

Training Activities

Introduction to Media

Objectives:

- To understand the definition(s) of 'media' and 'mass media'
- To be able to recognise the different types of media and those most prominent to the participants
- To give examples of different media types
- To highlight the types of tools that the media uses

Materials:

- Flipchart paper and markers
- Images (appendix)
- Examples of media (magazines, newspapers etc)
- Glue, Scissors, Pens
- Laptop(s)

Preparation:

- Find different examples of commonly used media.

Instructions:

1. Energizer 'The machine': one person starts to act out one part of the machine and other people join in to make other parts of the machine (variation: give the machine a goal - a social democrat machine, a computer network, money machine, internet machine).
2. Split into groups of around 5 people and ask them to brainstorm what media means to them. After 5 minutes get them to feedback to the rest of the group.
3. Read out standard definition of the media ('communication of a message or text between senders and receivers'). Compare participants' answers with the definition. Does it encompass everything they put? Does it show change in different contexts?
4. Explain that media theory suggests five ways we conceptualise the mass media:
 - Technical definition
 - Understanding as industries or organisations
 - Commodities
 - Cultural products
 - Social - agents of social change and globalisation and powerful sources of social meaning
5. Discuss what these could mean/imply and if our group's definitions fit with these conceptualisations. Discuss the difference between media and the mass media.
6. Back in the same groups, ask participants to brainstorm all the different possible media types.
7. Now give each group an image. Ask them to individually write down how they feel about that image and what they think the meaning or message is.
8. Feedback to whole group, compare answers. Explain that understanding the message from the image or hidden messages is crucial to media. The concept of conveying a message by a symbol is called 'semiotics'.
9. Split the room into different sections, giving each area a main media type. Try to have an example of each type at the different stations (obviously depends on what participants chose, but you can anticipate – internet (specifically social networking), TV, newspapers, radio, posters).



10. Split participants into same amount of groups as room sections. Ask them to create a mood board for each station, leaving enough space on it for every group to add to. This mood board should show the tools used to create this media. Ask them to think about the physical processes required, such as printing, placement, equipment, costs; and the emotive tools used such as repetition, colour, sex, social standing. Allow 5 minutes maximum for each group per station then rotate.
11. Once all groups have analysed all sections, swap one last time so that group is where they started. They therefore get to see what others have added to their initial ideas. Each group feedback to the whole group.

Appendix:

Examples of images:

- Polar bear: climate change etc
- Radio waves: how do you symbolise something you can't see
- David Goldblatt, "Saturday Morning at the Hypermarket: Semi-final of the Miss Lovely Legs Competition, Boksburg, South Africa. 28th June 1980
- WWF forest lungs
- Coca cola 'happiness factory'
- Macro image of a cauliflower







