

Rethinking Popular Culture and Media

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What happens when youthful lives are saturated by corporate interests that promote consumption, competition, hierarchy, sexism, homophobia, racism, and contempt for equality? What can educators do to balance these influences? How can they teach students to think critically about these issues? *Rethinking Popular Culture and Media* is a collection of articles written largely by and for teachers and offers insightful analysis of today's popular culture and how it influences children.

Popular culture is difficult to define primarily because culture is constantly changing. This book examines and presents a variety of expressions of popular culture, helping readers see the relationship between forms of popular culture, media and education. Many contributing authors share ideas, lesson plans, and outcomes to help educators faced with a fast-changing world.

The book is divided into six parts, with articles about the relationship between corporations and schooling and how popular culture and media frame the parameters of historical events and actors. Other topics examine race, class, gender, sexuality, and social histories in popular culture and media.

In the article "Girls, Worms, and Body Image," Kate Lyman from Madison, Wisconsin, an elementary school teacher with thirty-four years experience, deals with gender stereotypes among her second and third graders. To counter some of the girls' contention that they were "too fat" and needed to diet, she put together a unit on stereotyping and used magazine advertising for examples. Each child chose a print ad and wrote about it, sometimes coming up with a startling conclusion. One girl interpreted the message in a shampoo ad as, "You should be cute and skinny." If you use this certain shampoo... "and wear lots of makeup and cute clothes, you can look like a Barbie Doll." Children were quick to point out discrepancies in what ads projected and what people really looked like.

A plethora of helpful references is available throughout the book. A Resource Guide at the end of *Rethinking Popular Culture and Media* is compiled by the books' contributors, who offer suggestions to expand readers' insight into topics. Another resource is a list of useful organizations and web sites.

A well-edited book, the seriousness and scope of the subject matter is handled well by authors and educators who are experts in their fields.

PENNY HASTINGS (March 29, 2011)

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