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GET REAL

# Faking it

Women's Forum Australia

CAN MODELS WITH REAL FIGURES SAVE US?

the stick insect diet

SEX  
LET US ENTERTAIN  
YOU

WANTED

*Living doll*

TEACHER'S  
RESOURCE  
KIT

# ~~Faking it?~~ get real!

be thin... be happy? girl vs girl  
girls: too sexy, too soon  
the sum of your body parts  
...plus much more!

women'sforum  
AUSTRALIA



# Using *Faking It? Get Real!*

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**The resource and its educational aim** *Faking It: Get Real* has been produced by Women's Forum Australia from their own research publication *Faking It: The female image in young women's magazines*. The aim of this education resource is to provide teachers with self-contained classroom-ready materials and teaching strategies to enable exploration of the messages sent by popular culture and the impact they have on the healthy development and decision making of girls and young women.

**Components** The resource comprises two elements:

- A Teacher's Guidebook, with classroom-ready documents and questions, and suggested teaching strategies, for twelve key topics of the *Faking It* material.
- A CD-ROM containing the whole resource, including a PDF version and a PowerPoint presentation (of the Worksheets).

**Topics** The twelve topics provide students with resources for:

- studying the major messages sent by popular magazines, media and advertisers;
- exposing the lies that girls and young women may believe;
- evaluating the way media and advertising may objectify, sexualise and disempower girls and young women; and
- identifying how girls and young women can transform popular culture.

Each topic has a brief overview which outlines the academic research on the topic. There is also a set of suggested teaching strategies for using the materials, and the reproducible evidence/resource pages include key questions and classroom activities.

**Inquiry methodology** The resource uses an inquiry approach – students are provided with a variety of evidence and information, and they analyse this material to form their own conclusions and decisions.

**Approach** The resources, classroom activities and suggested strategies are not organised into distinct teaching for specific year levels. Teachers can choose which topics or resources and activities suit their classes. Due to the varied content contained in the resource, Women's Forum Australia advises that teachers use their own discretion about the appropriateness of activities for younger year levels. In particular this applies to topics that deal with sex.

**Required Resources** Classroom activities may call for the use of ICT resources. If educators do not have access to such resources they can choose to omit such activities from lessons.

**Creating a solution** The resource has been developed to allow students to create a solution project for one of the problems with popular culture that they expose through their studies. The solution that students create may be a Blog, an

artistic work, a collage, a newspaper report or letter to the editor. As students work through the different topics they are urged to gather information, and use it to develop their final solution project.

**The relevance of *Get Real* today**

This resource encourages students to be critical consumers of media messaging and advertising in popular culture, and to analyse how their beliefs may be formed or influenced. Students are encouraged to think about such concepts as: Why do I purchase the products I buy? How should I behave or act in certain social situations? Am I making decisions based on my personal comfort and beliefs or based on advice from unreliable sources? What should my goals and aspirations be in life? These are important questions for the healthy and happy development of students and can be explored through a fun and interactive framework such as is provided in this resource.

**A warning**

This resource touches on topics and issues that may be sensitive or confronting for students. Teachers may find that while most students will be able to manage the material comfortably, some topics could be disturbing for some students or bring up unnerving memories or experiences. Teachers are urged to carefully review the material and adapt the resource to suit their own and their students' needs.

