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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Amanda Gail Wilson entitled “An Investigation of How Students Experience Corporate Advertising in Public Schools.” I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Instructional Technology/Educational Studies.

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An Investigation of How Students Experience Corporate Advertising in Public Schools

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Amanda Gail Wilson
December 2007
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, who have made countless sacrifices to make this accomplishment possible. While I may never be able to fully express my gratitude for their devotion to my well-being and happiness, I will be forever indebted to them for that and so much more.
Acknowledgments

There are so many people who have helped to make this project possible. Among them are family, friends, professors, and members of the school system who participated in this study. First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to my parents and my sister Jennifer, who have supported me unwaveringly in so many ways throughout even the most trying times of this process. Next, I would like to express my thanks to friends who have been by my side (even if only metaphorically) through the periods of uncertainty, absence, and sleep deprivation (along with all the moods that accompany those states) that could not have been pleasant for them, and who are amazingly still there. I owe special thanks to Robbie and David for being so steadfast in their friendship. Also, the contributions made by my professors at UT can not be overestimated: they performed the work of true educators by guiding, encouraging, and challenging me, and making available the tools necessary for meeting those challenges. I am especially grateful to my advisor, Dr. Diana Moyer, as well as my other two committee members, Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon and Dr. Trena Paulus. Without their valuable advice and feedback, this project would never have reached fruition. Finally, I would like to acknowledge those who must remain anonymous, those administrators, teachers, staff members, and students in the school system who helped to make this research possible. You rise daily to the challenge of fulfilling your roles in our public education system, and I hope that this text can prove to be a valuable tool in continuing to do so. I am extremely appreciative of the time you allowed me to spend in your schools learning from your community!
Abstract

In order to discover the experiences of public school students with the presence of corporate advertising available in their schools, data was collected from a public elementary, middle, and high school. This included a walkthrough of the schools to make note of advertisements available to students on a regular basis; informal interviews with school staff; and collection of classroom materials from teachers. Also, a total of ten students representing three different grade levels were interviewed in three focus groups, one per grade level. This study is a qualitative analysis conducted from a critical and phenomenological standpoint. The impetus for the study was an interest in the influence(s) of corporate presence in public schools, and a concern for what implications that may/may not have on democratic ideals in American society in general and American educational systems in particular.

The results are presented as a literary journey of what students experience in terms of corporate advertising in their schools. Using Hatch’s interpretive analysis as a guide led to the development of five common themes that permeated the focus group discussions. Those include an understanding of the basic concept of advertising; a rejection of the idea that corporations employ the use of manipulative practices within the school; varying levels of awareness and abilities to recollect corporate names present within the school; the presence or lack of student agency; and evidence of “successful” manipulations of the students with regard to corporate agendas. Also noted was the presence in schools of practices that do not concur with school goals.
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Chapter One: Introduction

There seems to be quite a lot of talk in the media about advertising and children of late. CBS has produced a number of television specials on the topic and NBC has aired specials in a series called *Food Fight* on their morning program, The Today Show, in addition to primetime broadcasts. Members of Congress have spoken out recently on the perils of allowing marketing agencies too much access to children and have threatened to move toward legislation that would regulate advertising to children. Interestingly, the talk in the media seems centered on unhealthy and/or negatively perceived images, not necessarily the fact that children are exposed to the advertising phenomenon in ways that are increasingly unrestrained and aggressive. Also, most of the conversations are about the advertising children see on television, during programming that is aimed specifically at children, and which is either marketed as or perceived to be educational in nature. The discussion addresses cross-marketing of products which are often detrimental to the health/wellbeing of children with characters/images deemed by parents as “educational.” As such, it appears to focus solely on food and how food marketers no longer depend upon advertising to parents because of the buying power currently attributed to children. This chapter will elaborate upon the television broadcasts and statements from the Senate mentioned above, as well as other relevant concerns about advertising directed at children.

Before moving forward, I believe that it should be said that as a student of cultural studies concerned about how public spaces are threatened by corporate
presence, my voice is evident throughout this text. Because I have approached this study from both a critical and phenomenological perspective, which will be addressed further in the Methodology section of Chapter Three, I believe it is important to make clear at the outset that it is my interest in preserving public spaces that served as the impetus for this project. So while I have endeavored to portray student experiences accurately, I have not attempted to appear objective in order to satisfy positivist or postpositivist critiques.

*Advertising and Children—What’s the Big McDeal?*

As reported on the CBS series “Gotta Have It—The Hard Sell To Kids,” the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) teamed up with Dreamworks Animation to produce commercials wherein Shrek (the animated ogre of movie stardom) encouraged children to find time every day to exercise. When Katie Couric asked what the problem was with that, Dr. Susan Linn pointed out that Shrek is also used to advertise products like Snickers and Pop Tarts, as well as McDonald’s, to name just a few—not to mention the obvious disparity between the ogre’s image (overweight and unhygienic) and the message he is supposed to get across to kids in the DHHS commercials (CBS 2007).

Jane Kenway and Elizabeth Bullen write about the business of correlating characters with products for sale in their book *Consuming Children*, pointing out that doing so has moved far beyond a simple marketing practice into an environment wherein “The pleasures of entertainment…become the pleasures of consumption and lifestyle” (2001, 66). The result is an atmosphere where it is no longer enough to
simply sit back and enjoy an animated movie. In order to fully participate in the experience children are led to believe that they must obtain all of the associated action figures, toys, books, clothes, shoes, school supplies, etc. In order to make sure those items will sell, advertising agencies depend upon what has come to be called the “nag factor” (Schor 2004, 61). Schor traces the use of the term “nag factor” back to a 1997-98 study conducted by Cheryl Idell, which categorizes children’s ability to effectively bargain with their parents for the purchase of a desired item (2004, 61).

But what about the seemingly obvious/innocent/simple/end-of-story question Katie asked that starts with those five little words: “Isn’t it the parents’ responsibility…?” But wait a minute, if it really were that easy, if parents really could solve all the problems posed by supersaturating kids’ lives with advertising with a proverbial wave-of-the-hand, if that’s all it really took…. Well, seriously, would advertisers invest seventeen billion dollars a year in something that could be dismissed so easily (CBS 2007)? Would they honestly even bother convening a meeting with marketing executives who claim to be experts on the “nag factor” (Schor 2004, 61)? I’m going to go out on a limb and say…No. In fact, “they”—marketing gurus alongside the companies that hire them—know that they aren’t risking anything. They know that eight to twelve year-olds will spend around thirty billion dollars a year of their own money, and that those children will influence another one hundred and fifty billion dollars of their parents’ money per year (CBS 2007). They know that by the age of two, children watch on average one-and-a-half hours of television per day, and that there is a viable zero-to-three year-old market—in fact, it is a twenty billion dollar market according to Susan G. Thomas,
author of *Buy, Buy Baby* (CBS 2007). And even though Juliet Schor cites evidence which indicates that use of the “nag factor” among advertisers may be waning due to “yet another example of marketing overkill”, marketers are forging ahead (2004, 63).

In fact, Kevin Roberts, one of those “marketing gurus” and CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide, has written two books on what he calls “Lovemarks” (2007). On the website for Lovemarks, he defines them by saying that

…they transcend brands…. Lovemarks reach into your heart as well as your mind, creating an intimate, emotional connection that you just can’t live without. Ever. …You don’t just buy Lovemarks, you embrace them passionately. That’s why you never want to let go. Put simply, Lovemarks inspire (Saatchi and Saatchi 2007).

He even makes the bold statement that “Brands have run out of juice” (Roberts 2007). He may imply that he is trying to appeal to a more intelligent consumer by exclaiming that “The ‘persuasion’ industry is highly transparent,” and that “Consumers understand marketing and they are the party leading the dance” (WGBH 2007). However, the truth of the matter is that while he may seem to be a leopard who has changed his spots, he is merely a marketer who has changed the dance tempo by appealing to a consumer’s sense of “Mystery, Sensuality, and Intimacy,” (WGBH 2007) in his quest for what he calls “Loyalty Beyond Reason” (Roberts 2007).

On the Lovemarks website, Roberts encourages consumers to nominate brands they believe have reached the status of being called a Lovemark. And for those who think consumers are too smart to buy into someone selling them something by approaching them through an appeal to emotions and the use of flattery, consider the following. The child-oriented brands listed here have not only been nominated by consumers to receive that honor, they rank in the top two hundred
brands/people/places/products: Lego; Harry Potter; Sesame Street; Dr. Seuss; SpongeBob SquarePants; Pixar; Mickey Mouse; and Disneyland and Disney World (Roberts 2007). It seems as though consumers are no longer buying just products, but the belief touted by marketers that they simply can not live without those products. And as if that were not disturbing enough, consumers are confirming with the corporations this vow of loyalty.

