



Really, ¿Quiero Taco Bell?: A Multicultural Marketing Approach

Curriculum Unit 10.01.07
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Introduction

Move over mass marketing. Here comes something meaner multicultural / ethnic niche marketing. The audience is no longer one and is certainly not allowing its many selves to be dumped into the same pot. It wants something that appeals and connects to its particularity. In order for that to truly happen, marketers need to do research determine how the target group lives, works, identifies itself and factors into America at large. This is nothing new. This is true for any marketing team attempting to reach a particular audience. What makes this specific form of marketing-- multicultural or ethnic marketing different is that marketers will need to "capture the nuances of each multicultural segment and make that all-so-important emotional connection with consumers who are often marginalized in so many aspects of their lives" to be successful. "Marketing to a culture in cultural terms is about touching those cords that have been instilled in us since childhood". ¹ How exactly does one do this without offending the target ethnic group?

The usage of language, cultural objects and transparent renderings of familial or social situations is not enough. It needs to be "authentic and honest about relationships. The marketer must truly understand the culture and the underlying perceptions that members of a culture share." ² "Speak to me" has never rung truer than it does right now in today's marketing world, and the billions of dollars the various ethnic consumers have to spend are pulling all of the strings. It is the charge of this unit to examine the multicultural marketing strategies employed by Taco Bell over the last two decades, judge them as success or failure and conclude how we, as consumers, are targeted through these means. This will be achieved by utilizing the Spanish language and culture as a direct focus on the Latino community as the target audience.

Background

I teach in an urban high school in New Haven, CT and while there are most certainly some preconceived notions about what schools in New Haven look and feel like, I have always argued that my school, in particular, is unique to the rest. For clarification the number in brackets represents the actual number of

students. The demographic breakdown of my school is as follows: African American {935} 86%, American Indian {0} 0%, Asian {2} .2%, Caucasian {14} 1.3% and Hispanic {136} 12.5%. (Connecticut State Department of Education n.d.)

Based on the numbers alone, one can determine that the school is homogeneous in a manner very different than that of the average American school profile. It is also unique to New Haven public schools overall. While students appear to understand that their school make-up is unlike other schools, it has been my experience that they still believe there are "definitely" more African Americans than Hispanics if not whites in the United States. The environment in which they live and their lack of exposure to communities outside of their own have frequently misled them as to what the rest of the world looks like. Here the majority culture appears as if it is the only accepted one; so much so that the "minority" groups typically have little interaction with the majority. This is not to say that there are major conflicts between the groups; it is only to say that there is very little incentive for them to intermingle.

While this is a common sense identity issue, it makes my job as a Spanish language teacher tougher in the sense that I must not only make the connections for students but also show them that they do indeed have much more in common with the subjects of study than they actually realize. While this may be a shared sentiment in nearly all content areas, the fact remains that I am teaching students a foreign language and trying to instill an appreciation for cultures other than their own. Students are already resistant because they find language study difficult, but it is the issue of relevance to their daily lives that serves as the biggest obstacle. Students understand why they need math, English and history, but when trying to convince them that learning another language is equally as important, I believe most teachers would agree it is no easy task. While the curriculum objectives are mapped out in such a way to bring this relevance to the forefront, most of the students in my school have not left their community, let alone ventured outside of New Haven, leaving them to wonder where they are ever going to use the Spanish they are learning in my class.

Most world language curricula are taught thematically, meaning that the grammar and vocabulary are wrapped around an authentic life experience. The theme may be food talking about one's likes and dislikes, dealing with a restaurant situation or even the importance of nutrition in eating a balanced meal. Other topics include camping a topic difficult to relate to an urban student body without including the experience-- family, friends and the relationships with them and shopping among various others. Students do enjoy learning about the cultural aspects of these themes and often come back to tell me that they overheard people speaking Spanish and were able to understand them or while at work they tried to communicate to a Spanish-speaking person using the target language. These stories are great to hear and make me feel validated about what I do; however, if I want to make a bigger impact, I must dig way beneath the surface of the content.

Rationale

Shopping, while still painful for many students from the economic stand point, seems the most promising in the sense that I can promote a sense of ownership and control over the choices students make. As I delved a bit deeper into the shopping unit I realized that my students in many ways were uninformed shoppers, meaning they were not able to explain to themselves or others why they gravitate towards certain brands or why they spend money the way they do. While this does not surprise me, when I take the time to really think about it, it did surprise me that all of my students had the same reaction to the question, ¿Cuales anuncios te

gustan más y por qué? (What advertisements do you like the most and why?). The Spanish language was not a factor here as I told students to answer the question in English. They simply did not know what to write and just about all of the students left the question blank.

However, all students were able to answer ¿Qué marcas te gustan más y por qué? (What brands do you like the best and why?). All students answered the brands part of this question in Spanish I might add-- but they again, could not tell me why they liked them. When the same three brands showed up again and again, I was not fazed as this is typical teenager mentality; but I was very intrigued that they could not tell me why these brands were so well liked. How are students connecting to these brands and why are they so important to have?

Before I continue, I believe it is important to define the word "Latino," as it will be used throughout this unit. Latinos in this unit shall refer to any Spanish speaking person whether he or she be a native or heritage speaker. This is to keep things simple as the discussion of the diversity among Spanish speakers and their identity would create another unit unto itself.

