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Instructor Resources for Media Psychology

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with

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Instructor Resources for Media Psychology

These materials are the product of a semester-long project in an undergraduate, senior level media psychology course. We developed modules addressing 30 different media psychology research areas, which may be used to bring media issues to undergraduate psychology courses. Each module contains a brief overview, references, media links, and a class activity, including handouts suitable for class distribution.

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Advertising Alcohol to Underage Youth

Lecture/Discussion Notes

The consumption of alcohol by underage youth has long been a topic of concern among parents, the government, and advocacy groups who are dedicated to teaching responsible drinking habits (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2005). These groups have turned to the advertising of alcohol products in the media as a possible explanation for the prevalence of underage consumption. The results of several studies of young people showed a correlation between exposure to alcohol advertisements and current consumption of alcohol as well as intention to drink in the future (Gentile, Walsh, Bloomgren, Atti, & Norman, 2001; Saffer, 2002; Snyder, Milici, Slater, Sun, & Strizhakova, 2006).

Gentile et al. (2001) found that the brands of beer that are most frequently advertised had the highest brand awareness, brand preference, brand usage, and brand loyalty among adolescents. Snyder et al. (2006) found that advertising exposure was positively related to an increase in drinking. This study also found that the youth who lived in markets with more alcohol advertising drank more and continued to increase their levels of alcohol consumption into their late 20s.

A study conducted by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (2005) from 2001-2004 found that advertising of alcohol on cable television networks grew 138% during this time. In 2001, 13 of the top 15 shows watched by teens age 12 to 17 contained ads for alcohol. However, in 2002 and 2003 all of the top 15 shows contained alcohol ads. These shows, such as *One Tree Hill*, *Gilmore Girls*, and *CSI*, appeared on a variety of networks including CBS, ABC, NBC, and the WB.

The second most highly used media outlet for advertising of alcohol is magazines (Garfield, Chung, & Rathouz, 2003). Garfield et al. found an overrepresentation of distilled liquor ads in magazines as compared to beer and wine or wine coolers. Of the 9,148 advertisements collected from 1997 through 2001, 82% were dedicated to distilled liquor, whereas beer accounted for 13% and wine or wine coolers for only 5%.

The three segments of the alcohol industry, the Beer Institute, Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. (DISCUS), and the Wine Institute, have self-imposed ad regulations in order to prevent intentional advertising to underage audiences. However, these self-imposed regulations are not stringent enough to counter the strategic ambiguity that allows the alcohol industry to comply with regulations while still conveying persuasive messages. For instance, regulations require that excessive drinking not be portrayed in alcohol advertisements. However, a Foster's Lager Beer commercial portrayed a "designated driver" as a man wheeling his drunk, unconscious friends across the Outback in a wheelbarrow. Although excessive drinking was not shown, being carried in a wheelbarrow clearly implies drinking to excess (Zwarun & Farrar, 2005).

Zwarun and Farrar (2005) found frequent cases of strategic ambiguity in alcohol advertising during television coverage of college and professional football and basketball games from 1994 to 1997 and 1999 to 2002. One way to combat the possible strategic ambiguity in alcohol advertisements is to increase the amount of counteradvertising seen by underage youth. Counteradvertising is primarily seen either in broadcast material; such as television, radio, billboards and print media, or as product warning labels. A widely recognized example of counteradvertising is the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) campaign.

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Multimedia ResourcesWebsites:

This site contains the Beer Institute's advertising and marketing code.

<http://www.beerinstitute.org/tier.asp?bid=249>

This site contains the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States code of responsible practices for beverage alcohol advertising and marketing.

<http://www.discus.org/responsibility/code/read.asp>

This site contains the Wine Institute's code of advertising standards.

<http://www.wineinstitute.org/initiatives/issuesandpolicy/adcode>

This site from The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University provides a variety of publications and resources on the advertisement of alcohol to underage youth.

<http://camy.org/>

The Advertising Educational Foundation provides curricular materials for courses addressing the cultural, social, historical, and economic implications of advertising.

<http://www.aef.com/index.html>

Class Activity

Title: Strategic Ambiguity in Beer Commercials

Time Required: 1 ½ hr total

- 15 min to read guidelines
- 45 min to find 5 commercials and analyze
- 30 min for discussion

Materials Required: Summation of Beer Institute Guidelines from <http://www.beerinstitute.org/tier.asp?bid=249>, handout and access to a computer

Objective: To determine if strategic ambiguity is being used in the marketing of beer commercials.

Description of Activity: Working in pairs, the students will find five beer commercials marketed in the U.S. They will first analyze the commercials using the guidelines outlined in the Summation of the Beer Institute Advertising and Marketing Code handout to see if they can identify any instances where strategic ambiguity is being used. Then, they will review the commercials again for any features that they believe may appeal to underage youth. Groups will report and discuss their findings once everyone is finished.

Here are links to two examples of commercials that used strategic ambiguity:

Bud Light Beer Theft

http://youtube.com/watch?v=r-cL_504mtM&feature=related

Bud Light Parachuting

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9zxTY50NX8&NR=1>

Commercial #3:

1. Instances of strategic ambiguity:

2. Features that may appeal to underage youth:

Commercial #4:

1. Instances of strategic ambiguity:

2. Features that may appeal to underage youth:

Commercial #5:

1. Instances of strategic ambiguity:

2. Features that may appeal to underage youth:

Reference:

Zwarun, L., & Farrar, K. M. (2005). Doing what they say, saying what they mean: Self-regulatory compliance and depictions of drinking in alcohol commercials in televised sports. *Mass Communication and Society*, 8, 347-371.

Summation of the Beer Institute Advertising and Marketing Code

1. “These guidelines apply to all brewer advertising and marketing materials...” (p. 2)
2. “Beer advertising and marketing materials should portray beer in a responsible manner ...[and] should not portray, encourage, condone,” or imply:
 - a. “drunk driving ...
 - b. situations where beer is being consumed rapidly, excessively, involuntarily, as part of a drinking game, or as a result of a dare...
 - c. persons incapable of controlling their speech, movement, or behavior as a result of consuming beer...
 - d. illegal activity of any kind by an individual prior to, during, or after the individual consumes, purchases, or is served beer...
 - e. beer drinking before or during activities, which for safety reasons, require a high degree of alertness or coordination.
 - f. Retail outlets where beer is served or sold portrayed in advertising should not be depicted as unkempt or unmanaged.” (pp. 2-3)
3. “Advertising or marketing materials should avoid elements that appeal primarily to persons under the legal drinking age. ...
 - a. Brewers should take into account the following elements among others:
 - Symbols
 - Language
 - Music
 - Gestures
 - Entertainers or celebrities
 - Cartoon characters
 - Groups or organizations
 - b. Advertising ... should not depict Santa Claus
 - c. Advertising ... shall only be placed in magazines, on television, or on radio where at least 70% of the audience is expected to be adults of legal drinking age...
 - d. Models and actors employed ... should be a minimum of 25 years old...
 - e. Beer should not be advertised or marketed at any event where most of the audience is reasonably expected to be below the legal drinking age....
 - f. No beer identification ...should be used or licensed for use on ...materials intended for use primarily by persons below the legal drinking age...
 - g. Beer Institute will provide to manufacturers of parent control software the names and web site addresses of all member-company web sites. Additionally, brewers will require disclosure of a viewer’s date of birth at the entry to their websites.” (pp. 3-4)
4. “Beer advertising and marketing materials should not make the following exaggerated product representations:
 - a. ...convey the impression that a beer has special or unique qualities if in fact it does not
 - b. ...make...scientifically unsubstantiated...claims

- c. ...claim or represent that individuals cannot obtain social, professional, educational, athletic, or financial success or status without beer consumption
 - d. ...represent that individuals cannot solve social, personal, or physical problems without beer consumption.” (p. 4)
5. “Beer advertising and marketing materials should not contain language or images that are lewd or indecent in the context presented and ...should not portray sexually explicit activity as a result of consuming beer.” (p. 5)
 6. “Beer advertising and marketing materials should not contain graphic nudity.” (p. 5)
 7. “Beer advertising and marketing materials should not employ religion or religious themes.” (p. 5)
 8. “Beer advertising and marketing materials should not disparage competing beers.” (p. 5)
 9. “Beer advertising and marketing materials should not disparage anti-littering and recycling efforts.” (p. 5)
 10. “College marketing: Beer advertising and marketing materials on college and university campuses, or in college-owned media, should not portray consumption of beer as being important to education, nor shall advertising directly or indirectly degrade studying. Beer may be advertised and marketed on college campuses or at college-sponsored events only when permitted by appropriate college policy.” (p. 5)
 11. “Billboards... shall be located at least 500 linear feet from established and conspicuously identified elementary or secondary schools, places of worship, or public playgrounds.” (p. 6)
 12. “Product placement ... Brewers encourage producers to seek approval before using their products, signage, or other props in artistic productions.” (p. 6)

Source:

Beer Institute. (2006). *Beer Institute advertising and marketing code*. Retrieved February 6, 2008, from <http://www.beerinstitute.org/tier.asp?bid=249>

Sex in Advertising

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Sexual content has been associated with a wide range of products and services since the beginning of advertising (Reichert, 2002). Sexual content is known to be attention-getting, appealing, and interesting to viewers. The use of sex in advertising may have a positive effect, making society more open, or may be demeaning and harmful to the target audience (Kilbourne, 2005). For example, people may view themselves as flawed in comparison to the individuals portrayed in the advertisements (Kilbourne).

The image of sexuality in advertisements is greatly influenced by a heterosexual male perspective (Baker, 2005; Blair, Stephenson, Hill, & Green, 2006). In these ads, women are associated with physical beauty, and men are expected to seek out these beautiful women (Baker). For example, up to 40% of mainstream magazines and up to 12% of prime time TV ads were found to show women in very revealing clothing or no clothing at all (Reichert, 2002). These strategies are also used for products, such as Victoria's Secret™, that target female consumers (Blair et al.).

Sexual behavior is another strategy used by advertisers to evoke viewers' interest (Reichert, 2002). Examples can include sexual contact such as kissing and touching, verbal behavior, and tone of voice (Reichert). A classic example of this is a 1995 Clairol Herbal Essences commercial of a woman washing her hair yelling "Yes, yes, yes!"

In addition to the physical features and behavior of the individuals portrayed in advertising, sexuality is also present in elements known as contextual features. These include various film and production techniques, such as camera angles, as well as the setting of the advertisement, such as a beach or bedroom (Reichert, 2002).

Finally, sexual referents, such as a mix of verbal and visual elements, including sexual innuendo, can be used to make the ad sexual. A classic example of this is the 1980 Brooke Shields version of a Calvin Klein jeans commercial where she asks, "You want to know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing" (Reichert, 2002). Other examples include the slogans "We keep it up longer" or "Whip it out and show it to your friends" used to advertise a radio station and skateboard, respectively (Kilbourne, 2005).

Research has challenged the effectiveness of using sexual content in advertising. Although some studies indicated that sexually explicit advertisements have a positive influence on a consumer's recall of the ad (Reichert & Alvaro, 2001) and intent to buy the product (Reichert & Walker, 2005), other studies found no significant effect of sexual content on recall (Bushman, 2005; Parker & Furnam, 2007) and in some cases the content distracted the viewer from recalling the brand information (Reichert, 2002). In addition, brand name recognition seems to depend on the relevance of the sexual appeal to the product. If the sexual content is not related to the product, brand name recall is considerably lower than when sexual content is linked to the product (Reichert).

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This interactive site from the research marketing firm, Gallup & Robinson, allows users to try to correctly identify which of several pairs of ads was most effective. Explanations of the correct choice are provided.

<http://www.gallup-robinson.com/index.html>

Gallup & Robinson's table of contents contains many links to examples of and information about sex in advertising.

<http://www.gallup-robinson.com/tableofcontents.html>

The Media Literacy Clearinghouse's section on Sexual Messages in Advertising has many examples of advertisements that use sex to attract attention as well as several links to relevant news stories.

http://www.frankwbaker.com/sex_in_media.htm

Richard F. Taflinger of Washington State University gives examples of offensive sexual advertisements and access to his writings.

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~taflinge/badads.html>

Additional examples of sex in advertising:

Sex in Advertising: <http://www.sexinadvertising.com> by Tom Reichert, Grady College

Sex in Advertising: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl6B5J3aQ4Y>

Brooke Shields Calvin Klein Jeans Commercial:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YK2VZgJ4AoM>

Class Activity

Title: Sex in Advertising

Time Required: A class period of 45-60 min

Materials needed: Variety of magazines or film clips using examples of sex in advertising. Some suggestions from the site of the Media Awareness Network:

- http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/ethics/sia_calvin_klein.cfm
- http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/ethics/sia_gasoline.cfm
- http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/ethics/sia_budweiser.cfm
- http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/ethics/sia_comparison_ads.cfm

Objective: To have students become aware of the frequency and degree of sexual content used in advertising.

Description: Given the following handout, students examine a variety of ads (either that they bring or that the instructor shows) and answer the questions on the handout. The answers can generate a discussion and create awareness of sexually explicit ads.

Handout: Sex in Advertising

1. What is the product being sold by the ad? How easily is the product identified?
2. Who is the target audience for this ad? (Include age range, culture, gender, race)
3. What underlying message or value is conveyed by the ad? Is it obvious or subtle?
4. Does this ad get your attention? If so, why?
5. Is this a positive or negative portrayal of sexuality?
6. What is the connection between sexuality and the product being advertised?

Children's Educational Television

Lecture/Discussion Notes

There has been great concern about the effects of television on children, perhaps because research on television and children has mainly focused on its negative effects (Michel, Roebbers, & Schneider, 2007). These concerns led to the Children's Television Act (CTA) of 1990, which was enacted by Congress and implemented by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC; Anderson, 2003). The CTA's purpose was to increase the amount of educational programming for children. The FCC defined educational programming and stipulated several requirements that a program should meet in order to be considered an educational program.

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2001), children in the United States watch an average of three to four hours of television each day and by the time they graduate from high school, they will have spent more time watching television than they have in the classroom. This quantity of viewing time may be another basis for concern about children's television programs. Because children are spending several hours a day watching television, some effect of this exposure seems inevitable. An additional source of concern is evidence that young children may be unable to distinguish between what is being shown on television and what is the real world (Harris, 2004). Harris explained that unlike books and magazines, which children recognize as fiction, television is created to look realistic.

Whether the effect of television viewing is negative or positive seems to depend on the program itself. In fact, some evidence has suggested that watching educational television on a regular basis enhances children's cognitive development (Anderson et al., 2000; Rice, Huston, Truglio, & Wright, 1990). Furthermore, watching television programs that are educational and that incorporate active involvement can teach children many prosocial behaviors and preacademic skills (Calvert, Strong, Jacobs, & Conger, 2007). For example, research has shown that *Sesame Street* has both short- and long-term effects on children's academic skills (Anderson, 2003). *Sesame Street* has helped to increase young children's vocabulary, facilitated preparation for attending school, and been linked to better grades and greater interest in reading through high school (Anderson, 2003; Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, & Wright, 2001). Another positive effect of educational programming involves the introduction of children to diversity. Through several television programs such as *Dora the Explorer* and *Sesame Street*, characters from a variety of ethnicities reach into the homes of children. This may be particularly beneficial to children who live in ethnically homogeneous communities (Calvert et al.).

Television programs, such as *Sesame Street* and *Dora the Explorer*, are designed to encourage active participation in viewers. As a result, children are able to retain the program's material better than if they were to passively watch the show (Calvert et al., 2007). One way these shows involve children is by adding pauses within the program to allow the children to answer questions that the main character asks (Calvert et al.). The television program *Blue's Clues* is a good example of this. The main character, Blue, and her owner ask for help from the audience throughout the episode. Pauses taken after each time Blue's owner asks for help allow the children time to respond.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site contains an explanation of the television rating system used by the broadcast and cable television networks.

<http://www.tvguidelines.org/>

Details of the Children's Television Act (CTA) are outlined on this site.

http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Factsheets/kidstv.txt

The FCC provides in-depth explanations of the various definitions that are related to programming for educational purposes.

http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Orders/1996/fcc96335.htm#Definition

This PBS site contains links to child-friendly shows and information for parents and teachers.