Susan Linn, author of Consuming Kids, holds a position at Harvard Medical School as an Instructor in Psychiatry and is Associate Director of the Media Center at Judge Baker Children’s Center in Boston (Linn 2004, ii). When she says that it is “unfair and naïve to expect that parents, on their own” (CBS) be expected to teach children to be critical consumers in the current atmosphere, she is not being wistful, or naïve, or even lax of parental responsibility—she is being realistic. Linn summarized the relevant dangers of “the onslaught of marketing and advertising” when she made the following comment on the CBS special:

Advertising and marketing is a factor in childhood obesity, in eating disorders, precocious, irresponsible sexuality, youth violence, underage drinking, [and] underage tobacco use (CBS 2007).

In fact, much of what Linn has concluded in her studies of the susceptibility of youth to marketing stems from the creation of marketing campaigns that are designed to convince children that they need a particular product, whether or not the product actually meets any real or perceived need. Linn confirms that finding upon attending the 2002 Advertising and Promoting to Kids conference, the purpose of which is to help marketers target children with their products as well as advertisements. She writes that at one of the workshops a presenter tells the audience a primary goal of
advertising to children: “At the end of the day, we want kids to say, ‘I need this product. I want this product. I love this product’” (Linn 2004, 14). Mind you, the knowledge she gained at that particular conference came at a pretty hefty price, $1,495, to be exact, in addition to $400 for each workshop attended. Furthermore, because her motives were not driven by a desire to successfully market to children, added to her bill was the relative silence of her opinions on the topic (a difficult task, but one she executed upon the advice of her supervisor at Harvard Medical School). In order to accomplish this goal, Linn remained as vague as possible without resorting to dishonesty about reasons for her presence at the conference (Linn 2004, 11-12).

As a psychologist, Linn finds it difficult to believe that anyone would want to use the knowledge in her field to manipulate minors for profit, but she has found that there are those who are willing. Instead of using the study of developmental psychology to enhance and improve the lives of children, many advertisers choose to use it as a tool for reaching a target audience, a practice Linn deems “the height of cynicism” (2004, 24). Some of the quotes that she has collected from marketers and advertisers follow:

“Playing off teen insecurities is a proven strategy;” (2004, 24) and

“…in accordance with a wide variety of scientific research such as that of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg… It is an in-depth understanding of the child consumer that provides the only real access to approximating a ‘winning formula’ for the development of products and programs that succeed with kids” (2004, 24).

Perhaps what is most unsettling about these practices is that the wolf no longer finds it necessary to don the sheep’s clothing. Marketing is no longer necessarily subtle, and what used to be a practice exercised solely for the gain of customers and money
is now parading around under the guise of what Juliet Schor calls the “wholesome halo” (2004, 96). She describes this pretext as an effort on the part of advertisers to gain the trust of parents without actually having to be trustworthy, a practice wherein “Food marketers search for a believable (never mind true) nutritional claim” (2004, 186).

Even after looking at some of the tactics used by advertising agencies, there will be those who will defend advertisers who try to market their products to children by arguing that they are trying to make a living in a creative way, or that they are merely supporting a family. Who could argue with those lines of reasoning? After all, what’s wrong with earning a creative living and supporting a family? While discussing the aforementioned conference with the president of the sponsoring company, Susan Linn vocalized an answer to that very question: “You know, this is the only conference about children that I’ve ever been to where nobody questions whether the work they are doing is good for the kids or not” (2004, 21). She touches more on the topic later in the same chapter:

Anyone who works with teens and preteens—or who reflects on his or her own experiences at that stage of life—is aware that adolescence is a time of confusion, insecurity, and even rebellion. The challenge for the caretakers of those who are making this passage is to help them safely navigate the turbulence. But for marketers, adolescent vulnerabilities provide grist for the profit mill (Schor 2004, 25).

As part of the NBC series Food Fight, journalist Hoda Kotb sheds light on one link in the chain that advertisers have forged between themselves and children. I was especially surprised after watching a particular segment of Food Fight aimed at determining exactly how young these child-consumers are. In the segment, Hoda
holds up a flash card with the letter M in front of a group of four toddlers. Upon asking what letter of the alphabet is represented, one of the children answers “O.” However, when she holds up a card with the infamous “Golden Arches,” one of the children jumps up and down excitedly before joining another one shouting “Donald’s!” What is clear from this exercise is that even though the children are just beginning to vocalize language in a comprehensible way, they have correctly identified a well-known international commercial symbol for food (no matter how greasy, fattening, or unhealthy it may be) (MSNBC 2007).

In light of the aforementioned strategies used to promote unhealthy foods and the current rising rates of obesity among children in the United States, Senator Tom Harkin has urged corporations to self-regulate how and what they advertise to children. As motivation, he has made a point to inform those corporations that if they are not able to reign in their practices, he will push for legislation that will allow the government to step in on behalf of the nation’s children (Harkin 2005). On his website, he includes a copy of the letter he sent to business leaders and he cites a study similar to an American Academy of Pediatrics study which concludes that children under the age of eight are unable to differentiate between persuasive and informational statements (AAP 2006).

Harkin also recognizes that much of the time children are exposed to advertising outside of the purview of their parents/guardians. It is for this reason that he has made eliminating advertising from schools part of his legislative agenda (Harkin 2005). Senator Harkin and his supporters have recognized that while the phenomenon of advertising to children is at best unsettling, one that is even more
disturbing is the presence and prevalence of advertising in an environment wherein a primary purpose is expected to be democratic education: our public school system. In the next chapter, I will present a brief overview of the literature available on the intersections of issues concerning children, advertising, and education.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Because the phenomenon of advertising as it pertains to children is such a far-reaching topic, I have chosen to narrow my focus to the advertising children experience in public schools. As such, the second chapter of this text, which will exist in three parts, will serve as a review of the literature that has informed this study in particular. These works have provided a basis of understanding that has guided this project from its inception through its completion. The authors and editors cited here have contributed to the bodies of knowledge of several fields, including but not limited to: cultural studies, education, cultural studies of education, political science, sociology, and psychology. The first section of this chapter will highlight the basic connections between advertising and schools by delving into the ways in which these two entities come to occupy the same space. As an introduction to this upward trend in education, I will present Molnar’s categories for identifying and tracking what he calls “schoolhouse commercialism” (2005, 20).

In the second section, I will explore in more detail the intersection of public and private interests within the American educational system, investigating some of the reasons given for such an association. In doing so, some specific examples of corporate presence in schools will be presented. The third section will outline the dangers of the fusion of public education with the private sector, and how it may pose a threat to democratic society. I will use that section to answer a central question: Why is it important to be aware of the intricacies that bring together the social realm
occupied by children, the economic world of advertising, and the public domain of education? I hope that this review of literature serves not only as a summary of the volumes that informed my research, but also as a clear and relevant illumination of the foundation of this study.

**Advertising and Schools**

Alex Molnar, Professor and Director of the Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University, Tempe, outlines “eight categories of schoolhouse commercialism in order to monitor trends” (2005, 20). This section will explore those categories, highlighting the means by which corporations find their way into schools. The first seven of these categories have been monitored by the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), a division of the EPSL, from 1990 through June 2004. The trends reported by the CERU can be found in Figure 2.1. The eighth category, Fund Raising, was not added for observation until 1999. The following paragraphs will expand upon the details of what these categories include.

Sponsorship of Programs and Activities, the first category, refers to the correlation of a corporate name or logo with a particular event or activity. Molnar calls this “the most traditional form of corporate-school interaction” (2005, 21). Included in this category are scholarship programs, school contests, and one-time activities. The second category, Exclusive Agreements, accounts for agreements between schools and/or school districts and corporations, giving the corporation exclusive rights for selling and promoting their products at the school or in the
Figure 2.1 Molnar’s Categories of Commercialism
district. In exchange for such a contract, the school/district may receive a percentage of the profits (Molnar 2005, 21). Incentive Programs constitute the third category, and are represented by the offer of goods and or services in return for student/parent/school staff involvement in a particular activity. This type of program may require participants to collect receipts from a certain store or particular brand labels; some of the participating corporations cited by Molnar include Pizza Hut, McDonald’s, AMC, and Six Flags (2005, 22). While occurrences in these first three categories have significantly increased, they do not represent corporate presence in the school on a daily basis as much as can be seen in the following categories.

For example, the fourth category, Appropriation of Space, deals directly with the physical space of the schools, “such as scoreboards, rooftops, bulletin boards, walls, and textbooks on which corporations may place corporate logos or advertising messages,” (Molnar 2005, 22) and which now also includes the corporate designation of buildings or sections of buildings. Todd Gitlin, in his book Media Unlimited, draws attention to the power of logos and symbols as a form of what is known as branding—defined by Gitlin as “landing a symbol in front of you repeatedly and in multiple venues, hoping to attract attention, and building a ladder in the imagination from attention to belief” (2003, 69). As invasive as this practice seems, perhaps even more intrusive in the daily lives of students is the presence of Sponsored Educational Materials (SEMs), the fifth category inspected by the CERU. In Born to Buy, Juliet Schor discusses how corporations like Scholastic, the Campbell Soup Company, McDonald’s, and Kellogg’s, to name a few, use quasi-educational materials to increase brand awareness among school-age (and pre-school-age) children. In
exploring the materialistic determination of these corporations, Schor writes of how Scholastic is “…dedicated to in-school marketing, and it promises its clients that it can ‘harness the incredible brand building power’ not of educational materials but of educationally based ‘marketing programs’” (2004, 92). One way corporations have tried to extend their reach beyond the students is by advertising to families and community members who have access to the school. They do this by offering electronic programming and/or equipment to the school in exchange for the opportunity to advertise there. Molnar calls this sixth category Electronic Marketing, which consists of Channel One, in-school cable programs, and computer and internet service partnerships.

