

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute 2010 Volume I: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture

# Publicidad en Español

Curriculum Unit 10.01.02 by María Cardalliaguet Gómez-Málaga

"Uno no es creativo por el mero hecho de dejar volar la imaginación o dar rienda suelta a acrobacias gráficas y verbales.
La persona creativa aprovecha bien su imaginación. Es disciplinada en relación a cada idea, cada pensamiento, cada palabra que utiliza, cada imagen que muestra" <sup>1</sup> Bill Bernbach

Incorporating innovative, meaningful activities that help students to learn the Spanish language and the cultures of its native speakers in all four basic [language] skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as connecting these skills with both the mode and the direction of communication, inculcating respect and the ability to value global consciousness and cultural diversity are challenges I undertake with pleasure every academic year.

Students are not always enthusiastic about the challenges that accompany new language acquisition so my aspiration as a teacher is to make my students' learning as engaging and amusing as possible, while they identify and absorb cultural aspects and recognize features of diverse Spanish-speaking countries. Most, if not all, students in the New Haven Public Schools are exposed to other cultures daily but are not equipped or do

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not feel sufficiently comfortable to take advantage of such an invaluable experience since they do not know how to deal with the unfamiliar.

The unit La Publicidad en Español is designed as a vehicle to introduce students to the world of advertisement through the cultures and identities of various Latin American and South American countries, such as Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Colombia; as well as Spain and to the world of visual arts and advertisement.

Throughout the unit, we will apply the fundamentals found in any world language classroom, the "5Cs" of the National Standards of Foreign Language Learning (NSFLL): Cultures, Connections (among disciplines), Comparisons (between cultures), Communication and Communities. <sup>2</sup>

Many, if not most, of my students are in need of improvement in the areas of critical thinking and analysis; when I encourage them to interpret a text or to write a review or essay or even to comment on a piece of art or photography, I need to prompt them with a great amount of detail; otherwise, they feel lost. Through the development of the present unit, students will be able to assimilate the basics of advertising and marketing, learn to decode and interpret advertisements via a myriad of media including posters, bill boards and commercials from different Spanish-speaking countries. They will be able to understand that cultural identity is the result of many historical, anthropological, social and religious factors. They will also learn that even though Latin and South American countries may share common cultural aspects, they are very different in others. Students will be able to draw conclusions regarding the great diversity among Spanish speaking nations by examining their intrinsic cultural features.

The unit is to be taught at Hill Regional Career High School in New Haven. Career is an inter-district magnet high school with a student body of about 700 students. The school focuses on providing students with the skills and education needed to pursue careers in the fields of business/technology and health/science. The population is 53% African American, 27% Hispanic, 17% White, 3% Asian. About 67% of the students receive reduced lunch. Students are required to complete 28 credits in order to graduate, more credits than mandated by the state. A high percentage of Career graduates, go on to study in two- or four-year colleges.

The mission of Hill Regional Career High School is to prepare students to become productive members of their own community and global society by providing an educational environment that establishes rigorous standards of academic performance with a focus on health and business. We encourage students to maximize their potential by promoting critical and creative thinking, developing technological competence, and fostering respect for a diverse and changing world. These goals are the shared responsibility and commitment of the staff, faculty, students, parents and community.

I will use this unit with my Business Spanish students, who have an Intermediate level on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Performance Guidelines for K-12. <sup>3</sup> Since these particular world language students are able to use advanced grammatical structures, we will be working on increasing their levels of proficiency in all four language skills previously mentioned. Students will hone their higher-order thinking skills as they learn to express complex opinions and analyze advertisements and commercials. Even though the class follows the district's Spanish III curriculum in essence, it is an honor-level class with its own specific curriculum including units such as "Money and Remuneration", "Types of Businesses", "Accounting", "Banking", "Publicity" and "Advertising", etc.

Most of the class activities for this unit will be conducted in Spanish, but English will be used when necessary. With proper modifications, the unit could also be taught in Spanish 4 or in Advanced Placement Spanish Language.

