



**Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research**  
**Pune Chapter Learning Event Summary**  
**March 12, 2015 at The Orchid School, Baner**

This event focused on how interculturalists can use television commercials in the classroom to engage audiences, enhance learning and ignite discussions on intercultural topics. Led by Jill Sheldekar and Anindita Banerjee, each part of the presentation highlighted ways to effectively use commercials as a medium to explore cultural topics.

Jill focused on the practical knowledge required to use a commercial successfully in the classroom. This means identifying what you want to use it for – to introduce a theme or value, to conclude a discussion, to wake up your audience after lunch or to summarize learning after presenting multiple topics. Commercial selection is crucial and there are many challenges. Those discussed were: avoiding stereotypes, use of humor which may not translate well and ensuring the purpose behind using the commercial is clearly achieved. We discussed controversial commercials that if used incorrectly, may just reconfirm negative stereotypes and not enhance a deeper understanding of culture and values. Ethics behind usage of commercials was also discussed. Accessing commercials which can be streamed from YouTube directly are the safest way to show commercials. Sourcing commercials can also be challenging – it was suggested to look for brands that have a strong or historic tie to the country (legacy companies). In India this includes brands like – Fevicol, Amul and Tata. Others that are a great source are telcom companies and for new or changing values in society, tech companies or ads for apps or online retail. In the United States, sources include vehicle ads (Ford, Chevy, Dodge) and huge brands like Apple or Starbucks. Another great source includes any international sporting event – World Cups or the Olympics. Each country will have ads that release during that supporting event which often have strong ties to national culture.

To demonstrate how to introduce a value using commercials, Jill showed a set of three short ads. Wedding – New Tata DOCOMO TV ad and then Korean Employee Stealing from His Boss – McDonalds followed by FedEx Conference Call Ad. Each show an element of hierarchy in a humorous way. These commercials can ignite a variety of discussions about business protocol and common norms for professional behaviour. Just a few include, calling outside of office hours, what bosses offices look like, non-verbal body language, using respect titles, etc.

Lastly, Jill talked about how to build an activity from a commercial. It is important for the facilitator to have planned questions to ask during the debrief. Such as, “What to do think was important to the main character?” or “How would you describe the employee in that commercial?” or “What values did you see coming out in that commercial?” Once these questions have been discussed – ask people to write down one or two behaviours they noticed on an index card. Have a few index cards with other business behaviours that may or may not have been demonstrated in the commercial but relate to the same value. Distribute those. Have the core values written up on flip charts or poster paper around the room. Ask the audience to stand up and group the behaviours under a certain value. Example: if the value is hierarchy, the behaviours that might be grouped under that value are “using respect titles to address seniors” and “following a seating arrangement according to seniority” and “avoiding a direct no when responding to requests from senior colleagues.” The importance is not putting the behaviour under the *correct* value but helping the audience understand how values are expressed through behaviour. They will also begin to see how values and behaviours overlap and complement each other (or sometimes conflict with each other!) This activity allows for more complex discussions among the audience as they move around the room. Use tape, blu tak or pins to place the index cards around the room.

Following this presentation, Anindita shared a perspective on how dimensions of culture play a crucial role in commercials, both in the creation and the interpretation process. The potential mismatch in creation and interpretation has been a subject of relevance for international marketers across the globe. Interestingly, this very mismatch is what makes commercials a valuable tool in intercultural training. For the session, Anindita focussed on three dimensions of culture, namely (a) cultural values and beliefs, (b) material artefacts and (c)

communication/language. Each of these were discussed in the context of how commercials showcasing this dimension can be used effectively in a workshop. Anindita used interesting and thought provoking commercials for explaining each of the categories – for examples – the Cadbury Dairy Milk commercials wherein she asked the participants to look for personal relationships demonstrated - which reflected the collectivistic culture of the Indian society. This was followed by the Hot Star commercial which portrayed the shift/transition in this same value, from a collectivistic to individualistic cultural ideology. This commercial shows the characters opting to 'go solo' on what they watch rather than watching TV as a group, thus exercising a more individualistic choice.

Another set of commercials highlighted the material artefacts – for example, two Pepsi commercials were shown back to back. One was a commercial featuring Amir Khan and Aishwarya Rai and another one was the American (original) commercial featuring Michael J. Fox. The Indian commercial was a replica of the American version with some minor changes. These become an interesting study of material artefacts more common across the two cultures. For example, a chess board instead of a baseball bat.

The third category of commercials demonstrated how world languages, accents, communication styles and patterns can hinder the message intended to convey in an advertisement. At times, it can completely change the meaning of the context. While sometimes it can even be offensive to the target culture. Anindita shared interesting examples of such cross-cultural marketing gaffes. For example: When Kentucky Fried Chicken opened their first restaurant in China in 1987, they accidentally translated their slogan, "Finger lickin' good" to "We'll eat your fingers off." She concluded the session with the HSBC series of cultural advertisements which highlight cross-cultural gaffes across the world.

Anindita closed her session reinforcing the preparation needed in (a) selecting the right commercial and (b) giving the proper brief-debrief. The brief-debrief need to ensure that the interpretation of the commercial is in line with the trainer's objective for the session.

To conclude, the objective of this session (by Jill and Anindita) was to demonstrate how commercials can be used in showcasing life of people across the globe that are manifestations of deeply held values and beliefs.

***List of Commercials all accessible on Youtube (Please note some are examples of what not to use!)***

Korean Employee Stealing from His Boss – McDonalds

Germany vs. Japan – Who makes the best cars

Lufthansa – TV commercial These Germans

HSBC TV ad – Okeedokey

HSBC Eels Ad

Halftime in America OFFICIAL Chrysler Superbowl 2012 commercial

Monster India – Good Luck Charm ad

Wedding – New Tata DOCOMO TV ad

Michael Buble Starbucks Commercial

F-150 Way of Life

2010 Dodge Challenger World Cup England Commercial

ATT Commercial Olympic Games London

FedEx – Assistant, Conference Call (all for FedEx Cup)

AirTran Commercial – Poor Business Acumen

AirTran Commercial – Brainstorming Business Travel

Corporate Seals

Conference Call in Real Life

HarEk Friend ZarooriHota Hai | Airtel India TV Advertisement

Aussie Kids vs Kiwi Kids DIY – Mitre 10 Commercial (*courtesy of Taruni Falconer in Melbourne*)

Super Long Rare Version of Michael J Fox New Neighbors Pepsi Commercial

Aamir Khan Pepsi Commercial with Aishwarya and Mahima

Cadillac ELR Coupe 2014 Commercial

German Cost Guards (with subtitle)

HSBC Eels Ad

Make South Africa Work for You