

TELEVIZION

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Internationales Zentralinstitut für das
Jugend- und Bildungsfernsehen (IZI)



Feelings in Focus



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Emotions are deeply human and omnipresent. Perceiving them in oneself and in others, understanding them, and purposefully dealing with them constitutes emotional intelligence – one of the surest predictors of success and of a satisfying life. Supporting children and adolescents in their development means, in particular, strengthening them in their emotional competence and helping them to appreciate emotions as a resource (Glaser, Doubrava). The repertoire of emotions that children and adolescents experience is similar around the world. How often they experience emotions, whether they show these to others, and to what extent they are accepted by their environment, however, differs clearly in some cases (Götz/Schwarz).

Television for children and adolescents can make a contribution to emotional intelligence, for example, by portraying a constructive approach to anger (Fuhs/Peklo) and by avoiding unrealisable ideals of love and relationship (Reznik). Television has long been suspected of causing aggression, yet a thorough review of the research literature shows that a simple stimulus-reaction pattern does not exist (vom Orde). Within the text television suggests certain emotions, it allows one to sympathise by connecting with typical experiences (Mikos), and it makes viewers laugh when it distorts the familiar and thus narrates in a comic manner (Prommer). Emotional emphases are suggested by means of staging and especially of music, relationships that first become clear in their full potency when sound design and musical setting vary (Götz). Reception studies strikingly indicate how quickly children experience fear when the characters are repelling, when the scene becomes threatening, and when injuries are depicted. Television can become an experience full of fear, one that viewers carry with them for decades (Unterstell/Müller). Three quarters of children cope with what they have seen on television in their dreams. This can lead to traumatic television experiences when children see things that exceed what they imagined until now of how people can be and what they can do to each other, in a manner that they cannot come to terms with (Holler/Müller). The pleasure of excitement, the “thrill”, can only be enjoyed when viewers can conceive of themselves as capable of acting (Unterstell/Müller).

Having and showing emotions

For an international IZI study 5,190 children and preteens between 6 and 15 in 17 countries were surveyed whether and how they have and show emotions.

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When tears are dropping ...

Not all viewers are emotionally stirred by the same film scenes. As this article explains, whether one is moved or not depends on the viewers' individual biographical structures of experience that interact with the way a programme is made.

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When television becomes a traumatic experience

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Stirring up a good comedy

Can we create a scientific recipe for good children's comedy? This text presents such a formula as a synthesis of academic analyses of humour and practical advice from scriptwriters.

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"I was very creeped out and my heart was racing"

In an international study, 631 students from 8 countries recalled childhood TV experiences that had scared them.

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