# A Guide to Using *Faking It: Get Real!*

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<b>Background Information</b>	At the beginning of each topic, background information is given to the educator to ensure that they are aware of what the themes, ideas and information included in the topic.
<b>Introductory Activity</b>	Within each topic there is an introductory activity that is designed to introduce the students to the topic at hand by using examples from popular culture. Popular culture is dynamic therefore it is suggested that educators ensure that songs, video clips or advertising are recent and relevant. Each introductory activity should be tailored to the specific year group and their popular cultural influences.
<b>Worksheet</b>	<p>Within each topic there are worksheets designed to inform students. The evidence in each topic is presented to produce deep understanding of important, substantive concepts and information.</p> <p>The questions that accompany each worksheet require students to engage in higher-order thinking and to communicate what they are learning. Questions are also designed to develop students as critical thinkers, problem-solvers and innovators.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Within each topic there are additional resource pages that are designed to give current examples from popular culture to supplement the worksheets. In light of the fact that popular culture is dynamic educators should use their discretion as to the relevance of these resources.
<b>Case Study</b>	The case studies are designed to be challenging and engaging. Questions within each case study are designed to challenge the students to see the significance of the learning they undertake.
<b>Concluding Activity</b>	<p>Within each topic there is a concluding activity designed to bring the topic together and challenge the students to assess how their views or ideas about certain topics may have changed. Each activity challenges students to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom.</p> <p>If you do not wish to use any of the concluding activities simply asking students the following prompting questions will suffice:</p> <p><i>What have I learned during this topic?</i> <i>Have your own personal views altered as a result of this topic?</i> <i>How will this new learning be transferred to daily life?</i> <i>What can you do in daily life to reflect the values you have?</i></p>

# Topic 4: No Talent Required – Just Beauty.

## Background Information

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Research has shown that women's intellectual abilities are undermined by self-consciousness, body shame and constantly monitoring and assessing one's own body (surveillance). This threatens confidence, productivity and creativity. Self-consciousness, body shame and surveillance stem from the perceived need to live up to a beauty ideal.

Popular culture presents the idea that being beautiful and sexy is everything and should be a woman's main pursuit. But research suggests that pursuing beauty and beauty alone does not satisfy girls' and women's need for having competence.

This topic also analyses how an emphasis on beauty is also contributing to women's sporting talents being undermined. There is a struggle in popular culture to gain attention and especially media attention because of physical attributes, not talent.

Objectives – Students are able to:

- Identify, comprehend and evaluate the disempowering message received through media, advertising and cultural stereotyping that beauty is the most important pursuit for females.
- Examine the ability and power each individual has to reject this negative message or cultural ideal.
- Identify how they can be part of changing prescribed cultural ideals.

## Introductory Activity – No Talent Required – Just Beauty

Ask students to discuss:

- W What do you aspire to be?
- W Why do you aspire to this?

Listen to or view the song:

***The Fear by Lily Allen:***

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-wGMISuX\\_c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-wGMISuX_c)

***When I Grow Up by the Pussycat Dolls:***

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0K46C82v9o>

Give students a copy of the lyrics and ask them to read through the lyrics as they are listening to the song.

If you think that neither of these songs are appropriate visit the *Faking It? Get Real!* website and choose another song under the *No Talent Required – Just Beauty* topic for discussion.

Discussion questions stemming from this exercise:

- W What do these songs tell you about what is considered to be important in society?
- W To what ideal do these songs encourage you to aspire?
- W Is there a strong emphasis on the pursuit of looks, beauty and fame?

## The Fear by Lily Allen

I want to be rich and I want lots of money  
**I don't care about clever I don't care about funny**  
**I want loads of clothes and loads of diamonds**  
I heard people die while they are trying to find them

**And i'll take my clothes off and it will be shameless**  
**Cause everyone knows that's how you get famous**

I'll look at the sun and I'll look in the mirror  
I'm on the right track yeah I'm on to a winner

I don't know what's right and what's real anymore  
I don't know how I'm meant to feel anymore  
When do you think it will all become clear?  
'Cause I'm being taken over by the fear

**Life's about film stars and less about mothers**  
It's all about fast cars and cussing each other  
But it doesn't matter cause I'm packing plastic  
and that's what makes my life so fantastic

And I am a weapon of massive consumption  
And its not my fault it's how I'm programmed to function  
I'll look at the sun and I'll look in the mirror  
I'm on the right track yeah we're on to a winner

I don't know what's right and what's real anymore  
I don't know how I'm meant to feel anymore  
When do you think it will all become clear?  
'Cause I'm being taken over by the fear

Forget about guns and forget ammunition  
Cause I'm killing them all on my own little mission  
Now I'm not a saint but I'm not a sinner  
**Now everything's cool as long as I'm gettin thinner**

