

## **LANGUAGE AND CULTURE – GENDER AND JOBS.**

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### **Target audience**

- Pre-service teachers
  - Primary teachers
  - Secondary teachers\_
- In-service teachers
  - Primary teachers
  - Secondary teachers

### **Itinerary**

- Investigating and reflecting on the different social expectations of men and women in different cultures and on how this affects professional options.

### **Abstract:**

The personal and social awareness of oneself (and others!) as a product of cultural expectations regarding the individual, which are reflected in the scopes and options available to him/her in terms of gender and related career/professional choices, is the main focus of the activity. The set contains 6 worksheets. The activity can be done with all six as thematic project or finished anywhere after the first two, preferably with a whole-class discussion or by sharing written products to round it off. Worksheets 3-5 can also be lifted out and used on their own as a ‘media watch project’ on any given topic.

### **Rationale**

Pluricultural competence is being enhanced through this activity and, depending on the participants’ individual language repertoires, plurilingual skills can be employed in the selection of materials to be used in the activity. The classroom becomes an environment of multicultural focus and contents. Awareness of and reflection about diversity are core elements of the activity. The participants will

experience – and challenge? - their own ethnicity (and prejudices...) in the comparison of practices across different cultures.

### **Personal and social dimensions**

Developing awareness of cultural expectations and encouraging flexibility about their influence on individual career choices, as well as realizing and questioning what is taken for granted or seen as normal in various social contexts.

### **Professional dimensions**

The professional dimensions are developed in that different learning/work formats are practiced in this activity with an explicit aim to strive for a communicative learning environment with all four language skills being involved in the activity. These formats can then serve as models for classroom activities with pupils in school. All teacher trainees – pre-service or in-service – will be able to apply some aspect of the interactive models used in this activity to their own teaching, regardless of where in the school system they are/will be teaching, as long as the pupils have developed a basic level of literacy. (Adaptations of some of the models can even be used with pupils who are still learning how to read and write.) This activity model offers generative flexibility in the sense that it can be modified to include a great variety of cultures to be investigated and in that it can be applied to contexts other than “jobs”, such as sports, art, education, family responsibilities.

## **Worksheet 1**

Timing : 45’ – 60’

Material required: Writing paper and pen(cil)s, a flip chart or white-/blackboard(s) and markers.

### **Exploring preconceived ideas.**



Begin with 15 minutes of individual exploratory writing about

what is a typically male and typically female job/profession in

- a) my own culture,
- b) another European culture that I (think I) am familiar with, and
- c) a non-European culture that either I am interested in or has a sizeable immigrant community in my country.



In 4-6 groups of 4-6 persons, listen to each other's written accounts in the following

way:

- First everyone in the group reads about a) and the group compare/discuss what jobs were selected.
- Then everybody reads about b) and the comparison here also involves the cultures selected.
- Finally read about and compare c), in the same way as with b).

[This should take 20-30 minutes.]



Next, as a group, decide on

- a) one 'predominantly female' and one 'predominantly male' job from their own/the majority culture,
  - b) one male and one female job in the other European culture that most of the group members/more than one group member had written about (if all have chosen different cultures, a discussion or a draw will decide which culture the group will use), and
  - c) one male and one female job in one of the non-European cultures (same selection procedure as for other European) that the group members have brought up in their writings.
- [This should take max. 10 minutes.]



Finally, write this selection as six points on a flip chart page or other large piece of

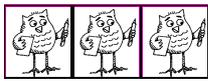
paper (or possibly on sections of a writing board). The papers are then stuck/pinned to the walls around the classroom. [This will take around 5 minutes.]

## Worksheet 2

Timing: 40' – 60' (depending on the number of groups)

No material required.

### Discussing stereotypes.



Form 4-6 'jig-saw' groups (=new groups with one person, or possibly two, from

each of the original groups) and stand in front of the six-point lists, one group in front fo each paper.



The person representing the group that wrote the list where the group is standing

- a) comments on the group activity that led to the selection and
  - a) answers questions from the others in this group.
  - b) After 10 minutes, the activity is interrupted and the groups rotate to the next poster.
  - c) The person representing the group responsible for this list comments and answers questions.
  - d) The same process is repeated until every group has spent time in front of each poster.

### Worksheet 3

Timing: Flexible (see description), but at least 60'

Materials required: Newspapers and/or a computer with Internet connection, a sheet of bristol board or construction paper, or simply or a large piece of sturdy paper.

