

UNDERSTANDING WORK AND THE WORKPLACE

LESSON 3: PERSPECTIVES OF THE WORKPLACE

Lesson aim:

- ✚ Recognise the role the media play in presenting different types of work and the image they portray of workplace issues.
- ✚ Understand the impact and portrayal of information using different forms of media.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- ✚ recognise and use different resources for research; and
- ✚ analyse research findings for inclusion in a brief report.

Lesson outline:

In-class activity: Discussion

Discuss how information may be portrayed differently in different media such as print (newspapers, magazines), visual (posters, TV) or aural (radio).

A broad selection of newspapers such as broadsheets and tabloids is required for this activity. Ask students to look through articles which are work-related and discuss them in terms of:

- ✚ Tone.
- ✚ Content.
- ✚ Language.
- ✚ Portrayal of different types of work.
- ✚ How are different industries and the workers within them presented? How are employers and organisations portrayed?
- ✚ What is their feeling towards the workers and employers in the article? Does it differ? Do they have more empathy with one group over another? Why might that be so?
- ✚ Do you think this is an accurate presentation of the issue? Please explain.

In-class activity: Group discussion

This activity can be expanded to give students a further insight into the story. They should be encouraged to check out the background to the story by attempting to find alternate perspectives and gathering more detailed information. They should be encouraged to find out additional information such as:

- ✚ What are the roles and responsibilities of these jobs?
- ✚ Minimum, maximum and average salary.
- ✚ Number of workers employed in this area.
- ✚ Status of the jobs (permanent, temporary, full-time etc).
- ✚ Security issues.
- ✚ What was the main claim or issue and the reasons for it?
- ✚ Why did the story make the news?

This may entail contacting the company, workers or trade union for another perspective. Comparisons should then be drawn between the original story in light of the new information. Are there any differences? Why might this be? Has their own opinion changed in light of new facts?

In-class activity: Group discussion

Students should discuss what they have learned from the previous activity in terms of their perception of work and the workplace. Do they think the articles are representative of the workplace? What type of stories make news? Is this a negative or positive thing? What should be done to change this situation?