In my reading I came across an enlightening segment in Arlene Dávila's *Latino's Inc The Marketing and Making of a People*, which inspired me to find out the answer to my above question. Dávila discusses the impact a culturally manipulated commercial had on the sales of Wrangler jeans among Latinos, particularly in the Southwest. The Wrangler ad used the image of a cowboy, or a vaquero, from a historical standpoint. The vaquero, who was of Mexican American descent, was "the first cowboy in the United States." Cartel Creativo (the creators of this commercial) reminded the public of this fact and went on to say that he, the vaquero, "created all we associate today with cowboys." The connection made between Latinos and this product is very blatant. Dávila asserts that "canonized American symbols" such as this have been "latinized" to target the Latino community by fostering a sense of nostalgia --..."and finally today they (vaqueros) wear Wrangler western wear." While there was much skepticism at the time over whether the ad should be aired or not, the jump in sales abated any qualms and hence, there was a new avenue to explore in the world of advertising.

Davila's anecdote impressed upon me that the reason my students could perhaps not answer certain questions was because they could not distinguish the culturally appealing elements from the quality of the actual product. I truly believe that if I polled the Latinos who purchased Wrangler jeans, they, too, could not tell me why they did so. They would more than likely have answers similar to the ones I received from my students when I pressed further, "I don't know. I just like it." The "why?" started to become clearer to me the ad induced a deep, emotional connection because the Latino population is proud of their heritage and the vaquero holds an esteemed place in their history and culture. Recognizing this has driven me to teach students to become informed consumers by taking a deeper look into the targeting of the Latino community through media and advertising. I have chosen the Latino population because while it is my content area, there has been a concerted effort on behalf of the marketing industry to attract more Latino consumers and most significant, my students have had and will continue to have historical and cultural lessons regarding Latino customs, celebrations, etc... I also feel it will be easier for students to recognize these cultural elements because they are not their own.

This strategy will enable me not only to draw upon previously taught cultural material but also to introduce students to a new set of Latino traditions and customs. They will need to have exposure to and an understanding of said practices in order to recognize how the ads we analyze do indeed target the Latino population. The fact that an ad is in Spanish does not necessarily mean it is compelling a community to purchase something as much as it is simply providing information. The connection the marketer makes

between the product and the community is where the investigation lies -- Is the product a quality product that is worth buying or am I buying it because the ad speaks directly to me as a consumer? It is here students will be able to apply what they have learned about the Latino community to pick out the "nostalgic" elements of the ad.

Goals

Essential Question: How does cultural relevance in advertising manipulate me, as a consumer, to purchase products?

Overview

Students will use prior knowledge as well as current teaching of customs, traditions and practices within the Latino community to analyze advertising via print and media. Students will answer the question, "Is it the quality of the product that is compelling people to buy this or is it the connection they feel to the product through its advertising?" As a result of this unit students will be able to apply the strategies used to analyze the advertising as a means of recognizing themselves as a target audience.

Objectives

- Students will identify cultural elements in advertising mediums
- Students will analyze advertising mediums from both a consumer and marketer's lens
- Students will create a culturally rich advertisement

Timeline

Since world language is thematically based, this unit can be used at any level of the language study. The higher the level of study, the more in depth the unit may be pursued. The English curriculum of New Haven public schools addresses aspects of this unit in the 10th and 12th grades, so this would work nicely as in interdisciplinary project. Regardless of which avenue teachers choose commercials, print or both the unit should take two weeks to complete unless the teacher chooses to use this unit as daily cultural exposure segment, in which case the unit would take four.

Historical and Background Information

Marketing 101...

In order to fully appreciate the scope of this unit, I feel it is important to cover some basic terms and language associated with marketing. Since my space is limited and the topic of marketing would cover volumes of units,

this section will be elementary at best but should provide enough of a sense to be able to use the information in the classroom.

Mass marketing is all about quantity. It attempts to reach as many people as possible through massive exposure to the product through advertising. These products tend to be something everyone purchases and/or needs, whether it be soda, deodorant, McDonalds Happy Meal or a television network. ³ Through sales demographics, strategists determine if there is a need to pursue a particular audience a little more aggressively to boost profits from that community, which is where "target" marketing comes in "the aim to reach a specific, 'high quality' audience." ⁴ Target marketing comes in all shapes and sizes ages, class, gender, and so on and we have seen this day in and day out. Think about Tide ads for example, and how they usually portray a mother distressed over getting her son's or daughter's soccer uniform clean. In this example homemakers are clearly the target audience.

"Niche" marketing, however, focuses on a subset of the market. It addresses a need that is not being met by mainstream or mass marketers. "You can think of a niche market as a narrowly defined group of potential customers." ⁵ In this case companies have ascertained that there is a need for ethnic / multicultural marketing (defined in the introduction of this unit) as research shows that African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics will account for 8.8%, 5.4% and 9.9% respectively of buying power by 2013 and marketers want the dollars from these groups to go in to their companies' pockets. ⁶

This is where an understanding of the "Marketing Mix" or better known as "The Four P's" is necessary. Product what you are offering, Price what you will charge, Place channels product will go through to reach your customers, and Promotion how you will raise awareness with your target market. The fifth and most important "P" according to marketers and strategists is Positioning "where you place your product in the consumer's mind." ⁷ This is where multicultural marketing must be at its strongest since ethnic target audiences demand a different approach. This is not merely a conclusion to which I have come. There are numerous companies out there "specializing" in multicultural marketing. And I must say I was quite taken aback by the straightforwardness with which these companies promoted themselves. To get an understanding of what I am talking about, let me quote one such company's self introduction to the public. For obvious reasons I will omit the company's name but will include it in my sources at the end of this unit.