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The material will be covered in a period of about 10 to 13 sessions, each of which will be eighty-two minutes in length; these long periods will allow me to implement complex strategies and a variety of activities without interruption

## **Rationale**

When I applied to the "Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture" seminar led by Dr. Agnew, I had no idea it was going to have such a strong impact on me. I expected to learn about various historical, political and racial aspects of consumerism as well as other matters as global consumerism, sports and consumerism, the meaning of objects, etc. I did not anticipate I would become so aware of advertisement and marketing, that I now analyze not only all kinds of advertisements around me but also the language, psychology or aesthetics they use. To me, it seems we are not always conscious of all the different avenues by which we are "persuaded" daily. Advertising has always been connected with history and has always been part of it as a result of a cultural, economical, commercial, financial and technical evolution.

Everyday we are bombarded with different advertisements. It seems like we were programmed to deal with this constant subtle attack since most of the time we are-or at least some of us think we are-oblivious to it. The average number of ads that we come across daily is about 1000 in Spain and three times that amount in the United States. <sup>4</sup> Of this vast number we only precisely remember two or three, and chances are we remember only those that impress us the most. We imbibe commercial ads through television, the radio, billboards everywhere, the web (banners or pop-ups), printed fliers, pamphlets, infomercials, magazines, newspapers, sides of buses or atop of cabs, banners towed behind planes or written in plumes of smoke, posters in stadiums, subway and train stations, supermarket receipts, stickers, etc. The possibilities are overwhelming and even though we think we can control our desires to consume, can we really? More importantly can our students? With the present unit I am not trying to persuade students not to buy the latest fashion item as feeble attempt to "be cool"- that would be a chimera- but have students learn about the world of advertisement and its characteristics and strategies through the foreign language goals I mentioned previously. I want students to be able to fully criticize and value all the different layers (or elements) that integrate into a good commercial or billboard.

## Advertising: a Form of Communication

Aristotle was of the idea that there is no communication that does not try to persuade and, giving information and persuading is the dual purpose intended in any form of advertising. It is not unique to it, but it explains its existence and characteristics and its main goal is to promote the acceptance of the item or items launched.

Another important aspect of advertising that I would like students to give thought to, is the communicative and persuasive nature of the discipline. In order to define its reality and compare it to other communicative systems, we should look at it as an activity and message that leads to an economic and social phenomenon: is impossible to understand advertisement without understanding its interaction with other fields like art, economics, technology, politics, psychology and above all, trade. Advertising is a planned activity that is connected to the area of marketing and that evolves to adapt to environmental and economic changes. However, there are non-commercial advertisers who, instead of spending money to broadcast consumer products or services, are interested in promoting interest groups, political parties, religious organizations or

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agencies. Public Service Announcements, on the other hand, aim to benefit the public interest by raising awareness on social issues and (hopefully) affecting public's attitudes toward safety and health.

It plays with persuasion since its message is delivered to obtain a reaction from the consumer/receptor, it makes use of rhetoric to generate the message, makes use of rhetorical strategies to distinguish itself from the clutter of other advertising messages. The world of advertisement is also a social phenomenon since it contributes to the "cultural industry" and has a direct impact on the behavior of individuals.

### **The Oldest Profession**

I would like students to learn basic history of advertising options, but I will not spend too much time on it during the unit since I consider the theoretical, linguistic and cultural aspects of advertisement will serve them better in a Business Spanish class.