<http://pbskids.org/read/>

Podcast:

Me Llamo Dora: An Explorer in Modern America

This National Public Radio podcast discusses the creation of *Dora the Explorer*.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89531478>

Class Activity

Title: Entertainment vs. Educational Television

Time Required: 35-60 min

Materials Required: Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Guidelines on Educational Television for Children, access to a computer with Internet (optional)

Objective: To discuss whether there should be a guidelines for educational television that distinguish it from entertainment television for children

Description of Activity: The class will act as possible producers for a children's television show. To do this they will be divided into two groups. The first group will produce a show that would follow the FCC guidelines for an educational program. (This group will receive the FCC guidelines.) The second group will produce a show for purely entertainment purposes. Both groups will be creating a television show targeted for children between 8 and 12 years of age. Each group will meet separately for about 15 to 25 min to discuss possible ideas for shows. When the groups have finished brainstorming and have come up with one or two examples, they will then come together as a whole class and share their ideas. A discussion will involve their decisions for why they chose their ideas and relate these ideas to differences between educational and entertainment television. For examples of educational and entertainment television shows see the following sites.

Educational:

Magic School Bus Clip

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TdhANlzBis>

Sesame Street (Number 7)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg71djeZfos&NR=1>

Entertainment:

CBS's Kid Nation

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kceDf3Px18>

Handout: Entertainment vs. Educational Television**Discussion Questions:**

1. Do you feel that the FCC guidelines are strong enough? Please explain.
2. What are the major differences between educational programs and entertainment programs?
3. In your opinion, are children drawn more to entertainment television than educational television? If so, why?
4. Do you feel that aspects of entertainment television can be incorporated into educational television to draw a bigger audience?
4. Should there be a difference between children's entertainment and educational programming? Why?

Handout: FCC Definition of Educational Programming

“Core educational programs...meet the following requirements:

- (1) the program has education as a significant purpose;
 - (2) the educational objective of the program and the target child audience are specified in writing in the children's programming report;
 - (3) the program is aired between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.;
 - (4) the program is regularly scheduled;
 - (5) the program is of a substantial length (e.g., 15 or 30 min) ;
 - (6) the program is identified as educational children's programming at the time it is aired, and instructions for listing it as educational programming are provided by the licensee to program guides” (para. 75)
- and
- (7) the program “furthers the positive development of children 16 years of age and under in any respect, including the child's intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs” (para. 26)

Source:

Federal Communications Commission. (1996). *Definition of programming “specifically designed” to serve children’s educational and informational needs*. Washington, DC: Federal Communications Commission. Retrieved from http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Orders/1996/fcc96335.txt

Disney's Messages

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Disney and its characters are an important and influential part of culture in the United States and are well known to millions of children (Dundes, 2001). Though Disney has a reputation for espousing positive values, some authors have suggested that a variety of negative stereotypes and images are embedded in Disney films, such as those regarding ethnicity (e.g., Lacroix, 2004), gender (e.g., Hoerrner, 1996), sexual orientation (e.g., Towbin, Haddock, Zimmerman, Lund, & Tanner, 2003), and age (e.g., Robinson, Callister, Magoffin, & Moore, 2007). In addition, Beveridge (1996) investigated images of mental illness in Disney films and found that across decades of Disney films, mental illness has been portrayed in a consistently negative manner, with portrayals of mental illness as dangerous and requiring isolation. Lawson and Fouts (2004) found that in the majority of the 34 Disney films they analyzed, terms to denote mental illness were used to denigrate characters.

Dundes and Dundes (2006) provided an example of several stereotypes in the Disney film, *The Lion King*. In this film, the lions and their land are light colored, whereas the hyenas and Scar, the villain lion, are darker colored, which may result in children making the connection that lighter skinned persons are good and darker skinned persons are bad (Dundes & Dundes). These authors also made connections between the plot of *The Lion King* and the issue of border patrol. The setting includes a distinct border separating the "pride land," a sun-filled region inhabited by royal lions, and the "wasteland," a darkened region inhabited by hungry hyenas. In the film, the hyenas, one of whom has the voice of Cheech Marin, with a distinct Latino accent, are driven to follow Scar only because they wish for a better life with food and protection. Another hyena has the voice of Whoopi Goldberg, an African American actor. Dundes and Dundes suggested that her dialect is used to indicate the dangers of the inner city during Simba's first run-in with the hyenas.

Tseëlon (1995) discussed issues of sexism associated with Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. The plot revolves around what Ariel will do to make the prince fall in love with her, including giving up her friends, family, and voice. According to Tseëlon, giving up her friends and family conveys the message that women should sacrifice everything for a man, and the fact that she surrenders her voice indicates that it does not matter what women say or think as long as they are beautiful.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

Journalist Kathy Maio provides analysis of possible messages in Disney movies on this site.
<http://www.newint.org/easier-english/Disney/diswomen.html>

Tufts University Child & Family Web guide provides links to websites specializing in research-supported knowledge of the effects of media on children.
<http://www.cfw.tufts.edu/topic/2/30.htm>

Video:

Mickey Mouse Monopoly (52 min., Media Education Foundation). This documentary explores the way Disney movies create and tell stories about race, gender, and class.
<http://www.mediaed.org/videos/CommercialismPoliticsAndMedia/MickeyMouseMonopoly>

See preview of *Mickey Mouse Monopoly* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byaMd_PNyIY

Dumbo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXx-6l7cLAI>

Aladdin, "Arabian Night"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPUAhSGZtvU>

Class Activity

Title: Disney, Take Two.

Time Required: 45-60 min (depending on the discussion and interaction)

Materials Required: A computer with Internet access, the handout and (preferably) a projection screen so all students can see each clip.

Objective: To explore the stereotypical messages in Disney movies and become aware of the possibility of learning stereotypes through viewing such movies.

Description: Students should pair up. The teacher will show some clips of Disney films (such as those in the Multimedia section) and have students pay attention to the messages that are being expressed. Following each clip, students should complete the questions on the following handout.

Handout: Disney, Take Two.

Movie title of clip:

1. What characteristics are associated with masculinity and femininity in the film clip?
2. What characteristics are associated with age in the film clip?
3. What characteristics are associated with different accents in the film clip?
4. Based on your knowledge of the movie you viewed, what race or ethnicity is the hero?
The villain? The supporting characters?
5. Describe any stereotypes you viewed in the film clip.
6. Describe any aspects of the film clip that counter stereotypical images.

Sports Violence and Aggression in the Media

Lecture/Discussion Notes

For centuries, sports and violence have been closely connected. People throughout the world seem to find entertainment in violent competition (Giles, 2003). Early examples include jousting and gladiators, sports that usually ended in the death of the loser. More recent forms of aggressive competition include football, hockey, boxing, rugby, and wrestling. Sports violence can take several forms during competition. It can be within the rules and objectives of the competition, for instance, in boxing. Aggressive behavior often takes place outside of the rules as well, with intentional violence toward an opponent, for example in sports such as rugby and football (Giles).

The media's portrayal of the aggressive and violent behavior found in sports appears to have an effect on those exposed to it. Studies have shown that viewers appear to find more excitement in sports they perceive as being more violent (Gunter, 2006). Bryant, Comisky, and Zillman (1981), for example, asked participants to view edited clips of American football games and rate their level of enjoyment. These authors found that greater violence and roughness were associated with higher levels of enjoyment. Similar studies using hockey have found the same results (Gunter). These results are more pronounced in men, but the trend can be found among women as well (Giles, 2003).

According to Gunter (2006), several theoretical approaches have been used to offer explanations for why violent sports are so appealing. The first approach is the catharsis model, which states that spectators enjoy watching violent sports because it allows them to release pent-up aggression. Although the catharsis idea may sound plausible, there is little empirical support for this model (Gunter). Alternatively, sports violence may constitute a display of power, allowing fans to identify with strong and powerful players and teams. This could produce desirable feelings of dominance and power in the less aggressive fans (Gunter). Finally, it has been proposed that the competitiveness in sports produces drama. Conflict and tension are important in creating drama, which leads to excitement. These ideas will require further empirical investigation.

Today, commentators play a significant role in how sports and athletes are viewed. Commentary can determine the level of enjoyment one gains from a competition, while also changing one's perception of the level of violence involved (Gunter, 2006). Commentators may even make nonviolent sports events appear more aggressive. For example, Trujillo (1995) investigated how players are described on ABC's Monday Night Football. One metaphor that is often used in describing an NFL athlete is that his body is a weapon and football is war. Players were referred to as "weapons," "missiles," "shields," "rockets," and "hitting machines."

Research has shown that when commentators describe a sport as more aggressive, viewers are more entertained. For example, Bryant, Brown, Comisky, and Zillmann (1982) found that when opponents in a tennis match were described as hating each other, thus creating tension surrounding the match, viewers found the game to be more exciting and enjoyable.

Overall, the media embrace sports violence and aggression, whether it is through commentary or more recently, as a theme in advertising (Kahle & Riley, 2004). Some research has shown that sports violence may even be linked to violence and aggression in noncompetitors, such as marital conflict and domestic violence (Gunter, 2006). As the popularity of televised sports grows and networks compete for audiences, networks seeking to entertain may continue to show sporting contests that display conflict, violence, and aggression.

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Multimedia Resources

Website:

This site from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center provides information about the role of adults in youth sports violence.

<http://www.upmc.com/healthAtoZ/Pages/HealthLibrary.aspx?chunkid=14369>

Article:

This research report, sponsored by Children Now and funded by the Amateur Athletic Association and the Henry J. Kaiser Family foundation addresses the effects of sports and advertising on boys' development and their perceptions of masculinity.

<http://www.la84foundation.org/9arr/ResearchReports/boystomen.pdf>

Videos:

This site illustrates the use of sports violence in advertising with a popular Reebok ad about an "office linebacker" who maintains order within a company through fear.

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=office%20linebacker&search=Search&sa=X&oi=spell&resnum=0&spell=1

This Youtube video illustrates aggression during a hockey game.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1-25s4uwFQ>

Class Activity

Title: Aggressive Words Used by Sports Commentators

Time: Approximately 2 hr

Objective: To recognize and record the number of aggressive or violent terms used to describe players during an NFL game. (Other sports events may be substituted for NFL games.)

Description: Each student will record the number of violent words used to describe the action during a game. They will note the number of different words and which words are used multiple times to describe players. They may also record words that describe the intelligence or grace of the players. Afterward, they can compare findings with other students and discuss the use of aggressive words (see the following examples).

Examples: “Weapons, missiles, shields, rockets, hitting machines... attack, blow away, break through, burst, catapult, club, crash, cripple, crunch, decapitate, decimate, destroy, dislocate, dislodge, dismantle, drill, explode, fire, fly, hammer, hit, hurdle, jack hammer, kill, launch, mortar, mug, penetrate, plug, pop, pound, push, ram, rifle, rip, shoot, shred, slam, slash, smash, smoke, snap, spin, steamroll, tattoo, tomahawk, toss, twist, unload, upend, whack, whip, wound, and wreck” (Trujillo, 1995, p. 228).

Racism and Sexism in Sportscasts

Lecture/Discussion Notes

People attending a live baseball game might notice an interesting phenomenon -- a large proportion of people will be listening to handheld radios, tuned into a local broadcast of the game even though they are physically attending the game. The sportscaster is the voice of sporting events. Despite technological changes, the purpose of this role has stayed essentially the same over the years: to provide insight and a vivid narration to the television and radio audience (Harris, 2009). Unfortunately, the content of this narration has, at times, included racist and sexist statements. Some scholars have speculated that "Stereotypes seem to be the language of sport, at least in college basketball, and few sportscasters make an effort to break out of the patterns of speech used by their predecessors" (Eastman & Billings, 2001, p.198).

Recently, scholars have noticed gender differences in commentary about men and women in the same sports. Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002) investigated commentary on the 2000 men's and women's collegiate final four basketball games, noting that when discussing male athletes, commentators were more likely to make comments focused on athleticism, whereas when discussing female athletes they were more likely to comment upon their background, personality, and appearance. For example, Eastman and Billings (2001) found, in their analysis of men's and women's collegiate basketball games, that sportscasters commented specifically on women's, "backgrounds -- their fathers, coaches, and families --- that did not turn up in commentary about men" (p. 195). Billings et al. (2002) found that the gender of the commentator also affected the kinds of comments that were made. It was common for the male commentators to note the athlete's physicality and athleticism. In contrast, the female commentators were more inclined to comment on the athlete's overall "looks and appearance surrounding an athlete's performance" (p. 313). Gender differences are also relevant to representation in sports broadcasts. According to Tuggle and Owen (1999) women in the Olympics were more likely to be shown in sports showcasing relatively fit and attractive bodies, such as in gymnastics, swimming, or diving, whereas the men in the same Olympic Games were represented in a wide variety of sports.

Many sports commentaries reference the idea of racial superiority or make attributions for success based on racial or ethnic background. For example Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder, a former sportscaster, infamously argued that an extra bone in the feet gave athletes of African descent an advantage on the football field (Billings, 2004). The successes of Black athletes have been attributed to innate natural athleticism, whereas the successes of White athletes have been attributed to intellect and hard work. Eastman and Billings (2001), for example, found that announcers described Black basketball players in terms associated with being powerful, quick, and naturally athletic, whereas announcers described White players as having a more mental approach to the game, "being a shooter, revealing effort/hard work, demonstrating intelligence or mental skill" (p. 193). Similar comments could be found in football (Billings, 2004) and soccer (McCarthy & Jones, 1997). What about athletes who do not identify exclusively as Black or White? One example is Tiger Woods. Due to his biracial identity, he is "portrayed as exhibiting stereotypes of both White and Black athletes" (Billings, 2003, p. 35). Specifically, according to Billings, Woods is portrayed as being stereotypically Black when he loses, but when he is doing well, the comments made are not ones stereotypically associated with Black athletes.

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Multimedia ResourcesWebsite:

This resource from the American Sportscasters Association contains articles written by sportscasters as well as various others articles concerning sportscasters.

<http://www.americansportscastersonline.com/>

Videos:

This video shows Don Imus' offensive comments about the Rutgers's women basketball team

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RF9BjB7Bzr0>

This video shows Kelly Tilghman's offensive "lynching" comment about Tiger Woods

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ugYbCIbHZs&feature=related>

Articles:

This cbsnews.com article describes the aftermath of the Don Imus incident with the Rutgers team.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/04/12/national/main2675273.shtml>

This golf.com article discusses Kelly Tilghman's 2-week suspension following her comments about Tiger Woods.

http://www.golf.com/golf/tours_news/article/0,28136,1701417,00.html

Class Activity

Title: Analysis of Commentators' Broadcasts in Collegiate Basketball

Time Required: About 1 hr

Materials Required: Television capable of receiving men's and women's basketball games.

Objective: To observe the language used by sportscasters to describe the race of players, as well as to compare language used in men's and women's games.

Description of Activity: Each student should find and watch broadcasts of a single half of a men's and a women's collegiate basketball game, paying close attention to the language used by the sportscasters and which sportscaster said what. After watching both games, students should compare and contrast the way the sportscasters described the players and their actions. If it is not collegiate basketball season, any collegiate sport with comparable teams can substitute.

Effects of Listening to Music

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Music has been, and continues to be, one of the most prominent and influential forms of media. Surveys have indicated that Americans listen to an average of 3.5 hr of music each day provided by the radio and recordings (Greenwald, 2000). Anthropologist Alan P. Merriam (1964) once said, “There is probably no other human cultural activity which is so all-pervasive and which reaches into, shapes and often controls so much of human behavior” (p. 218). Studies of the psychological effects of music have been numerous and extensive. Hargreaves and North (1999) suggested that the psychological functions of music can be effectively separated into three basic domains: cognitive, emotional, and social.

Numerous studies have examined the cognitive effects of background music presented during task performance (e.g., Cassidy & MacDonald, 2007). A recent study of the effects of calming versus aggressive music on the task performance of primary school children found that calming music led to better performance on both arithmetic and memory tasks, whereas aggressive music disrupted and weakened performance (Hallam, Price, & Katsarou, 2002). Studies of the cognitive effects of music have also investigated the possibility of increased intelligence as a result of music, such as the so-called *Mozart effect*. This refers to the supposed improvement of spatial-reasoning abilities as a result of listening to classical music. However, Steele, Bass, and Crook (1999), among several other investigators, found no statistical support for such an effect. Instead, it is likely that confounding variables may have influenced the results of the original study (such as musical preference and training, changes in mood induced by the musical stimuli, and the participant's baseline spatial-temporal abilities).

Several studies have investigated the emotional effects of music. For example, one study found music therapy to be an effective tool for assisting individuals being treated for substance abuse with emotional regulation (Baker, Gleadhill, & Dingle, 2007). Other studies have suggested that music may reduce stress levels and consequently strengthen the immune system (Avers, Mathur, & Kamat, 2007).

A third area of research deals with the social effects of music. Music influences a range of behaviors, from whom we choose as our friends and significant others, to the products that we buy and what we decide to wear. Recently, Carpentier, Knobloch-Westerwick, and Blumhoff (2007) studied the effects of sexually suggestive mainstream music on perceptions of potential romantic partners. Their results indicated that college students who listened to music with provocative lyrics put more emphasis on sexual appeal when judging potential partners than those who listened to nonsexual music.