Privatization of schools, a practice accelerated by the political trends explored in the next section, is the seventh category cited as an indicator of school commercialism. I find it worthy to note that the purveyor of Channel One, Chris Whittle, is also the prominent originator of the privatized educational corporation known as the Edison Project. Although Molnar notes a slight decrease in privatization in recent years, he draws attention to the dramatic increase in the years from 1990-2004, which can be seen in Figure 2.1. Finally, the trend in School Fundraising, which was not surveyed by the CERU until 1999, seems to have decreased in the years since then. However, the overall fundraising trend in relation to the other categories is unclear since information from those years has not been gathered. The next section will focus on why and how these corporate interests became intertwined with the interests of public schools.
After understanding the ways corporations build visibility within a school, it is important to try understand why they do so. According to Molnar, the primary factor in setting the stage for welcoming marketers into schools was the U.S. Department of Education’s 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, which outlined the failings (perceived or otherwise) of the public school system and, in effect, the potential demise of our nation’s economic superiority. The saving grace that would be offered to the education system was corporate involvement—the rationale being that if the schools were failing to provide adequately educated employees, so much so that our economy was threatened, then the natural conclusion would be that corporations would offer help, financial or otherwise, to schools determined to be in need. What followed was the influx of an emphasis on higher standards (and with it high-stakes testing), the introduction of charter schools managed by corporations (and outside the reach of government regulations), and an atmosphere conducive to a national reform program that would threaten the very existence of public schools (better known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002) (Molnar 2005, 10-12). So in an environment wherein a school’s survival is in jeopardy, many schools have looked to corporate partners to fill in gaps in school funding that might allow administrators and teachers to enhance the learning opportunities available to the children they serve.

If introducing advertising to public school students has been/is an effort on the part of schools to provide more/better educational materials/facilities to students, what are the reasons for corporations to become involved? Jane Kenway and Elizabeth Bullen have tried to answer this question through their research in
Australia. From the standpoint of the corporation, the answer does not require much creativity: corporations are creating loyal customers who will spend money on their products. Kenway and Bullen say this is relatively easy because of the fact that “Schools offer convenient aggregations of age-coded children” (2001, 94). As Molnar points out, in order to take full advantage of their opportunities, corporations can and do “…market consumer products to the students who attend public schools and to their parents…, pronounce schools unfit to teach and proffer tools for improvement…,” and “…sell alternative schools to the public, which pays for them with tax dollars” (2005, 12). Of course, when corporations make themselves visible in schools, they often do so in a humble, charitable light. What is ironic is that in their studies, Kenway and Bullen have discovered that these corporations, despite their efforts to seem philanthropically motivated, offer “help” that in many cases perpetuates existing economic divides. As an example, they point to the research of Libero della Piana, whose work has revealed that Burger King Academies are present primarily in what he calls “poor communities,” while “…in rich communities you have Microsoft Academies which prep kids for high tech jobs and track them into the best colleges” (Kenway and Bullen 2001, 99).

In The Shame of the Nation, Jonathon Kozol also speaks of the issue of corporate and school affiliations in locations that tend to have families with lower socio-economic status. He talks of the “utilitarian” ideologies and teaching methods used within those schools, highlighting the broader philosophical trends leading up to such practices, and locating the more recent trends historically:

Beginning in the early 1980s and continuing with little deviation right
up to the present time, the notion of producing ‘products’ who will then produce more wealth for the society has come to be embraced by many politicians, and increasingly, by principals of inner city schools that have developed close affiliations with the representatives of private business corporations (Kozol 2005, 95).

This movement is consistent with Molnar’s analysis of the socio-political environment brought on by the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. Unfortunately, this delineation between inner city and suburban schools is not imagined, as Kozol points out in his reference to the writings of Charles Murray, who wrote in 1993 that the educational environment described above is appropriate “for children who grow up in what he termed ‘disorganized homes’ or ‘urban areas’” (Kozol 2005, 105). He cites in Murray’s writings examples of inner-city schools where, unlike suburban schools, the school principal is referred to as “‘building CEO’ or ‘building manager’…teachers are described as ‘classroom managers’…children in these classrooms are selected to be ‘learning managers,’ ‘line managers,’ ‘score managers,’ ‘time managers,’” and how “…these terminologies remind us of how wide the distance has become between two very separate worlds of education” (Kozol 2005, 107). So one must ask, if these “poor” students are being directed into a specified type of workplace by a corporation that could readily use them, exactly who benefits from this intersection of public and private interests, and who does not? If, as is suggested by the works cited here, the advantages fall primarily to the corporations, perhaps it is time to rethink the purposes behind the relationship. In the next section, I will shed light on some of the dangers inherent in uniting these two facets of our American society.
An Awareness of Dangers

Whether or not a consensus can be reached about the role commercialism should play in public schools, it is important to understand the dangers present when that role becomes as exaggerated as it has. Obviously, schools and corporations alike have something to gain from each other—but is the cost to students too high? Researchers like Alex Molnar, Juliet Schor, Susan Linn, and Marion Nestle all agree that it is. In their texts on the topic, they each point to various ways in which advertising has endangered one aspect or another of children’s lives. I have chosen the work of these authors to represent four aspects of this threat, each of which plays an important role in the public school system: creativity, parental role and responsibility, pedagogical issues, and health concerns.

Creativity

In Consuming Kids, Linn devotes an entire chapter to examining the detrimental effects extreme commercialism has had on play and creativity in young children, maintaining that she “…place[s] marketing’s impact on children’s toys and play among the most dire consequences of commercial culture” (2004, 61). Her line of reasoning is pertinent to this study because of how easy it is for marketers to access children through school systems. For example, when Scholastic sells “Clifford’s Kit for Personal and Social Development” to pre-schools they are not just promoting healthy personal and pro-social habits, they are using licensed products and characters to create a brand image in the minds of the children (Linn 2004, 74). And while there is nothing necessarily inherently harmful about Clifford the Big Red Dog, Linn does
discuss how, by inundating children with countless numbers of fictional characters with fixed expressions, personalities, and voices, “…we are depriving children of the invaluable challenge of populating their own fantasy worlds with characters of their own creation” (2004, 72).

She also expresses concern and even sadness for the fact that toys like Legos and Lincoln Logs that were once sold in collections that encouraged creativity that was bounded mainly by the imaginations of the children are now sold in “kits” that allow for a restricted number of pre-determined designs. Instead of being encouraged to construct multiple original models with a variety of different pieces, children are prompted to generate only a few planned reproductions based on provided blueprints and pictures with a set of component parts designed for a specific purpose. The underlying principle is that parents (or the children themselves) will seek multiple one-purpose kits to purchase. It is perhaps an ingenious (if not ingenuous) plan on the part of the marketer, but one that leaves quite a bit to be desired for the benefit of the child.

In summary, the playthings marketed to children today are entirely too specialized to hold their attention for any reasonable amount of time. Children use the toys infrequently and for their singularly intended purpose, then put them down in search of another (hopefully more interesting, fascinating, and challenging) choice. Linn cites the findings of D. W. Winnicott to support the crux of her argument: that the role of play and creativity is paramount to the development of young minds and to the promotion of characteristics such as “originality, the capacity for critical thinking, and the ability to both recognize the difficulty in a problem and to search for
solutions” (2004, 66), all of which are desirable in any school curriculum. If one must ask the purpose/benefit of fostering imagination in education, John Dewey provides the answer:

If we once believe in life, and in the life of the child, then will all the occupations and uses spoken of, then will all history and science, become instruments of appeal and materials of culture to his imagination, and through that to the richness and the orderliness of his life (1902, 61).

Parental Role and Responsibility

Because this study is about children and how they experience advertising, I believe it is important to bring into the equation the related responsibilities assigned to parents by marketers. Some, like Paul Kurnit, do not see advertising to children as a viable risk to children’s well-being. Juliet Schor addresses this issue when she reports on the evolution of “antiadultism,” how advertisers attempt to undermine adults in general, and parents in particular. In their advertising, corporations have in the past tended to employ a divide and conquer strategy known as “dual messaging” (Schor 2004, 24). Using this strategy, advertisers would tout the positive aspects of a product in ads aimed at parents, while ads aimed at children would emphasize the playful or kid-friendly qualities of the product. However, some food marketers discovered that because the nag factor has become such an effective bargaining tool they could take advantage of advertising exclusively to children, a far more blatant divide and conquer strategy. Once other marketers caught on, they learned that there is no need to just market products to children when they can market whole concepts outlining ways for them to exist in their worlds. As an example, Schor points to “the
marketing of cool,” wherein “Cool is …associated with an antiadult sensibility, as ads portray kids with attitude, outwitting their teachers and tricking their parents” (2004, 48).