#### Media watch.



First, carry out an individual media survey.

- a) Read newspapers provided by the instructor or
- b) look in the daily press for the next week or couple of days.
- c) Check articles, news stories, columns, letters to the editor, want ads and commercial advertising to see if the gender stereotypes identified in the group discussions can be found.
- d) If possible, investigate newspapers from the other cultures represented too. (The Internet is useful resource to access news media from other countries.)
- e) Relevant newspaper items are cut out / printed up (Internet sources).



Bring the clippings to the original groups (=activity 1-groups), and put together a

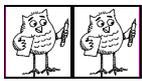
collage poster, one for each group. Attach the poster beside the group's six-point 'jobs/cultures' list.

## Worksheet 4

Timing: 30' -40'

Materials required: Writing paper and pen(cil)s.

### Responding and challenging.



Form pairs including one person from two different original groups.

Study a collage that is created by a group neither one has been part of.

[This should take max. 5 minutes.]

Discuss these newspaper clippings and choose one clipping per person to respond to in writing (=the next step), preferably one text (news story or article/column) and one piece of advertising (commercial or job ad). [This should take 5 - 10 minutes.]



Write an individual response that challenges the stereotypical job/gender role that is reflected in

the selected newspaper clipping. [Write for 20 - 30 minutes.]

## Worksheet 5

Timing: 50-60 minutes (or more, if a panel debate is included)

Materials required: A box (or the like), writing paper and pen(cil)s.

### Draw and debate!



Fold the written responses and put them in a box.

[This will take max. 5 minutes.]



Draw one paper from the box and try to find the collage clipping that it responds to and read it.

[This should take approximately 15 minutes.]



Next, get back into pairs (as in worksheet 4) and

- choose one of the two responses drawn,
- jointly create a written dialogue where one person defends the traditional view and the other one challenges it.

Who wins the argument is anybody's guess!

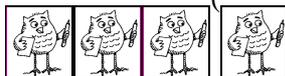
[This will take 20 – 30 minutes.]



The dialogues are then collected by the instructor and a few selected dialogues

are performed front of the whole group.

[This part takes at least 15 minutes.]



( ) An optional panel (or class) debate may then follow,

## Worksheet 6

Timing: From at least 60' up to a few days (Hard to say... see description!)

Materials required: Interviewee(s), writing paper and pen(cil)s, photo copier and stapler.

### **Interviewing and reporting.**

#### Option A:



Using questions from the dialogues, go out into the community and interview a member from

one of the ethnic groups represented in the poster selections about how s/he regards gender stereotyping and professional career opportunities in her/his culture/country of origin.



Write a summary of the interview, with personal reflections and comments, which is given to

the instructor.



The instructor copies the interview reports and puts them together as booklets

which are given to and read by all the participants (which can in turn generate written responses....).

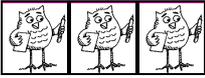
[This work can be completed over a couple of days.]

*In some locations it may be difficult for the participants to find suitable interviewees themselves. Then, instead of sending the participants out to interview individuals in the community, the model below can be used.*

#### Option B:

The instructor brings in guests from some of the cultures that have been investigated in the project.

The participants can then take turns asking them questions as follows:

- a)  in groups - one guest per group – and then share the information in ‘jigsaw groups’ (=see worksheet 2), or

- b)  in class with the guests as a "panel of experts". The participants then write down their own reflections and comment on how their own gender/job and culture assumptions have been affected.

[Option B will take around 60 minutes.]

*If no representatives of other cultures can be interviewed,  
the following model can be used instead.*

#### Option C:

Persons with non-stereotypical jobs in the majority culture can be used as substitutes, e.g. male nurses/preschool teachers or female construction workers/fire fighters. They can be

- a)  interviewed individually by the participants outside the classroom or

- b)  invited to the classroom by the instructor for group interviews or a panel

discussion (as in option B). The writing task that follows will then focus on how each persons’ views on jobs and gender have been influenced.

[Option C should take around 60 minutes]

*Of course, these guests can be invited to the classroom for a panel discussion **in addition to** the participants going out into the community to interview persons from other cultures. The individual writing will then include both cultural and gender stereotypes that may have been challenged by these experiences. **That will be the best of both worlds!***

### **Assessment**

Ongoing observation, collection of written products, listening to pair dialogues and group discussions.