I don't know what's right and what's real anymore  
I don't know how I'm meant to feel anymore  
When do you think it will all become clear?  
'Cause I'm being taken over by fear

## When I Grow Up by The Pussycat Dolls

Boys call you sexy (What's up sexy)  
And you don't care what they say  
See, everytime you turn around they screamin' your name

Now I've got a confession[Ha Ha Ha Ha]  
When I was young, I wanted attention[Ha Ha Ha Ha]  
And I promised myself that I'd do anything[Ha Ha Ha Ha]  
Anything at all for them to notice me[Ha Ha Ha Ha]

But I ain't complaining, We all wanna be famous  
So go ahead and say what you wanna say  
You know what it's like to nameless  
Want them to know what your name is  
Cause' see when I was younger I would say

[Chorus] When I grow up I wanna be famous,  
I wanna be a star, I wanna be in movies  
When I grow up I wanna see the world  
Drive nice cars, I wanna have groupies  
When I grow up, Be on TV  
People know me, Be on magazines  
When I grow up Fresh and clean  
Number one chick when I step out on the scene  
But be careful what you wish for cause' you just might get it  
You just might get it, You just might get it

They used to tell me I was silly[Ha Ha Ha Ha]  
Until I popped up on the TV[La La La La]  
I always wanted to be a superstar[Ha Ha Ha Ha]  
And knew that singing songs would get me this far[La La La La]

But I ain't complaining, we all wanna be famous  
So go ahead and say what you wanna say  
You know what it's like to nameless  
Want them to know what your name is  
Cause' see when I was younger I would say

I see them staring at me, oh, I'm a trendsetter  
Yes, this is true 'cause what I do, no one can do it better  
You can talk about me, 'cause I'm a hot topic'  
I see you watching me, watching me, and I know you want it

**SOURCE 4.1** One factor restraining women from achieving political, economic and domestic equality is the perceived need to live up to the 'beauty myth'. This struggle wastes women's energies, and is based on a lie. – Naomi Wolf



**SOURCE 4.2** Research has shown that women's intellectual abilities are undermined by self-objectification, self-consciousness, body shame and surveillance.

**SOURCE 4.3** Schlenker and colleagues claimed that even in the 1990s, magazines for teens failed to address the intellectual issues concerning young women.

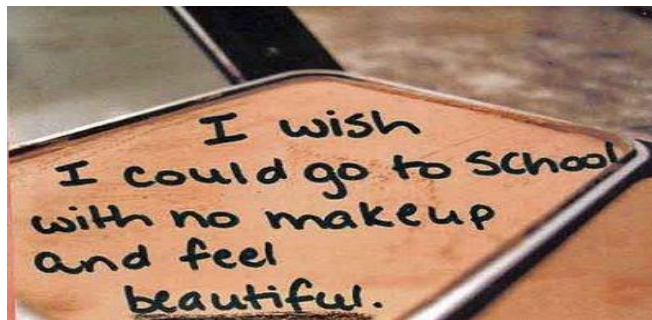
## CASE STUDY: Are the beautiful people happy?

A 2007 study compared 91 professional models with 93 adults from other occupations. In this study, models scored significantly lower than non-models in measures of self-esteem, relatedness to others, overall well being, life satisfaction, and happiness.

Why? Possibly because being in a career that rewards looks but does not specifically require any other talents or skills may offer fewer opportunities to engage in activities that would satisfy a person's need to feel competent.

Models are treated as if they are valued solely for superficial attributes. They are not seen as having any other competencies. This is not a holistic way of being viewed. It may warp their perspective of themselves and make them focus solely on their looks and physical appeal.

Modelling requires a model to submit their own will to other people's instructions, requests and demands. Models are told how to look, how to walk, or how to pose in a fashion show or photo shoot. Their need for control over their own life is compromised.