And while marketers may have moved away from dual messaging, it looks like they have made use of the practice of double standards. Kurnit, whom Schor calls “one of the deans of kid marketing,” admits to the power of advertising to children when he talks of “…the recognition that you could drive macaroni and other foods to kids themselves” (Schor 2004, 24). Later he all but denies that power when he places full responsibility on the shoulders of the parents—“…if you don’t want your child to eat pre-sweetened cereals, don’t buy them…. I mean, on some level it is truly that simple” (Schor 2004, 130). Schor also quotes Amanda Carlson, who echoes Kurnit’s sentiment when she says that parents “…should be good examples, which they’re not, in terms of how to eat healthfully” (2004, 130). It seems as though the adage ‘actions speak louder than words’ applies here. Do Kurnit’s actions, marketing to children based on the premise that he will be successful because of the consumer power he attributes to children, ‘speak louder’ than his disparaging responsibility lectures to parents? Does he really believe parents alone have the capability to fend off advertising targeted at children, or is he just trying to have his Little Debbie Snack Cake and eat it, too? And what about Carlson’s comments—should parents be the only responsible adults in a child’s world? Mathematically speaking, that would be daunting at best: the parents versus well, everyone else. In a marketing game where children are the ones at risk of losing, the playing field is not level and the marketers have recruited the kids to play on their team.
Schor also discusses how other factors related to family interactions may exacerbate the recent changes in dynamics between advertisers and children. She points out that parenting styles have become more lax than in previous years, and cites parental collaboration with children for family purchases as a result of that. She also says that parents are seeking this sort of input from their children at increasingly younger ages. Additionally, in “time-starved households” where parents work long hours, the children are more likely to receive “guilt money” and/or “discretionary items such as toys, videos, and books” (Schor 2004, 25). Another factor that has determined how much influence the children have on purchasing is parents’ desire to save money by buying only what their children will eat. To be sure that this consumer power assigned to children is not underestimated, Schor states that “…89 percent of parents of tweens report that they ask their children’s opinions about products they are about to buy for them” (2004, 25).

And to make things even more challenging, corporations are using the money and power they have earned from their successful marketing to children to lobby political leaders to vote against legislation that requires stricter labeling guidelines and to ensure that legislation is passed that protects the company rather than the consumer (Schor 2004, 130-31). Although parents should bear responsibility when it comes to purchasing power, they should not be alone. Schor elaborates upon the dangers of continuing to force feed commercialism to children:

Psychologists have found that espousing these kinds of materialistic values undermines well-being, leading people to be more depressed, anxious, less vital, and in worse physical health. Among youth, those who are more materialistic are more likely to engage in risky behaviors (2004, 37).
In a society where the lives of children have become supersaturated with advertising that demeans and ridicules the parents and seduces the children with power, there must be some larger effort, beyond any that parents alone could exercise, to protect the minds and bodies of children. A failure to do so will undoubtedly jeopardize the mental, emotional, and physical health of this nation’s youth.

**Pedagogical Concerns**

In *School Commercialism*, Alex Molnar cites the dangers of excessive advertising not only to public education, but to democracy in America. In so doing, he calls upon the writings and theories of John Dewey, stating that “In every aspect, advertising ideology is the enemy of Dewey’s philosophy” (Molnar 2005, 80). He argues that “the values of marketing” and “the values of education” are set apart from one another by their ultimate goals, as well as by their history. Molnar traces the current state of marketing affairs to the early twentieth century and John D. Rockefeller’s efforts to improve public perception of his family in light of an incident in Ludlow, Colorado, where fifty-three people were killed by militia during a strike of a mine owned by the Rockefellers. He calls what was to follow “the birth of public relations” (Molnar 2005, 74), wherein Edward Bernays used the study of psychology in an attempt to manipulate the minds of the citizens. Bernays believed this manipulation to be desirable and necessary in a society in which there are competing ideologies. On the contrary, Dewey believed that in order for democracy to flourish, citizens must be imbued with the ethics of “democratic habits of cooperation and public service by living them in the classroom” (Molnar 2005, 80). Molnar explains
that while advertisers encourage individuals to give in to their impulses, Dewey argued for self-control that would allow for “freedom of intelligence” (2005, 82). He successfully illustrates the point that the propaganda and manipulations used by advertisers stand in direct contrast to the democratic ideals and educational goals set forth by John Dewey. As a well-respected educational theorist, Dewey believed that a child’s education should be centered on what is best for the growth and development of the child for the purpose of democratic citizenship. Which leads to a primary pedagogical question: as a democratic society will we bend our educational systems to the will of commercialism, or will we shape educational practices around preparing children for democratic and critical participation in civic life?

Health and Nutrition Concerns

In her book, Food Politics: How the food industry influences nutrition and health, Marion Nestle makes a simple and important observation about food, children, and health, stressing that eating healthy as a child can help prepare against and possibly prevent dangerous and life-threatening illnesses. It almost seems too simple; is it in fact so simple that advertisers are risking the health of children, and the adults they may become, to sell their products? Or is it so simple that it is merely overlooked as an unnecessary cautionary tale? But perhaps it is not that simple—in a chapter devoted to “underage consumers,” Nestle states that

The increasing prevalence of childhood obesity results from complex interactions of societal, economic, demographic, and environmental changes that not only encourage people to eat more food than needed to meet their energy requirements but also encourage people to make less healthful food choices and act as barriers to physical activity (2002, 175).
Although there are many contributing factors, Nestle finds a way to assess the impact school environments have on childhood obesity. With regard to advertising in schools, she offers a brief history that includes Channel One, “corporate-sponsored teaching materials,” and corporate management of school lunch programs (Nestle 2002, 188-195). Nestle does note that there are schools that have chosen not to allow corporations entrance. However, the ones who do welcome them claim that “‘The kids need something to eat…and we want to make it as pleasant for them as we can;’” to which Nestle responds, “In such discussions, nutrition hardly ever emerges as an issue” (2002, 195). It is precisely that ideal, nutrition, that Nestle places as the core issue at risk when advertising and corporate interests pervade the educational environment. According to Nestle, “Nowhere are these kinds of issues brought into sharper focus than in the debates about the snacks and soft drinks served outside the school meal programs, and, therefore, in competition with them” (2002, 196).

**Conclusion**

In thinking about the purposes for and objectives of corporations’ presence in our schools, I believe there are some basic questions that should be asked: What are the goals of these corporations that have made themselves so obviously visible in our nation’s public school systems? Have those goals suddenly changed because they now cater to an increasingly younger audience? Can corporate representatives truly separate their corporate goals to sell their product(s) and make money from their individual desires to see their community schools flourish? Do those goals exist counter to an environment conducive to the healthy development of the child—a
development which accounts for play and creativity, parental involvement, child-centered educational theories, and nutritious sustenance? What about the goals of the school systems—do they really just exist to turn out the next generation of entry-level employees at the plant/business that moved to town to fill those spaces on the factory/office floor so as to allow the local economy to prosper? It is my hope that corporate leaders and school superintendents together can realize what Jonathon Kozol so aptly asserts:

Childhood is not merely basic training for utilitarian adulthood. It should have some claims upon our mercy, not for its future value to the economic interests of competitive societies but for its present value as a perishable piece of life itself (2005, 95).
Chapter Three: The Present Study of Student Experiences

Introduction

In order to elaborate upon the details of this study, I have divided this chapter into the following sections: the methodology that guided the research, the design and procedures of the study, the instruments used to carry out the research process, the challenges faced during the course of the project, the results, and an analysis of the findings. I will conclude the chapter with a brief summary of the research and findings, before moving on in the next chapter to a discussion of possible implications of this study and suggestions for moving toward a school setting that is not inundated with corporate advertising.

Methodology

Eric Louw, author of The Media and Cultural Production, recognizes an important link between modern mass media and the “culture industry,” about which adherents of the Frankfurt School (the school of thought seen as the foundation of critical theory) warned: “that the opportunities for dialogue become more narrow as the ‘culture industry’ becomes more powerful, stifling the possibility for true democratic discourse” (2001, 97). It is attention to this warning with the hope of inviting more in depth points of view for increasing dialogue which confirmed grounding the methodological approach for my research in phenomenological and critical perspectives. While it may not be common practice to join these two perspectives, there are several reasons this combined methodology is a good fit for
this study. One compelling argument for the phenomenological perspective is that “The phenomenological approach is primarily an attempt to understand empirical matters from the perspective of those being studied” (Creswell 1998, 275). Also, in Changing Multiculturalism Kincheloe and Steinberg posit phenomenology as a form of inquiry that informs critical awareness (1997, 52).

It is precisely the possibility for both of these approaches to inform one another that allows them to coexist within a research project. Whereas critical theory opens the door to understanding social structures on a large scale, phenomenology offers the opportunity to pursue insights into how those social structures affect the lived experiences of individuals. Those insights can in turn “inform critical awareness.” To better understand how phenomenology and critical theory are compatible, it is important to understand how phenomenological theories opened the door to more activist approaches such as critical theory:

The system that exists now in the United States [in regard to trade, economics, diplomacy, and education], which is highly appropriate for the decade in which it was forged, was outgrown and inadequate once phenomenological philosophies began to permeate the inquiry environment…(Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 178).