Whether your goal is to reach the Hispanic market, African American market, or to select subsets of a specific ethnic group, ___ helps you define your goals and provides you with the programs and services to reach those goals. With just one call you can implement an integrated marketing campaign, capture your target multicultural and urban consumers, drive sales and put your mind at ease.

Maybe it's just me, but this really stuck in my craw for some reason. As a consumer it provokes a negative

reaction because I do not want to believe I am profiled in this way; but when I adopt the marketer's lens, I am not shocked or appalled and I am actually looking for companies like this one to help me reach my ethnic audience. I "get it". I do. After all, marketing is in the end about making money and if corporations want to play and win in today's game, they must employ agencies as the one referenced above because their promises are "too much of an offer to resist." To bring this all together it is important to go back to the Dávila anecdote I discussed earlier. The success of that ad was no accident. Marketers spent much time researching the target (in this case Latino) audience and by exploring the "what", I believe we will find the answer.

Jeans are considered a durable and practical product. They are not only used for work but for social occasions as well. Jeans are a staple in most wardrobes and Wrangler knew it wasn't a matter of convincing Latinos that they needed jeans, they had to convince the target audience that they needed Wrangler jeans. Marketers truly did their "homework" for this campaign. They understood that the Latino community did not identify with the traditional Anglo cowboy but the U.S. western lifestyle aligned almost perfectly with the Mexican lifestyle as reflected in Tejano and Norteño music. From there marketers deemed the heritage of the vaquero to be the most direct link between the target audience and the product and they researched the history of the vaquero and the importance it held in the Mexican community. To bring this concept full circle, marketers created a counterpart theme, "Viva la Tradición" (Live the Tradition) to Wrangler's Anglo campaign "The Western Original,"⁸ and the target audience "ate it up."

Wrangler created a commercial depicting a young Latino cowboy fitted in Wrangler products and riding through incredible Southwestern scenery on horseback. The young man conjures up black and white images of his grandfather, a vaquero and wishes that he had known him. Suddenly, the images of the grandfather become colorized as the grandfather tells the grandson that he, too, carries the vaquero tradition and should never lose it.⁹ The positioning of this ad is incredibly strong. Not only did Wrangler connect to its target audience by using a proud piece of heritage, the company also capitalized on the importance of family in the Latino community. Marketers proved that it is not enough to gather information; you have to not only know how to use it but in what context stated or unstated. It is the "unstated context" where I see a connection between the ideas of E.D. Hirsch's cultural literacy and those of the up and coming ethnic / multicultural marketers.

Marketing 101...with a Hirschian twist?

"In order to truly understand what someone is saying, we must understand more than the surface meanings of the words; we have to understand the context as well." (Hirsch 1988) Background information is necessary in order to interpret any form of text whether it be written, symbolic or graphic and it is necessary to make a deep connection between people and a product.

Hirsch evokes strong reactions in people as he is a proponent of the Core Knowledge movement, which asserts that all children, regardless of race or background, should learn a common body of knowledge. The reactions come from debates such as; what then are the considerations for the common knowledge curriculum and whose common knowledge are we using? It is easy to see how, when looking at the Core Knowledge curriculum in this manner, his teachings can be misconstrued as being elitist and intolerant of other cultures. I prefer to look at the idea of cultural literacy (or world knowledge) as he defined it: "the network of information readers possess...that enables them to take up newspaper...grasping the implications, relating what they read to the unstated context which alone gives meaning to what they read." (Hirsch 1988)

To give a more concrete example, I will share an experience I had while simply reading his book, Cultural

Literacy: What Every American Should Know. He scripts four lines from the song "Waltzing Matilda," which uses terms familiar to "every Australian" as an American though, I had extreme difficulty deciphering the text. If he (Hirsch) had not defined terms such as "billabong", "billy" and "swagman," I would have either tried to look up the words with little success or chalked the lyrics up as "something odd" and given up. I am not Australian but if I had had the slightest knowledge of Australian culture, I might have been able to make sense of what I had read. My inability to understand the text is not a reflection of my native intelligence. I am simply not well versed in or exposed to Australian culture which is understandable in the sense that few Australians are my neighbors.

Now spin that as a marketer. You know the above-mentioned words are recognized and understood by just about every breathing Australian. Is it enough to just use the words because they are well known? Can you expect to throw a few of them in here and there and create a connection? No. They must be used in a context much like that of the song so that they elicit an authentic and emotional experience. It's not enough to know the words. You have to know the origin and/ or history behind them. What do they really mean and to what do they refer? Your cultural literacy as a marketer has to be quite far-reaching if you hope to truly impact your target ethnic audience. As a consumer you will more than likely need to have an equal if not greater cultural literacy as the market is trending towards employing multicultural marketing strategies. It's one thing to recognize meaning but entirely another to deconstruct it.

Why Taco Bell?

