

Commercialism, Youth, & Schools

- Increasingly difficult to reach children via traditional media
 - clutter
 - “advertising-free” media
- Advertisers turn to schools

History of advertising in public school

- Concept itself isn't new
 - Ivory Soap: sponsored soap-carving competition
 - Public-private partnerships (Dell)
 - Sponsored magazine/supplements

Advertising in schools

- Advertisers buy ads on cafeteria tray liners, bathroom stalls, book covers and team warm-up suits
- Brands & Logos in textbooks
 - example;
 - Math book: “Will is saving his allowance to buy a pair of NIKE shoes that costs \$68.25...” & “The best selling cookie in the world is the OREO cookie...”
- Sponsored Educational Material (SEMs)
 - Reach; over 12,000 companies
 - Subway, Chevron- magazines with q&a
 - Common where textbooks are old and funds are limited
 - Critiques argue:
 - primary objective is not education
 - not an objective source
 - conflict of interest
 - e.g.- “Prego Thickness Experiment” (use scientific method to compare Prego & Ragu)
- Study of SEMs by Consumer Union
 - Collected >200 SEMs
 - poster kits
 - teaching packets of print materials

- videotapes, software, and/or CD-ROMS
- 80% of SEMs:
 - “contain biased or incomplete info...promotes consumption of product...”
- **Channel ONE**
 - 12 minutes of daily TV news
 - Broadcast “free” to schools
 - 3yr contract promising to show Channel One on 90% of school days in 80% of classrooms
 - Schools receive:
 - AV equipment+install tech support
 - News on current events, political issues
 - Criticism of quality
 - oversimplify issues
 - ignoring breaking news
 - focus on consumption
 - Has received awards- PEABODY
 - 2 minutes of ads- 70% of ads are for food
 - mostly gum, soda, fast food, candy, chips
 - Criticism:
 - Unethical; counter to what schools are entrusted to do
 - Classroom is suppose to= market place for ideas NOT commercial products
 - Ads contradict school lessons
 - Tacit endorsement
 - Displacement of time
 - Criticism: the other side
 - Captive Audience argues passionately against the educational value
 - Argued by media literacy educator **Renee Hobbs**
 - Hobbs has been paid by Channel One to develop curricula
 - Channel One allows opportunities between classroom and culture
 - see the relevance of schoolwork to larger culture
 - Who uses *Channel One*?
 - SES differences
 - low-income schools

- schools with *less money* to spend on educational materials
- Concern: unequal education