Lincoln goes on to say that the result of this shift has allowed for a system that has “…re-created research in the image of democracy, care/caring, and social justice” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 179). Both paradigms are interpretive and, while they may not be identical, they are compatible: Guba and Lincoln ask, “Is it possible to blend elements of one paradigm into another, so that one is engaging in research that represents the best of both worldviews” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 201)? They agree that it is possible, so long as researchers do not attempt to combine paradigms that are
clearly contradictory. For example, joining a positivist and an interpretive paradigm would not be possible “…because the axioms are contradictory and mutually exclusive” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 201). Perhaps what makes critical theory and constructivist phenomenology most appropriate for this research project is phenomenology’s “shift toward [social] action” that “came as both a political and an ethical commitment” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 201).

It should be noted that the standpoint of the phenomenological researcher allows for the concept that we live in “a world in which universal, absolute realities are unknowable, and the objects of inquiry are individual perspectives or constructions of reality” (Hatch 2002, 15). It is when the researcher takes on the responsibility of observing, understanding, and portraying those constructions that she becomes a co-creator of those perspectives. In light of that, phenomenology provides for a practice referred to as bracketing, wherein the researcher should first acknowledge her attitudes toward a particular phenomenon, then set aside or bracket those feelings during the research process. And while I do not believe that a researcher can fully detach parts of herself, I do believe that it is possible to put aside certain aspects of our experiences in order to be more open to the experiences of others. In discussing communicating across cultural divides Lisa Delpit speaks to the importance of this practice and how challenging it can be:

To do so requires a very special kind of listening…that requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds…. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment—and that is not easy…it means turning yourself inside out, giving up your sense of who you are…. It is not easy, but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and the only way to start the dialogue (1988, 297).
Although Delpit was not referring to the concept of bracketing in her definition, I believe her words speak to the essence of attempting to understand others’ perspectives. Because I view this “special kind of listening” as being pertinent to the practice of bracketing, I made a point to repeatedly remind myself to practice it throughout the research process in order to really hear the participants. In the next section I will elaborate on the specifics of the particular types of procedures I chose to use, which included focus group interviews, informal interviews, textual analysis, and observation of school environments.

**Design and Procedures**

As mentioned above, this project is a qualitative phenomenological research study with the purpose of attempting to better understand the experience of being the object of corporate advertising in a public school environment. The following research questions were developed during the initial phase of the study:

1. How prevalent is corporate advertising (sponsored educational materials and competitions, corporate logos, sponsored events/trips, incentive programs [ex: Pizza Hut’s BOOKIT! Program], merchandise for sale, etc) in three public schools?

2. How do students experience the phenomenon of corporate advertising at school? What are student attitudes toward corporate advertising in their schools?

In order to answer the research questions set forth, I set out to follow the walking paths of a chosen class from each school through their daily activities. In doing so I made note of advertising that is aimed at the children throughout the school/curriculum program. My observations included advertisements found in math
textbooks and/or other learning materials, posters found throughout the school(s) containing advertisements, and products with brand name logos. For the purposes of this study, advertising was defined as materials containing or possessing persuasive intent for the purpose of selling a product or brand, and which are presented in a way that may increase students’ awareness of a particular brand, including logos, catch phrases, and product placement. This definition was devised based upon the intentions of marketers and their aspirations to gain access to younger audiences. It was influenced by the work of authors like Gitlin, Linn, Molnar, and Schor, who are cited in the literature review of this text.

At the elementary school, I was able to actually walk along with students as the day progressed. When the class split up into thirds to take part in each of three curriculum areas (gym, music, or art), I visited each of the three areas in turn, then followed one third of the class back to the classroom to meet up with the other two thirds of the class. However, because of the nature of how students move through the chosen middle and high schools, I was not able to actually move with a class of students, so I walked through the areas of both schools to which the participants had access. Since the aim of this study was to understand the experience of students and not necessarily the number of times they encountered particular advertisements, I did not generate a mathematical schematic with rates of exposure to certain ads and/or products dependent upon the number of times they enter/exit a certain area of the school. My goal for the walkthrough of the schools was to try to gain an appreciation for how the students see their environment as they make their way through the halls.
on their way to and from classes. The manner in which I collected this data will be addressed in the *Instruments* section of this chapter.

In addition to the walkthroughs, I asked one teacher from each chosen grade level to provide me with all instructional mathematics materials provided/approved by the teacher, school administrator, and/or school board (textbooks, magazines, pamphlets, posters, library books, toys, games, etc.). In order to facilitate the analysis process, some of these items were photocopied and returned to the teachers, and some were kept by me with other collected data (with the permission of the teacher). Some of these instructional materials can be found in Appendices F and G. The school environment, math texts and other relevant artifacts have been analyzed for presence and general prevalence of corporate advertising and its impact on students’ experience with their learning environment.

Because understanding student experience is the primary goal of this research project, I conducted three focus groups, with four participants in each of two groups (the elementary and middle school groups) and two participants in the final group (the high school group). I employed purposive sampling to identify participants, whereby the participating teachers chose students based upon the teacher’s assessment of the students’ ability to participate in the focus group (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 450-51). I also followed rules of equitable inclusion as far as parental permission and classroom/school population allowed. The focus groups were formal, semi-structured interviews, defined by Hatch as those wherein “although researchers come to the interview with guiding questions, they are open to following the leads of informants and probing into areas that arise during interview interactions” (2002, 94). The ages
of the participants varied, as there was one focus group for each of three different grade levels. Student participants from the elementary school were in fifth grade; student participants from the middle school were in sixth grade; and student participants from the high school were in tenth grade. The ages/experience of participating teachers, who were selected with the help of each school principal, varied.

At the outset and throughout the project, risks were expected to be minimal. The students were asked to participate in a focus group session wherein they would discuss their experiences with and views about the corporate advertising to which they are exposed within their school/classroom setting. The focus groups lasted between 25-45 minutes, and while students were out of class during the focus group meeting, they were participating in a university research project, in itself an educational opportunity. Minimal time was required of the teachers, who were asked to provide all texts (either copied or kept) that are used throughout the year in the subject area of mathematics. As mentioned above, teachers were also asked to distribute parental permission/consent forms, and to suggest a group of students who would be able to contribute to a group discussion on the topic of research. The participating teacher at the elementary level was asked to be, and was present during the review and signing of the Student Assent form. Each of the three teachers also participated in informal interviews of varying scope and length, offering information and answering questions relevant to student experiences with corporate presence in the school. In addition to the teachers, the following staff members also participated in informal interviews: an administrative assistant at the elementary school; a
guidance counselor and a gym instructor at the middle school; and a cafeteria worker and a football coach at the high school.

Protection measures for the study included safeguarding the confidentiality of all participants, teachers, administrators, and schools. As necessary, pseudonyms have been used, and any recordings have been kept in a locked compartment, to be destroyed within three months after data analysis has been completed. While I have made every effort to protect confidentiality, I am not responsible for what students may share with each other outside of the focus group sessions, a point I made clear to parents on the parent permission form and to participants during the review of the assent form. Also, transcriptions have been coded to protect the identities of the participants. Permission from all appropriate administrators and school personnel, and parental informed consent forms were obtained prior to implementation of the study; student assent forms were signed by students before they were interviewed. In order to ensure the safety and comfort of the students, a member of the school staff (teacher, teacher’s aide) at the elementary and middle school was asked to be present during the focus group meetings. This was determined to be unnecessary for the meeting with high school students, although the meeting took place in a central area of the building through which students and faculty moved freely during the interview without being intrusive to the interview process. Once the students were made aware that they might be selected to participate in a study, permission forms were distributed and returned, and students were selected. At the beginning of the focus group meetings, students were reminded that they were taking part in a research project, they were informed of their rights, and they signed student assent forms.
before the study continued. For elementary school students, the teacher was present for the review and signing of the assent form; for middle school students, a substitute teacher was asked to witness the signing of the forms; and high school students reviewed and signed the forms at the beginning of the focus group meeting.

**Instruments**

During the walkthrough of each of the schools I brought along at least one of two digital cameras to record images that were relevant to the purpose of the study. For example, I took pictures of posters that included corporate advertising/logos, vending machines, and products/product labels found at the schools and accessible to the students. Images of much of the photography can be found in Appendices F, G, and H.

The semi-structured focus group protocols (see a sample in Appendix E) were designed with questions/statements that could be used during the focus groups as guides to initiate and keep on track the discussion between the participants and myself. While the questions/statements were generally the same for each of the three focus groups, I included for my use data and notes specific to each school that would help steer conversation if necessary, or that would provide insight to participants clarifying the questions if participants seemed uncertain as to what the questions may be asking. The focus groups were audio taped using a cassette recorder plugged into a power outlet with battery backup power available if necessary. Using a transcription machine, focus group audio tapes were transcribed and evaluated for identification of main and recurring themes within and between grade levels. As
mentioned above, the transcriptions do not include information that could be used to identify the participants.