Taco Bell, an American chain selling Mexican style fast food was founded in 1962 in Downey, California. There are more than 6,000 restaurants across the United States and abroad. These restaurants serve over two billion customers a year and according to the Orange County Business Journal, earn almost as much (1.9 billion) in revenue. The company has come up with some pretty hefty and zany marketing pitches over the last decade or so and if you ask any Cleveland Cavaliers fan, there are two things they care about during a game: LeBron James and a team score over 100 points. When the team surpasses the 100 point mark at home, each attendee receives a coupon for a free chalupa. Clevelanders are big Taco Bell fans and perhaps within the next three years, so will many other NBA fans since as of last July (2009), Taco Bell replaced McDonalds as the fast food sponsor of the NBA in a four-year contract. It doesn't stop there; in an effort to promote their \$2 meals, the company created a Facebook page to gather signatures petitioning for more \$2 bills to circulate in the United States. ¹⁰ Americans quieren (love) Taco Bell.

While the company has opened chains in Latin America, Europe and Asia, it cannot seem to take hold of Mexico. ¹¹ Despite the highly publicized and valiant efforts to take Mexico City by storm back in 1992, the restaurants closed within two years and Taco Bell hasn't been back...until now. The company is looking to capture Mexican hearts by appealing to them as an American restaurant that serves Mexican-like food with French fries and ice cream to boot. In other words, Taco Bell is learning that it must make concerted efforts to distinguish its products as an alternative to traditional Mexican food to cater to those upper-class Mexicans who want any and everything American. Its new brand strategy "Taco Bell is something different" has a long way to go, however, if it plans to succeed. As it stands now, the menu confuses native Mexicans as it uses authentic names such as the gordita, chalupa and burrito.

Taquerías and tacos "hold a place of honor in the national cuisine" and one look at Taco Bell tells Mexican customers it is neither a taqueria nor a taco. ¹² A taquería simply is a taco shop. It is tiny and may come in the form of a street-cart vendor or a space as big as your clothing closet or kitchen. They are not fancy and do not have an extensive menu. They offer tacos -- a flat corn tortilla filled with a variety of mixtures (meat, chicken,

seafood, vegetables, etc...) The Taco Bell version looks more like a tostada, a fried or toasted corn tortilla served with the taco fillings atop. Since these days Taco Bell is in the business of "thinking outside the bun", it has renamed its taco product as the "tacostada." This makes sense since according to Mexican gastronomy, Taco Bell's taco is actually a folded tostada. But will changing name alone do "the trick"? Perhaps. Perhaps not. Or perhaps Taco Bell is really onto something. The word "tacostada" is a perfect example of how marketers are blending words and cultures to invent a new language, so to speak, that everyone will understand. And as the multicultural / ethnic marketing trend continues, more corporations may be encouraged to engage in this type of culinary and linguistic fusion.

Taco Bell's track record has shown it is willing to take chances but not in the way we may think. It is apparent they are willing to try new ideas and when they want something, they want it badly enough to try just about anything.

Gidget

Yes, the Taco Bell dog had (she passed away in July 2009) a name and she was the rage and face of Taco Bell advertisements from 1997-2000. In fact it is still hard not to think of her when you hear the company's name. She made the line, "Yo quiero Taco Bell" famous as she sought out and promoted Taco Bell products at all costs in a variety of locations and has become a mnemonic for many teachers to recall the verb "querer." She truly became an advertising icon, but why her breed?

Chihuahuas are the smallest breed of dogs said to have originated in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. They were part of religious Aztec and Toltec ceremonies because their molera a soft spot on the top of the head was believed to have the power of leading the dead into the underworld. As a result they were also often sacrificed when a human died. ¹³ When the 14th century Toltecs were defeated by the Aztecs, chihuahuas became pets of the noble class and objects of "true veneration". ¹⁴

So here we have a Mexican dog a valued one at that, using Spanish and eating Mexican food or food similar to Mexican cuisine. Are we connecting the dots yet? It would appear that Taco Bell, in pursuit of a larger Hispanic consumer population, tried to connect to their target audience through usage of their (Latinos) language and one of their own Mexico, in this case-- national products. Multicultural / ethnic marketing at its best, or so Taco Bell thought. It wasn't the Latino community that latched onto Gidget, it was the Americans. And in 2000, Gidget shot her last Taco Bell ad due to a Hispanic advocacy group lobbying against the image of Gidget as they believed the advertisements were "a thinly veiled culture stereo-type." ¹⁵

There's a fine line between employing multicultural / ethnic marketing strategies and offending the intended audience mainly due to the assumptions one makes. And when looked at in that frame, Gidget was postulated to be a success because she's a dog from Mexico. But in order to be truly triumphant, there has to be something more than a geographical connection between an audience and a product. No emotion, no sales. NO sales, no profit. No profit...then it's time to do something else.

Viva Gordita

A gordita is a small, thick tortilla made of corn flour filled with various items (cheese, meat, stew, etc...). The most traditional version is found in central Mexico while regions to the North use wheat flour resembling a small pita. It is the latter that the Taco Bell gordita most imitates.

