

The Lesson Part 1

Media Violence: Counting and Discussing

Overview

This lesson helps children become **(1) aware of the types** of violence that appear on television, the **(2) frequency** with which these acts occur, and **(3) how they respond to these acts**.

Brainstorm with your students:

What is violence? (Make sure that students consider both physical and emotional acts of violence in their definitions: i.e., violence is when a person hurts someone or makes them feel sad or scared.)

How many **types of violent acts** can you think of? (Emotional acts include yelling, put-downs, name-calling, or dumping [transferring unrelated anger to another person]. Physical acts include threatening/bullying, pushing/shoving, hitting/punching/kicking, shooting/stabbing, vandalism and dangerous behavior)

Explain to your students that the problem with violence on TV is that it can **confuse kids about the real world**. If kids see lots of violence on TV they might believe that their own world is a scary and dangerous place. If kids see people on TV solving their problems with violence, they might think that violence is a normal part of life, or that **violence is a good way to solve problems**. And if kids see a lot of violence on TV it makes them **less sympathetic** to victims of violence in the real world.

The problem is that when we watch TV, we **may not even notice how much violence we are watching**, especially in cartoons, which move so quickly that we don't have time to really think about what we have just seen.

TV Violence Observation Form

Name:

Date:

Program:

Length:

Make talley marks to graph!

Hitting & Punching

Pushing & Shoving

Shooting/Zapping

Knifing

Destroying/Explosions

Put-Downs/Name Calling

Threats/Yelling

Journal Questions

- a) Were there lots of violent acts in your show?
- b) Were you surprised with the number of violent acts? Why/Why not?
- c) Did the show/violence seem real to you? Why or why not?
- d) Which violent actions are used the most/least? What could the characters have done differently instead of using violent acts?
- e) What is happening in the show when the violent acts occur? Music? Sound effects? Bright colours? Why might this happen?
- f) Who commits more violent acts? Men or women? Young or old? White or minority?
- g) How did the violence make you feel after you watched this show?

Discussion about Consequences

Think about the consequences of what you see. Ask yourself: How do the people involved in the conflict feel? What are the responsibilities of the people who have acted violently? What injuries have occurred? What are the results of the violence on others?

Activity

Distribute Consequences worksheets to students. View the taped excerpts. After each excerpt, ask your students to consider the questions on their *Consequences* sheets. Review the students' findings and have the class decide how realistically the program has dealt with consequences.

Consequences

When you see violence on TV, movies, or video games think about the consequences that would result from this violence in real life. Ask yourself some of the questions below:

Feelings

Who will be sad?
Who will be angry?
Who will be embarrassed?
Who will be scared?
Who will be left out?

Responsibilities

Who will pay for the damages?
Who will fix everything that was broken? How much will it cost?
Who will clean up the mess?
Who will pay the hospital bills or the fees for the funeral?

Injuries

Who will have to go to the hospital?
How long will they stay in the hospital?
Will they fully recover from their injuries?
Will their lives go back to normal?

Results

What will happen to the victim's families?
Who will be left alone?
How does this affect other people?
If someone dies, who will attend the funeral?

Happily Ever After? Consequences?

Glory Road (chapter 8)

1. How did the people react to the black basketball players as they walked into the diner? Why?
2. When the 2 white guys first walked into the washroom, did you expect anything to go down? Explain.
3. Why did the director choose to have “happy” music playing in the diner, while Shed was being beaten up in the washroom?
4. How did the little girl react to the black players? Why show her?
5. Why did the coach want them to just “get on the bus?”
6. How did the scenario affect the rest of the black players?
7. Do you think kids understand the importance of including these types of violent scenes in movies?
8. What was the purpose of the violence?

Fried Worms

1. Which people are sad and why?
2. Where does the main bully get his power from?
3. Can you relate yourself, or anyone you know, to one of the characters?
4. Is the principal a bully too?
5. Why doesn't the boy like his new school?
6. Explain the statement “you're making it worse”
7. What was the purpose of the verbal-violence?

Ace Ventura

1. What would really happen to the guy he pushed face first into the fire?
2. Describe the fight scene.
3. If a spear was thrown into your leg, how would you react?
4. How come there wasn't any blood when they removed the spears?
5. Describe what would really happen if someone miraculously survived falling off a waterfall. Injuries? Hospital? Etc..
6. If he died, who would be sad?
7. What was the purpose of the violence?

Pacifier

1. What happens to all the guys Vin Diesel kills?
2. Do you think the bad guys had families?
3. How have they glorified the hero?
4. Would a real fight with a ninja last that long? Explain.
5. What would you really do if someone broke into your house?
6. Why did he use the weapons that he did?
7. What was the purpose of the violence?