### QUESTIONS...

1. In contemporary Australian society what is the 'beauty myth'? You could write a description or draw an illustration of what is portrayed as idyllic beauty.
2. Do you think there is a perceived need to live up to the 'beauty myth'? How does this perceived need affect your life or the lives of people you know?
3. Do you think magazines encourage girls and women to pursue talents and skills outside of the realm of beauty?
4. Referring to the *Case Study: Are the beautiful people happy?*, explain why it is important for individuals to have skills and talents outside of superficial attributes?
5. What are some activities or pursuits that may satisfy a person's need for competence?

# In Pursuit of Beauty

Monday, 21 June 2010, Kerry Lotzof,

<http://www.superliving.com.au/storyview.asp?storyID=1035860&sectionsource=IND%3A+SL+Feature>

THERE is something about beauty that lifts the human spirit. We have gone to war for it, conquered nations for it, travelled the globe to witness it, and pay a lot of money to specialists each year in trying to maintain it. The cosmetics and beauty services industry is a booming market, even in recession. While banks fell, the lipstick index stayed strong, as women spent more on little luxuries to help themselves feel good about tightening the belt in other areas like holidays and entertainment.

Men and women alike are prepared to shell out in excess of \$300 for a haircut and colour. Why? Because success has a distinctive look, and it's expensive to maintain. It's calculated that an average Australian woman will spend \$412,000 in her lifetime on skin care, hair and nail products, spa treatments, perfumes, cosmetics and dietary regimes, all for the sake of looking good and appearing younger.

If this sounds excessive, you only have to look at history and cultures around the world to realise this is no new phenomenon. Rightly or wrongly, being attractive (inside and out) continues to rank as one of the most important elements in attracting a life partner, though you might be surprised to learn that notions of beauty aren't exactly universal.

## **Japan: Collagen-infused food**

In Japan, skin is considered to be the key to true beauty, with fair smooth skin the absolute ideal. While Australians are using collagen and Botox injections to erase wrinkles, Japanese women are eating their way to beauty with so-called "collagen-infused" foods.

Collagen-infused food is everywhere in Japan and many women choose it off restaurant menus as part of their beauty routine. Others get it in powdered form, mixing it with water or tea every day to try to keep their skin looking youthful. Although there is no evidence that it works, that does not deter millions of women from doing it, or the industry from profiting.

## **Kayan Tribe: A head above the rest**

You've probably seen images of women from the Kayan tribe who elongate their necks by wearing brass rings, in national geographic or documentaries on Burma and Thailand, but what you may not know is why they do it.

Yes, that's right, all in the name of beauty and it's perhaps one of the most extreme beauty practices. Women of the Kayan tribe commence their beauty rituals at just five years of age by wearing brass rings around their necks. In a ritual that is centuries old, as women age they add more rings and eventually their necks become elongated giving them a giraffe-like appearance.

For the men and women of the tribe, these rings weighing as much as 21 pounds are the ultimate sign of female elegance and status, but are also a serious health challenge. The muscles and bones on women's necks can be so dilapidated by the procedure that life without the rings becomes impossible.

## **India: Spicy complexions and hairy rituals**

In India, women take a more natural approach to beauty with homemade remedies and lotions considered the secret to beauty. On their wedding day, Indian brides sometimes use a mixture of turmeric, lemon and honey on their skin to achieve a glowing complexion. A dot of red powder on the face – known as a kumkum – is also thought to make a woman more attractive.

Indian women are known for their beautiful hair, and women all over the world go to great lengths to achieve the same thick, shiny locks. Many salons in the western world offer hair extensions and weaves to those seeking luxurious locks, a process that is both time consuming and extremely expensive.

What many women with weaves and extensions don't know is that most of those weaves that use human hair come from sacred places in India, where pilgrims shave their heads (a religious process known as tonsuring) as an offering to the gods. Annually, temples can earn as much as \$18 million selling pilgrims' hair to exporters.

