



Pestalozzi

Training Resources

Diversity of world views and
world knowledge in the classroom (VIEWS)
Analysing commercials: on what kind of world views the
advertising industry is feeding us?

by

Author: Marko van den Berg - Finland

Editor: Olga Ferreira



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The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

Theme: How the commercials are affecting our world views

Expected outcome

- To increase awareness of the values and interpretations of society and the role of individuals commercials contain;
- To analyse how media, especially commercials, might affect our ways to construct reality;
- To raise awareness of apparent and hidden messages conveyed by commercials.

Target group

Type of training	School level / age	Subject area
Initial and in service teachers	junior high school, high school	Social studies, media, Philosophy

Brief description of the unit

In this training unit; the concepts of world view and world knowledge are used as a framework for analysis.

A world view can be described as a personal perception of reality, a basic assumption that raises the fundamental questions about the past, the present and the future. World views are developed mostly by communication and reflection on actions of those surrounding us. The social reality is also based, along with other factors, on the interpretations and representations spread by the media. It can in fact be assumed that the power of the media has increased very quickly in the last decades with the progress of information technology. One example of media influence in our everyday life is advertising. As consumers, we base our choices on what we see on TV, Internet and other media.

On the other hand, advertising is not just something that makes us interested in certain commodities. Commercials are also selling us lifestyles and behavioral patterns which are associated and identified with certain products. These kind of behavioral patterns contain almost inevitably elements that are connected, among other things, to world views.

That is to say, they are related to, for example, the basic assumption of what is valuable, precious and eligible in life. Here advertising connects us to the pattern of world knowledge which deals with elements that shape answers to fundamental questions such as what the world is or how things work⁽¹⁾.

The main focus of this unit is on TV-commercials but other types of advertisements can of course also be used. For example, analyzing average newspapers and analogous publications ads can be very interesting and fruitful. The technique used with these alternative ads is very similar to TV commercials. The participants are asked to take part in different kind of activities which are planned to raise awareness of apparent and hidden messages conveyed by commercials.

Methods/techniques used

- Analyze commercials from different kind of perspectives.
- Discussions in plenary and in smaller groups have an important role.

Time 3h + homework

Activity 1	▶ 25 minutes
Activity 2	▶ 20 minutes
Activity 3	▶ 45 minutes
Activity 4	▶ 40 minutes
Activity 5	▶ 30 minutes
Activity 6	▶ 20 minutes

¹ To learn more about world view and world knowledge look up: Council of Europe. Diversity of world views and world knowledge in the classroom, Basic Assumptions Document. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/Source/Documentation/Modules_VIEWS/Views_Module%20A_BAD_FR.pdf. Take also a look of the supplementary materials of this exercise.

Tips for trainers:

The sessions include many different analysing tasks. In order to get some ideas about how TV commercials could be analysed in class, you can familiarize yourself in advance with one exemplar lesson plan such as *Values and Images Reflected in TV Commercials*, which you can find via this link: http://www.carla.umn.edu/articulation/polia/pdf_files/tvcomm.pdf.

Resources

a PowerPoint presentation of the key concepts used in the exercise	
a selection of TV commercials from past decades	YouTube
a selection of current TV commercials	YouTube
a selection of TV commercials from	http://tvadsview.com/ and/or similar sites
an example of a website concerning media criticism in school	(http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/index.cfm)

Activity 1 Introducing the concepts of world view and world knowledge



25 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To present and define the concepts of world view and world knowledge; ➢ To make students realize that our world views are not developing in a vacuum but that their development is affected by different kinds of factors of which media is one example; ➢ To give some examples of how media can affect our perception of reality. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To define the concepts of world view and world knowledge, linking them to the topic of advertising; ➢ To understand what kind of role the media have on our world view and world knowledge; ➢ To consider what kind of world knowledge, values and ideas of valuable goals for our life the commercials are designed to attach us to. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ PowerPoint presentation ➢ Discussion. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Some examples of older TV commercial (easily found with any search engine) as a basis for discussion. 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ A spacious room to allow participants to work together in plenary as well as to split and work in small groups. 	

► Instructions/procedure:

- 1. The trainer presents the key concepts using a PowerPoint presentation;
- 2. Then participants watch an example of a TV commercial chosen by the trainer;
- 3. In small groups the participants will analyse and discuss it, linking their ideas to the previous presentation;
- 4. Each group gives a brief presentation to the plenary.

► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:

- The trainer is of course free to choose what TV commercial she/he wants to use as an example.
- There are many websites which are specialized in assembling different kinds of TV commercials from different decades and cultures. For example, you can find useful materials on these websites:
 - <http://www.tellyads.com/>
 - <http://tvadsview.com>
 - <http://www.clipland.com/>

► Debriefing/reflecting:

- Which TV commercials do the participants remember from their childhood and youth?
- These memories are often connected with irony and humour. This attitude might partly arise from the realisation that those commercials are representing values and refer to expectations that nowadays are considered outdated or even irritating.
- The aim of this discussion is to get the participants to understand that commercials convey values and ideas of their time.
- It is also important to pay attention to how TV-commercials might be embedded in our memories of a certain time period.

Activity 2 Commercials as mirrors of society and social order



20 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To get students to realize how TV-commercials reflect and interpret the time when they were aired. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To learn how to create distance from the “truths” conveyed by today’s commercial advertisements, by watching the old ones, in which the connection between the views communicated and the values of the time is more evident; ➤ To discuss about the fundamental nature of commercials and to understand what their interrelationship with reality is. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Group work; ➤ Discussion. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some examples of TV commercials from different decades as a basis for discussion. 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A spacious room to allow participants to work together in plenary and in small groups. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1. Participants watch an example of a TV commercial chosen by the trainer; ➤ 2. In small groups the participants consult the guidelines and the examples provided (Appendix 1) 	

<p>and analyse and discuss the video;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3. Brief presentation by the groups to the plenary and discussion. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Examples of TV commercials periods can easily be found among other sites in YouTube. ➤ Some suitable sites are described in Activity 1. ➤ Some examples of TV commercials from past decades can also be accessed via the following links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1950s and 1960s: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFbCGT_AWBI - 1970s: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM_sMM_tvX8 - 1980s: http://tvadsview.com/centel-commercial-1989-first-cell-phone-ad/ - 1990s: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NILLzIztbxo ➤ It is very important that the trainer makes her/himself familiar with the materials used beforehand! The trainer can choose the examples her/himself. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How have values and ideals in commercials changed over the decades? ➤ Who are the main actors (pay attention for example to gender, race, age and appearance) in the commercials and what does the choice of actors tell us about the values of this time? 	

Activity 3 Analysing current commercials



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To analyse current commercials, with special regard to their values. <p>▶ Specific aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To stimulate thinking about what kind of world views commercials of our time might reflect. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Small group discussion; ➤ Plenary presentation and discussion. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Examples of some interesting TV commercials can be found for example via the following links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wq58zS4_jvM • http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQban1gJNnU • http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMRMW1FXSHw • http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOecSZt3eZU 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A spacious room where participants can work together in plenary but also split and work in small groups; ➤ The homework guidelines (Appendix 3) should be copied for distribution to the participants. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1. Participants watch the TV commercial; ➤ 2. In small groups the participants consult the guidelines (Appendix 2) and analyse and discuss the 	

<p>examples of TV commercial as a basis for the discussion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3. Brief presentation by the groups to the plenary and discussion. ➤ 4. During the final 15 minutes, the trainer introduces and delivers the guidelines for the homework (Appendix 3) that will be part of the next session. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is important that the trainer does not press participants to get the desired answers. The participants should be allowed to get insights independently. Subsequently, it is of course possible and even desirable that the trainer gives some ideas on how the materials can be analysed. ➤ At the end of the activity, the trainer should introduce the guidelines for the homework that will be presented during activity 4 (15 min.) ➤ The trainer should make sure that the participants fully understand what they are asked to do, but they shouldn't be limited in their ideas. Participants should be allowed to use their creativity and imagination. ➤ The trainer should clarify the commercials that will be presented in the next work session. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are the three most important conclusions you could draw from this activity? ➤ Are commercials a harmful or distorted resource for building our world view / world knowledge? 	