An example of music affecting consumer behavior is North, MacKenzie, Law, and Hargreaves' (2004) study of “musical fit” in advertising. The term *musical fit* refers to the notion that consumers recall more about a radio commercial if it contains music that is compatible with the product it is selling. Results confirmed that not only did musical fit improve participants' recollection of the product, brand, and claims made in the commercials, but it also increased their liking for the advertisement and the odds that they would purchase the product being sold. Researchers have also investigated the effect of music on participants' helping behavior. For example, uplifting music brought about greater willingness to help than did annoying music (North, Tarrant, & Hargreaves, 2004).

Unfortunately, not all of the effects of music are positive. Some research has indicated that heavy metal music is correlated with drug use and suicide among teens (Snell & Hodgetts, 2007). However, it is difficult to determine whether the music itself contributes to these destructive behaviors or if the traits that draw teens to these behaviors also draw them to this genre of music. Research on potential dangers of contemporary popular music has also suggested that males who listen to hardcore rap music are more likely to have negative perceptions of women due to misogynistic lyrics (Adams & Fuller, 2006).

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site contains book reviews and video clips related to Oliver Sacks' book, *Musicophilia*.

<http://musicophilia.com>

The official website for the American Music Therapy Association provides information about career opportunities in music therapy.

<http://www.musictherapy.org/>

Jeremy Dean of University College London outlines seven ways in which music influences mood.

<http://www.spring.org.uk/2007/03/seven-ways-music-influences-mood.php>

National Public Radio's site for the documentary *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* provides information about masculinity, sexism, violence, and homophobia in hip-hop.

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/hiphop/film.htm>

Class Activity

Title: Music and Mood Adjustment

Time required: Approximately 45 min

Materials required: A music-playing device (e.g., stereo, computer), printed copies of the chosen picture, and the handout.

Objective: To determine the effectiveness of music in mood adjustment.

Description of the project or activity: This activity takes the form of a mini experimental study. The class is separated into three groups and put in different rooms. All students look at the same neutral picture (e.g., a landscape photograph), but each group is exposed to a different auditory stimulus while viewing the picture. The first is the control group that will not be exposed to a musical stimulus. The second is exposed to an uplifting classical song (such as Mozart's *Sonata for Two Pianos*), and the third hears a sad or dramatic classical song (such as the *Adagio in G Minor* by Albinoni). After viewing the picture for the duration of the songs, students fill out the following handout and subsequently discuss their findings in class. Students might also discuss possible confounding variables in this study of music and mood.

Handout: Music and Mood Adjustment

1. What is your initial response to the picture you just viewed?
2. How did you feel while looking at the picture?
3. Did you have any thoughts while viewing the picture? If so, what were they?
4. Do you feel any differently now than you did before the exercise?
5. Additional comments:

Music Preferences

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Research has begun to shed light on the processes underlying musical preferences. The *Mere Exposure Effect* suggests that people enjoy music they have heard before (Peretz, Gaudreau, & Bonnel, 1998). For example, people may not even take notice of a particular song the first time they hear it, but during the second or third time when they are able to recognize it, more positive reactions are likely. This effect also takes place when people come to like certain musical genres that they once disliked. After being exposed to the genre multiple times, the familiarity is often interpreted by a person as pleasure. In addition, repetition within songs leads to higher levels of enjoyment because as the parts of the song repeat themselves, people are able to become more familiar with them (Szpunar, Schellenberg, & Pliner, 2004). This familiarity is then interpreted favorably.

People do not have the opportunity or ability to be exposed to every type of music so they tend to listen to what they already know (Mark, 1998). Both time and energy are spent maintaining musical preferences through buying music, attending concerts, and going to dance clubs. The more resources spent on one particular genre, the fewer are available for other genres. Preferences then develop based on the extent of exposure.

Arguably the most influential factor of music preference is the social one. It is well known that people enjoy spending time with those who are similar to themselves and who hold similar interests, and this appears to be especially so with music. Mark (1998) argued that musical preferences spread through social network ties, in which people are constantly exposed to and learn about new types of music. As people see the musical tastes of those who are similar to them, they are more likely to respond positively to that type of music. Furthermore, Mark suggested that associating a type of music with someone disliked can cause a person to develop a negative view of the music.

Studies of music preferences have shown that certain personality traits are often associated with specific genres. For example, Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) reported that extraversion is related to preferences for music with heavy bass, such as rap or dance music. Also, those open to new experiences may be more likely to be interested in sophisticated or less mainstream music styles that reinforce this part of their personality. Oftentimes the themes that are consistently evident in various genres are what draw certain people to them. Schwartz and Fouts (2003) found those experiencing psychological turmoil, exhibiting anger or emotional problems, and having more antisocial personalities were more likely to enjoy heavy music, such as hard rock, metal, or even rap. Those concerned with romantic relationships, autonomy, sociability, and other developmental issues can be expected to enjoy lighter music, such as pop or dance. Eclectic music preferences are held by those who choose different music based on mood. These individuals may not have a connection with any one genre, but rather change their preference to fit their current state. Not only are music preferences associated with specific personality types, but one study found that participants were able to make accurate judgments about an individual's personality after listening to that person's favorite music (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006).

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

On this site, the BBC provides explanations of various musical genres.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/learning/genres/>

The sixty-one is a website that lets people introduce each other to new music as well as rate music. It is a good example of socialization in music.

<http://www.thesixtyone.com>

Podcast:

Exploring 'Your Brain on Music'

In this National Public Radio podcast, Daniel Levitin discusses what makes certain noises music as well as what we come to like or dislike about it.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9348246>

Class Activity

Title: Music Preference Stereotypes

Time required: Approximately 1 hr

Materials required: Poster boards and markers

Objective: To explore the presence of stereotypes of certain musical preferences including their development, encouragement, and any validity.

Description of activity: Students generate and discuss stereotypes associated with different music genres.

Directions: The leader of the activity should make poster boards, each one listing a different musical genre with enough room around it for students to write on. For a list of music genres see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/learning/genres/>. The posters should then be hung at different spots along the walls of the classroom. Students should be instructed to visit each poster and write the stereotypes they know of the people with that musical preference or personality traits associated with it. After each student has had time to visit each poster, everyone should gather for a discussion about music preference stereotypes.

Discussion questions:

1. What were some common beliefs about each music preference?
2. How do these stereotypes come to develop?
3. How are these stereotypes passed on?
4. Is there any truth to the beliefs about these different music preferences? How do we decide?
5. Was it easier or harder to come up with stereotypes of your own music preference?
6. Is there really any danger in music?

Gender and the Media

Lecture/Discussion notes

Much research has examined gender stereotypes in the media. One common finding in these studies is the relative invisibility of women. For example, over two decades ago, Chavez (1985) found that males far outnumbered females as main characters in comic strips. A similar study conducted more recently found that this underrepresentation of female characters in comics continues (Glascock & Preston-Schreck, 2004). Other forms of media in which men are overrepresented include sports coverage (Knight & Giuliano, 2001), children's animated programs (Baker & Raney, 2007), and radio broadcasts (Radio-Television News Directors Association, 2008). For example, in children's programs male superheroes significantly outnumber female superheroes, approximately two to one (Baker & Raney).

Other studies have focused on gender stereotypes in the content of media portrayals. Male characters are more likely to be portrayed in work settings, whereas female characters are more typically portrayed in a domestic context (Lauzen & Dozier, 1999). In addition, physical appearance is emphasized in portrayals of women to a far greater extent than in portrayals of men (Glascock & Preston-Schreck, 2004), even in coverage of male and female athletes (Knight & Giuliano, 2001).

References

- Baker, K., & Raney, A. A. (2007). Equally super?: Gender-role stereotyping of superheroes in children's animated programs. *Mass Communication and Society, 10*, 25-41.
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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This is the site of the Geena Davis Institute, a nonprofit organization devoted to gender equity in children's television.

http://www.thegeenadavisinstitute.org/about_us.php

This National Organization for Women page provides information on how the media reinforces gender stereotypes and promotes unrealistic standards of beauty.

<http://loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org/presentations/SexStereotypesBeauty/flash.html>

This National Organization for Women page provides statistics on representation of women in various forms of media.

http://www.now.org/issues/media/women_in_media_facts.html?printable#printnews

This site from the University of Iowa Communication Studies Department provides links to resources on gender and ethnic stereotypes in the media as well as other media related issues.

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~commstud/resources/GenderMedia/>

Information on films that focus on women in the media and other gender-related issues are provided on this site by the University of California at Berkeley library.

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/WomenVid.html>

This site, developed by Dr. Scott A. Lukas of Lake Tahoe Community College, provides ads that illustrate gender stereotypes along with background information and discussion questions.

<http://www.genderads.com/>

Podcast:

Women's Wasteland?

This National Public Radio podcast explores the question of whether new media draws on old stereotypes in portraying women.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1070176>

Class Activity

Title: Gender Stereotypes in the Media

Time Required: About 20 min plus discussion time

Materials Required: Computer with Internet access and handouts

Objective: To examine gender stereotypes involved in the media through reversing gender roles.

Description of project or activity: Students will search YouTube for five television commercials. After watching each commercial, students should complete the 2-page grid on the handout to identify characteristics of the characters. Questions are provided for discussion following the completion of the grid.

Some possible sources for commercials include:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Avsp_UJ3mrY

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IK7tL67ghP8> <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8696712219453691704&q=paris+hilton+carls+jr&total=165&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7VUTFp2UE4>

Brave										
Automobiles										
Independent										
Insulting										
Attractive										
Angry										
Other:										

The characteristics you tallied may indicate gender stereotypes. Previous studies (e.g., Baker & Raney, 2007; Chavez, 1985; Hurtz & Durkin, 1997; Knight & Giuliano, 2001), have found that females (more than males) across media have been described as the homemaker, a sex object, in the home more, cleaning/preparing food, dependent, attractive, minor characters, having children, preparing food/drink, and cheerful. They have also found males (more than females) to be involved with automotives and sports, in occupational settings, authoritative, independent, aggressive, major characters, insulting, competitive, and brave.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you observe gender stereotyping in the commercials? Are the activities and characteristics of the characters realistic?
2. Try to imagine each character as the other gender. How does this change your view of stereotypes if at all?

References

Baker, K., & Raney, A. A. (2007). Equally super?: Gender-role stereotyping of superheroes in children's animated programs. *Mass Communication and Society, 10*, 25-41.

Chavez, D. (1985). Perpetuation of gender inequality: A content analysis of comic strips. *Sex Roles, 13*, 93-102.

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Knight, J. L., & Giuliano, T. A. (2001). He's a Laker; she's a "looker": The consequences of gender-stereotypical portrayals of male and female athletes by the print media, *Sex Roles, 45*, 217-229.

Sexual Orientation and Media Stereotypes

Lecture/Discussion notes

Despite a gradual increase in the frequency and positive portrayal of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) characters in the media in recent years, LGB characters continue to be both stereotyped and underrepresented (Raley & Lucas, 2006). Fisher, Hill, Grube, & Gruber (2007), found that LGB characters on television appeared primarily in movies or sitcoms and were represented in approximately 15% of programs overall.

LGB characters on television have been stereotyped as promiscuous, substance abusers, fashion-obsessed, comedy clowns, criminals, psychopaths, mental patients, vampires, child molesters, and individuals battling HIV (Chung, 2007; Raley & Lucas, 2006). Very rarely are these characters presented realistically, such as in a committed same-sex relationship or as parents (Herman, 2005; Raley & Lucas).

LGB underrepresentation and stereotyped portrayal have also been identified in print media. For example, Gadsen (2002) found that only 6% of *New Woman* and 5% of *Essence* magazine issues discussed homosexuality; those that did focused primarily on the experiences of women who learn that their husbands or boyfriend are gay.

Another area of media with few LGB characters is video games (Barton, 2005). One video game that gives the player the option of other- or same-sex relationships is *The Sims*™, which was released in 2000 by Electronic Arts. Players of *The Sims* are able to involve their avatars in romantic relationships with whomever they please, but they are not allowed to marry another character of the same gender (Consalvo, 2003).

References

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- Gadsen, G. Y. (2002). Crooked men and straightened women: Images of homosexuality across race in two women's magazines, 1986-1995. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 43, 59-75.
- Herman, D. (2005). "I'm gay": Declarations, desire, and coming out on prime-time television. *Sexualities*, 8, 7-29.
- Raley, A. & Lucas, J. L. (2006). Stereotypes or success? Prime time television's portrayals of gay male, lesbian, and bisexual characters. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 51, 19-38.

Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This webpage from the videogame history site, Armchair Arcade, provides a description of several gay and lesbian characters in video games.

<http://www.armchairarcade.com/aamain/content.php?article.27>

This is the home page of gamer.org, a gay-friendly video game community.

www.gaymer.org

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation website provides information and resources that aim to expose and reduce stereotypes of LGBT individuals in the media.

www.glaad.org

This site from the nonprofit Media Awareness Network provides educational resources on a variety of stereotypes in the media.

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/>

Class Activity

Title: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Presence in Video Games

Time required: 45-60 min

Materials required: A computer with Internet connection and the handout

Objective: To observe the relationships that videogame characters hold with one another.

Description of project or activity: Each student should find a free online gaming site (see examples below) and explore the games that are provided. Student will then respond to the questions on the handout. (Teachers of students under the age of 18 may wish to pre-screen games. The Miniclip site below specifically prohibits the posting of offensive material).

Websites:

Free Online Games

<http://www.freeonlinegames.com/>

Teen Free Arcade

<http://www.teenfreearcade.com/>

Miniclip Free Games and Shows

<http://www.miniclip.com/games/en/>

Handout: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Presence in Videogames

Please take about 45 minutes to an hour exploring an online gaming site. Play games with main characters that have a recognizable gender. Remember the relationships that you encounter in the games and fill out this handout.

Website visited:

Game(s) played/observed:

1. What gender are the characters that are assigned to you by the game(s)? What do they look like?
2. What is the goal of the game?
3. How is sexuality manifested in this game?
4. What kinds of interactions with other characters are offered?
5. What type of person could best relate to the main character?

Memory for the News

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Although television viewers in the United States have confidence that they are being well-informed by TV news (Harris, 2004), these broadcasts are highly edited to allow for the presentation of news highlights in a limited amount of time (Borden, 2007). One area of research has focused on what viewers retain after exposure to television news broadcasts.

Gibbons, Vogl, and Grimes (2003) demonstrated that viewers of television news may be so confused by the information presented that they attribute actions (often illegal actions) to the wrong person. Several studies have investigated whether memory is enhanced when the audio and visual aspects of the broadcast are redundant (see, e.g., Brosius, Donsbach, & Birk, 1996; Grimes 1991). Zhou (2005) gave the following example of redundancy:

If the audio refers to the aftermath of an earthquake, visuals showing debris of the disaster are considered semantically redundant with the audio. In a farming regulation story, however, shots of a Congressional debate on such issues are considered more semantically related than shots of cows munching hay because it is about enactment of regulations (p. 24).

Although most studies have found that redundancy enhances memory (e.g., Fox, 2004), some have found that recall is impaired. Zhou (2005) suggested that these conflicting findings might be explained by differences in the nature and level of emotional arousal elicited by the material used. Miller and Leshner (2007), for example, found that disgust-eliciting images in television news stories hindered encoding of information. Newhagen and Reeves (1992) found that the timing of emotional images had an influence on recall of news material in that memory for visual news material was better when it was presented after compelling negative images than if it was presented before such images.

Other strategies used by news broadcasters can impact memory as well. For example, Schleuder, White, and Cameron (1993) found that verbal information, but not visual information, in news stories that followed bumpers and teasers was remembered better. Bumpers are news previews that occur at the beginning of a newscast and teasers are previews that occur before commercial breaks.

References

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- Zhou, S. (2005). Effects of arousing visuals and redundancy on cognitive assessment of television news. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 49*, 23-42.

Multimedia Resources

Websites:

Steven Schoenherr, a retired professor of the University of San Diego, has compiled this timeline of the history of television news.

<http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/recording/television9.html>

Data on a variety of news media are provided on this site from The Project for Excellence in Journalism, affiliated with Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

<http://www.stateofthedia.org/2006/>

This site provides a database of local news broadcasts that were compiled by the Local TV News Media Project, conducted by the University of Delaware Graduate School of Urban Affairs & Public Policy.

www.localtvnews.org

NewsLab is an online resource center for television and radio newsrooms, focused on improving journalism.