**Challenges Confronted**

As a researcher working in a public school system, care was taken during the design phase of this project to account for contingencies that might be encountered; however, as I worked through the process, I found that I faced three major challenges at varying stages throughout the course of the study. Some of these challenges might be attributed to the following: the fact that the research took place in a public school setting, the ages of the students participating, any unease of administrators and or personnel with the nature and perceived purpose of the study, and/or as difficult as it may be to admit, to researcher error. In the paragraphs that follow, I will elaborate upon not only the challenges I faced, but also how I chose to deal with them. I will also address how the presence of those challenges and how they were dealt with may or may not have affected the outcome of the study.

Although I have found the phenomenological perspective, as it informs and is informed by a critical perspective, to be the best fit methodologically for myself as a researcher as well as for this study, I experienced a dilemma during the planning stages of my research, to which Hatch gives some attention in *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Having spent time working in a public school system, I was concerned about how involved I could expect administrators, teachers, staff, and students to be. I found Hatch’s statement that “Educational settings are complex professional, social, and political contexts,” (2002, 47) to be as accurate as
any I could use to describe the atmospheres I have experienced. Also, having worked in various classroom settings, I have learned that even the most reserved observer can change the dynamics of a classroom setting. So when I planned the amount of time I would expect to be present in each of the schools (as observer as well as interviewer), I had to use my best judgment based upon my personal experiences as well as Hatch’s response to the question of longevity in an observational research setting:

It depends. It depends on your research questions. It depends on how much time your participants will give you…. It depends on the time of the year, especially in a school-based study. It depends on your own time and resources. It depends on factors that I (and perhaps you) cannot anticipate (2002, 89).

And although generally speaking, a constructivist approach like phenomenology suggests a somewhat intensive co-participation between the researcher and the participants, I heeded Hatch’s advice to gather evidence from various sources when participant limitations are present (2002, 50). I believe that I have overcome the challenge posed by a desire to interfere only minimally in the educational processes at each of the schools by collecting data from the sources mentioned above.

The second, and perhaps most difficult, challenge I faced was the presence of contradictions between comments made by students during the middle school focus group and information from teacher feedback. Having prepared for the focus group with middle school students by conducting an informal interview with their mathematics teacher and reviewing observational notes as well as the material provided to me by that teacher, I was caught off guard when feedback from those students did not concur with data I had already collected. In one glaring example of this disparity, after trying unsuccessfully to guide a discussion with open-ended
questions, I specifically asked about whether the students used candies to supplement any of their mathematics lessons. The relevant excerpt of this segment of the interview follows:

Interviewer: …what about any candies that Ms. Haley brings—does she bring in any types of candy—

(Students begin to answer almost at once)

Colleen: We’re not—

Dianne: We’re not allowed to—

Abigail: We have a health rule thing—

Colleen: Yeah—

Abigail: We can’t have candy or anything

I: ok

Colleen: We can eat it at lunch, though.

Brianna: She said that kids startin’ to get more bigger off the pops and—

Dianne: —obese—

I: Mm-hmm (OC: I wonder when this conversation took place, but do not want to seem adversarial, so I just let the students talk…)

Brianna: and so they give us free sugar stuff like that—

Abigail: —Sugar free—

Brianna: Sugar free, yeah.

Colleen: Granola and stuff like that.

Dianne: Can’t be chocolate candies. They can give us stuff like mints or stuff, but—

Abigail: Granola bars, Cheez-Its—
Dianne: Our language teacher gives us like Goldfish, uh Goldfish—

Colleen: —raisins—

Dianne: —yeah, health snacks…

This part of the interview was particularly startling to me for several reasons, the first of which being that the students had already disclosed to me that their teacher had let them use marshmallows and toothpicks to form basic shapes during a geometry lesson. After the students talked more about some of the foods they can and do have at school, I tried to broach the subject again:

I: ok, now I know that Ms. Haley doesn’t bring in the candies, does she ever use pictures of candy with you all, when she’s talking about fractions, or graphing—

Colleen: —uh-uh (no)—

I: —or percentages?

Abigail: No

At this point, I was utterly confused—not only had I seen the Smart Board screen in the classroom just two weeks prior with an image of rows of M&M’s, but I had also been provided with a copy of that image by the teacher as material that she used in the classroom. Not to mention the fact that I had already been dealt a blow when students informed me that they had never seen the Pizza Hut fraction game that the teacher assured me she used with all of her students. Images of the Pizza Hut game and the M&M’s lesson, as well as other similar handouts, can be found in Appendix G.
As to an explanation of how to account for these discrepancies, I can only
guess. Because I did not want to create what Hatch calls “an ’antagonistic-defensive’
relationship” (2002, 96) between myself and the students, I did not delve into when,
where, or why the discussion about eating healthy at school took place between them
and their teacher. It is for this same reason that I did not approach the teacher at a
later date with these same questions (it may be important to note that a substitute
teacher was present on the day of the focus group interview). At the point of the
interview wherein these discrepancies became obvious to me, I made the decision to
continue with the meeting. At the time, some of the reasons for this included not
wanting make the students feel unnecessarily at fault and not wanting to lose
important insight that I still believed the students had to offer. After all was said and
done, I am glad that I continued with the interview—as will be seen in the Results
and Analysis sections, doing so provided data valuable to the outcome of this study.

The final major challenge I confronted was related to the number of students
present for the high school focus group and the amount of time they were able to
spend in the interview. Constraints resulting from the time of year, the demands
expected of the students, and the permission forms returned led to only two students
being available for the focus group meeting. While I had hoped to interview four
students from each school, I was now looking at interviewing only two high school
students. I found myself faced with a decision: either continue the study, or throw out
the data I had collected and start again next semester. I weighed my options, and
determined that any data I could collect would add to the value of the study. As time
for the interview to end was drawing near I noticed that the students were taking note
of the time, and recalled that their class was reviewing material for a test. Feeling comfortable that I had obtained enough information, and wanting to make sure the students did not miss out on the opportunity to review with their teacher, I ended the focus group five minutes shy of the thirty minutes I had planned on spending with the students. Since that time, I have recognized that although participant numbers and interview times would be different for the high school, participant experiences would carry the same weight. And while I may have been at the mercy of certain limitations as a qualitative researcher in an educational setting, I do not believe those limitations jeopardized the findings of this study.

**Results**

The data of this study took the following forms: notes and transcripts of student focus groups coded in order to protect participant confidentiality; notes and digital photographs taken during observation of each of the school environments (see Appendices F, G, and H for photos); a collection of relevant text and materials used in mathematics lessons (also found in Appendices F, G, and H); and notes taken during informal interviews with teachers and staff at each of the schools. The following paragraphs will present a literary compilation of what students experience in terms of corporate advertising in their schools. Each is an account that was created from the data collections described above, with three characters taking on the roles of the participants (one character representing each school). The quotes are taken from focus group transcripts and/or informal interviews at each of the schools—what “Sammy” says is an actual quote from a fifth grader(s) in this study, and the same
goes for “Julia” at the middle school and “Susie” at the high school (some of the quotes can be found in their original form in Appendix I). The characters are each aggregates of the student participants of this study, meaning they represent the combined experiences of the participants. The images referenced below can be found in Appendices F, G and H (unless otherwise noted). A typical day in the life of the participants is not exactly what you are about to read. Instead, what you will encounter here will give you the impression of their experiences across time in terms of advertising and corporate presence in their schools.

Sammy

As a fifth grader at Sunny Day Elementary School, Sammy is perceptive enough to recognize brand name logos that can be found in her classroom, even with the brand name erased or covered. She loves to read books and to watch movies made from books, saying that “…some books, they have more details than the movies, and some movies have more details than the books;” although she went on to say that “…when you read the books you get your own image of the people and animals in it, and the movie—it’s just dull, its already there...and you don’t get to imagine it up.” She can find some of these books made into movies in her classrooms (Ella Enchanted, Harry Potter), and even some books that have television show tie-ins (Scooby Doo from the Cartoon Network, The Magic School Bus). Sammy tells me that she watches Cartoon Network, and was able to recognize the logo nearly instantly (in fact, I wondered if she even had time to actually read it before exclaiming what it was). Regarding literacy, the teacher shares with me that one of
the reading programs may have a noticeable number of corporate advertisements. Magazines represent other popular culture texts that are introduced via student interaction during lessons, and include such titles as *Women’s Day*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Vogue*, *Cars*, and *Forbes*. In addition, there are advertisements for *Weekly Reader* activities and website advertisements in her math textbook. And although her teacher tells me students use the textbook infrequently, since she prefers to use teacher created materials, Sammy names the math book among her favorites. Sammy’s teacher also tells me that one of the educational games provided by the county must be played on a Dell computer. The Texas Instrument calculators that are available in the classroom are made available for use on state-wide tests; however, the teacher informed me that students use them when they do not need to, even if doing so slows them down or misuse of them results in an incorrect answer.