As for the origin of advertising, there are various approaches, based on different ways of interpreting it. If we look at it as a persuasive method aiming to influence people in their behavior and take a close look into its communicative nature, we find advertisements first traces in the Luxor Obelisks or the Thebes Papyrus. The Luxor Obelisks, one remains at the entrance of the Luxor Temple in Egypt and the second one sited in La Place la Concorde in Paris, are two red granite columns decorated with hieroglyphics exalting the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II. Many authors agree on a section of the Thebes Papyrus as the first known written advertisement. It dates between 3000 and 2000 BCE and is kept in London's British Museum. After giving information regarding the escaped slave Shem, his master takes the opportunity to comment on the quality of the fabrics he sells:

"Having escaped the slave Shem from his master Hapu, the weaver, this one invites all the good citizen of Thebes to find him. He's an Hittite, five-foot high, of healthy complexion and brown eyes; who returns him to the store of Hapu, the weaver, where are woven the most beautiful fabrics to the pleasure of each one, will be given a piece of gold." <sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, if we look at advertisement as an economic tool used by companies to foster demand, we would have to look back to the economic development and specifically of capitalism in mid 18 th century England and 19 th century in the rest of Europe. This was the time when merchants, manufacturers and entrepreneurs began introducing and promoting advertising by incorporating it into their activities until it became part of the companies as a business strategy; they realized they needed to pay more attention to marketing and to compete with other like goods in the market. It is during the second half of the 19 th century that the brand developed to become a selling point and a guarantee. Brand products became more expensive than bulk ones and were thought to be of better quality. A few examples of the time are Colgate (1806), Coca-Cola (1886), Levi's Strauss (1873) and Goodyear (1844).

In 1864, James Walter Thompson (JWT) opened as the first American advertising agency, the first national ad campaigns appeared at the turn of the 20 th century. During the 20's and 30's economic crises ad professionals converged. In the early 40's ad men ran the government's propaganda and public information.

Advertising was not fully developed, as we know it today, until probably the postwar, when it became an integrated communication system that is considered in corporate marketing budgets, supports media financially and tries to persuade consumers. It is during this time that the modern advertisement agency

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becomes part of the American popular culture, with novels and movies situated in the world of "Madison Avenue", as Dr. Agnew pointed out in one of our conversations. In 1952, CBS opened Television City in Hollywood and four years later the introduction of video tapes allow prerecorded commercials. <sup>6</sup>

## **Advertising Agencies**

In my effort to incorporate the business component into the unit as well as the advertising jargon and vocabulary in Spanish, I would like my students to learn how an advertising agency works, how are the different departments configure and what are employees main duties.

A classic ad agency is usually divided in five key departments: creative, customer service, media, financial and traffic departments. Each of these departments has an executive director who reports to the general director, whose job is to perform functions of management any other director would in any type of company; establish, keep and supervise relationships with prospective clients and plan, develop and supervise the agency's public and internal relationships.

In multinational and bigger advertising agencies there is a president, who is in charge of the international relations of the agency, works to strengthen the agency's public image, as well as sharing economic and management guidelines with the general director.

## The Creative Department

The creative department is the core of the agency. The creative teams are responsible for the originality and coherence of a campaign, the development of ideas and the design themes, style and aesthetics. Once the ideas and notions are determined, they go to the graphic production or media production. In the creative teams, copywriters and art directors work together to create and design the ad campaigns. Every agency has several of these teams that are coordinated and supervised by one or more creative directors. All the creative team in an agency share the total of customers. There are two different services within the department: the graphic production and the audiovisual production.

The graphic production department is responsible for the infrastructure on production of print media and the technical supervisor of the printing of different materials such as photographers, artwork, models, budgets, etc. The audiovisual production is responsible for facilities for the audiovisual media like radio recordings, relationship with film producers, budgets, etc.

The Creative Process forms the most crucial part of the advertising process.

The Customer Service Department (Accounts Department)

The members of the department which include account managers and executives, keep a direct relation with clients from whom they receive requests and commissions so they can coordinate and connect them with one of the creative departments as well as other departments or divisions in order to solve all matters with customers as handling billing, research studies, and the preparation of campaigns.

Thus the director of this department is responsible for all the accounts in the agency, meanwhile the executives would have one or more clients, according to their eminence/importance.

The Media Department

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The media department is responsible of planning the distribution of a campaign in different media, negotiating with radio stations, printers, TV channels, the press, etc. Employees work colleagues in the finance department very closely since they need to have a clear idea of what the budget allows them to do. They are responsible of assessing the impact and effectiveness of their "media buys". When dealing with major campaigns and media, this work might sometimes be outsourced to a media agency since they might have better contacts and be in a better position to negotiate prices, ...