### **Iran: Nose-job capital of the world**

This may come as a surprise but it's not the plastic-surgery addicted US who can take the title of "nose-job capital of the world", but Iran. In a place where women cover most of their bodies, business is booming for plastic surgeons –they're performing an estimated 60,000 nose jobs a year. With beauty so focused on the parts of the body that can be revealed in public, it's not hard to understand why.

After surgery, nose bandages are worn openly like badges of honour. The expense involved in attaining the surgery makes these bandages somewhat of a status symbol. Nose jobs are so desirable that pharmacies in Iran sell surgical tape because people who haven't had the operation still buy tape for their noses. If you've ever wondered what women wear under their conservative black robes (abaya), you would discover an absolute riot of colour. Jewel-like colours are associated with beauty and are revealed only in private.

Even in countries where the burqa is optional, many women wear it as a sign of beauty, to develop a sense of mystery and to emphasise their eyes.

### **Maritania: Bigger, divorced and with stretchmarks is best**

In Australia, and most countries around the world, thin is the standard when it comes to beauty. But in a small West African country, bigger is definitely better. In Mauritania, on the northwest coast of Africa, a woman's beauty is treasured – but thin is out.

While it might sound nice to throw dieting out the window, it's not all cookie binges. For many generations, young girls were subjected to the practice of gavage – or force feeding – in order to fatten them up and make them more desirable. In Mauritania, many say the more you weigh, the better the chances of you finding a husband. Even in Mauritania's more progressive cities, some women are willing to do anything for a fuller figure, including buying black-market drugs meant for animals.

This notion of beauty has led to widespread health problems including high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, but that doesn't keep women from doing it. Thick ankles, plump arms, large bottoms and stretchmarks are considered the most beautiful parts of a woman. And, if you happen to be a divorcee, this makes you all the more seductive – it just means more men want to be with you.

Though the habit might not be healthy it's certainly a refreshing change of perspective. How do you define beauty? Is it an emaciated washboard figure? Perfectly whitened smile and straight hair? Or is it all about personality?

After reading the article *In Pursuit of Beauty* what are your initial thoughts?

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1. How much will the average Australian spend in their lifetime ‘for the sake of looking good and appearing younger’? Do you think this is excessive?

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2. What do you think Australia’s standard of beauty is?

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3. How does this differ from the standard of beauty in other cultures?

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4. How can some beauty procedures lead to health problems? Give one example. Does this concern you?

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5. How do you define beauty?

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## Case Study – Australian Women’s Netball

The place of netball in Australian and world sports provided the incentive for a determined campaign in the 1980s to obtain greater media coverage for the sport. Those involved in the game felt that it was unfair that netball lost out to the dominant male sports, especially as the Australian netball team was consistently in the top three countries in world championships and had an extraordinary large player base. As a response to this problem the Australian Sports Commission published *Women, Sport and the Media (1985)* a report that called for greater coverage of women’s sport.

The constant struggle for greater media coverage caused a great deal of internal dissension in the netball ranks. It was felt in some quarters that the game needed to be ‘sexier’ if it was going to gain wider public attention. However, long-time advocates such as the then national coach Joyce Brown felt there was little need for the use of frills and lace to promote netball. She fought for women netballers to be recognised for their skill and athleticism and was opposed to suggested changes to the uniform that incorporated lycra bodysuits and colourful patterns. The game’s administrators thought otherwise and introduced tight-fitting uniforms. The publicity campaign exploited feminine sexuality to a moderate degree.



Evidence of such moves to make the game and its players more appealing was a photograph of the Australian netball team in black dresses with a single leg exposed, captioned as ‘Belles of the (net)Ball’ and accompanying text asks: ‘Who are these leggy ladies? Are they international models set to knock Elle Macpherson off the catwalk?’ (*The Advertiser (Adelaide) 19 May 1992*). Linda Pearce of the *Sunday Age* (7 March 1993:39) reported in her article ‘Netball looking to bright year’ that professional make-up artists, hairstylists and fashion designers were brought in to glamourise the national players.