Activity 4 Presentation of the commercials produced by the groups



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To present and discuss the work carried out in the groups. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To develop analysis and criticism competences; ➤ To discuss different world views and world knowledge; ➤ To go deeper into pedagogical work on the issue. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A room where teachers can work together in plenary; ➤ Equipment needed: computer and projector. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plenary presentations and debate. 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provided by the groups. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1. All groups present their commercials, explaining the work process and defending their views; ➤ 2. Each presentation is followed by a short time slot for questions and discussion. ➤ 3. The trainer also gives feedback to the participants and takes part in the debate. 	

<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The trainers' role depends partly of the active participation of the group.	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The methodology should be discussed as well as the commercials which led to the work produced, focusing on aspects such as their interpretations: commercials are not necessarily harmless and they often contain viewpoints on fundamental issues – e.g. about which mental attitudes are really important for human beings, and what kind of values should to be sought after in life.	

Activity 5 Giving some examples of lesson plans based on analysing media



30 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To give participants ideas on how to organize a lesson based on TV commercial analysis. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To give hints about what kind of resources are available in order to get ideas for media teaching; ➢ To discuss strengths and weaknesses of the presented lesson plans; ➢ To provide the students with knowledge about different approaches to media education. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Analysis of the material available on the internet; ➢ Debate. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Different examples can be found on the Internet, e.g. the website “Media awareness network” (http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/index.cfm). 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Make sure a sufficient number of computers with internet-connection are available for this activity. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ First, participants are asked to familiarize themselves with the websites listed above in pair work; ➢ Debate about the impressions with the whole group. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The trainer should avoid presenting the lesson plans as models. They are just examples of lesson plans concerning media and can be assessed freely, criticised and adapted. 	

Activity 6 Final discussion: what kind of world views and world knowledge is the advertising industry feeding us?

15 minutes

	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ General aim:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ To make a summary of the ideas, questions and viewpoints concerning the theme TV commercials and the world views / world knowledge they represent.▶ Specific aim:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ To get participants' feedback.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Methods /techniques used:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Discussion with participants;➢ Participants write a short report to summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the training unit.	

Appendix 1:

Activity 2 - The TV commercials can be analysed for example from the following viewpoints:

- Which actors are more active/passive?
- Which social class are the actors representing?
- Is the commercial conveying any values in addition to the product the commercial is advertising? Should they be followed in life?
- How are foreign cultures and their representatives presented?
- Who plays the leading roles? For example: men/women, individuals/groups?
- How are problems and conflicts solved?
- What influences might the commercials have on the formation of our world views and world knowledge?

Model: analysing an example from the 1950s - the Swiss cream sandwich-ad (first sample, 5.00 minutes onwards)

- The adults in the ad are more active than the children. Their home seems to be the domain of the mother and the children. The man is representing the bonds to the world outside.
- The actors are representing a white middle class nuclear family. Their residence seems to be a cosy one-family house. This might give some information about what was appreciated and considered eligible at the time.
- Minorities are not present. In a single ad this does not necessarily tell us much but if this is very common for ads of a certain time, this observation will be relevant.

The authoritarian tone in the background telling about the good features of the product is a man's voice. This is notable if this is the prevailing practice of a certain period.

Appendix 2:

Activity 3 - The TV commercials can be analysed for example from following viewpoints:

- Which actors are more active/passive?
- Which social class are the actors representing?
- Is the commercial conveying any values in addition to the product it is advertising? Should they be followed in life?
- How are foreign cultures and their representatives presented?
- Who plays the leading roles? For example: men/women, individuals/groups?
- How are problems and conflicts solved?

What influences might the commercials have on the formation of our world views and world knowledge?

Appendix 3:

Activity 3 - Homework guidelines - Independent production

General aim:

- To practice skills and improve our abilities to understand representations appointed by TV commercials.

Specific aims:

- To put theory into practice and deepen the comprehension that TV commercials convey values and an interpretation of the world around us.

Methods/techniques used:

- Group work (small groups of 3-4 students);

Resources:

- TV commercials from a suitable site (for example: <http://tvadsview.com/>).

Instructions/procedure:

1. The participants are asked to form groups of 3-4 students;
2. The participants have to choose and analyse one or more TV commercials (they can consult the site: <http://tvadsview.com/>);
3. They should create an activity for pupils based on the analysis of this visual material regarding the following:
 - They should create an exercise directed to comprehensive school pupils or senior high school students;
 - The accomplishment of the activity should in reality not take more than 45 minutes;

The concepts of world view and world knowledge should somehow be built into the exercise.