

Overview:

This lesson plan will challenge participants to consider how advertising and marketing is affected by cultural norms, values, and behaviors. Each participant will first find a print, digital, or video advertisement and analyze how it reflects aspects of their culture. Then, they will pair up with someone from a different culture, compare advertisements, and discuss why or why not the ad would work in the other's culture.

Note: This activity works best in a culturally heterogeneous group, where students are able to learn about different cultural values in advertising from others in the group.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Analyze how norms, values, and behaviors affect advertising and marketing in their own cultures.
2. Develop awareness of how the nuances of cultural norms, values, and behaviors affect advertising across cultures.

Time:

1 hour

Group Size:

Pairs

Materials:

Access to computers, tablets, or smartphones.

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks:

- To demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs & practices.

Other Skills:

Friendship

Activity Instructions:

1. For homework, participants should select an advertisement from their own culture. The advertisement could be print (such as from a magazine), digital (such as on a web page), or a video (such as from YouTube). Then, they should write a brief analysis that describes how the following items from the advertisement reflect their culture's norms, values, and behaviors:
 - The product being promoted
 - The words or language used
 - The images and colors used to reinforce the message
2. Participants will then pair up with someone from a culture different from their own. They should first show each other their advertisements and explain how they are a reflection of their culture. Then, they should discuss why or why not their ads would work or be effective in the other's culture. For example, they might discuss how colors used in the advertisements symbolize opposing things within their cultures.
3. Then, the facilitator should ask if any volunteers would like to share their advertisements and their discussion with the entire group.
4. The facilitator should end the activity by debriefing with the following questions:
 - What were some of the key differences (and/or similarities) between your advertisements that you and your partner identified?
 - What did you learn about your own culture through this activity? What did you learn about your partner's culture?
 - How might this activity change how you think about or interact with advertisements in the future?

Related Tools:

- [Advertisements of Our Own](#)
- [How Advertising Breaks Down Stereotypes](#)
- [How Advertising Perpetuates Stereotypes](#)
- [Impact of Bias in Advertising, The](#)
- [Representation in Advertising](#)
- [Stereotypes in Advertising](#)