In early 2000 the Australian netball team refused an offer to remove their clothes for a calendar. It was reported that the team had voted decisively against such a move (*Sydney Morning Herald, April 2000*). *The Age* (May, 2000) ran the headline ‘Taking a stand for skill over skin this calendar year’.

SOURCE: T Taylor (2001) ‘Netball in Australia: A Social History’.

## Case Study – The Matildas Australian Women’s Soccer

In late 1999 the Australian women’s soccer team, the Matildas posed in the nude for a calendar to promote their sport. *Sports Today* (27 November 1999) quotes one of the players, Amy Taylor, as saying that she appeared in the calendar to prove to people that female soccer players are not



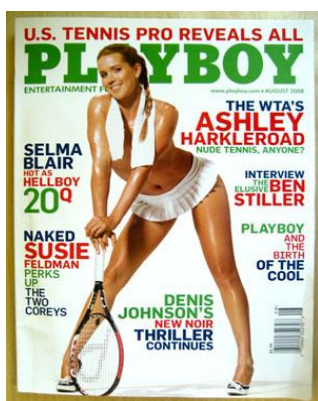
necessarily all butch and masculine. This is further evidence of the pressure on female athletes to prove that they are not ‘masculine’ and that they fit mainstream societal expectations of femininity. In the same magazine article netball player Liz Ellis commented that it was a shame that female athletes had to go to such lengths to prove their femininity.

SOURCE: T Taylor (2001) ‘Netball in Australia: A Social History’.

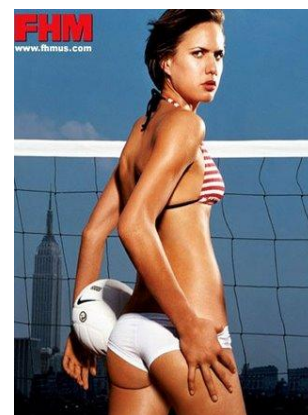
Models, actors and singers are the ones most talked about in women's magazines. Their professional success depends on their bodies and faces being viewed and judged by other people. What about women who achieve in other areas?

**SOURCE 4.4** A common criticism by researchers is that magazines convey a message that women's sexuality and physical appearance is the most important aspect of a woman's self. This is disturbingly demonstrated in the trend of female athletes posing for men's magazines, advertisements, or calendars wearing very little.

**SOURCE 4.5** In many sports, the sexualised female athletes body holds more value for promotion than her achievements. To attract media and sponsorship attention, many female athletes allow themselves to be marketed for their 'voyeuristic potential.'



**SOURCE 4.6** Some commentators have called this (left and right image) 'sexploitation', because of the focus on the physical attributes and sexuality of the female athletes. It's like their sporting performances and abilities don't count that much. The objectification of women could partly explain why women's sports struggle to be taken seriously.



**SOURCE 4.4** The American Psychological Association says that it is vital that society resists the sexualisation and objectification of women and girl athletes because involvement in sport is one proven way to improve self-esteem and healthy behaviour.

## DISCUSSION...

After reading the sources and the two case studies, discuss the following questions.

1. At present do female or male athletes gain more media attention? In your opinion, why is this the case?
2. Do you think that female sport is taken seriously in Australian society? Use examples to back up your answer.
3. Do you think that the sexualised athletes body should be used to gain media attention? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe the Australian netball team made the correct decision to not remove their clothes for a calendar? Why or why not?
5. Do you believe that female athletes need to pose nude to prove that they are not butch and masculine? What other strategies could they use to display their femininity?
6. If you were to write a media campaign for the Australian netball or soccer team what would be the main focus of your campaign?

**Beauty** *n.* The quality that gives pleasure to the mind or senses and is associated with such properties as harmony of form or colour, excellence of artistry, truthfulness, and originality.

**W** Would the world be better off if everyone agreed on what is beautiful?

**W** What can we learn about ourselves from what we find beautiful?

**W** When we say something is beautiful, are we recommending to others that they should take delight in it?

**W** Can we argue rationally about whether something is beautiful?

With the above definition in mind, design a creative response (poem, artwork, collage) with the title...

Beauty is...

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