
A MESSAGE FROM...

Aim

- ◆ To evaluate whether the educational value of sponsored teaching resources outweighs their marketing messages.

Outcome

- ◆ Students assess sponsored teaching resources used in the school and present findings to appropriate school bodies.

What you need

Copies of **Actionpage: A message from...** selection of sponsored teaching resources being used in the school, eg posters, teaching packs, multimedia; further examples of teaching materials produced by TNCs (see *Resources*, p187).

What you do

- ▷ Divide participants into small groups. Explain that there is concern that many sponsored teaching materials offer little educational value and are mainly product placement.
- ▷ Their task is to use the Actionpage to evaluate some examples of such resources.

Whole group discussion

Ask groups to feed back on whether the educational value outweighs the marketing messages.

- ◆ Have you found examples of blatant marketing or product placement?
- ◆ Have you found examples of more subtle marketing or product placement?
- ◆ Do references to the activities of the sponsor aid understanding of processes, issues etc?
- ◆ Do any materials imply that the sponsor is superior to its rivals?
- ◆ Do you think the material is hiding certain information from you?
- ◆ Do any materials admit to criticism of their sponsor's operations?
- ◆ Do you think you are affected by such marketing?
- ◆ What do you think motivates sponsors to fund such materials?
- ◆ What restrictions should there be on the use of sponsored materials in schools?

Key ideas

See *The bottom line* p44.



Illustration: Sarah Guthrie (UK)

Actionpage: A message from...

- ◆ Use this questionnaire to judge the balance between education and marketing in this teaching resource. Some questions may not be relevant.
- ◆ Title
- ◆ Age group & curriculum area
- ◆ Who is the sponsor?
- ◆ How clearly is the sponsor indicated?
- ◆ Who wrote and published the resource?

- ◆ Is there any mention whether the material has been tested in schools?

- ◆ Give examples of where the material does **not** give a balanced view of an issue or acknowledge the existence of alternative views:

- ◆ Give examples of where **no** distinction is made between factual statements and expressions of opinion:

- ◆ Give examples of stereotypes that are used – of relationships, religion, age, disability, gender, race:

- ◆ Give examples of messages that encourage children to pester adults about buying a specific firm's products or services:

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- ◆ Give examples of any incentives to children to eat an unhealthy diet or take part in unsafe/unhealthy activities?

 - ◆ How does the material promote the sponsor's market interests, eg case studies, photos, use of logos?

 - ◆ How does the material acknowledge the sponsor's business interests?

 - ◆ What messages about the sponsor does this resource communicate?

 - ◆ Do you think the educational value outweighs its marketing messages? Please list reasons.