A common mistake viewers make is confuse Cinco de Mayo with Mexico's Independence Day. The latter marks

a celebration of Mexico's victory over the French at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. Mexico's independence day is actually celebrated September 16 and to herald the event, at 11:00 pm the current Mexican president steps out onto the balcony overlooking the Zócalo the main plaza located in the heart of Mexico City-- and gives the "grito" -- "¡Viva México!" The Zócalo is reminiscent of Times Square on New Year's Eve and the crowd goes wild and joins the president in echoing the grito. The Taco Bell Viva Gordita commercial mimics this event to a tee. The chihuahua, wearing a military beret, steps out onto the balcony as the camera pans the excited crowd and buildings of the Zócalo, and the dog pauses to survey the crowd and then yells, "Viva gordita". The multitude below him roars and the commercial ends in dramatic fashion.

What could be more nationalistic than heralding Independence Day? By using this event in particular, Taco Bell demonstrates that it does indeed recognize and understand the differences between the two holidays. It "captures a nuance" and "connects to people emotionally" as the message of the commercial directly connects to Mexican pride -- freedom is uplifting and combats marginalization. But what about the beret? A Ché Guevara reference? Ché was Argentine fighting for Cuba and yes, he is a hero for many Latinos across the board, but the Mexican president would never wear a beret and most certainly would not want to be portrayed as a militant revolutionary. There are some great ideas here, but do they really work? Is the idea to get people in the door or to actually purchase and become a fan of the product?

Despite the emotional connectivity the commercial achieves, Taco Bell's version of the gordita is not comparable to the traditional and will continue to "confuse" the Mexican community the company so desperately seeks to attract. So in order to see an upswing in sales in the Mexican community, perhaps they need to think more along the lines of the "tacostada" and name it the "gorpita".

The Revolutionary Taco

"Revolutionary" as defined by Webster's dictionary is "constituting or bringing about a major or fundamental change." Taco Bell's slogan "The Revolutionary Taco" indicates that there is something radically different about their taco product in comparison to what is already out there in the market place; at least that is what I, as a literate consumer, would gather upon reading the words. Gidget, however, interprets the slogan as meaning something else.

The commercial is simple. It sweeps over a large billboard containing an image of Taco Bell's taco and the phrase "The Revolutionary Taco." As Gidget nears the billboard, she focuses on "taco" and the root "revolution." She instinctively puts the two words together and says, "A taco Revolution. I am there." Now if we were to look at the meaning of the word "revolution," we would most assuredly understand it to mean a war or political uprising and the way Gidget qualifies the phrase with "a" implies that she, too, is thinking along these lines. Why is she considering battle?

You don't have to know much about Mexico to realize that this is a country which has undergone much political unrest during her lifetime The Mexican War of Independence of 1810, the Mexican-American War of 1846 and the most famous Mexican Revolution of 1910 to name a few. It is the last that has had the most impact on Mexico as well as the United States.

Having suffered under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz for thirty years, a new generation of young leaders desired to take part in the political arena and make Mexico a true democracy. While the Mexican Constitution called for a public election and other aspects of democracy, the wealth and power stacked in Díaz's favor secured his control and made democracy without civil disobedience unlikely. Understanding what it would require to exact change, Francisco Madero, politically star-struck, traveled the country and gathered

reformers to his cause. Upon discovering Madero's plot, Díaz captured the young revolutionary and threw him in jail. Madero, however, managed to escape and fled to the United States in exile. When Madero heard that Díaz had again been "elected" as President, he created a manifesto declaring that the elections had been a fraud and he would not recognize Díaz as president. Madero claimed himself as the "President Pro-Temp" until new elections could be held. As part of his "campaign," he promised to return confiscated land to the peasants. Madero called for an uprising on November 20, 1910, marking the beginning of the Mexican Revolution.

Persuading individuals such as Pascual Orozco and Francisco "Pancho" Villa enabled Madero and revolutionaries to be fierce combatants. The capture of Ciudad Juárez led by Orozco and Villa in 1911 served as the decisive victory for Madero and company. While Madero's presidency and own life were short-lived thereafter, the Mexican Revolution nonetheless achieved freedom and instilled a national zealous pride for Mexico.

This 30-second ad is steeped in unstated context and does so so simplistically that a non-native Mexican or an individual illiterate in Mexican cultural might miss it. The play on words of "revolution" and "revolutionary" are ingenuous from a marketing standpoint. The idea of revolution appeals to the Mexican community as it reminds them of a proud yet difficult moment of their history. The rebels were the underdogs against Díaz and his armies yet through perseverance and determination, the revolutionaries were victorious. Since Taco Bell had the cultural literacy to recognize the difference between its version of the Taco and the traditional, it was able to use the idea of revolution not only as a means to connect to the target audience but also as a pitch for something new and different.

50 Cent Sues Taco Bell

I decided to use this example in my unit because I believe students will be able to peel away the various layers this particular story holds. I also feel that they will have explored enough (admittedly not much) in the way of target and multicultural marketing strategies and tactics to engage in informed and intelligent discussions. You, the reader, may have to or want to do a little research on rap, the hip-hop/urban lifestyle, influential contributors and the rapper himself, but for the purposes of using this account as an example of multicultural marketing, what you read below can be sufficient.