There are other corporate names Sammy notices around her school, as well. For instance, as she makes her way through the building she may encounter movie posters (one in particular comparing and contrasting horses and zebras, although she could only remember two of twenty-one facts); posters encouraging her to participate in *BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION* or *Campbell’s Labels for Education*; a poster encouraging its readers to register their grocery discount cards for the new school year; a person costumed as a Chick-Fil-A cow dancing around and handing out coupons and stickers; and Santa Claus (although she admits, “We don’t know what that was from”). She can also find other corporate names and logos in one or more of her classrooms, including Dell and Apple computers; Microsoft Windows; Texas
Instruments; Crayola and Pentel art supplies; Scholastic; Weekly Reader; textbook website ads; and teacher created materials with company names.

When Sammy goes to lunch, she does not always like what is offered, so she tells me that as often as once a week she will have just a bag of Doritos from the cafeteria, “…and at least have somethin’ to **have in your stomach**.” She can easily name the brands of many of the other products (milk, ice cream, juice, raisins) in the lunch room with little or no trouble. However, her concept of what constitutes healthy food seems off-target. When asked her opinion about whether the foods she gets at school are healthful, she talks about the fruit being bruised; and when asked about whether there might be foods that are unhealthy, she told me “…they usually don’t use brand names, we don’t usually know,”(after having identified brand foods) neglecting altogether the presence of ice cream, chips, and flavored milks, and failing to realize her own potential to determine what is good for her health without a brand name attached to it. On a similar note, when the students’ teacher provides mid-morning snacks for the class she buys generic brands, but repackages them before bringing them to class because of what she calls the children’s “misconceptions of what tastes good.”

With regard to her understanding of advertising, Sammy seems to understand the basic concept, and to even be aware of dishonest tactics on the part of some marketers. However, in light of that, her point of view of advertising in schools is rather positive. When she says, “I think it feels right because, like if you look at an advertisement and you don’t know what it’s about, then you can like, look at it and say stuff about it,” the idea that she sees advertisements as informative is clear.
Sammy also likes when advertisers come to her school because, “...when they come to advertise it’s really fun...and people know about new places they’ve never heard of before.” Sammy sees the advertisements at her school as a way for marketers to reach out to children; in a discussion about ads at the school directed at the adults, she told me that “...most of it’s for the children, because there’s more children than adults at the school, and they want to make sure that the children feel welcome at the school.” Overall, she has an optimistic outlook about advertising in schools, and shared with me one of the benefits of having brand name products at school: “If you try it at school and you like it, you can get your parents to buy it so you can let them try it and eat it more.”

Julia

Julia is a sixth grader at High Noon Middle School, where she sees corporate names and logos on a regular basis. Although most of those are in the hallways of the school and in the cafeteria, there are a few advertisements available to her in her mathematics class, including iMac, Office Depot, Elmer’s, HP, InFocus, and Star Wars movie posters. Also, her math teacher provided me with a group of materials that she uses to supplement the lessons; some of those include references to Pizza Hut, M&Ms and Skittles candies, and Lucky Charms cereal. And even though Julia refutes having used some of the materials offered by the teacher, her experience with advertising in school does not end here.

In Julia’s language arts class, she and her classmates were assigned a project wherein they created and packaged their own product. All of the product ideas Julia
shared with me fell into the category of sweet treats (specifically, cakes topped with icing). In reference to her claim that students were not allowed to consume sugary, fattening foods at school, she informed me that “...if we bring in foods for projects like cake and stuff we can eat it.” Apparently, brand packaging is used in other classes as well: On display in the cafeteria are panels with student art work, most of which are either student renditions of brand product packaging, enlarged by students to show the detail in a particular area of the packaging or representations of store displays. The products depicted include Oreos, Chips Ahoy, and Ritz crackers, and the stores represented include Wal-Mart and K-Mart. (Because these images are of student art work not produced by the participants, they are not included in Appendix G.) These images are accompanied by posters on display and product brands made available for purchase, including Gatorade; Snickers; Kellogg’s Frosted Flakes; Doritos; Dasani; and Mayfield. Still more sweet treats are available through the practice of fundraising, wherein students sell cookie dough to benefit a particular school program. What does Julia think of this? “We get to eat chocolate, and it’s helping your school raise money. Cookie dough’s not really good for you, but most people do like cookie dough as a craving, so I think it’s a good thing to sell for your school for money.”

Other signs of advertising can be found in the hallway near the gymnasium. The most obvious of these is the Dasani vending machine stocked with bottles of Dasani Water for seventy-five cents each. Julia freely offered her opinion about the price of the water: “That’s awful...too expensive. It costs about fifty cents, [and] they bump it up a quarter.” In addition to the vending machine, there are a number of
posters lining the walls, most of which advertise for companies that have products to sell. One poster exalting the characteristics necessary for successful teamwork is supplemented by ads for DK books and NFL licensed products and games. Another poster, depicting race car drivers wearing their team uniforms plastered with corporate logos, encourages students (in relatively lengthy paragraphs) to “fuel their bodies” with healthy foods. In contrast to the depictions of Michael Jordan and Faith Hill supporting teen initiatives, the prints of NFL stars having a connection to the local area appear to be advertisements for their respective teams (each of which offers licensed products for sale). Advertising on or near the athletics field is limited, with the predominant ad being a Coca-Cola sign.

Yet another area of the school permeated by advertising is the library. While books are of primary relevance to Julia and her friends, even the books represent a type of advertising. The books preferred are biographies about cultural icons, most of whom are in the movie and/or music industry, including Whoopi Goldberg, Tony Hawk, Kelly Clarkson, Leonardo Dicaprio, and Elvis Presley. Coming in at a close second and third to books are computers and magazines. Julia informed me that while searching the internet at school to complete class assignments, she and her friends use Google, although at home she uses dogpile.com. And despite the fact that the library offers a multitude of educational magazines, the most memorable ones include those about skating, dogs, cats, and sports, with Julia’s favorite being Girls’ Life Magazine (which she calls Girls’ Stuff). When asked to tell me about what she likes about the magazine, she indicated the inclusion of products like cell phones, and references to the clothes celebrities wear. In terms of the magazine’s marketing, she
is aware of ads for clothes, shoes, jewelry, and fashion fads (which she generally
does not like).

_When Julia talks about Channel One, she tells me in a very detached way that_
“...it’s about celebrities, or the weather and diseases and stuff like that.... Like
global warming, things happening in schools like drugs and stuff. It just tells about
what happened in school, and what’s important in our lives and everything.”
Ironically, there is nothing in her tone to indicate that the news reported on Channel
One is actually important to her.

_Considering the abundance of marketing surrounding Julia at school, she
seems to have only a very basic understanding of advertising. She understands that
ads are intended to persuade a person to purchase a product or take part in an
activity. However, there is little evidence of understanding of any complexity beyond
that. There is nothing in our discussion to indicate that she considers product
placement to be advertising, although she does admit that seeing a product at school
means “It’s a really good product...people give it credit more.”_ When asked to
share her thoughts about the advertising she sees at school, she only referred to
public service announcements and school notices in her response, revealing that she
does not differentiate public service announcements and school activity notices from
corporate advertising. In fact, she does not even identify any corporate advertising in
her response to this inquiry. However, even with a lack of critical understanding of
advertising, Julia recognizes a disadvantage to using products like pizza and candies
as supplemental learning materials: “...it kinda has got a downside ‘cause it’s like
tryin’ to make you eat candy; [and] I will eat it.”
Susie

As Susie, a sophomore, makes her way through Solar Valley High School, she walks through a cornucopia of spending opportunities. In the main hallway alone there are three beverage vending machines and one snack machine. She has the opportunity to choose from thirty-one drink options (one is diet, six are unflavored water), and thirty-three snack options (three of which might be considered healthy). There are at least four other buildings on campus that offer beverage vending (in addition to the second floor of the main building), and one other that houses a snack machine—which is located in the hallway leading into one of the cafeterias. And although the machines are turned off during lunch, Susie has found a rather simple alternative to eating what is offered in the cafeteria: “I usually go every day before [lunch], ‘cause lunch isn’t that good. If you get it before or after then you’re good to go (laughing).” By “it” Suzie means chocolate, usually Reese’s Cups. She also informs me that some of the teachers sell “the best candy bars ever.” In reference to the beverages offered, I am told that even though she chooses to drink Coca-Cola products at home, she will buy and consume Pepsi products sold at the school.

Unlike the advertising that occurs at the elementary and middle schools, which includes products other than foods, a majority of that which takes place at the high school (excluding other types of product placement) is primarily for food and beverages, and offers several more opportunities for impulse buying. In addition to the vending machines, other forms of this type of advertising at the school include Pepsi logos on the scoreboards in the gymnasium and on the athletic fields, and
product placement throughout the school, especially in the cafeterias. Some of those products include but are not limited to Doritos, Cheez-It, Ruffles, TGIFriday’s Potato Skins, Snickers, Baby Ruth, Hershey’s, Kit Kat, Skittles, Oreo’s, Three Musketeers, M&Ms, Pop Tarts, Butterfinger, and Reese’s.

