



LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades 7 to 9

About the Author: This unit was created by educator Arlene Petkau as part of a Media Education course taught by John Pungente at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, 1992.

Sports Personalities in Magazine Advertising

Overview

In this lesson students explore the relationship between athletes and advertising through a number of different activities. In activity 1, students deconstruct the "text" of these ads; in activity 2, students explore target audience and how audience negotiates meaning; in activity 3 students look at the importance of "emotional climate" in ads; and in activity 4 students use role-playing to understand production elements.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- describe an advertisement which uses sports personalities
- identify the role of sports personalities in advertising
- analyze the target audience of magazine advertisements
- respond to advertisements and analyze these reactions
- identify what created these reactions and emotions
- understand how and why a sports personality is used in advertising

Preparation and Materials

- Prior to class, make overheads and photocopies of several advertisements that feature athletes. Try to find a variety of ads, geared to different target audiences for a wide range of products.
- Have students collect Canadian and American publications, such as *Chatelaine*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Teen Beat*, *Shape*, *Maclean's*, and *Muscle and Fitness*—enough for several small groups.

Procedure

Introduction

Ask students:

- Who are your favourite athletes?
- What sports do these people play?



- What do you like/dislike about these athletes?
- Do they ever appear in advertisements?
- What personality traits exhibited by athletes do advertisers want associated with their products?
- What products are advertised?

To pique curiosity, show a few of your selected athletic advertisements to the class on the overhead, concealing the name of the product being advertised. Have the students guess what product is being "sold" to them. Explain that they will be asked to critically analyze ads like these over the course of the next few lessons.

Activities

Activity 1: "The Text"

Advertisement Analysis

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Using the photocopies of your selected ads, distribute one advertisement to each group, as well as a list of questions concerning the content of the ad. Sample questions could be:
 - What do the athlete(s) look like in the ad?
 - What is happening?
 - Which company made the ad?
 - What product is being sold?
 - Where is the athlete looking?
 - What are the athlete(s) wearing?
 - What techniques are used to make the ad appealing?
 - Are there other people in the ad?
 - What is shown?
 - What is left out?
- Have each group record their responses.
- After 5 minutes, the ads will circulate again, giving another recorder and group a chance to respond.
- Continue until each group has studied all the ads.
- Have the groups present their findings to the class. (Groups will hand in their notes in rough form.)
- Allow the class to arrive at some general conclusions about the text of the ad—body image, star status, importance of product in our lives, etc.



Activity 2: "The Audience"

Target Market

Target marketing is essential to advertisers. Consider some of the following questions:

- What are some examples of the types of groups that advertisers want to attract?
- What is the size and growth rate of each of these groups?
- Which groups have the most influence on what is bought? (Offer some statistics about dollars spent, etc., in order to put this activity in context.)
- What types of athletes do you think might work best for each group?
- Why do you buy sports-branded products or clothing. What appeals to you? Why "must" you have something?
- How do advertisers research their audience? One method is telephone solicitation and interviews. Discuss students' experiences with telephone soliciting. What information do market researchers want to know when they call?
- In small groups, ask students to formulate questions that could be used in a survey for a chosen product, such as sports equipment. For example: How old are you? How many times a week do you participate in sports? Do you watch sports?

Ad Analysis

- Still in small groups, have students choose a magazine.
- Have them go through the magazine and record the following information:
 - The magazine they have selected
 - The target audience of this magazine
 - Total number of advertisements
 - The number of ads within this magazine that feature athletes
 - The types of products that are promoted in these ads
- Have students collect examples of advertisements that feature sports personalities (at least 3 per group).
- Ask students to analyze their ads in relation to target audience.
 - What is the target audience for this ad? (Consider the magazine it appears in, the product being sold, etc.)
 - How are males and females portrayed?
 - Does the ad appeal to everyone?
 - Who does it appeal to?
 - How can you tell?
- Have each group report their findings to the class.



Activity 3: "Emotional Climate"**Journal Writing**

- Advertisements are intended to foster positive feelings about a brand or product. Have students look at the ads they have collected and write down their immediate impressions in their journals.
 - How do these ads make you feel?
 - Does the ad make you feel jealous? Excited? Angry? Teary? Cool?
 - Do you want to buy the product?
 - What if you were not able to buy it?
 - How are males, females and ethnic groups represented?
 - Are any stereotypes illustrated? Elaborate.
 - What background knowledge do you bring to these ads?
 - Does this knowledge affect what you think of the ads?

Activity 4: "Production"**Role Playing**

- In pairs, ask students to role-play the meeting of a famous athlete and an advertiser.
 - What does the advertiser want?
 - What does the athlete want?
 - Can they agree?
 - Must the athlete use the product?
 - What sort of ad will they create? (Based on the athlete's personality, reputation, etc.)

Students may choose any well-known sports personality and any product to be advertised. Students must keep in mind:

- what and how they want to sell
- their target audience
- the desired "emotional climate" of the ad

A written outline of the text used will be handed in. Students will be asked to present their role-play in front of the class.

Evaluation

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- Participation in class - 25%
 - Small group discussions - 25%
 - Written assignments: introductory response to ads, journal writing -10%
 - Role play: written and oral presentation - 40%

