

SHARING EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP: TEACHING AUDIENCE RESEARCH

(From Martin Barker & Kate Egan)

We will be running the workshop on teaching audiences, and would like you, if you can, to think about a few issues in advance.

Imagine you are offering an audience studies course. We are presuming three things: (1) that this course is situated broadly within cultural studies approaches to audiences; (2) that this is a course addressed to either third, or perhaps second year, undergraduates; and (3) that this is not simply a course looking at writings on and around audience research (if it were just this, we don't see any special issues involved), but is trying to combine this with getting the students to do a little bit of such research.

Now, imagine you want to get your students to plan for a bit of such research – probably in groups of 3-4. You are going to offer them choices (because in our experience undergraduates find it too hard to come up with viable ideas on their own), and have in mind three very different ones:

1. Children and Disney films
2. Religious people and mainstream media
3. Watching sexual violence on screen

Think of this third option in one of two ways - either that the students would seek to talk to people directly about this, or that they would look at and analyse available talk online (a more reception-studies approach).

We want you to choose one of these, and ask yourself the following questions:

- a) What *background materials* (existing research close to the topic, eg) could you point the students to that will help them to shape a research question and related methods for doing this?
- b) What guidance would you feel it is necessary to give the students as they prepare to do the research?
- c) What would you set as your criteria for assessing the work?

In the workshop we will share ideas and experiences on these.