## The Finance Department

This department is in charge of all the finances in the agency as well as bookkeeping, taxes, payrolls, social security of employees, financial management of clients, payments to contracted providers for campaigns, and so on.

## The Traffic Department

The traffic department is an independent department that keeps track of the stages of all work in the agency so that the status of a particular job can be determined at any given time. The traffic department coordinates all phases of production and the acts as a go-between for the accounts and the creative departments. It is also responsible for checking production deadlines and ensuring that all the work is mailed, delivered or broadcasted on schedule. This department is especially helpful in larger multi-national agencies.

# **Objectives**

This unit will primarily serve as an introduction to the world of publicity and advertisement, how advertisement agencies work, etc, focusing in various Spanish, Latin American, South American advertisements.

By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- 1. Learn basic notions of how the advertising world works.
- 2. Read, understand, analyze, and interpret various advertisement products such as billboards, posters, brochures, magazine/news paper's ads, commercials, etc.
- 3. Analyze and interpret television commercials, decoding their language and linguistic characteristics and semantics.
- 4. Learn and recognize basic advertising strategies.
- 5. Understand and interpret various cultural elements intrinsic to different countries in Latin America and South America such as Argentina, Chile, México, Colombia and Spain.
- 6. Learn to express personal opinions, persuade, convince and influence a certain audience (other students), engage others attention and persuade them to do something, attract classmates (possible consumers) attention to a piece of information and/or detail.
- 7. Use various grammatical structures and contents such as affirmative and negative, regular and irregular commands (with and without pronouns) and various verb tenses in the indicative mood.
- 8. As for the lexical content, students will expand their functional vocabulary, in particular, the

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language of advertising and commerce, as well as the language of oral presentations.

- 9. Listen to radio ads in order to practice listening comprehension.
- 10. Foster critical thinking skills, such as problem-identification and solving, decision-making, anticipation and planning.
- 11. Meditate on the consumer culture they live in and how advertising establishes patterns to follow as consumers.
- 12. Learn expressions such as en mi opinión, me parece que, me da la impresión de que...
- 13. Write using Spanish for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- 14. Read texts -in the target language, actively and critically for a variety of purposes.
- 15. Effectively communicate for a variety of purposes.
- 16. Use academic knowledge and information to think critically, problem-solve, and make decisions.
- 17. Select and apply the tools of technology to improve personal and professional productivity.
- 18. Demonstrate an appreciation for diverse cultures.
- 19. Exhibit positive communication and collaboration within the school and regional community.

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# **Strategies**

Two of the main goals I want my students to achieve with the unit are related to the persuasive language of advertising and the way of presenting it visually. A third one has to do with cultural awareness.

## The World of Advertising

Throughout the unit, I will equip students with the tools to recognize and use effective grammatical structures. I will provide them with appropriate activities by which they will practice reading and writing in Spanish, as well as lead to an improvement of their critical thinking skills. In order to do so, we will use articles from online magazines such as "Revista Brandlife" (Spain), "Revista LatinSpots" (Argentina) and others, as well as the following strategies:

#### Ads and Billboards

Students will learn how to interpret magazine advertisements and billboards by analyzing the language and the visuals. They will first have to find 2 to 3 different advertisements from magazines, newspapers and websites. The teacher will first sample a couple of analyses to establish the pattern to follow. Students and teacher will collaboratively analyze some other graphic ads during class time such an exercise will help students to get more comfortable with such as task. Students will then have to narrow their choices to one example of each (that is, one billboard and one ad). The will follow a rubric in order to be aware of the criteria the teacher will follow in order to grade this mini-project. Presentation of one of the analyses will be required for this assignment. Other students will be able to grade their classmates following another rubric teacher will provide, focusing in various aspects such as creativity, clarity in the exposition, development of ideas and so on.