<http://www.newslab.org>

Class Activity

Title: Memory for the News

Time required: 1.5 hr

Materials required: Recordings of the daily news from different news stations. Pen and paper.

Objective: To analyze the types of information that were retained from each different recording.

Description of project or activity: Students first view at least 30 min of recorded news stories and then write down all of the details they recall. Class discussion can focus on any patterns in the stories recalled to determine the role of emotional content, bumpers and teasers, and redundancy.

News Coverage: Race and Crime

Lecture/Discussion Notes

An important area of research within the topic of news coverage is the media's portrayal of race and crime. Oliver and Fonash (2002) pointed out that the majority of individuals in the United States obtain most of their information about crime from the media. Countless studies have found a consistent pattern in terms of how race and crime are presented in the media. Generally speaking, African Americans are most commonly represented as criminals, Whites as police officers or victims of crime, and Latinos are underrepresented altogether (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b). Many viewers think of the news as a portrayal of reality and as a result may take this perceived connection between race and crime to be accurate and representative of the world around them (Dixon, 2007; Dixon & Linz, 2000b).

Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) conducted two content analytic studies on race and crime in the news. One study focused on the representation of African Americans and Latinos as lawbreakers, whereas the other focused on race and victimization. These authors found that Whites are more likely than African Americans or Latinos to be portrayed as victims of crime in TV news, whereas African Americans and Latinos are more likely to be portrayed as lawbreakers than as victims of crime (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b). Similarly, Chiricos and Eschholz (2002) found that African Americans are more likely to appear as criminals than as victims of crime and that this pattern is even more pronounced for Latinos. "Blacks are 2.4 times more often shown as crime suspects than Whites, and Hispanics are 5.6 times more likely than Whites to be shown in that role" (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002, p. 415-416). The same study also found that Whites are most often shown as police or role models.

Dixon and Azocar (2006) conducted a content analysis on the media's representation of juvenile offenders by race in the news. They found that like African American and Latino adults, African American and Latino juveniles were more likely than White juveniles to be portrayed as perpetrators on television news. Additionally, Black juveniles were generally overrepresented as lawbreakers whereas Latino juveniles were underrepresented as lawbreakers on television news when compared to actual crime statistics.

Additional research by Dixon (2007) examined research participants' racial perceptions of criminals and officers who were racially unidentified. In this study, participants exposed to a criminal whose race was unidentified were likely to perceive the criminal as being Black. Officers of unidentified race, however, were perceived to be both White and benevolent.

There are important implications of this portrayed connection between race and crime. One of the main effects is stereotyping. Because the viewers come to see the real world as similar to the television world, they may come to associate certain racial or ethnic groups with crime. These associations can lead to the creation of stereotypes or the reinforcement of previously held stereotypes (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). Dixon and Azocar (2006) proposed that one of the effects of the distorted association of Blacks with crime is that "White viewers might come to associate juvenile crime itself with Blackness" (p. 155).

Although a significant amount research has been done on the news coverage's portrayal of race and crime, other aspects of this subject still need further investigation, such as the crime-related portrayals of other racial or ethnic groups, such as Asian Americans, and the portrayals of crime and criminals in global television reports as well as news reports in languages other than English (Dixon & Azocar, 2006). Finally, most of the current work relates to how Whites

perceive other races and criminals as a result of the media. Future research should also investigate the crime-related perceptions of television news viewers of color (Dixon, 2007).

References

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

OFF BALANCE: Youth, Race & Crime in the News

This report from the nonprofit organization, Building Blocks for Youth, provides data on the overrepresentation of youth of color in media coverage of crime.

<http://www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/media/>

Tips on how to talk to children about what they see on the news is provided by Children Now and The Kaiser Family Foundation.

<http://www.talkingwithkids.org/television/twk-news.html>

These sites provide one example of how the media alters the portrayal of criminals based on race.

http://z.about.com/d/politicalhumor/1/0/F/g/katrina_looting_vs_finding.jpg

http://www.howardmarcrosen.com/uploaded_images/whitelooters-780851.jpg

http://www.howardmarcrosen.com/uploaded_images/blacklooters-784739.jpg

<http://www.bairey.com/journal/katrina2.jpg>

Class Activity

Title: Local TV News and Crime Reports

Time required: 1 hr at night to watch news; 30 min during the following class

Materials required: TV with local news; handout; pen or pencil

Objective: To allow students to explore the ways in which media portrays race and crime in their local TV news.

Description of activity: Students receive the handout and instructions as a homework assignment. They are asked to watch 1 hr of their nightly local television news (e.g., 5 p.m., or 11 p.m. news broadcasts). As they watch the news they take notes about the segments on crime in the newscast. They should note the race and role of individuals mentioned in the segment. During the next class the instructor will facilitate a discussion about what the students observed in their news shows. The instructor will also provide the students with actual crime statistics from the local area (see links above). The class will then discuss how their observations from the TV news compare to the actual crime statistics.

This site provides FBI crime statistics and information on crime in the United States.

<http://www.fbi.gov/>

This site provides U.S. Department of Justice statistics on crime, victims, and trends of crime in the United States.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

Handout: Local TV News and Crime Reports

Directions: Tonight watch an hour of the nightly local television news. For each crime segment, answer the following questions and make notes about your observations regarding crime and race. Be prepared to discuss your observations during the next class session.

Crime segment # _____

1. What is the crime being reported?
2. Who is the victim? What is his or her race?
3. Who is the perpetrator? What is his or her race?

Effective Political Campaign Ads

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Millions of dollars are spent on political campaigns, with a large portion allotted to advertising. In the 2004 Presidential race, \$620 million were spent on television advertisements alone (Devlin, 2001). One area of research has focused on how campaign advertisements elicit emotions. Brader (2005) defined emotional appeals as “communications intended to elicit an emotional response from some or all who receive them” (p. 390). Two main types of emotions are commonly elicited in campaign advertisements: fear and enthusiasm.

Brader (2005, p. 390) defined enthusiasm as “a reaction to signals that have positive implications for a person’s goal,” and fear as “a reaction to threat.” Campaign ads appealing to enthusiasm promote viewers’ interest in campaigns and willingness to vote (Brader; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000). Campaign advertisements attempt to elicit enthusiasm in many ways. For example, enthusiasm can be prompted by images of success, colorful images of children, uplifting music, personal experiences, and positive symbols (Brader). A classic campaign ad that is widely recognized for using enthusiasm was Ronald Reagan’s ad “Morning in America.” This ad showed positive aspects of the economy in 1984 including people returning to work, as well as decreased interest rates and inflation. The ad ended with the sentences “America today is prouder, stronger, and better than ever before (Reagan, 1984).”

Another tactic to elicit emotion is fear. Fear is often prompted within campaign commercials by images of violence and drug use, grainy color schemes with black and white images, sounds associated with tense situations, or harsh music (Brader, 2005). An example of a controversial advertisement that elicited fear was Lyndon B. Johnson’s ad “Daisy Girl.” This ad showed a young girl picking daisies in a field, when a commentator begins to count down from 10 and an atomic bomb exploded. The ad later said that “We must love each other or die (Johnson, 1964).”

Studies involving fear tactics elicit a range of responses from viewers. Fear can prompt constructive action, withdrawal, or no action (Witte & Allen, 2000). Marcus et al. (2000) found that fear cued in campaign ads can cause people to increase their media attention, political knowledge, and even sway their political choice.

In addition to targeting emotions, another tactic in swaying political choice is through manipulating the appearance of the candidate. Rosenberg and McCafferty (1987) found that changing certain aspects of a candidate’s photograph such as the camera angle made them more appealing to participants. Photographs were taken of candidates in different poses: slightly to the side, straight in camera, and slightly up or down. Participants were asked to rate the candidate based on fitness for public office, character, competence, likeability, and trustworthiness. It was found that slight variations in a photograph could drastically change perceptions of a candidate’s image or character.

Physical attractiveness of both male and female politicians is positively related to perceived competence for both male and female voters (Lewis & Bierly, 1990). Rosenberg, Kahn, Tran, and Le (1991) were able to identify specific aspects of a female candidate’s appearance that are most appealing to voters. Females who have almond shaped eyes with a slight curvature on the top, hair that is short and combed back or with a side part, a hairline that comes to a slight widow’s peak, and a broad or round face are considered more favorable. Furthermore older women and women who are smiling are viewed more positively. The style of dress was also

analyzed and wearing a suit or formal blouse was ideal with simple contrasts or white. Images of females wearing modest jewelry were preferred over those with no jewelry at all.

References

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This Museum of the Moving Image site contains presidential campaign commercials from 1952-2008.

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.com/>

Hundreds of historical videos and photographs are available from this EASE History site, including presidential campaign commercials from 1952-2004.

<http://www.easehistory.org/castream.asp?id=2>

A variety of campaign links are available on this site compiled by Glenn W. Richardson Jr. of the Department of Political Science at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

<http://faculty.kutztown.edu/richards/220/ad-archive.html>

Examples of political campaign commercials:

Lyndon B. Johnson's "Peace Little Girl (Daisy)." This is a famous and very controversial campaign advertisement invoking fear appeals.

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964>

George W. Bush's "Ashley's Story" is a historical advertisement with emotional appeal.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWA052-B148>

Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America" (1984) is a historical advertisement with enthusiasm appeal.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMJ90T2rwXU>

Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) "It's Time for George Bush to Listen" (2007) illustrates a committee web advertisement using a variety of tactics.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aEh5bF6avI>

Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Ike for President" (1952) is a Presidential advertisement using enthusiasm appeals.

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1952>

Adlai Stevenson's "Let's Not Forget the Farmer" (1952) is a Presidential advertisement using enthusiasm appeals.

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1952>

Two distinctly different advertisements run by Senatorial candidates are John Ensign's "Bio" (2006), which is a biography using positive and appealing components,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zsgNtvp5C0>

and Jack Carter's "Bio" (2006) with a limited use of positive and appealing components.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgvQddWACfg>

Video:

The Persuaders (PBS Frontline/Ark Media). Wording techniques used in political campaigns is a topic covered in this documentary.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/>

This PBS site offers a historical timeline; a step by step break down of the creation of a political ad campaign, "Tricks of the Trade"; and a summary of the PBS television program, *The 30 Second Candidate*.

<http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/index.html>

Class Activity

Title: Campaign Advertisement Comparisons

Time required: Approximately 30 min

Materials required: Computer, audio and visual capability via a projector, Campaign Advertisement Comparisons (handout), links to campaign advertisements

Objective: To examine specific aspects of campaign advertisements and their effectiveness.

Description of activity: The facilitator chooses two campaign advertisements from the list below. Students observe certain dimensions of each advertisement, as instructed on the handout. After each advertisement students answer questions pertaining to the ad and their perceived effectiveness. The class will discuss their observations.

1. Two similar advertisements using fear appeals.

Ronald Reagan “The Bear” 1984

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=NpwdcmjBgNA>

George W. Bush “Wolves” 2004

http://youtube.com/watch?v=MU4t9O_yFsY

2. Two similar advertisements run by Presidential candidates using enthusiasm appeals. Music differences are clearly seen as well.

Dwight D. Eisenhower “Ike for President” 1952

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1952>

Adlai Stevenson “Let’s Not Forget the Farmer” 1952

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1952>

3. Two distinctly different advertisements run by Senatorial candidates.

John Ensign “Bio” 2006

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zsgNtvp5C0>

Jack Carter “Bio” 2006

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgvQddWACfg>

4. Two committee web advertisements using a variety of tactics.

NRSC “Two Seats” 2007

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=e4tbzvBCn8Y>

DCCC “Time for Bush to Listen” 2007

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aEh5bF6avI>

Handout: Campaign Advertisement Comparisons

Directions: Please read the questions below before watching the campaign advertisement. After watching the advertisement, please answer the questions based on your observations and reactions. Repeat the procedure for the second advertisement and discuss your findings with the class.

1. Who do you think this advertisement is targeting?
2. What factors might contribute to the success of this advertisement?
3. What emotions did this advertisement invoke?
4. What about the background of this advertisement was effective?
5. What about the background of this advertisement was not effective?
6. Did the appearance of the candidate (or main figure, such as animal) enhance the effectiveness of the advertisement?
7. Did the choice of music enhance the message?
8. Was the presence of the narrator beneficial in the delivery of the message?
9. Do you think this advertisement has served its purpose?

Pornography

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Pornography refers to “sexually explicit media designed to sexually arouse the consumer” (Vega & Malamuth, 2007, p. 105). Research on pornography that once focused primarily on magazines, pictures, and videos has now turned to the Internet.

The Internet has become a key provider of pornographic material because it allows for anonymous, 24 hour access from the convenience of an individual’s home (Nosko, Wood, & Desmarais, 2007). The Internet allows viewers to access pornography instantly and usually without a charge or fee. Not all viewers of Internet pornography seek it out intentionally. For example, pornography is presented through pop-ups, which are uncontrollable advertisements on the Internet. Nosko et al. found that males were more likely than females to approve of pornographic material that they came across unintentionally online. Females were more likely to find pornographic material to be offensive and degrading. This study also found that the more unwanted pornographic material was presented to Internet users, the more desensitized they became and the more they viewed it positively. Similar findings also held for child pornography in that male participants thought this was more acceptable than did female participants. In addition, with greater exposure to child pornography male participants were more likely to find it attractive (Paul & Linz, 2008).

Cook (2006) investigated the content of Internet pornography and found that similar to pornography in general, it portrays men as dominant and women as sexually available, insatiable, and objectified. Recurrent pornographic consumption (Vega & Malamuth, 2007) and arousal in response to pornographic materials (Davis, Norris, George, Martell, & Hieman, 2006) have been found to correlate significantly with sexual aggression for men at high risk for such behaviors. Morrison, Ellis, Morrison, Bearden, and Harriman (2006) found that for men, exposure to pornographic material on the Internet was negatively correlated with self-esteem. The authors attribute this relationship to the unrealistic genitalia, physiques, and sexual proficiency characteristic of Internet pornography.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site strives to educate and empower parents to become their child's first line of defense against Internet dangers.

<http://www.enough.org/inside.php?id=9LEZ249LA>

This site, sponsored by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, provides an educational resource for children aged 5 to 17, parents, and teachers on how to stay safer on the Internet.

<http://www.netsmartzkids.org/indexFL.htm>

This PBS site provides a definition of pornography, links to antipornography organizations, first amendment proponents, guidelines, and articles about the pornography industry.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/porn/etc/links.html>

Videos:

Frontline: American Porn (52 min., PBS Home Video).

Frontline investigates the adult entertainment industry in this film.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/porn/view/>

A Drug Called Pornography, Part 4/7 (8:05 min)

Pornography addiction is the topic of this part of the movie. It addresses pornography's tolerance, dependence, and withdrawal. See

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LkKx0irYPs>

A Drug Called Pornography, 2/7 (6:01 min)

Pornography is the topic of this part of the movie. Men discuss how pornography has affected their attitudes toward sex and women. See

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Q7PEDlbVXo>

Class Activity

Time: 1 hr for class time discussion and one week outside of class

Materials: Handout; Greenfield (2004) article cited below.

Objective: To investigate inadvertent exposure to the Internet

Description: Students read and discuss Greenfield's (2004) article on inadvertent exposure to pornography on the Internet:

Greenfield, P. M. (2004). Inadvertent exposure to pornography on the Internet: Implications of peer-to-peer file-sharing networks for child development and families. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 25*, 741-750.

Available from: www.center-school.org/pko/documents/Inadvertentexposure.pdf

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever experienced inadvertent exposure to Internet pornography? If so, what did you do? (If not, what would you do in this circumstance?)
2. How might inadvertent exposure to Internet pornography affect your view of yourself or others?
3. Do you agree with Greenfield's recommendations for dealing with inadvertent exposure to Internet pornography? Please explain.

Video Game Violence

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Violent video games originated out of the need for military and law enforcement agencies to train individuals in a safe way (Villani, 2001). However, now that they have been mainstreamed, there is a concern about how these video games can affect children. Gentile, Lynch, Linder, and Walsh (2004) found use of video games to be correlated with verbal and physical conflict, as well as poor performance in school. Of the 8th and 9th graders in this study, 94% played video games an average of 9 hr per week and 23% reported getting into verbal arguments “almost weekly” or “almost daily.” Another 34% recounted taking part in a physical fight within the past year. In addition, 99% of boys and 84% of girls said they preferred violence in their video games.