In July of 2008 Rapper 50 Cent filed a \$4,000,000 lawsuit against Taco Bell for use of his name without his permission. In their "Why Pay More?" campaign, Taco Bell asked 50 Cent to change his name to "79, 89 or 99 Cent in concordance with their price campaign. Taco Bell feels it "made a good faith, charitable offer to 50 Cent that if he, indeed, changed his name for a day by rapping his order at Taco Bell, the company would have been pleased to make a \$10,000 donation to a charity of his choice." (USA Today: 7/23/2008) To add more insult to injury, Taco Bell stated, "We know that you adopted the name 50 Cent years ago as a metaphor for change. We at Taco Bell are also huge advocates for change. We encourage you to 'Think Outside the Bun' and hope you accept our offer." 50 Cent had no prior knowledge of the "offer". In fact he didn't find out until he saw a news report about it. Naturally he felt Taco Bell unjustly capitalized on his name and they did but for 50, what was more concerning was the flack he received from the public as a sell-out. In this case there was only one place for 50 to go to clear his name in the public eye the legal system.

Now for those who are not "culturally literate" in the hip hop/rap culture, the reference to 50 Cent may be lost. There may be confusion as it would seem that Taco Bell is attempting to personify the monetary quantity of 50 cents versus referring to an actual person. For those who are, your reaction will more than likely be similar to that of the many bloggers mentioned above. 50 Cent has cultivated the image of being a gangster rapper so for him to join the mainstream public would be devastating not only to his image but to those artists who

share the "gangsta limelight" as well. Being gangsta means being tough and being street smart; daily urban life en vivo.

Taco Bell lost on this tactic many times over. It's pretty safe to say that the company thought low prices, rapper and African Americans. Now how they all related to one another is another story. Perhaps I sound a bit cheeky but the fact remains that they took advantage of a person for their profit and made an assumption that using a rapper in their marketing scheme would appeal to the ethnic group. They didn't do their homework. A rapper is not a rapper is a rapper. Jay Z is not the same as 50 Cent and he never will be.

Other Commercials to Consider

Due to the vast amount of Taco Bell commercials out there, I could not possibly cover all of them in this unit, but I have included a few below that you may want to investigate as they are great examples of multicultural advertising. They are, however, not necessarily geared solely to the Latino population but upon viewing them, you will ascertain whether they are appropriate for your classroom.

Taco Bell Fiesta Platter A commercial in which a mariachi band comes to the workplace to encourage the employees who have purchased Taco Bell to sit down, relax and enjoy their fiesta platter. A female employee literally lets down her hair, becomes seduced by the music and then sidles up to a member of the band and says, "Hola."

Taco Bell The Roosevelts This ad has so much going on in it that it may be used for two lessons. It is Taco Bell's first music video commercial aired during this year's (2010) Superbowl. It depicts a boy band going out for the evening and as they drive they are singing or rather "biting" to the tune of, "The Benjamins." When they finally arrive at their destination, they are surrounded by a crowd as they begin to break dance. A look-alike Ice Cube nods in approval of the boys' breakin' as do the various other African Americans in the mix. There are women somewhat scantily clad, a "blinged out" pepsi can and neon illuminated prices in the background. As I said there is a lot going on in this commercial but it is definitely worth watching.

"Here, Lizard, Lizard" This commercial was created in anticipation of the movie Godzilla. Taco Bell capitalized on the pop icon as it portrayed Gidget attempting to lure and capture the "lizard" with free taco signs and a small box with a stick and string. As the monster approaches, Gidget realizes its enormity and says, "I think I need a bigger box;" a direct play on the line from the movie Jaws.

Conclusion

Teaching this unit will not necessarily change students' consumption habits, but they can at least now ask the questions: "Why do I identify or not identify with this product? Is it because it (product) speaks to me as a person or group I belong to or is it speaking to someone else and I don't understand it? If it does speak to someone else, does that mean I can't appreciate it enough to become a consumer of it?" I truly believe that exploring the various multicultural / ethnic marketing strategies of the Taco Bell commercials will "get kids thinking". Once students begin to identify the cultural elements and make connections between the consumption of the product and the ad, they can remove themselves from the targeted population and become critics of advertisements they see.

The culminating project creating their own advertisement in either print or media using the marketing tactics studied will give us adults insight into how our students view the world and which cultural elements they value. This conversation alone will open up dialogue between generations, classes and races and is one I will most assuredly keep in mind for the next time I teach the unit. I do realize that these particular Taco Bell advertisements will run the risk of obsolescence and irrelevance, but as an educator, it is my duty to find current examples to replicate the unit. My goal is not to completely transform my students, but to make them more informed and self-directed consumers of society.

Activities

Lesson 1

Assumption: The various forms of advertising print, radio and television have already been explored and discussed prior to this lesson.

Objectives:

- Students will develop an initial understanding of "market targeting" in geographical terms by analyzing demographic charts for their school, New Haven and the United States at large and their own shopping experiences.
- Students will use the target language to express their ideas and opinions on the subject of geographical market targeting.

Activities:

- Individual and then whole group analysis and discussion of demographic charts (see appendix A for U.S. demographic chart). Note: teachers will need to remove (white out) information from chart to create analysis assignment for students.
- Share magazine search findings and review preterite tense endings and direct object usage
- Chart magazine findings on board
- Inquiry and discussion on consumer products and geography
- Share personal shopping experiences regarding difficulty locating particular products and how those experiences reflect society's attitudes
- Introduction of term "targeting" as a marketing strategy
- Discussion of how market targeting affects students as consumers
- Discussion: Should Latino products be sold in your local neighborhood shops?

