" referring to freedom of speech. It should be everyone's individual decision what they want to look like. Thus the importance of acceptance and tolerance should be discussed - also in the context of other topics, for example race.

The link leads to an interesting online project by Caitlin Crosby where people can upload pictures of themselves and a message about their flaws. I think it's definitely something worth looking at with students.

http://loveyourflawz.com/

7.2. AW: Reading the slender body
Christina (30.12.2010 21:01)

Great ideas, Sonja! :-) When I first saw the Dove add I wanted to use it in the class room "somehow" - but now there is an actual purpose! Yeahy! Good thinking.

7.2.1. AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Johannes (20.01.2011 11:31)

Another idea might be the German "Brigitte" (is it the right one?) I think it was this magazine! They avoid using young models but instead use real pictures of real women of all age. Women are encouraged to help this idea and send in their real pictures. This goes into the same direction as the Dove Ad!

I have attached two links to the "new" idea:

http://www.brigitte.de/mode/ohne-models/ohne-models-1037114/
http://www.brigitte.de/mode/ohne-models/ohne-models-faqs-1038523/

7.2.1.1. AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Tiziana (20.01.2011 13:06)

Actually "Brigitte" has been critized by e.g. the TAZ because their "use of normal models" turned out to be non-professional models but nevertheless very slim women, fitting a certain ideal... http://www.taz.de/1/leben/medien/artikel/1/husch-husch-an-den-herd/

But there is actually a fashion magazine that attempts to use normal women a lot, the British "Easy Living" http://www.easyliving.co.uk/blog/fashion

7.3. AW: Reading the slender body
Susanne (25.12.2010 13:13)

I think the idea with the Photoshop makeovers is great! However, I don't know if the Dove commercial isn't just another example of the thesis presented in the text. True, there are women in different sizes and shapes, but they still all have very smooth skin (okay, it's a commercial for body lotion, that's bound to happen) and their bodies still appear firm. One could still use these commercials as an example of a positive development towards a healthier view on the body image.

Great point with not neglecting the boys. It would be interesting to compare different images of men - the more feminine, androgynous man, the "metrosexual" man, the "real" man with muscles and broad shoulders...

7.3.1. AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Victoria (25.01.2011 13:50)

Hi All, I think this is a great discussion. Indeed, the Dove philosophy is not entirely problem free:

http://dir.salon.com/story/mwt/feature/2005/07/22/dove/index1.html
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-kSZsvBY-A&feature=related
http://our-turn-feminism.blogspot.com/2010/01/media-awareness-dove.html

Could be useful in dealing with this in class.

7.3.2. AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Lisa (04.01.2011 13:11)

While I completely agree with you on the importance of talking about body images and possibly resulting self-esteem issues with students in school, I'm still left wondering about the actual practicability of such a topic in the class room. Simply because it's such a delicate and sensitive issue to discuss, especially - but not only - for young girls.

Personally I think one of the biggest challenges concerning this topic is the difficulty of creating a safe environment for students to honestly talk about their opinions, maybe even fears and worries. It probably would be easy to get a rather superficial discussion going, since (hopefully) many students are aware of the fact that most images used in advertisements are retouched or airbrushed (or aren't they?), but I find it hard to tackle the topic in a way that would actually result in a honest discussion where students would feel free to open themselves up to their classmates. Before-and-after pictures of airbrushed advertisements are a great starting point in my opinion, but how can you continue?

7.3.2.1. AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Tim K. (06.01.2011 16:08)

first of all... thanks a lot to the group for the great summaries & suggestions, well done :-)!

One possible way of trying to create an honest / "deeper" discussion could lie in the choice of the specific topic of the discussion. Perhaps the students are more honest if there is no direct personal connection (e.g. if the discussion is about beauty ideals from other times / cultures). Hopefully, the insights from such a discussion would "sink in" and create something like a general awareness.

Examples to talk about could be:

- baroque beauty ideals (->Rubens)
- the fact that tanned skin only became a beauty ideal in the early 20th century (Coco Chanel…

see for example http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_tanning#Cultural_history)
- the current ideal of "white skin" that is prominent in Asia

I think a very important point here would be to make clear that cultural values "standardise" what is considered to be a beauty ideal… (and what is considered not to be one)

7.3.2.2. AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Anna H. (04.01.2011 20:38)

I read your posts and I really like the ideas you came up with to use in a discussion about eating disorders and the ideal of a slender and perfect body. Of course, these topics must be addressed in class and as Lisa mentioned, it is quite difficult to deal with this delicate topic in a class of adolescents.

I experienced this situation when I talked about eating habits and different food pyramids in a bilingual biology lesson. The students were willing to talk about various constituents of food and we discussed the healthy quantity per day of the corresponding constituent, but a "deeper" discussion was not really possible. Here, one could show the clips and pictures you suggested in order to present some ideas to talk about.

The message of such a lesson (try to eat roughly all items on the pyramid each day and do sports + one's body shape is genetically determined and we can only influence it within a certain range) can be intensified by a common breakfast according to the pyramid and maybe a discussion (in smaller groups and a more natural environment) about the ideal of beauty in our times and how the students deal with airbrushed photos, if they knew that most pictures have been touched before they are printed and if a touched picture should be tagged according to them.

This approach via a healthy breakfast could be applied in a regular English lesson and it is also geared towards boys, but it is true that the embedding of the topic in a natural environment in a class seems to be problematic.

7.3.2.2.1. AW: AW: AW: AW: Reading the slender body
Johannes (20.01.2011 11:47)

Talking about eating disorders, I want to add one thing I kind of ran into my teaching career. I once helped a girl in England to prepare for an oral presentation about anorexia. While researching I figured out, that there is a whole online community supporting anorexia as an image of power. The idea is to control your body with the pure strength of one's mind. There are forums online where young (sorry, but mostly girls) exchange ideas how to hide their anorexia and how to live while suffering from starvation. I have also attached their "Bible", the "Letter to Ana". It really shocked me when I first read this the first time. I just had to read it over and over again. The basic idea is, that "Ana" gains control over your buddy and your mind! Girls are encouraged to hide the problem and to get stronger and stronger while not eating!

Of course, this can be used in classroom situations. You can either talk about eating disorders or about social problems of kids with their parents and/or their society.

http://www2.citypaper.com/news/story.asp?id=3414