According to Robinson, Wilde, Navracruz, Haydel, and Varady (2001), the results of nearly a thousand studies of children’s exposure to video game violence indicate three types of effects: “1. direct effects, in which children become more aggressive and/or develop more favorable attitudes about using aggression to resolve conflicts; 2. desensitization to violence and the victimization of others; and 3. beliefs that the world around them is mean and scary” (p. 17). It is difficult to determine whether violent video games make individuals aggressive or aggressive individuals enjoy violent video games. However, Gentile et al. (2004) found “low-hostile students who have the highest exposure to violent video games are more likely to have been involved in fights than high-hostile students who have the lowest exposure to violent video games” (p.18). In addition, Robinson and colleagues (2001) found decreased levels of aggression in children who were randomly assigned to an intervention designed to decrease video game use.

Sherry (2001) suggested that the cultural meaning of the violence within the video games may determine whether there are changes in the individual’s actual level of aggression. For instance, violence in sports may be more acceptable in our culture than shooting someone and may thus elicit less aggression. On the other hand, the newer fantasy games are more realistic and contain more action than the older sports games and may thus elicit higher levels of arousal (Sherry).

Browne and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005) pointed out that the majority of the research where aggressive behavior is seen soon after video game play studies young children. Studies where the participants were older children, teenagers, and young adults found no evidence that violent video games were the cause of aggression.

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Sherry, J. (2001). The effects of violent video games on aggression: A meta-analysis. *Human Communication Research*, 27, 409-431.

Villani, S., M. D. (2001). Impact of media on children and adolescents: A 10-year review of the research. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40, 392-401.

Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site explains the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)'s rating system.

http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings_guide.jsp

Gamepolitics.com provides news stories about incidents where “video games and politics collide.” This particular article claims that the wii™ controller is training for violence.

<http://gamepolitics.com/2008/02/18/child-advocates-see-wii-controller-as-violence-training/>

This site provides links to the 25 most popular gaming sites.

<http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/video-games>

Class Activity

Title: How Do Video Games Make You Feel?

Time required: About 2-3 hr

Materials required: Computer or gaming system with access to video games and multiple copies of the handout.

Objective: To understand the emotional effects of different levels of violence in video games.

Description of project or activity: Have students fill out the handout. Then break them into groups of 3-4. Rotate each group so that everyone has the opportunity to play each of several video game once for about 10 min. After each game is played, have the students fill out the handout again. When all groups have completed the handouts, have students discuss how each game affected them. Other discussion questions might include the following: Were the ratings on the video games appropriate? At what age do you think the ability to separate fantasy from reality is acquired? How important are ratings and parental controls?

Handout: How Do Video Games Make You Feel?

On a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) rate how you feel right now in relation to each emotion.

- 1. Interest _____
- 2. Contentment _____
- 3. Anger _____
- 4. Fear _____
- 5. Happiness _____
- 6. Rage _____
- 7. Anxiety _____
- 8. Surprise _____
- 9. Desire _____
- 10. Shame _____
- 11. Courage _____
- 12. Acceptance _____
- 13. Disgust _____
- 14. Excitement _____
- 15. Guilt _____

Please circle to describe game: no violence some violence extreme violence

Psychological Effects of the Media's Coverage of Terrorism and September 11

Lecture/Discussion Notes

The media coverage of the September 11th attacks allowed viewers across the world to be connected to the greatest act of terrorism that the United States has ever faced. During this time, viewers appeared willing to watch large amounts of news for extended periods of time in order to not miss out on the coverage of these attacks (McDonald & Lawrence, 2004). As a result, the media coverage of these events may have had a strong psychological impact on the viewers.

Media coverage of terrorism may increase stress and anxiety. Television viewing was found to be correlated with higher levels of posttraumatic stress disorder, stress, and trauma (Cohen et al., 2006; Propper, Stickgold, Keeley, & Christman, 2007). Cohen et al. found that proximity was not significantly related to the anxiety symptoms, indicating that the media's coverage of terrorism affects viewers whether or not they actually experienced the terror first hand. However, because the data were correlational, it is possible that more anxious or stressed individuals simply watched more television.

McDonald and Lawrence (2004) investigated the impact of continuous coverage of the events of September 11. They found that television reports caused the viewer to paradoxically feel an intense sense of personal involvement while at the same time feeling isolated from the world. Additionally, viewers felt a sense of exhaustion despite the fact that they had no real involvement in the events of September 11.

Propper and colleagues (2007) investigated media exposure and dreams following September 11. They found that features of people's dreams changed following September 11 and that television exposure was strongly correlated with changes in dream features after the attacks. Dream images increased in intensity and in levels of terror- and fear-related emotions following the attacks.

The media's coverage of terrorism may have also had some positive effects on viewers. For example, Cohen et al. (2006) reported that television exposure following September 11 was associated with an increased sense of patriotism, an increased concern about nurturing others, and a greater value of working for the well-being of the community.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site provides links to research on terrorism and crime from the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/terrorism.html>

The National Center on the Psychology of Terrorism provides training- and research-related information on this site.

<http://www.terrorismpsychology.org/>

This site provides information from Psychologists for Social Responsibility on using psychology to promote peace.

<http://www.psysr.org/>

Podcasts:

From National Public Radio, *Psychological Effects of 9-11* examines coping strategies and use of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana immediately following the attacks.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1149527>

From National Public Radio, *Psychological Effects of Terrorism and War* examines use of anti-depressants and anti-anxiety drugs following the attacks.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1131659>

Class Activity

Title: What Impact Did Media Coverage of September 11 Have on You?

Time required: 20 min for individual reflection and 30 min for class discussion

Materials required: Handout, pencil or pen

Objective: To allow students to reflect on the way they were affected by the media's coverage of September 11.

Description of activity: Students spend 20 min working independently on the handout. During this time they are to reflect on how the media coverage of September 11 affected them. Then, students should come back together and share their reflections with the group.

Handout: What Impact Did Media Coverage of September 11 Have on You?

Directions: Please take the next 20 minutes to reflect independently on how the media's coverage of September 11 affected you. Use the following questions to assist in this reflection.

1. What forms of media did you utilize to get information about September 11?
2. How often did you view media regarding the attacks on September 11?
3. What immediate emotions did you experience as a result of the media coverage of September 11?
4. What images do you recall most clearly from media coverage of September 11th.
5. How do you think the media affected your perceptions of the events of September 11th?
6. Do any of these effects continue to impact your life?

The Appeal and Effect of Horror

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Horror and other fright-filled films have attracted viewers since the beginning of cinema. These films attract viewers and audiences of great numbers by immersing them in nearly 2 hours of fear, terror, and disgust (Andrade & Cohen, 2007). Horror films are created to elicit these specific strong emotional reactions and generate negative feelings in its viewers (Goldstein, 1998). Why might viewers willingly expose themselves to seemingly negative stimuli?

One explanation for intentional horror movie viewing comes from sensation seeking theory. Zuckerman (1996) proposed that people who willingly expose themselves to stimuli that others perceive to be aversive may actually be experiencing pleasant arousal. In other words, viewing horror for an increased level of sensation can be a positive experience for some individuals. The susceptibility to adaptation is inevitable in frequent viewers, which translates into viewing more extreme cases of horror and being desensitized to its tactics (Zuckerman).

A second explanation focused more on the aftereffects of viewing such stimuli rather than simultaneous reactions. It can be argued that once the aversive stimuli are removed (the end of a scary movie) and some level of arousal remains, feelings of relief and pleasure subsequently arise. People come to anticipate the pleasant aftermath of the movie's end rather than the negative consequences (Andrade & Cohen, 2007). Thus, viewers are willing to tolerate the fear and disgust in movies to enjoy the positive feelings brought on by relief when it is over.

Walters' (2004) Integrated-Interactive Model identified three components of horror films: tension, relevance, and "unrealism." Walters suggested that horror films are popular because they speak to basic human fears. That which frightens us becomes less frightening once it is understood (Walters). What happens is this; while watching an aversive stimulus (a horror movie) the viewer, regardless of frequent or seldom horror movie encounters, experiences negative feelings of fear or disgust. However, the realization that it is only a movie (unrealism) allows one to feel protected from the aversive stimuli. Once this occurs, anxiety and fear can turn into excitement and enjoyment. Further, once the movie is over the threat is removed and what remains is an elevated sense of pleasure.

Another area of research on the horror genre deals with its possible effects. One effect is emotional changes in viewers, particularly in children. Many children report the enjoyment of being frightened, but suffer unwanted effects. Among these are increased anxiety, trouble sleeping, stressful emotional responses, and even distortion of reality (Bryant & Zillmann, 1994).

Stereotypes and images that are depicted in horror movies are another possible influence on viewers. Conflict and suspense are vital to these movies. Usually, this means a threatening, evil character whose mere presence implies danger and instills fear (Lester, 1996). Horror movie portrayals are awash in villains whose evil and threatening presence is exemplified by a deformity of the body – a limp, a hook for a hand, a patch over the eye, a hunchback (Lester; Nelson, 1994). This strategy of portraying villains is explained by the fundamental nature of stigma in which the stigmatized person is seen as less than human (Nelson). The use of physical impairments in villains may imply that people with disabilities are to be feared or have undesirable characteristics.

A second stereotype involves portraying female characters as victims. Modern horror movies seem to thrive on scenes that focus on aggression and sexual violence toward women. Scenes in which these themes occur are often viewed as fantasy and create excitement or sexual

arousal in those who watch them. The effect of repeatedly viewing this type of material may be an increased insensitivity toward such actions in reality (Walters, 2004).

Horror films may even affect interpersonal attraction between viewers. One study indicated that simply watching a horror movie increases perceived attraction between heterosexual partners. Consistent with gender role expectations, this study reported that if a women visibly exhibits fear, her male partner evaluates her level of attractiveness higher, whereas if a man shows any signs of distress, the female partner enjoys his company slightly less and evaluates his attractiveness as lower (Zillmann & Weaver, 1996).

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site supports scientific investigation of extraordinary claims. <http://www.skeptic.com>

House of Horrors provides information about and links to examples of the horror genre. <http://www.houseofhorrors.com>

Podcasts:*Extreme Horror: Basic Escapism or Simply Base?*

This National Public Radio podcast explores the content of, and attraction to, the horror genre.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=10785956>

How Scary Movies Stoke Fear

This National Public Radio podcast discusses the strategies used to create fear in horror films.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=15807232>

Class Activity

Title: Victims vs. Villains

Time required: One hr outside of class and discussion

Materials: A central monitor or projection screen to view clips of horror movies in class, and the handout.

Objective: To explore strategies used to induce fear and evaluate portrayals of villains and victims in horror films.

Description: The students are to view clips of past and recent fright-filled films individually or in pairs. They are to pick clips, involving the victim and villain, from 3-5 different films and record the villain(s) and the victim(s) information. (One source for horror films is <http://www.best-horror-movies.com/100-greatest-horror-movies.html>) After this task, students fill out the handout for later discussion. This discussion may center around the entire class viewing some of the clips students selected.

Handout: Victims vs. Villains

1. Who was the villain(s)? The victim(s)? Describe as best you can. (Include such characteristics as ethnicity, gender, age, and physical appearance.)
2. What is the role of aggression in the film?
3. What is the role of sexual content in the film?
4. To what extent are traditional gender roles exhibited in the film?
5. Additional observations:

The Effect of Media on Paranormal Beliefs

Lecture/Discussion Notes

The word *paranormal* has been defined as a term “reserved for claims made about the existence of a wide range of extraordinary phenomena that includes such things as ESP (extrasensory perception), haunted houses, ghosts, devils, spirits, reincarnation, telekinesis (the ability of the mind to move or bend objects), UFOs (unidentified flying objects), astrology, and astral projection (one’s spirit leaving the body, traveling some distance, and then returning)” (Sparks, Hansen, & Shah, 1994, p. 386).

Several recent studies have indicated a widespread belief in paranormal events and concepts among Americans (Sparks, Pellechia, & Irvine, 1998). For instance, a national survey administered by Gallup and Newport (1991) revealed that close to 50% of respondents believed in ESP and nearly 30% reported believing in haunted houses. In another study, almost 45% of participants reported believing in extraterrestrial UFOs (Sparks, Nelson, & Campbell, 1997). Moreover, in a study on the paranormal beliefs of Purdue University students, an astounding 70% of respondents believed in the existence of ghosts, 40% believed in the accuracy of palm-reading, and 37% believed in the accuracy of predictions made by psychics (Sparks et al., 1994). Although some researchers have neglected to consider the effect of mass media on paranormal beliefs, it is undoubtedly an important factor.

Movies and television programs such as *The Sixth Sense*, *The Blair Witch Project*, *Roswell*, and *Unsolved Mysteries* are only a few examples of the ever-growing popularity of paranormal content in today’s media (Sparks & Miller, 2001). A series of studies conducted by Sparks and colleagues provided evidence for the influence of exposure to paranormal media on paranormal beliefs. For example, in one study in which participants watched the program, *Beyond Reality*, experimenters manipulated whether or not viewers were first exposed to a disclaimer that stated that the show was fictional and contained impossible content. Participants who first saw the disclaimer were considerably less likely to report a belief in paranormal activity than those who were not exposed to the disclaimer (Sparks et al., 1994). These findings are relevant because the vast majority of paranormal media do not provide their viewer, reader, or listener with such a disclaimer.

Other studies of paranormal media exposure have focused on participants’ belief in UFOs. In one study, Sparks, Sparks, and Gray (1995) found that when participants had seen a program depicting UFOs, they were significantly more likely to accept their existence. Sparks and colleagues (Sparks et al. 1998) also examined the impact of having someone with scientific authority question the accuracy of a UFO story in a news segment. Results indicated that those exposed to a segment with more scientific uncertainty were far less likely to endorse UFO beliefs than those who were exposed to a segment without scientific uncertainty.

Another study involved a telephone survey of 120 randomly selected participants (Sparks et al., 1997). Respondents were asked to either agree or disagree with a series of statements intended to measure their tendency to have paranormal beliefs. They were also asked if they had ever personally experienced paranormal activity of any kind. Lastly, in order to assess the correlation between television programming and paranormal beliefs, participants responded to various questions about their exposure to certain programs with regular paranormal content, and estimated the amount of television they watched overall. Consistent with their hypothesis, Sparks et al. found a significant correlation between amount of exposure to programs with paranormal content and actual paranormal belief.

According to the theory of *media cultivation* (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986), viewers gradually accept a particular reality presented in television programming as an accurate representation of the world. Thus, although it is possible that individuals who believe in paranormal phenomena seek out media on that topic, it may also be the case that media strongly contributes to paranormal beliefs.

References

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site includes an article by Glenn Sparks on the effect of paranormal TV shows, and various links to related news stories and forum entries.

<http://www.unexplained-mysteries.com/viewnews.php?id=74345>

This is the official website for The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry.

<http://www.csicop.org/>

Videos:

Secrets of the Psychics (60 min., PBS/NOVA) In this film, magician and skeptic James Randi questions and provides information on the validity of paranormal and psychic phenomena.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/2012_psychics.html

Alien Autopsy: Fact or Fiction (48 min., Fox Network) This television special investigates the legitimacy of the alleged 1947 UFO crash near Roswell, New Mexico.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThElkSo5Rc0>

Class Activity

Title: The Effects of Disclaimers on Paranormal Beliefs

Time required: Approximately 45 min

Materials required: Handout and pen.

Objective: To determine how influential the exposure to disclaimers before a paranormal program is on the paranormal beliefs of the students in class.

Description of the project or activity: Like the participants in Sparks et al. (1994), students will be split into two groups and assigned to watch a paranormal program. However, one group will watch the program following a disclaimer that states its scientific invalidity. Afterward, the students will fill out the Response Sheet (handout below) and then come together to discuss and analyze their responses in class. (For the disclaimer group, instructors can find a disclaimer online and project it prior to any paranormal program they choose).

Sample disclaimer: This program is for entertainment purposes only. We do not make any claims about the accuracy of the information presented.

Examples of paranormal programming:

<http://www.ghostsandstories.com/ghost-video-paranormal.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deoJUBW9CI8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9cZ8F1KTTM>

Handout: The Effects of Disclaimers on Paranormal Beliefs

1. To what extent do you believe in the existence of paranormal phenomena (such as UFOs, ghosts, and psychics)?
2. Are there certain types of paranormal phenomena that you believe more than others? If so, why is this?
3. How realistic did you consider (*name of program that was watched*)?
4. What is your overall evaluation of (*name of program that was watched*)?
5. Additional comments:

Public Service Announcements

Lecture/Discussion Notes

The purpose of a public service announcement is to promote education, awareness, and behavior change (Greco, n.d.). To do this effectively, companies producing public service announcements must consider a variety of factors. One factor that needs to be considered is the target audience (Thesenvitz, 2003). The narrower the audience, the more likely individuals within the group will respond in a similar manner (Thesenvitz). For example, Palmgreen, Donohew, Lorch, Hoyle, and Stephenson (2001) targeted high sensation-seeking teenagers and aired public health advertisements during programs that these teenagers were most likely to view. All announcements had teenage actors, showed negative consequences of marijuana use, and “employed high-sensation-value characteristics such as novelty, drama, surprise, and strong emotional appeal” (p. 293). Palmgreen et al. showed that for the 30-day period during which antimarijuana ads aired, the high-sensation seeking teenagers decreased their marijuana use.