Commercials: Radio and Television

Students and teacher will view a number of television commercials representing different countries and a variety of products, scrutinizing the language and analyzing visuals to the detail in order to practice listening comprehension, as well as description of situations in the target language. We will finally comment on difference and similarities these commercials have with current popular American commercials.

Every day, as an opening activity, students and teacher will watch one or two commercials, analyzing them first informally and later on, in depth. Students will get familiar with the analysis so they will be able to distinguish between the idea, its formal and aesthetic organization.

Final Project: Design an Ad

As a final Project, students will have to produce an original ad following a rubric the teacher will provide, taking into account a specific process that goes from identifying the product the would like to advertise in terms of popularity within their age group. They will next have to decide the format they want to present their final project in: whether they want to make poster/ad, a video or recorded commercial, they will provide the teacher with a draft explaining the idea and process. They will finally have to present their product to the rest of the class, as if they were real ad-men.

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#### The Business World

#### Ad Business

The teacher will divide the classroom in five different groups asking students to take different roles in an advertising company: one group will represent the creative department, another the traffic department and so on. Once the groups and roles in each are distributed, the teacher will give individual directions to different people in each group. After doing a directed research on-line to find out what are the tasks they are expected to accomplish in their jobs, students will have to work on a brief essay.

In a second stage of this activity, students will have to collaborate with their department "coworkers" in order to write a "role play" of a situation given by the teacher that they will have to represent in front of the rest of the agency. The rest of the students will anonymously critique the way they dealt with the situation, as well as the performance and their peers´ use of he language.

#### Interviews

The teacher will ask students to imagine they are journalists who are interviewing ad-men about their job and how things work in the agency, what are the campaigns they are most proud of and so on. Every student will have to come up with at least well-organized and relevant questions. Students will discuss them in class giving their classmates feedback.

Ideally, the teacher will be able to organize a field trip to one of the 33 advertising companies that are established in New Haven, so the students will be able to ask these questions to real advertisement professionals.

# **Sample Lesson Plans**

## Lesson Plan 1: Time to Listen, Read and Think!

### Goals

Practice listening comprehension while listening to Spanish and Argentine radio commercials, practice reading comprehension by reading the text "¡Quien no anuncia cada día no vende la mercancía!" <sup>7</sup>.

## Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson students will be able to:

- 1. Engage in conversations, provide and obtain information and exchange opinions. (Standard
- 1.1)
- 2. Understand and interpret several commercials s in the target language. (Standard 1.2)
- 3. Understand and interpret a text about how to analyze effective commercials in Spanish. (Standard 1.2)
- 4. Use (reading and writing) the target language in the classroom. (Standard 5.1)

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#### Materials

LCD projector, computer with Internet access and speakers, copies "¡Quien no anuncia cada día no vende la mercancía!" and questions on it, copies of the transcripts of the radio commercials with comprehension exercises.

#### Procedure

The teacher will start the lesson showing a commercial, giving students seven minutes to brainstorm what the main components are and to discuss what they think the creative director wanted the audience to see and if they accomplished their goal. The teacher will then give students a copy of "¡Quien no anuncia cada día no vende la mercancía.!" Different students will be asked to read paragraphs out loud. After, the teacher will team students up in groups of two so they will be able to help each other to understand and answer the questions about the text. The teacher will go around the classroom assisting students. Once students are done, some of them will be asked to read their answers.

Students will listen to two radio commercials to see how much of information they are able to get, filling in a "listening conversation/grid" activity. After that, the teacher will distribute a copy of the transcription of both commercials. Students will be able to listen to both of them again.

#### Assessment/Homework

The teacher will collect the reading comprehension questions to grade and make sure everyone has understood its main ideas.

For homework, students will bring the transcription of the commercials, their already filled out "listening conversation/grid" activity and a blank one so they can fill it out again and then compare both of them.

#### Lesson Plan 2: TV Commercials

## Goals

Understand and analyze different commercials from different countries applying some of the advertisement strategies and feature and practice listening comprehension skills.

#### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson students will be able to:

- 1. Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain descriptions, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions. (Standard 1.1)
- 2. Understand and interpret several commercials s in the target language. (Standard 1.2)
- 3. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the theory, texts and perspectives of the culture in them. (Standard 2.2)
- 4. Reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through Spanish. (Standard 3.1)
- 5. Use (listening and writing) in the target language. (Standard 5.1)

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## Special Needs

Students are already familiar with some "Viewing Cues" and types of advertisements the teacher has already explained and exemplified.

Materials

Computer with Internet access, LCD projector, speakers, graphic organizer and a question handout.

#### Procedure

Teacher will start the lesson asking different students to summarize some of the "Viewing Cues" explained in previews classes. Teacher will distribute a handout with various questions about the types of commercial and interpretation of. Teacher and students will discuss their answers in detail. Students will have to write a 20 to 25-line paragraph describing one of the commercials and their interpretation of it that they will turn in at the end of the period.

Assessment/homework

Students will be assessed based on their writing and description of details.

## Lesson Plan 3: What's your Slogan?

Goal

Create slogans from pictures

Learning Objectives

- 1. Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics. (Standard 1.3)
- 2. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied (Standard 2.2)
- 3. Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language. (Standard 3.1)

## Materials

Copies of the "student assessment rubric", pictures and cards with products to advertise.

### Procedure

During the first part of the class time, one of the "creative teams" will have to present their campaign. The rest of the students will have to assess their peers. Immediately after, the teacher will divide students in groups of 3. They will have to choose three pictures from a pile (without looking) and three cards with the

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names of products to advertise. Students will have to write slogans for the product, if they wish, the will be able to chance only one of the pictures.

### Assessment/Homework

For homework, students will have to improve the advertisement look by making a product including the slogan.

## **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Mariano Castellblanque, ¿Creativo sobre qué?: Manual del redactor publicitario: ¿Reglas, normas, técnicas? ¡Rómpelas!. (Madrid: ESIC Editorial,) p. 52.
- <sup>2</sup> National Standards for Foreign Language Education. http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3392. (Accessed May 10, 2010).
- <sup>3</sup> ACTFL Performance Guidelines: Samples of Performance Descriptions. http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3329. (Accessed May 10, 2010).
- <sup>4</sup> La Historia de la Publicidad. http://lahistoriadelapublicidad.com/presentacion.php. (Accessed July 17, 2010).
- <sup>5</sup> Miguel ¡ngel Furones, Comunicación total. (Madrid: ESIC Editorial,) p.147.

Translated into English by María Cardalliaguet, from "Habiendo huido el esclavo Shem de su patrono Hapu, el tejedor, éste invita a todos los buenos ciudadanos de Tebas a encontrarle. Es un hitita, de cinco pies de alto, de robusta complexión y ojos castaños. Se ofrece media pieza de oro a quien de información acerca de su paradero. A quien lo devuelva a la tienda de Hapu, el tejedor, donde se tejen las más hermosas telas al gusto de cada uno, se le entregará una pieza de oro".

- <sup>6</sup> Ministerio de Educación, Política Social y Deporte del Gobierno de España: Media http://recursos.cnice.mec.es/media/publicidad/bloque1/pag1.html. (Accessed July 22, 2010).
- <sup>7</sup> This is a text that my good friend Charo Bullón (a teacher for Cursos Internacionales, Unversity of Salamanca) adapted and gave me years ago, so I am afraid I am not able to properly cite it.

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Cervera Fantoni, ¡ngel Luis. Comunicación total. Madrid: ESIC Editorial, 2008.

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## Resources

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- -IAA Spain (International Advertising Association: Spanish Chapter). http://www.iaaspain.org. (Accessed July 28, 2010)
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- -Revista Brandlife. http://www.brandlife.es/blog. (Accessed July 25, 2010).

# **Appendix**

Advertising Companies

Advertising Companies for students to work with, include:

- -Chocolate Estudio. http://www.chocolatestudio.es. (Accessed
- -GPS Comunicación. http://gpscomunicacion.es. (Accessed

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