

Talking Risk: Communicating Science to the Public

Material adapted from

Cancer Research UK Teacher Resources: Design your own health campaign

http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/images/pdfs/ys_lesson_healthcampaign.pdf

Discovery Education: Smoking Pressures and Responsibilities

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/smoking/>

Introduction:

The government and health charities spend large sums of money every year trying to influence public health and safety. But which campaigns actually succeed in influencing behavior for the better? In this activity students will analyze previous national public service advertisements in order to create their own healthy lifestyle campaign and design an example of their campaign's advertising.

Materials:

(Materials in **bold** are provided by SMILE)

Flipchart Paper

Poster Board

Markers

Used magazines to cut out (Optional)

Construction Paper (Optional)

Scissors & Glue (Optional)

Tape (Optional)

Materials provided are enough to support **5** student teams

Handouts/Overheads:

Public Service Advertising Examples Overhead

Public Service Advertising Examples

Campaign Plan Worksheet

Campaign Requirements Handout

Healthy Eating Factsheet

Campaign Cost Factsheet

Activity

1. Begin with a class brainstorming session. Firstly, ask the students if they know the difference between a public service advertisement and a regular advertisement. Next, ask the students to discuss public service advertisements they may have seen themselves that communicate and promote the awareness of certain public risks. Examples may include quitting smoking, healthy lifestyle promotion, alcohol abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and hazard preparedness (e.g. wildfires). What problems may scientists encounter when trying to warn of these risks to the public?

2. Divide the class into teams. Give each team a *Public service Advertising Example Handout*, a large sheet of paper and a marker. Ask the teams to read through each sample on the handout and list methods each advertisement uses to promote its risk awareness. Such methods could come under the following categories:

- Target Audience (e.g. who is the ad aimed at?)
- General ambience (e.g. what mood does it create?)
- Language (e.g. are emotive/persuasive words used?)
- Layout (e.g. what aspects are most 'eye-catching')
- Use of images (e.g. use of scaremongering/non verbal communication of the image)
- Information Content (e.g. effective of statistics/scientific data?)
- Impact on reader (e.g. is it a strong message, emotive)

Ask each team to share their findings with the rest of the class, plus which advertisement they think works best, which works least and why.

4. Give each team a *Campaign Plan Worksheet*, poster board and markers. Inform the teams they are now Marketing Companies being commissioned by a government organization (e.g. the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS) to develop a 3-month campaign to warn people of the risks of an unhealthy lifestyle and promote healthy eating in Oregon. Covering the specifications outlined on the *Campaign Requirements Handout*, teams must:

- Name their Marketing Company
- Decide upon their target audience (e.g. high school students)
- Develop a campaign slogan

- List all campaign activities they would undertake on the Campaign Plan Worksheet, detailing their campaign budget using the Campaign Costs Factsheet as a guide
- Produce an example public service advertisement to be used in the campaign, taking into account the different methods of advertising risk discussed earlier

Teams must complete their task within a set time limit and be ready to explain their choices to the rest of the teams.

Their choice of target audience may be decided using the *Healthy Eating Student Factsheet*, which highlights groups who could be reached by public service advertising and gives background information and statistics on healthy lifestyles.

Each team has a budget of \$200,000 and their campaign costs should not exceed this. The *Campaign Costs Student Factsheet* will help the students choose activities for their campaign in relation to how much each activity will take of their budget. To make the activity more realistic the costs are as accurate as possible, for example using TV campaigns would blow their entire campaign budget. Please note that students should not halve the numbers of advertisements to reduce their costs, explain that set-up costs would mean that the costs of making the advertisement would still be about the same. If the students have other ideas for activities, estimates of the cost could be given or the students could be asked to research the costs themselves (e.g. via internet).

Teams should record all planning on their worksheet.

5. Ask each team to present their campaign and public service advertisement to the class, with spokesperson(s) from each group to explain the methods they have incorporated to effectively promote their Healthy Eating Campaign.

Optional Extras: Magazines, construction paper and any other scrap materials could be used in addition to markers for more creative advertisements.

Class Extensions:

- Campaign proposals were reviewed by HSS and were greatly received! As a reward for creating such well-developed public service advertising, HSS has decided to award each team with

an additional fund of \$20,000 for campaign activities. Ask the teams to create additional features for their campaign such as market research surveys, buttons, logos and leaflets, all with the idea of increasing the effectiveness of promoting healthy eating. Students can research the cost of these activities (e.g. via internet) and update the new budget accordingly – would the teams make any dramatic changes with more available funds?