

FACS: Messages from the Media

Summary

This lesson is to help students understand messages that the media is sending and how to choose what to support and what they value.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 90 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Materials

- Popular teen magazines of the time
- Lyrics of popular songs of the time
- Trailers of popular movies of the time
- Newspapers that have ads in them

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will understand that media is sending messages that are affecting them whether they know it or not.

Instructional Procedures

- BELL RINGER:

Have students write down the lyrics to their favorite song they listen to right now on their ipod. Have them see if they can think of all the lyrics. Then see if they can explain what message those lyrics are sending.

- ACTIVITY:

Show students a few ads from a currently popular magazine, but hide what the ad is actually trying to sell. See if they can identify what the ad is trying to sell. Who is the group this ad is aimed for? How does this ad appeal to that group? What is the "behind the scenes" message of this ad?

- DISCUSSION:

Have students write down on a piece of paper "If I could be anyone in the world, I would be ... because..." Then have them answer the following questions.

- What is your favorite music group to listen to?

- What kinds of songs do they usually sing?

- What pictures do you have up in your bedroom?

- What movies do you usually see?

- When you go places with your friends, and you don't feel comfortable with what they are doing or viewing, do you stand up for your values?

- ROLE MODELS:

Most media use famous people to promote their products so you will buy it to be like that person! What's the big deal? Karin Jasper, Ph.D states "Women are encouraged to be over-concerned with their appearance, to invest time and energy in how they look at the expense of other important goals. The media, fashion, and advertising industries have been accused of causing eating problems by their almost exclusive presentation of thin female actors and models."

She also states "...current advertisements perpetuate the myth that everyone can be thin, they lend reality to what is false. We are led to believe that if we would do all the right things, if we would eat right, exercise right, and think right, then we could all be thin. The fact is that genetic factors contribute to our having a variety of body types."

In Media Messages by Linda Holtzman she quotes Douglas Kellner saying, "Radio, television, film and other products of the culture industries provide the models of what it means to be male or female, successful or a failure, powerful or powerless...media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and its deepest values: it defines what is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil."

Holtzman also states "On the one hand, most of us know and can articulate that the programs we are watching are fictional; yet we often believe and internalize the invisible messages we are receiving.

This same process occurs as we listen to popular music or watch a feature film."

- CHALKBOARD DISCUSSION:

What kind of invisible messages do you think are on television? Have students come up and write down one invisible message they think the media is sending in what they are viewing. Discuss the answers they write on the board.

- WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Key Concepts for Deconstructing Media

Source: Whose message is this? Who has control over the content?

Audience: What group is the target audience?

Text: What do you actually see and/or hear?

Subtext: What is the meaning we create from the text in our own minds?

Persuasion techniques: What techniques are being used to persuade me to believe or do a certain thing?

Point of view: What is the point of view the story is being told from?

Basic Questions to Ask

Whose message is this? Who created or paid for it? Why?

Who is the "target audience"? What are the clues (words, images, sounds, etc.)?

What "tools of persuasion" are used?

What part of the story is not being told?

Extensions

Have students evaluate one song and one movie that they have listened to recently and explain the messages sent by them. Have them answer if they support those messages or if they are supportive of their values? If not, what should they do?

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