Assignment: Write a letter (in the target language) to their local CVS, Walgreens, etc... petitioning to have at least one Latino magazine offered for purchase and the reasoning behind why such request should be obliged. It is assumed that students will use the class discussion as a large basis for their letter but it is hoped that

once students begin to write and reflect, their personal ideas and opinions will come to the surface. This assignment, whether completed in Spanish and English will aid in the development of student writing since this piece is a form of persuasion essay. It will more than likely be necessary to review the elements of a persuasive essay and transition words (in Spanish).

Lessons 2 & 3

Assumption: Students will have completed the assignment and have some basic understanding that product placement and/or availability within a community is not accidental.

Objectives:

- Students will identify and recognize cultural elements as a means of audience market targeting by analyzing commercials by the same company.
- Students will identify and employ the elements needed to create a strong, persuasive essay by analyzing a model sample and their own work in groups.
- Students will learn and use marketing terms in the target language and their knowledge of historical and customary practices of Spanish-speaking cultures to analyze commercials

Activities:

- Warm-up: students will arrange a letter (based on homework assignment) in order
- Review warm-up and discuss sentence order, transitions and organization of letter
- Question: Is the letter a weak or strong argument?
- Students will work in small groups and share letters they have written
- Group will analyze letters: What are the most persuasive elements of the letters shared? And share their findings with the class
- Introduction of marketing terms -- audiencia a la que está orientada la emisión, mercado objeto, destinar _ a _, apuntar a, estrategia de marketing, mercadotenia de grupos étnicos, marketing multicultural, posición, -- target audience, target market, to target , to aim, marketing strategy, ethnic marketing, multicultural marketing and position
- Reflection on Taco Bell: Based on what you can remember of Taco Bell for whom or for which community (ies) is the product? (Use of some of the terms above)
- Group discussion of Taco Bell reflection
- Picture of Gidget the picture of Gidget will be used for discussion and used as a means of learning and using the remaining terms above in context.
- Partner or small group discussions. Sample questions: ¿Qué tipo / clase de perro es? ¿Representa algo especial? En tu opinión, ¿por qué usó Taco Bell este tipo de perro en particular? ¿Qué opinas del uso del perro? (What type of dog is this? Does it represent something special? Why do you think Taco Bell used this particular type of dog? What do you think of the usage of the dog?)
- Viewing of Taco Bell Revolution commercial found at www.everwonder.com/david/tacobell.html

- Observations discussion and analysis in small groups
 - Whole group sharing on large sheets of paper taped on wall around the room and discuss
 - Viewing of Taco Bell commercial Viva Gordita -- found at same referenced site above
 - Same protocol after viewing the first commercial
 - Review Mexico's Independence Day
- Discussion and/or reflective note jotting before discussion: "¿Para quiénes es este anuncio? ¿Por qué opinas así? ¿Por qué seleccionaron este evento/costumbre en particular? Por lo general, ¿qué opinas del anuncio? ¿Cuál es la posición del product después de ver el anuncio?
- ¿Es ejemplo de buen estrategia de marketing? (Who is this commercial for? Why do you believe this? Why did they choose this particular event/ custom? Overall, what do you think of the commercial? What is the product position after viewing the commercial? Is it an example of good marketing strategy?)

Assignment: Students will write/ convert their support lists into an "opinion" essay. Again this type of essay is a type of a persuasive essay and will require students to give good supporting details, use transition language and develop strong introductions and conclusions.

Lesson 4

Assumption: Students will more than likely not have used most of the vocabulary regarding target marketing and audience in their homework assignment, so I will need to "remind" them how to use this vocabulary and what their differences are through the warm-up assignment.

Objectives:

- Students will incorporate authentic and appropriate usage of marketing terms through writing.
- Students will read an article for information according to the standards set forth by the Connecticut State Department of Education by reading an article and completing the standard formatted questions.
- Students will use the target language to express their ideas and opinions by engaging in a conversation requiring them to use their previous knowledge on the topic of audience market targeting and the article read in class as a means of supporting and/or defending their position.

Activities:

- Warm-up: students will define and use terms learned in class in a sentence (audiencia a la que está orientada la emisión, mercado objeto, destinar _ a _, apuntar a, estrategia de marketing, mercadotenia de grupos étnicos, posición, -- target audience, target market, to target , to aim, marketing strategy, ethnic marketing and position)
- Review warm-up by writing the sentences on the board and review grammar constructs

- Reading of 50 Cent in RFI (Reading For Information) format: students will read the article, answer four multiple-choice questions and write two open-ended responses

Sample open-ended questions: Is 50 Cent justified in suing Taco Bell? Based on current study of market targeting strategies, why do you believe Taco Bell chose to use 50 Cent as part of their advertising?

- Oral partner work in the target language based on the RFI article. Vocabulary brainstorming if necessary.

Sample questions: . 1) En tu opinión, ¿ tiene razón 50 Cent a demandar dinero de Taco Bell? ¿Por qué o por qué no? 2) En tu opinión, ¿A cuál audiencia está orientada este anuncio / esta emisión? ¿Por qué opinas así? 3)¿Fue una estrategia inteligente por Taco Bell? ¿Por qué opinas así? {1) In your opinion, does 50 Cent have the right to sue Taco Bell? Why or why not? 2) In your opinion, who was the target audience of this commercial? Why do you feel this way? 3) Was this an intelligent marketing strategy on Taco Bell's behalf? Why do you feel this way?}

- Group discussion and sharing of partner work
- Research cultural relevance used as a marketing tool by using the internet or magazines

Assignment: Find an advertisement in print or a commercial (provide the link) that you feel is an example of multicultural marketing. You must also write up a 7-10 sentence paragraph in Spanish stating and supporting your opinion.