Die Hard (chapter 15)

1. How likely was it that neither of them were hit by any cars when they got out?
2. What would have happened to the people in the car that was flipping all over, or the people in the other cars getting smashed?
3. Why didn't we see any of those people?
4. Who will pay for the damages? Who will clean it up?
5. Do you think anybody, no matter how much they practiced, could "kill a helicopter with a car?"
6. Is it likely the helicopter guy would be able to walk away after falling from so high up?
7. What was the purpose of the violence?

Guided discussion

a) Do you ever play video games where people fight?

b) What happens in these games? Do you get to use weapons? Have special powers?

c) How do you win? Does someone die?

d) **Imagine that you are playing a video game.** (Students might volunteer to perform this scenario as a skit.) In your game, you have chosen two characters to fight against each other. You play until one of your characters dies and the other character wins. Then, because you really like these two characters, you select them again, and play another game.

e) **How is a video game fight different from real fighting?** (You can hurt or even kill a character, but, with the press of a button, the person comes back to life and isn't even injured.)

f) In **real life**, when something happens, there are **consequences**. But when people are attacked in **video games**, they are always able to **come back and play again** because there are **no consequences** - no one has to go to the hospital; no one is upset; no one has to pay for everything that has been destroyed; and no one is put into jail.

Video Game Consequences?

What do you think would *really* happen in the following situations?

In a video game...

When you hit someone so they bleed, you get points and win the game.

In real life.....

In a video game...

When you have a car chase, cars crash and sometimes explode. But no one ever goes back to remove the crashed cars or take care of injured people.

In real life.....

In a video game...

When your player dies you just pick another player and start all over.

In real life....

In a video game...

The hero can destroy property and kill people, but never has to go to jail or pay for what was destroyed.

In real life....

Effects Of Video Game Playing On Children

Facts

- The U.S. video game market reached nearly **\$10.5 billion** in sales (2005)
- 45% of heavy video game players are age **6 to 17**.
- 69% of unaccompanied 13-16 year-olds were **able to purchase "M" rated video games** from retailers.

Positives

- Video game playing introduces children to **technology**.
- Games can give practice in **following directions**.
- Some games provide practice in **problem solving** and **logic**.
- Provide practice in use of **fine motor and spatial skills**.
- Provide occasions for parent and child to play **together**.
- Games are **entertaining and fun**.

Negatives

- Over-dependence on video games could foster social **isolation**, as they are often played alone.
- Women are often portrayed as **weaker** characters that are helpless.
- Game environments are often based on plots of **violence, aggression and gender bias**.
- Playing violent video games may be related to **aggressive behavior**
- **Games can confuse reality and fantasy**.
- In many violent games, players must become **more violent to win**.

Video Game Ratings

Titles rated **EC (Early Childhood)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 3 and older. Titles in this category contain no material that parents would find inappropriate.

Titles rated **E (Everyone)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 6 and older. Titles in this category may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.

Titles rated **E10+ (Everyone 10 and older)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language, and/or minimal suggestive themes.

Titles rated **T (Teen)** have content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language.

Titles rated **M (Mature)** have content that may be suitable for persons 17 years and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content, and/or strong language.

Titles rated **AO (Adults Only)** have content that should only be played by persons 18 years and older. Titles in this category may include prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.

Title listed as **RP (Rating Pending)** has been submitted to the ESRB and is awaiting final rating. (This symbol appears only in advertising prior to a game's release.)

Video Game Survey

1. List your 3 favourite video games.

**2. Which of these games do you consider the most violent?
Why?**

**3. Which of these games do you consider the least violent?
Why?**

4. Do you tend to play video games alone, or with friends?

5. How long do you usually play a game before you want to quit? Is it difficult for you to leave the game?

After Playing The Game:

Title of your game: _____

Was the violence rewarded or punished in your game? Explain.

Were there any consequences in your game? Explain.

Describe the violence in your game.

- Types of violence, most frequent, real?

What age group do you think this game is targeted at? Why?

VIDEO GAME OBSERVATION SHEET

Hitting/Kicking/Pushing

Shooting/Zapping

Knifing

Destroying/Explosions

Death

JOURNAL ENTRY x 2

(1) Are violent video games just harmless fun or do you think they can make someone more violent/desensitize them in real life?

(2) Why is it important that children learn the difference between the “glory” of video game violence and the “consequences” of real life violence? (try to use examples from the “Happily Ever After” page).