The spokesperson also has a potential to impact the effectiveness of public service advertisements. Toncar, Reid, and Anderson (2007) showed three types of ads to participants featuring a world celebrity, a local celebrity, or a natural disaster victim. Participants rated the credibility of the three spokespersons. Toncar et al. found that the victim was most credible, whereas the world celebrity was least credible.

Farrelly et al. (2002) studied the effectiveness of two antismoking campaigns, Phillip Morris’s “Think. Don’t Smoke” campaign launched in 1998, and the American Legacy Association’s “Truth” campaign launched in 2002. The “Think. Don’t Smoke” campaign focused on the direct message: Do not smoke. In contrast, the more effective “Truth” campaign replaced the association between tobacco and attractive models with the unattractive aspects of tobacco use. An example of a popular “Truth” ad is “Body Bags.” This ad shows young people piling body bags outside of a major tobacco company. Although the ad does not tell the audience to not smoke cigarettes, it visually presents statistics about tobacco deaths. Furthermore the “Truth” campaign strategy is to market their message in a manner similar to that of a popular brand (e.g., Nike), which in turn will appeal to youth. Finally, the “Truth” ads were designed to tap into the desire of young people to feel empowered and challenge authority (Farrelly et al).

Both the “Truth” and “Think. Don’t Smoke” campaigns were found to increase awareness of the tobacco industry; however, the “Truth” campaign had a greater impact on attitudes towards smoking (Farrelly et. al, 2002). In addition, it was found that youth exposed to the “Truth” campaign were more likely to agree that “cigarette companies try to get young people to start smoking,” “cigarette companies lie” and “the [tobacco] industry concealed tobacco’s deleterious health effects” (Farrelly et. al, 2002, p. 904-905). Novelli (1999) suggested that if Phillip Morris (founder of the “Think. Don’t Smoke” campaign) is concerned about children smoking, it should start by getting rid of the Marlboro brand, which is the choice for 60% - 70% of 8th -12th graders.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

Rich, F. (1998, December 24). Journal; Just say 1 billion. *The New York Times*.

In this article, a *New York Times* columnist critiques a public health announcement.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F07EFD91E31F936A25754C0A96E958260>

This Ad Council site provides examples of a wide variety of public service announcements.

<http://www.adcouncil.org/default.aspx?id=15>

Class Activity

Title: Public Health Announcements Comparison

Time Required: Approximately 30 min

Materials required: Computer, audio, and visual capability via a projector; handout; links to advertisements

Objective: To examine different types of public health advertisements and discuss their perceived effectiveness.

Description of activity: The facilitator chooses three public service advertisements from different companies; links to sample public service advertisements are listed below. Students are instructed to watch the three advertisement and then answer questions pertaining to each ad and its perceived effectiveness. The class will discuss their observations. Students might then discuss qualities of the “Truth” ads that make them more effective than either the “Think. Don’t Smoke” or “Body on Heroin” ads.

1. Advertisements from “The Truth” campaign

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4xmFcrJexk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7abIkin2mA8>

2. Advertisements from Phillip Morris’s, “Think. Don’t Smoke” campaign.

<http://adland.tv/commercials/philip-morris-youth-smoking-prevention-think-dont-smoke-2001-030-usa>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltqssfzVyrw>

3. Public service announcement, “Your Body on Heroin” from The Partnership for a Drug Free America.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTZk0bGLRw0>

Handout: Public Health Announcements Comparison

Directions: For each of the advertisements provided, answer the questions below based on your observations and reactions. Discuss your findings with the class.

1. What age group do you think this advertisement is targeting?
2. What was the overall message of the advertisement?
3. Do you think the message was clear?
4. Did the message clearly state a purpose? Or was the purpose assumed?
5. Do you think this advertisement has served its purpose?

Childhood Obesity and the Media

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Between 1960 and 2002, the prevalence of overweight children and adolescents ages 6 through 19 has increased by 300% in the United States (Finkelstein & Trogon, 2008). As much as 30% of children ages 6 to 19 are overweight and 15% are considered to be obese, with higher rates for African American, Mexican American, and Native American youth (American Public Health Association, 2008).

During the time when childhood obesity has increased significantly, the number of media targeted to children has expanded as well. Specialized cable networks, TV shows, movies, and Internet activities attract children to spend an average of 5.5 hr per day using the media (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005). Dietz and Gortmaker (1985) reported that the prevalence of obesity in children increases by 2% for every hour of television watched. Four mechanisms have been proposed to explain the correlation between children's television viewing and weight: television viewing slows one's metabolic rate, encourages unhealthy food choices, encourages increased snacking, and reduces time available for physical activity (Bryant, Lucove, Evenson, & Marshall, 2007). Bryant et al. suggested that ambiguity surrounding the relative importance of these factors may be due in part to inconsistent methods for measuring television viewing in children.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

The non-profit Common Sense Media provides links to information and research on childhood obesity and suggestions for parenting in a 24/7 media world.

http://www.common sense media.org/parent_tips/healthsurvivalguide/overview.php

The National Institute on Media and the Family provides facts on childhood obesity.

http://www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts_tvandobchild.shtml

The Healthy States website addresses various public health issues including childhood obesity.

<http://www.healthystates.csg.org/Public+Health+Issues/>

The website of the American Journal of Public Health Provides access to many articles regarding health, including issues of childhood obesity.

<http://www.ajph.org/>

The Kaiser Family Foundation has reports and information regarding obesity. See especially *The Role of Media in Childhood Obesity*.

<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia022404pkg.cfm>

From University of Michigan health system, the article, “Obesity and Overweight” provides facts and findings on obesity.

<http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/obesity.htm>

This site links to *Obesity*, the journal of the Obesity Society.

<http://www.obesityresearch.org/>

Class Activity

Title: Childhood Obesity and the Media

Time required: Two to three days outside class time (preferably during Saturday morning cartoons) to collect information. One class period to discuss findings.

Materials needed: Access to children's television programming.

Objective: To have students become aware of the frequency of food products targeted towards children and how this has potential to lead to obesity.

Description: Students watch 1 hr of children's media to collect information on the prevalence of food advertisements and media targeted towards children. One time for this activity would be during Saturday morning cartoons. Suggested networks to watch include Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, and The Disney Channel.

Handout: Childhood Obesity and the Media

Briefly note the content of each advertisement you view during one hour of children's television:

1. How many advertisements did you view during the hour of children's television?
2. How many of these advertisements were for unhealthy food or drink?
3. How many of these advertisements were for healthy food or drink?
4. How many of these advertisements were for products that involve physical activity.
5. What efforts did advertisers make to attract children to unhealthy food.
6. What efforts did advertisers make to educate children about healthy food choices?

Cyberbullying

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Cyberbullying or electronic bullying refers to the use of “electronics to taunt, insult, threaten, harass, and/or intimidate a peer” (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007, p. 565). Survey results have differed in regard to the most common means of cyberbullying, perhaps due to changes in the popularity and accessibility of forms of electronic communication over time, but it may involve instant messaging, text messaging, e-mail, chat room interactions, and website postings (Finn, 2004; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2005). Willard (2005) identified several forms of electronic bullying, including the following:

Flaming. Online “fights” using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.

Harassment. Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages.

Denigration. “Dissing” someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.

Impersonation. Breaking into someone’s account, posing as that person and sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person’s reputation or friendships.

Outing and Trickery. Sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images online. Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online.

Exclusion. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group, like a “buddy list.”

Cyberstalking. Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating. Engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for her or her safety. (pp. 1-2)

Surveys of adolescents’ online behavior have indicated that up to one quarter of respondents have been the victims of cyberbullying (Li, 2005). Although most of the research has focused on middle and high school students, there is evidence that college students experience cyberbullying as well (Finn, 2004). In terms of gender, females tend to be more frequent victims of cyberbullying (Li), although statistics regarding the gender of the cyberbullies have been inconsistent. One clear finding across studies is that a significant percentage of victims of cyberbullying have also acted as cyberbullies themselves (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). One explanation for this finding is that electronic communication provides a less threatening means by which victims are able to seek revenge upon those who bullied them (Kowalski & Limber). Research has supported a link between real-world bullying and bullying in cyberspace, in that real-world bullies and victims also tend to take on these roles online (Li).

The literature on cyberbullying has indicated that significant adjustment problems are associated with this form of harassment (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, and Finkelhor (2006) found that over a third of victims report “feeling very or extremely

distressed by the harassment” (p. 1170). Raskauskas and Stoltz reported an increased risk of depressive symptoms, such as feelings of sadness and hopelessness, among victims of electronic bullying.

Kowalski and Limber (2007) pointed out that, as compared with real-world bullying, victims of cyberbullying may feel particularly vulnerable because electronic bullying can occur at any time and may result in the rapid circulation of harmful materials among a large number of people. An additional source of vulnerability in cyberbullying may stem from the fact that in a large number of cases the identity of the bully is unknown to the victim (Kowalski & Limber; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007)

Investigators of cyberbullying (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Ybarra et al., 2006) have called on schools to be more proactive in addressing this problem. Beran and Li (2005) suggested that most teachers and school administrators are unaware of the prevalence and severity of electronic bullying. Li (2005) found that only about one third of victims of cyberbullying, and a similar percentage of students who knew of peers experiencing cyberbullying, ever reported the incident to an adult. Li’s research suggested that students believed adults in school would be unlikely to take action in cyberbullying cases. Students may be hesitant to tell parents about cyberbullying for a different reason. Kowalski and Limber (2007) reported that teens are concerned that if parents knew about cyberbullying they might limit their access to online or cell phone communication or they might access material that the teens, themselves, have posted on the Internet.

Experts have called for the integration of information on electronic bullying into existing programs, such as those aimed at conflict resolution (Stomfay-Stitz & Wheeler, 2007) and preventing bullying in the schools (Ybarra et al., 2006). Teaching young people how to guard personal contact information, such as cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses, is one strategy for decreasing cyberbullying (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). Another approach targets sensitivity to interpersonal cues. Kowalski and Limber (2007) suggested that one factor in electronic bullying may be the inability of bullies to receive any visual feedback about the emotional impact of their communication on the victim. Such feedback, they propose, might indicate to bullies that their message was too severe or was misinterpreted. Ybarra et al. noted that individuals with social problems are more susceptible to electronic bullying and suggested that programs to prevent such incidents include training to assist adolescents with interpersonal and communication skills.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

Criminal Justice Professors Justin W. Patchin and Sameer Hinduja provide a collection of resources on cyberbullying.

<http://www.cyberbullying.us/>

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children provides resources on the prevention of cyberbullying.

<http://www.netsmartz.org/resources/reallife.htm>

This site provides information about *Delete Cyberbullying*, a public advertising campaign focused on preventing cyberbullying.

<http://www.ncpc.org/newsroom/current-campaigns/cyberbullying/>

Information on cyberbullying from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services may be found at this site.

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adult/indexAdult.asp?Area=cyberbullying>

Information on cyberbullying from the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use may be found at this site.

<http://www.cyberbully.org/>

Video:

Growing Up Online (60 min., PBS Frontline/ Ark Media). Cyberbullying is one of several topics investigated in this documentary on the perspectives of teens and parents about the role of the Internet in the lives of adolescents. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/#press>

Class Activity

Title: Cyberbullying Prevention Programs

Time required: One hr

Materials required: Interview Questions (handout)

Objective: To investigate local efforts to address cyberbullying

Description of project or activity: Each student or pair of students chooses a different local school and interviews the school counselor or appropriate administrator about the prevalence of, and efforts to prevent, cyberbullying.

Handout: Cyberbullying Prevention Programs

Beran and Li (2005) suggest that most teachers and school administrators are unaware of the prevalence and severity of cyberbullying. This activity involves investigating a middle school, high school, or university in your area to learn about their efforts to address and prevent cyberbullying.

Directions:

Make an appointment to speak with the school counselor or person in charge of bullying issues. It may be possible to conduct this interview over the phone, though it will likely take a minimum of 15 minutes.

Conduct the interview using the interview format included in this activity.

Answer the reaction question that follows in order to analyze the information that you gathered.

Name and description of school you selected:

Interview Questions

1. Do you know of instances of cyberbullying * (also called electronic bullying) in your school? Please explain.
2. How does your school deal with cyberbullying incidents?
3. What information is communicated to students about cyberbullying?
4. What information is communicated to teachers about cyberbullying?
5. What information is communicated to parents about cyberbullying?
6. Does your school have any plans to expand or change its policies or programs on cyberbullying in the future? Please explain.

*You may need to explain what is meant by electronic bullying or cyberbullying.

Reactions: Based on what you have learned about cyberbullying, do you feel this school's practices are appropriate and sufficient? How might it better address this problem? Please explain.

Reference:

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Media Portrayals of Mental Health Professionals

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Survey research has indicated that for most people in the United States television is the primary source of information about mental health issues (Diefenboch & West, 2007; Orchowski, Spickard, & McNamara, 2006). The media influences viewers in terms of their knowledge of the experience of mental illness, effective treatments for psychological disorders, and the therapeutic process. In addition, television, film, and print media tend to inaccurately portray mental health professionals as largely unethical and incompetent (Vogel, Gentile, & Kaplan, 2008). These unethical behaviors frequently take the form of harming the client or crossing professional boundaries (Orchowski et al.). Bischoff and Reiter (1999) found that male rather than female clinicians in film were more likely to be portrayed as incompetent and inept in addressing emotional problems of others. Female clinicians were more likely to be depicted as sexualized (Stout, Villegas, & Jennings, 2004). Vogel and colleagues have suggested that distorted media portrayals may deter viewers from taking advantage of mental health services.

Anderson (2003) has recommended that mental health professionals become more involved in advocating for accurate media images. In fact, there have been some efforts to increase the accuracy of mental health professionals in television and film. An example of this effort is the Media Watch Committee of the American Psychological Association Division 46, which has established the Golden Psi Media Award for television and film producers who depict mental healthcare professionals accurately (Orchowski et al., 2006).

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

The site, *The 10 Greatest Psychiatrists in Movie History*, has clips of mental health workers in the media.

<http://www.nerve.com/CS/blogs/screengrab/archive/2008/02/28/the-10-greatest-psychiatrists-in-movie-history-part-1.aspx>

Articles:

Sleek, S. (1998, November). How are psychologists portrayed on screen? *APA Online*, 29 (11).

Retrieved from: <http://www.apa.org/monitor/nov98/film.html>

Lehmann, C. (2002, August 2). Positive psychiatry portrayals a rarity in Hollywood. *Psychiatric News*, 37(15), 10. Retrieved from: <http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/37/15/10>

Podcast:

Hollywood's Crazy Idea of Mental Hospitals

This National Public Radio podcast discusses unrealistic media images of mental health facilities.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4799208>

Class Activity

Title: Images of Psychologists

Time required: About 20 min to complete the handout and hold discussion

Materials required: Pen or pencil and the handout questions

Objective: To discuss the implications of media images of psychologists.

Description of project or activity: Students respond to questions about their recollections of media images of psychologists and then discuss their findings in class.

Handout: Images of Psychologists

1. What media images of psychologists do you recall?
2. What characteristics do you associate with these psychologists? Do you think these characteristics are typical of actual psychologists?
3. What type of problems do these psychologists address? Do you think these are typical of the problems for which people seek therapy or counseling?
4. What treatments do these psychologists use? Do they seem to be successful? Why or why not?

Mental Illness as Portrayed by Mass Media

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Pirkis, Blood, Francis, and McCallum (2006) pointed out that, “the primary imperative of the film and television industries is to entertain and achieve box office or ratings success” (p. 536). Given this motive it is not surprising that certain groups are not always portrayed in the most accurate light. One particular group that is misrepresented in media portrayals is people with mental illnesses. These portrayals tend to include both inaccuracies about the nature of specific disorders as well as stereotypes about the characters’ behavior.

Hylar, Gabbard, and Schneider (1991) identified six categories of psychiatric characters in popular films: homicidal maniac, narcissistic parasite, seductress, enlightened member of society, rebellious free spirit, and zoo specimen. These authors suggested that media portrayals have a significant impact on the public’s views about the condition and treatment of individuals with mental illnesses. Diefenbach and West (2007) found that characters portrayed as mentally ill were 10 times more likely to commit crimes on television shows than characters who were not mentally ill.