Lesson 5

Assumption: Students will have completed the assignment from the day before as they will have been given some time to complete the assignment in class.

Objectives:

- Students will critique advertisements for cultural elements by examining and analyzing commercials and print advertisements.
- Students will review and apply proper editing techniques by completing a structured and guided version of the process itself.
- Students will use the target language to express and defend their opinions and positions by engaging in whole group discussion regarding their observations of advertisements and commercials.

Activities:

- Warm-up: quiz on the vocabulary terms from this unit.
- Review of terms / quiz

- Group review and edit of previously written letter to local CVS on overhead. Review of editing symbols and terms will be necessary.
- Group sharing and viewing of examples of and / or links to culturally relevant ads. If technological resources are available, viewing of actual commercials will be possible.
- Students will make note of observations: length of commercial, characters, visual appeal, music, voice, etc...
- Paired sharing and then whole group discussion of observations

Assignments: Edit and re-write persuasive letter. Brainstorm and outline ideas using a storyboard for creating an audience targeted commercial.

Since Lesson 6's objective is for students to create their own target audience advertisement using the concepts taught regarding market targeting throughout this unit, it is clear that teachers can decide for themselves the manner in which this is achieved. Meaning, this culminating assessment will look different according to content area and age group. I, as a Spanish teacher, will most assuredly want target language usage while a history teacher may want to include a particular historical period or political agenda. And while the final project may look different, I believe that regardless of content area, all subject matters can employ significant pieces of the lessons outlined above.

Materials

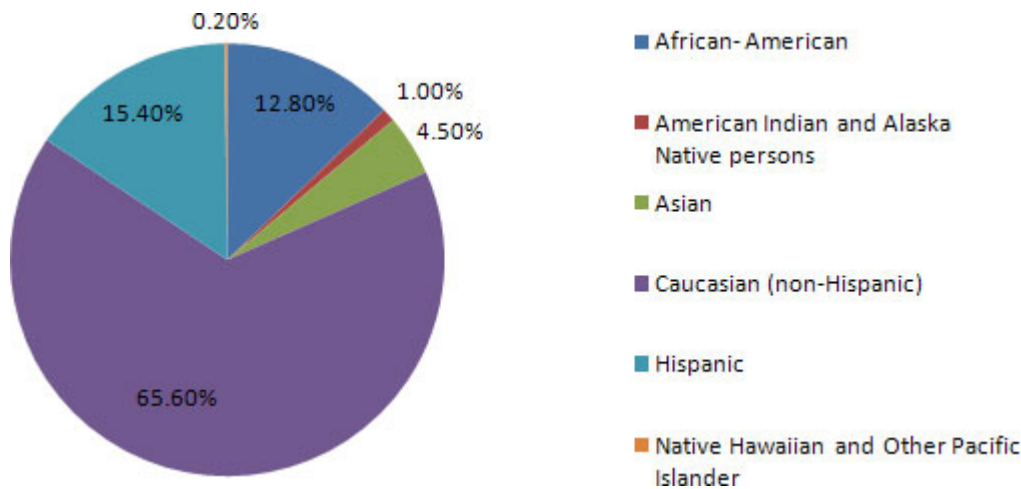
Demographic Chart Information

Demographics by Race in the United States

	<u>Overall Percentage</u>
African- American	12.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons	1.0%
Asian	4.5%
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	65.6%
Hispanic	15.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2%

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2008)

Percentage of Population by Race



Appendix A: Implementing District Standards

This unit will encompass the "Five C's" of Foreign Language Education, which are communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities by addressing but not limited to the standards below found in the 2005 Connecticut World Language Curriculum Framework:

Standard 3.4.A: Describe, explain, express opinions about and analyze stories, plays, poems or other literature as well as radio programs, music, films, art and websites. Students will defend their position in commercial analysis by drawing upon historical, social and political cultural knowledge.

Standard 4.1.A: Identify and analyze products and practices of the target culture (e.g., social, economic, legal and political), and explore the relationships between these products and practices of the perspective cultures. Students will identify and evaluate authentic customs and practices of the Latino culture which are being used as target audience marketing strategies.

Standard 6.2.A: Access and analyze materials, looking for sources of information for potential use in original work on the target language or culture(s). Students will create a culminating project by using authentic cultural practices and experiences to create an audience targeted advertisement.

In addition to the above standards for World Language, this unit will also encompass standards from the Connecticut Academic Proficiency Test (CAPT) in specific reference to the Reading For Information (RFI) of the exam by addressing but not limited to standards:

Developing an Interpretation: Standard A.1: Make connections between the text, other texts and outside experience and knowledge. Students should be able to use knowledge they have acquired throughout the unit to not only make connections but also support their opinion.

Demonstration of a Critical Stance: Standard B.3: Evaluate explicit and implicit information and themes within a text. This directly correlates to "unstated context" and the scope of one's cultural literacy as a measure to construe meaning.

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More Resources

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- ² <http://felipekorzenny.blogspot.com/2009/12/cultural-marketing-for-2010s.html>
- ³ <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-mass-marketing.htm>
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