Negative media portrayals of mental illness may be found in children’s films as well as popular films for adults. Lawson and Fouts (2004) analyzed Disney animated films and found that 85% of Disney’s animated movies contained references to characters with mental illnesses, with 21% of the main characters referred to as mentally ill. Wahl, Hanrahan, Karl, Lasher, and Swaye, (2007) found relatively few depictions of mental illnesses in children’s television programming, yet in those they did find, characters with mental illnesses were often portrayed as threatening, as someone to be avoided by others, and as labeled with negative terms (e.g., “crazy” or “nuts”).

Several recent publications have examined the accuracy of media depictions of mental illness (see, e.g., Robinson, 2003; Wedding, Boyd, & Niemied, 2005). Levin (2001) suggested that deliberate efforts to portray mental illness more accurately and positively have increased in recent years. This may be due in part to greater involvement of people with mental illnesses in producing and contributing to print media, television, and film (SAMHSA Health Information Network, n.d.).

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Multimedia Resources

Video:

West 47th Street (90 min., LCmedia). This film explores the stigma associated with mental illness.

http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2003/west47thstreet/special_face.html

Transcript:

This segment of the National Public Radio program *On the Media* discusses the misuse of the word "schizophrenic" in a variety of media sources.

<http://www.onthemedial.org/transcripts/2001/09/08/07>

Class Activity

Title: Misinterpreting Mental Illness

Time required: One class session

Materials required: Pen, handout, reference material on psychological disorders, a film involving character(s) with mental illness

Objective: To investigate the accuracy of film portrayals of characters with mental illness.

Description of project or activity: Students view portions of films (individually, in small groups, or as a class) that involve characters portrayed as having mental illnesses and determine the accuracy of the portrayals. Wedding, Boyd, and Niemied's (2008) list of films illustrating psychopathology may be found on the OTRP website at <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/resources/resources.php?category=Film%20in%20Psychology>.

Handout: Misinterpreting Mental Illness

1. What mental illnesses were presented by the film?
2. Is the mental illness accurately portrayed by the film? What discrepancies are there?
3. What are possible consequences of the portrayals of mental illness in this film?

Prosocial Behavior and the Media

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Much research has focused on the actions people take when others are in need. Initially, prosocial behavior was explained as “the result of ‘tender emotions’ created by the parental instinct” (McDougall cited in Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005, p. 365). However, the definition of prosocial behavior has changed greatly since then and can be regarded as “behaviors a person carries out without considering his or her own safety or interests” (American Psychological Association, 2009). According to Wallace (1999), research on prosocial behavior began after Kitty Genovese’s brutal death in 1964 because as she was being stabbed by her attacker, nobody attempted to help and the police were not called until after the attack was completed. This disturbing story and the questions regarding the character of the witnesses led to the need for a better understanding of why certain people help and why others choose to stand by and do nothing.

The answers came down to something simple: numbers. The more people around, the less likely help is offered to a stranger; this is referred to as the *bystander effect* (Darley & Latané, 1968) or the *numbers effect* (Wallace, 1999). This effect can occur for several reasons: (a) being in a large group may cause a person who needs help to go unnoticed unless the person makes it evident, (b) relying on others to understand the extent of the situation can cause a person to ignore the need for assistance when nobody else attempts to help, and (c) the greater the number of people, the greater the diffusion of responsibility (Wallace).

Although the numbers effect explains why people may not help in person, when it comes to the Internet the numbers effect is a bit more complicated because other factors are involved (Wallace, 1999). The main factor is that the exact number of people with whom a person interacts is not always known or may be incorrect. If people underestimate the number of others online, they may be more willing to help out (Wallace). This underestimation may account for the tremendous amount of help found online. People help others online quite often, such as volunteering to answer questions or participating in support groups to meet the specific needs of others.

Research on prosocial behavior and television differs from Internet research on the topic. When portrayed on television, prosocial behavior has been studied similarly to the way the effects of violence on television are studied. Berkowitz (1984) concluded that media can lead children to both positive and negative behaviors. His research showed that educational media can lead to prosocial behavior. The main factor is how the media present information. Berkowitz believed that media have the power to increase prosocial behaviors.

An example of the media facilitating prosocial behavior is the news coverage of the Ethiopian famine of the 1980s and the subsequent Live Aid rock music concert, which raised over \$100 million to aid Ethiopia (Giles, 2003). Other television programming used to promote prosocial behavior includes sitcoms and dramas in many parts of the world (Giles).

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Multimedia Resources

Website:

This site contains lists of free and anonymous support groups of all kinds.

http://dailystrength.org/?ad=supportgroup?_ds_partid=googshort&gclid=CMG0sPn7qJICFQ4JPQodTzZzSA

Transcript:

The Witnesses That Didn't

From National Public Radio's On the Media program, this story details the Kitty Genovese murder.

<http://www.onthemedial.org/episodes/2009/03/27/segments/127346>

Class Activity

Title: Helping Others Online

Time required: 1 hr class time, 10 to 20 min per day for 3 days, 1 week to complete assignment

Materials required: Pen, handout, access to a computer

Objective: To discover how the *numbers effect* works online

Description of activity: Each student chooses a game room online either by searching “free game rooms online” or consulting <http://www.gameroom2000.com/> or <http://www.tothegames.com/>. After registering and creating a user name, students should visit the game room for about 10 to 20 min a day, for 3 days. The goal for students is to ask for help from their fellow players and to observe how much help is offered. Each student generates questions that require help or problems that relate to the game. During each visit, students answer the questions on the handout. After a week, use the discussion questions to have the students talk about their experiences and how much help they received online.

Handout: Helping Others Online

User name: _____

Day 1:

Title of Game/Game Room:

Game objective:

Number of players present in room:

Problem created/Why did you need help?

How quickly did others offer help? What did they do?

How helpful were your fellow players?

Day 2:

Title of Game/Game Room:

Game objective:

Number of players present in room:

Problem created/Why did you need help?

User names of those who offered help:

How quickly did others offer help? What did they do?

How helpful were your fellow players?

Day 3:

Title of Game/Game Room:

Game objective:

Number of players present in room:

Problem created/Why did you need help?

User names of those who offered help:

How quickly did others offer help? What did they do?

How helpful were your fellow players?

Discussion Questions:

1. Were you surprised by the amount of help you received from fellow players?
2. Did your results differ from what would be predicted by the *numbers effect*?
3. Was your username gender specific? If so, do you feel that you were treated differently because of this?
4. Compared to classmates of the other gender, how much help were you offered?
5. Do you think gender makes a difference? If so, how might one directly test for differences in helping behavior based on gender?

The Televangelists

Lecture/Discussion Notes

The use of television by evangelists has become an increasingly popular and important tool for reaching fellow followers (Mills, 1990). This type of religious television is most often referred to as “televangelism.” According to Peck (1993) “televangelism combines some of the elements of revivalism with the formats and constraints of the television medium” (p. 20).

According to Howley (2001), religious broadcasting began to grow quickly in the 1970s with shows such as Pat Robertson’s “700 Club.” By 1985, the audience for religious broadcasting was estimated to be between 13 and 15 million viewers. Two of the most popular of the religious television networks include the Christian Broadcasting Network and Trinity Broadcasting System. Televangelism ranges widely, from giant crusade-like sermons, where the pastor travels around the audience “healing” people, to religious talk shows in which the host simply holds discussions with different people each episode.

Schultze (1991) suggested that televangelism is driven by a business perspective. People want to be entertained when they watch television, so religion must be presented in a “creative and visual way” (Schultze, p. 15). Research has shown that certain types of programs attract a wider audience, and in turn, increase revenue. A number of Christian programs offer simple solutions to complicated problems (often for a charitable donation) such as transforming a life, curing illnesses, or soul redemption (Peck, 1993).

Many viewers of religious programs are looking for an intimate relationship between themselves and the televangelist. These viewers are seeking a “para-social interaction” or a simulated conversation (Peck, p. 101). Research has indicated that viewers receive the most gratification from a broadcast during the sermons, preaching, and music, and from the experience of “having your spirits lifted” and “feeling close to God” (Peck, p. 109). TV hosts of these shows utilize specific methods and tactics to create the feeling of a conversation and a relationship. Specific camera techniques and methods of addressing the viewers are used to close the gap between viewer and host (Peck). The televangelist may also disclose personal stories to become closer to the audience. If the viewers are loyal to a certain televangelist, they are likely to be less critical of the things he or she says and are more likely to comply with requests, such as for donations (Peck). For example, the televangelist Oral Roberts threatened that God would “call me home” if viewers were unable to donate \$8 million by a specified date (Peck, p. 2). His viewers complied and he was able to meet his fund raising goal.

In 1988 and 1989, a number of scandals related to popular televangelists surfaced in the media, ranging from sex scandals to financial fraud. Following these events, the popularity of all religious shows dropped significantly (Smith, 1992) and have remained below their early 1980s peak in terms of income and audience size (Winzenburg, 2000). However, it is possible that new media, such as the Internet site tangle.com (formerly godtube.com), may fulfill some of the same functions as those addressed by religious television.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This website provides links to religious television around the world.

http://wwitv.com/portal.htm?http://wwitv.com/religious_tv/

This online Christian community (formerly Godtube), posts religiously themed videos.

www.tangle.com

This site is televangelist Jimmy Swaggart's home page.

<http://www.jsm.org/>

Article:

Echchaibi, N. (2005, November 4). When mullahs ride the airwaves: Muslim televangelists and the Saudi connection. *Flow*. 3. Retrieved from <http://flowtv.org/?p=311>.

Class Activity

Title: Televangelists and Para-social Relationships

Time required: Approximately 1 hr

Materials required: Handout and access to television

Objective: To investigate the strategies used by televangelists to establish a relationship with viewers.

Description of activity: Students watch a discussion-based televangelist TV show or a televised sermon, then complete the handout.

Handout: Televangelists and Para-social Relationships

1. Describe the type of show that you watched.
2. What strategies were used in the show to keep your attention?
3. Did you agree with some of the points that were made by the hosts? Which points?
4. Did the host discuss personal experiences? If so, did any relate to your own experiences?
5. What media strategies were used to make viewers feel as if they were having a conversation with the host?
6. What strategies were used to encourage viewers to call or donate money?
7. Did you feel a sense of community while viewing this show?
8. In what other ways did you feel the host was trying to establish a relationship with the viewer?

Media Depictions of Romantic Relationships

Lecture/Discussion Notes

One of the ways mass media influences viewers is in regard to perceptions of romantic relationships (Galician, 2007). Relationships that mass media portray are, for the most part, unrealistic and may be an unhealthy model to follow. Such dysfunctional relationships could eventually lead to depression, abuse, and violence (Galician). Media portrayals of abusive relationships usually emphasize lust and physical attraction over the abusive component (Jefson, 2006). This theme frequently appears in sitcoms that produce humor from conflict. However, the negative consequences of harmful interactions between couples are rarely shown (Buslig & Ocaña, 2007). For these reasons, it is important to be able to decode mass media's portrayals of romantic relationships.

Magazines set agendas by presenting and identifying topics that are featured on their covers. Agenda setting theory states that the media does not tell people how to think, but what to think about (Johnson, 2007). Johnson studied the women's magazine, *Cosmopolitan*, and the men's magazine, *Maxim*, over a year's time (12 issues) and showed that 50% of both magazines' cover lines were dedicated to sex. *Cosmopolitan* had 23% of its cover lines displaying topics of romance or relationships, whereas *Maxim* had only 4% dealing with romance or relationships. Because of the prominence of sex discussed in these magazines, readers may believe that sex and the attractiveness of the human body are the key elements that determine a romantic relationship (Johnson).

Bader (2007) used cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986) to investigating popular music. This theory states that media images shape heavy viewers' -- or listeners' -- perceptions of reality. Of 160 college students surveyed, 83% said that song lyrics affected their behavior, 56% knew the lyrics to their favorite song, and 60% agreed with messages that were expressed in the song (Bader). This is worrisome because Bader coded 100 songs (5 from each of the 10 years of the 1960s and 1990s) and found 75% contained song lyrics based on myths about romance (see list of Galician's myths in the following Class Activity).

In Bader's (2007) study examining these myths in music, the only song that did not have any of these stereotypes was "MMMBop" by Hanson. Half of that song did not contain words, and the other half was actually quite realistic about relationships. The irony of this was that the Hanson brothers were 11, 13, and 16 years old when they wrote the song. Songs that embody many relationship myths included *No Scrubs* by TLC (1999), *Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In* by The Fifth Dimension (1969), and *I Do It for You* by Brian Adams (1991), but the song that scored highest in this study was *Oh, Pretty Woman* by Roy Orbison (1964; Bader).

Unrealistic portrayals of relationships can be seen in most movies and television shows. For example, in *You've Got Mail*, a series of hostile encounters results in the two main characters (played by Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks) falling in love (Asenas, 2007).

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

Media Awareness Network. This site discusses mass media portrayals of women, focusing on sexuality and relationships.

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/women_and_girls/women_sex.cfm

This National Coalition Against Domestic Violence resource provides links to information on legislation, publications, and volunteer opportunities dealing with domestic violence.

<http://www.ncadv.org/>

Videos:

This trailer for *You've Got Mail* (1998) shows the two main characters' relationship throughout the movie and the final scene illustrating the myth that love will overcome all negative aspects of a relationship.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCetfaS7GAo&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPA8v06EsIY>

The music video “I Do” by 98 degrees, is a good example of a song that shows unrealistic expectations of love.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4wirSuglyc

Class Activity

Title: Unrealistic Expectations

Time Required: 2 hr

Materials required: Pen or pencil and computer (optional)

Objective: To decode popular song lyrics about romantic relationships

Description of project or activity: Ask students to think of a song that is about love, sex, or romance in a healthy form and discuss the following question: What messages does this song convey about love? (It may be difficult to find a song that discusses healthy relationships because they are so rare.) Then ask them to think of a song that is about love, sex, or romance in an unhealthy form and answer the same question. Give the students at least 45 min for this portion of the activity. Finally, ask the students to get into small groups and develop (and possibly perform) lyrics that are healthy representations of a romantic relationship. A list of Galician's relationship myths (below) can be distributed to help the students decode songs.

Resources for song lyrics:

<http://www.romantic-lyrics.com/>

<http://www.songlyrics.com/>

Galician's Myths of Romantic Relationships

1. Your perfect partner is cosmically predestined, so nothing/nobody can ultimately separate you.
2. There is such a thing as "love at first sight."
3. Your true soul mate should know what you're thinking or feeling (without you having to tell).
4. If your partner is truly "meant for you," sex is easy and wonderful.
5. To attract and keep a man, a woman should look like a model or a centerfold.
6. The man should not be shorter, weaker, younger, poorer, or less successful than the woman.
7. The love of a good and faithful true woman can change a man from a "beast" into a "prince."
8. Bickering and fighting a lot mean that a man and a woman really love each other passionately.
9. All you really need is love, so it doesn't matter if you and your lover have very different values.
10. The right mate "completes you"--filling your needs and making your dreams come true.
11. In real life, actors and actresses are often very much like the romantic characters they portray.
12. Since mass media portrayals of romance are not "real," they don't affect you.

Galician, M.-L. (2004). *Sex, love, and romance in the mass media: Analysis and criticism of unrealistic portrayals and their influence*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Social Networking Sites: Myspace™ and Facebook™

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Social networking is “the generic name used for a range of Internet based techniques for communicating online” (Goodings, Locke, & Brown, 2007, p. 436). On these social networking sites, people create profiles that are made specifically to display their personal information. Also, individuals can customize their profiles to display photos, videos, or comments (Eberhardt, 2007). Individuals’ interactions with others on these social networks are associated with both positive and negative outcomes.

Social networking sites have become part of everyday life and allow people to connect with their friends virtually. One example of this type of site is Facebook.com. Facebook™ was created by students at Harvard College in 2004 as an internal friendship network but grew to over 300 million users by October 2009 (Hesse, 2009). Facebook™, similar to other social networking sites, allows individuals to find friends who have the same interests, find information about classes, feel as though they are part of a large community, and browse online to find a potential mate. Teachers can use social networking sites to connect with students about class assignments. On the other hand, problems identified with such sites include accounts of stalking, members locating parties for underage drinking, and groups forming based on racist goals (Shier, 2005). Another example of a networking site, very similar to Facebook™ though with a smaller number of users, is Myspace.com. On Myspace.com it is possible to view others interests and values and to construct one’s own profile (Goodings et al., 2007).

News reports have increasingly raised concern about what individuals are posting and revealing on their profiles (Walker, 2008). Walker stated what looks like people exposing everything about their personal lives is actually a distorted version of their real lives. A Pew Internet and American Life survey found that almost half of the teenagers that they surveyed posted “at least a little and sometimes a lot of false information” (Walker). Recent legislation is aimed at protecting individuals who use social networking sites. On Oct 13, 2008, Congress passed the Keeping the Internet Devoid of Sexual Predators (KIDS) Act of 2008 (H. R. Rep. No. 110-400, 2008). This bill requires convicted sexual offenders to register their e-mail addresses and IM screen names with a government-controlled database so that they can be traced and eliminated from social networking sites.

There are many positive benefits to online social networking sites. Social networking sites allow individuals to have a connection with a larger community. This provides them with an important connection to their educational community. Online social networking sites also help students transition to new situations. They use the sites to keep connections with their friends from their past. In addition, social networks help students work through academic and personal problems, find friends who are having the same problems, and find groups that can help create their own identity (Eberhardt, 2007).

Even though there are benefits to these sites, there are also many negative effects. Though rare, posting profiles may expose people to online stalking or physical attacks (Eberhardt, 2007). Social networking sites can also lead students to create negative opinions about people without even meeting them, thus limiting social opportunities (Eberhardt). Similarly, Brown, Broderick, and Lee (2007) found that people portray themselves as something they are not and start to appear as “actors” on these websites. Another negative effect of social networking sites is that

people become so focused on maintaining their friendships from the past that they do not form any new friendships (Eberhardt).

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site sponsored by the Federal Trade Commission provides a short and useful list of reminders for staying safe online.

www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec14.htm

X-Block trains teen mentors, hosts teen-produced vodcasts (video podcasts), and sponsors contests. There are free online tutorials, printable newsletters, and other resources.

<http://xblock.isafe.org>

This site is designed to help educators gain skills needed to safely and responsibly harness the Internet's potential. It helps in promoting student's creative inquiry, collaboration, and critical thinking.

<http://www.cybersmart.org/home/>

This site, sponsored by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, provides an overview of social networking.

www.pewInternet.org/PPF/r/198/report_display.asp

This Internet tip line from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children encourages children who have been threatened online to tell a trusted adult and contact the CyberTipline.

www.cybertipline.com

Video:

Social Networking in Plain English (2 min.) This video from the Tools for Outreach & Teaching Series (TOTS) at UBC Library is for people who wonder why social networking web sites are so popular.

<http://tots.pbwiki.com/Social-Networking>

Podcast:

Facebook, MySpace Divide Along Social Lines

This National Public Radio podcast discusses social and ethnic group differences in choice of social networking sites.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113974893>

Class Activity

Time: 1 hr class discussion, two days outside of class

Materials: Poster board for profiles

Objective: Students will be able to describe positive and negative effects of Myspace and Facebook profiles. Students will be able to create a profile that models appropriate material.

Description: Before starting this activity, hold a class discussion on social networking profiles' positive and negative effects on students. Next, in small groups, half of the class creates a positive profile, in which they promote appropriate material that should be posted on someone's profile. The other half of the class creates a negative profile, in which they demonstrate inappropriate material to be posted on someone's profile. All the groups present their profiles to the class. Students will be able to see different examples of what should and should not be posted on their profiles. If an opportunity to do so is available, college students might help to conduct this activity with middle or high school students.

The Effects of Social Network Sites

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Research on social network sites (SNS) is relatively new and has encompassed a wide variety of topics from psychological behavioral effects to business implications in communication and marketing. There are various definitions of SNS. Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network sites as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others in the system” (¶ 4-¶ 5). Within the last few years, there have been some interesting findings on the differences between users and nonusers of SNS in terms of Internet addiction, friendships, and several other topics (Hardie & Tee, 2007; Hargittai, 2007; Walther, Van der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008).

Hargittai (2007) found some fundamental differences between those who use and do not use SNS in a sample of 1,060 first-year students at the University of Illinois, Chicago. The primary demographic predictor of being a user was gender; women were more likely to use SNS than men. Another predictor of SNS use was living situation. Students who lived with their parents used SNS significantly less than those who lived with roommates or on their own. Hargittai also investigated several background characteristics such as a student’s race, ethnicity, and parental schooling level but found no relevant correlations to SNS use, although these characteristics affected which site the participants used. For instance, Latino/a students, who made up 18.8% of the sample, were considerably less likely to use Facebook™, and more likely to use MySpace™. Asians and Asian Americans were significantly less likely to use MySpace™ than both Latino/a and White students but more likely to use Xanga™ and Friendster™. This different pattern of usage is most likely due to offline influences, such as friends. Because people are likely to socialize with those who are like them, it is not surprising that those of similar backgrounds would tend to use the same SNS (Hargittai).

Some research has also examined the behavioral effects of Internet usage and SNS. Some fear that the Internet can be an isolating force that prevents interaction with others in a face to face context. Hardie and Tee (2007) used Young’s (1996) Internet Addiction Test to determine 96 participants’ level of Internet addiction as average users, overusers, or Internet addicts. The results indicated that age was a significant predictor of the type of Internet use in which participants engaged. There were 38 average users mostly in their late 20s, 50 overusers mostly in their mid 20s, and 8 Internet addicts mostly in their mid 30s. Hardie and Tee noted that their study does not provide an explanation for the breakdown of ages into the three groups and that longitudinal research would be better able to explain these differences. Levels of both neuroticism and social anxiety were significant predictors as well. Each factor positively correlated with the level of Internet use, such that high levels of neuroticism and social anxiety were associated with greater Internet use. The level of Internet use was also positively correlated with the amount of online support received from Internet social networks. Therefore, level of neuroticism and extensive use of Internet social support networks were adequate predictors of an individual’s potential for problematic Internet use.

Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten (2006) conducted a study in the Netherlands on social self-esteem and its relation to SNS. They defined social self-esteem as “adolescents’ evaluation of their self-worth or satisfaction with three dimensions of self: physical appearance, romantic attractiveness, and the ability to form and maintain close friendships” (p. 585). Their results

indicated that adolescents' self-esteem was affected solely by the positive or negative tone of the feedback they received from others on their profile. Positive feedback was correlated with an increase in self-esteem, and negative feedback was correlated with a decline in self-esteem. Neither the number of friendships nor romantic friendships formed had a relevant effect on social self-esteem.

Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) focused on the effects of friendship and SNS. They found the maintenance and creation of social capital, the ability for an individual "to draw on resources from other members of the networks to which he or she belongs" (¶ 10), was positively related to certain kinds of Facebook™ use on the Michigan State University (MSU) campus. Ellison et al. looked at three types of social capital: bridging, bonding, and maintained. Bridging assessed the strength of the ties to the MSU community and how these ties affected students' social abilities. Ellison et al. found certain types of Facebook™ use, based on intensity measures, can help students create and maintain bridging social capital. Students who reported lower levels of bridging social capital and self-esteem were also less intense users of Facebook™ and reported less satisfaction with life on the MSU campus. Bonding social capital is found among people in close knit groups, such as family and close friends. It accounted for less of the variance than bridging; however, it was still predicted by the intensity of Facebook™ use. Other factors such as ethnicity, year in school, living on campus, self-esteem, and satisfaction with MSU life were significantly related to bonding social capital. This may be due to the role Facebook™ plays in helping continue pre-existing close relationships (Ellison et al.). Finally, maintained social capital, the ability to maintain valuable connections as one progresses through life changes, was also considerably affected by the intensity of Facebook™ use. General Internet use was also a significant predictor of maintained social capital but not bridging and bonding social capital.

Another study on Facebook™ by Walther et al. (2008) examined the impact of friends' comments and physical attractiveness on assessments of the physical attractiveness of the profile owner. Wall postings by others that implied negative moral behavior decreased the attractiveness of female profile owners, but increased the attractiveness of male profile owners. The profile owners' physical attractiveness significantly varied in the same direction as the attractiveness of the friends who had posted on their wall.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

The Pew Internet and American Life Project provides articles on the impact of the Internet on families, communities, work and home, daily life, education, health care, and civic and political life.

<http://www.pewInternet.org>

This site is a resource center for social networking that provides a links to a wide variety of social networking materials.

<http://www.deitel.com/ResourceCenters/Web20/SocialNetworking/tabid/1231/Default.aspx>

BNET provides multiple resources on online social networking and how it affects business. There are videos, articles, presentations and much more that can be viewed for free.

<http://www.bnet.com/>

Podcast:

Mourning our Electronically Tethered Lives

This National Public Radio podcast discusses how widespread use of technology has impacted our lives.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88552617>

Facebook, MySpace Divide Along Social Lines

This National Public Radio podcast explores demographic differences in the users of different social networking sites.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113974893>

Class Activity

Title: Are You an Internet Addict?

Time required: 1 hr for quiz, handout, and discussion

Materials required: Internet access (unless test is taken at home and brought to class with results), and handout.

Objective: For students to assess their level of Internet addiction and reflect on their findings.

Description of Activity: Students may take Young's (1998) Internet Addiction Test at http://www.netaddiction.com/index.php?option=com_bfquiz&view=onepage&catid=46&Itemid=106# either before or during class and determine their score. Then they can consider the questions provided on the website below the scoring scale. Students will then individually fill out the Are You an Internet Addict? handout and discuss their responses as a class.

Handout: Are You an Internet Addict?

1. Do you feel your score was reflective of your Internet habits? Please explain.
2. Reflect on questions on which you scored a 4 or 5. Prior to taking the test, were you aware of these behaviors? How did you view them?
3. Do you think you need to reassess how much time you spend on the Internet? If yes, how will you do that?

Reference:

Young, K. (1996). Internet addiction: The emergence of a new clinical disorder. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 3, 237-244.

Identity and Virtual Reality

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Identity is typically associated with categorizing an individual into a social category, whether it is by gender, age, ethnicity, or common interest (Fiol & O'Connor, 2005). With the advent of virtual communities, social identity becomes increasingly complex. Virtual communities involve repeated interactions within a space designated by a common interest (Utz, 2003). Members of virtual communities design avatars to represent themselves and to portray what they view as desirable characteristics (Talamo & Ligorio, 2001), even though the avatar may be quite different from the actual individual's identity. For example, Kang (2003) described the common practice of *cyber-passing*, in which people create avatars with a racial/ethnic identity that differs from their own.

Every virtual community has a specific set of resources that can be used to create interactions that are essentially only possible in that environment. Users of a specific virtual community will usually categorize themselves as part of that particular community instead of stressing their uniqueness as an avatar (Turner, 1999). Although avatars are merely a representation of an individual in a virtual community, identity still is more strongly determined by the environment itself (Utz, 2003). Bers (2001) found that when students were allowed to create an avatar's identity before the environment was created, the community contained a much more diverse and complex set of individuals.

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Multimedia Resources

Websites:

This site provides links to a variety of virtual communities.

www.virtualworldbuddies.snappville.com/

This site from Activeworlds allows users to create their own virtual world and choose from a wide variety of avatars.

<http://www.activeworlds.com/>

This site is a virtual community for a younger audience in which users can create their own avatar, buy it clothes, and so on. The avatars in this site are called zwinkys. A companion site, zwinky.com, is dedicated to accessorizing the zwinky avatars, with zwinky money.

http://zwinky.smileycentral.com/download/firefox_install.jhtml

Podcast:

Go Get a (Virtual) Life

National Public Radio's Talk of the Nation guests and callers discuss why virtual lives are so compelling.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=14087749>

Video:

Growing Up Online (60 min, PBS Frontline/Ark Media). Identity in the virtual world is a topic in the documentary, which focuses on adolescents searching for identity online.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/#press_install.jhtml

Class Activity

Title: Me in Virtual Reality.

Time required: Extended over 4 days, in class time about 30 min each day (excluding time at home).

Materials required: Computers with Internet access.

Objective: To see the way students choose to depict themselves in a world they created as a class and discuss it.

Description of Project:

The class will explore the website <http://www.activeworlds.com>. Here they can create a world together as a class. They should discuss the kind of world and the type of interactive features they would like to create for their avatars. As members of the class add what they want, they should explain to the class why they choose each feature. In the next step class members create their own avatar and write down why they chose to depict themselves in that way. After students spend time developing their avatars and the virtual community, they spend additional time interacting freely in that world. The instructor can observe some of the social interaction between avatars and make notes for discussion.

Handout: Me in Virtual Reality

1. Please describe your avatar using as much detail as possible.
2. What did you contribute to the virtual community and why did you think it was important to do so?
3. Do you feel that you mirrored your real life identity through your avatar in this virtual community?
4. Describe your interactions with other avatars and discuss the nature of social interaction in a virtual community.

Realistic Virtual Reality

Lecture/Discussion Notes

Research on virtual reality has identified several factors that impact its success, including the sense of presence, social interaction, and character development. A primary factor that influences how virtual reality games and simulators are perceived is presence. Presence has been defined by Persky and Blascovich (2007) as “the feeling of physical existence within a virtual environment” (p. 137). Essentially, virtual reality’s success lies in its ability to make people forget their physical surroundings and fall into the multidimensional, virtual world presented to them. Persky and Blascovich also discussed the possible dangers of presence, such as eliciting real world aggression in adolescents when playing violent games. This important element of virtual reality needs to be carefully considered by its designers in order to achieve a comfortable balance between presence and well-being.

Another factor in the success of virtual reality is its developing social component. Whereas virtual game playing, specifically on the computer, is traditionally thought of as a solitary activity, Zaphiris, Ang, and Mahmood (2007) pointed out that virtual gaming is beginning to be transformed into a community that encourages social interaction among its players. Virtual reality’s expanding social component allows users to connect to others with similar hobbies, ethnicity, education, and values. For example, Zaphiris et al. pointed out that most multi-player online games involve some mode of communication that allows participants to engage with one another, such as through chat rooms. This social element adds to the perceived realism of the experience, enhancing people’s involvement and enjoyment. Ridings and Gefen (2004) suggested that virtual communities have been a key to the success of virtual reality because they allow people to exchange information, receive social support, develop friendships, and participate in recreational role-playing and game playing. These activities make it more likely that users will continue their participation in the virtual world.

An additional determinant of the success of virtual reality is the characters. Creators are taking note that in order to make an environment realistic, the inhabitants need to be realistic too. Recent studies have investigated the personalities of people in the real world and how those results can be applied to virtual people. Poznanski and Thagard (2005) discussed the creation of computer based models of personality that are based on psychobiological theories, social learning theories, and the traits of openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism from the Five Factor model of personality traits. The information provided by these theories allows computer based models to vary the personality of the characters similar to the patterns evident in real people. These approaches are allowing for more dynamic and believable characters that are vital to virtual reality’s growth and success (Poznanski & Thagard).

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http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue1/ridings_gefen.html

Zaphiris, P., Ang, C. S., & Mahmood, S. (2007). A model of cognitive loads in massively multiplayer online role playing games. *Interacting with Computers*, 19, 167-179.

Multimedia Resources

Websites:

VResources is a directory of virtual reality companies as well as news center for virtual reality information.

www.Vresources.org

The virtual reality section of the Science Daily website is an excellent resource for virtual reality news, articles, videos, images, and books.

http://www.sciencedaily.com/news/computers_math/virtual_reality

How Stuff Works presents an article by J. Strickland, "How Virtual Reality Works," that explains basic aspects of the history and construction of virtual reality.

<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/virtual-reality.htm>

Videos:

The New Virtual Reality (3 min) looks at the development of the virtosphere--a virtual reality device that expands on the possibility of increased movement in a virtual setting.

http://www.sciencedaily.com/videos/2006/0409-the_new_virtual_reality.htm

Podcast:

Virtual World Healing Real War Realities (7 min, NPR). This National Public Radio broadcast explores how virtual reality simulators and games work and how they may be used to treat PTSD in soldiers fighting in Iraq.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88678421>

Class Activity

Title: Virtual World Review

Time required: Approximately 1 hr 30 min for exploration and preparation of review, 45 min for discussion.

Materials required: Computer with Internet connection and handout.

Objective: To investigate hands-on what makes an entertaining virtual experience.

Description of activity: Students visit and evaluate the quality of virtual worlds that can be accessed on the Internet.

Directions:

Present the class with a list of virtual worlds to be reviewed, such as <http://www.virtualworldsreview.com/info/categories.shtml> . Students should then sign up for the site they would like to explore and review. The written review should answer the questions in the handout.

Handout: Virtual World Review

1. How is presence established in this virtual world? Is it successful?
2. Does this virtual world allow you to communicate with other people? If so, does that communication enhance the experience? Why or why not?
3. Do the characters exhibit a variety of emotions? How are emotions expressed? Does this add to the perceived realism of the environment?
4. What improvements might be suggested to attract more people to this site and/or increase its perceived realism?
5. Are there any dangers that may come with the level of presence on this site?