The other corporate representations visible throughout the school are made available on the walls in hallways and classrooms or through the use of classroom materials and/or assignments, and include Apple computers, Google, Grolier, Texas Instruments, textbook websites, and a local newspaper source. While the website advertisements are available throughout the math textbook, Susie told me that she has not really taken notice of them. There is also a small poster in the main building notifying students of ACT testing times. While there are various magazines available in the library, Susie informed me that her class rarely has time to browse them, as they are usually working on specific assignments during their time in the library.

Susie’s comprehension of advertising and some of the deceptive tactics used by marketers seems slightly more advanced than that of Sammy and Julia. For instance, she understands that statistics can be used in deceptive ways by marketers, and shares how one of her teachers has discouraged students’ use of them in their reporting. In discussing her attitude toward the presence of vending machines stocked with sugary foods and beverages, Suzie said, “I think it’s sorta hypocritical since they changed the lunches and stuff. You know we can’t have salt or they don’t use, like sugar, but then, like—vending machines! We’re lucky on that part.” Later on, when I asked her to elaborate, she told me that “…it’s like they’re trying to tell us to be healthier, and then trying to enforce that, but I don’t think that they’ll take the
“extra step to get rid of the vending machines, because we get money from the vending machines.” But her willingness to be aware of any more of the intricacies of marketing and advertising seems to end there, as does her sense of personal agency. For example, Susie tells me that one of her teachers showed the film Super Size Me, and afterwards had students collect nutrition information from local fast food restaurants. Although Susie admits that her eating habits were affected for a short while after watching the documentary, she says that she still eats fast food at least twice a week and no longer pays attention to the food labels at those restaurants.

Analysis

Further examination of the data was guided by the stages suggested by Hatch for interpretive analysis found in Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings (2002, 179). This analysis led to the development of five common themes or categories that permeated the focus group discussions. While Hatch recognizes that interpretive analysis is a phrase that could be used for several types of qualitative research, he chose to identify this approach as such because the “model…details a way to transform data that emphasizes interpretation” (2002, 180). He also points out that rather than a rigid set of instructions, the steps he identifies are intended to be “a framework for exercising…creative and artistic powers in productive ways” (Hatch 2002, 180). The following paragraphs will offer explanations of the process applied and of how each of these common themes was identified.

After each of the school walkthroughs, informal interviews, and focus group meetings, I made notes of first impressions and completed any missing data in my
field notes. As I carried out the initial readings of the notes, I organized my first impressions into bulleted lists. I made a point to read through each new data set as it was completed, and again after another set was compiled. After all of the data was collected, I studied the entire set as a whole, making notes as trends/themes became clear. From the notes I created a bulleted list that represented overlapping themes of student experiences. As I studied and reread data sets and referred back to notes of original impressions, I made relevant entries in transcripts and organized a chart indicating places in each transcript where evidence of the trends could be found. After generating the chart of themes and references, I chose excerpts from the transcripts to support the themes discovered, and began constructing a final form for reporting the results. A description of each of the themes and the chosen data that support them follows.

**Understanding of Advertising**

One of the first themes I noticed in my evaluation of the data as a whole was an understanding of at least the basic concept of advertising at each of the focus groups. While the elementary school students indicated that they understand the purpose of advertising, they also revealed that they are not able to distinguish between informative and persuasive claims. They demonstrated this tendency in light of their recognition that some companies use deceptive tactics. For example, when asked to elaborate upon how they view advertising in schools, these were some responses:
Ariel: I think it feels right because like, if you look at an advertisement and you don’t know what it’s about, then you can like, look at it and say stuff about it.

Donna: I like it, especially, ‘cause sometimes people might not know about um, a company and they’ll come and advertise about it and people might turn out to like it and usually when they come to advertise it’s really fun. Like the chicken, the—not the chicken, the [cow], [Cassie: cow] the um, [Cassie: Santa] the Santa Claus, and, and people know about new places that they’ve never heard of before.

Cassie: I think it’s good, because um, if we haven’t heard of it or anything like that we could maybe give it a try someday, and it just, like, if we do get to try it, then it would help the people that like, control it.

Billy: I think it’s natural because, they’re just trying to adver—to convince you to um, go to their place and get something so they’d make more money to um, I don’t know, do something (laughs).

For middle school students, responses were somewhat similar, but suggested that students were not able to differentiate between advertising and public service or school activity announcements. When I asked students to “tell me what you know about advertising,” Abigail’s response was that “They try to persuade you to buy things or do something.” However, when I asked students to tell me their thoughts on advertising at school, they spoke of school activity posters and public service announcement posters encouraging them not to smoke (see Appendix I, Discussion about meanings behind products at school). This also signified to me at least minimal difficulty in making a distinction between informational and persuasive statements.

At the high school, students portrayed a more complex understanding of the persuasive intent of advertising, which also speaks to how they understand manipulative practices (another prevalent theme throughout the focus groups). They demonstrated the capacity to look beyond the surface of advertising to determine how
advertisers might misuse “facts” to unfairly promote their products. I asked these students to relate their understanding of advertising to what they see at school, and these were their responses:

Bailey: I guess it’s just like they advertise where people will want to use it cause they see it all the time, and then if they put it into the schools, they’re like, maybe we can get all these teenagers to start using our product, and then they’ll use it more, (quietly) I don’t know.

Anna: I know the food always looks better on TV.

Bailey: And the statistics the commercials use, they’re usually made up. Or they might be truthful statistics, but they’re still misleading because they chose who they want—like they say nine out of ten doctors, then the people who took the survey usually choose the doctors.

Anna: And sometimes they just tell you the good part of it, and not the bad part of the product.

**Corporate Deceptive Practices-But Not at My School**

Considering students’ basic understanding of advertising practices, I was interested to learn that none of the students expressed a belief that any of the deceptive practices discussed occurred at their schools. This was especially remarkable in light of their recognition that some of the products offered at the schools did not concur with current health policies. Below are statements from each set of students that indicate knowledge of deceptive practices as well as an assertion that those practices do not happen within their schools.

Students at the elementary school discussed deceptive practices in a couple of different contexts. In terms of artificially inflating prices, Billy said the following:

Um, some advertisements are bad, like they cheat you into buying one item for a lot of money, and that item would be, like cost ten dollars or
something, and they um, make the cost higher, like twenty dollars, sometimes that happens.

Other students talked about what Cassie called “a scam for a free lap-top,” explaining how they have seen pop-up ads on school computers.

I: Are those things that you’ve seen at school?

Donna: Yeah, it’s like, ‘Winner!’ It’s, it was like flashing ‘Winner!’ and say ‘You win a free Apple,’ uh ‘free nano i-pod from the Apple store, claim your prize here.’

I: So, you’re talking about the computer, you’ve seen them on the computer at school?

Cassie: Yeah, because when we go to get on Google or Ask Jeeves or somethin’ like that, it will pop up.

However, when I ask them to tell me about whether companies that advertise at their school exercise these practices, they indicated to me that they do not.

In much the same way, the middle school focus group yielded similar results.

For example, students said that companies trying to sell cigarettes, alcohol, or chocolate might advertise only the positive aspects of their products in order to sell them. The students also hinted about very basic knowledge of subliminal advertising:

Dianne: Like my parents were talkin’ with me about how they made this illegal, you know how before you start a movie with this like clip thing where it shows you like a corn dog or somethin’ like that and it makes you crave having it, or something like that, it goes to your brain, and now it’s illegal, or it makes you wanna buy more of it, or somethin’ like that.

I: ok

Abigail: In Carmike theatres they have this big thing before the movie where it’s like you need to get your drinks and your popcorn and stuff—

Dianne: Your refreshments.
However, the closest any of the students came to recognizing negative practices in their school was when Dianne said, “I don’t think the fruit roll-ups are good for you, that’s just my opinion.” Some of the products Dianne and her classmates did not seem to take into consideration include those advertised inside the cafeteria (whether in the form of student art or products for sale), such as Oreos, Chips Ahoy, and Frosted Flakes, among others.

As mentioned above, when high school students Anna and Bailey gave details about manipulative practices corporations might use in advertising they exhibited more complex ways of thinking about the issue. For example, they talked about how “the food always looks better on TV,” or how “the statistics the commercials use might be truthful statistics, but they’re still misleading.” Yet when asked if they see any of these practices at their school, they simply responded “No,” and “Not really.”

Reasons for why students do not see advertisements at their school as manipulative may involve Juliet Schor’s concept of the “wholesome halo” (2004, 96-97). It is possible that schools themselves now reside under that umbrella of safety, where the goodness of their purpose supersedes any negative repercussions of their associations. While this may not offer a definitive explanation, I do believe that it offers insight into how students may rationalize their school purchases that do not constitute healthy choices.

**Recollection of Corporate Names**

As I moved from interviewing one focus group to the next, I noticed that the progressing grade levels of the students correlated with a decreasing capability to
recollect brand and corporate names within their schools. I found this fascinating since, although I noticed the types and placement of advertising to be different, I did not notice a decrease in the amount or relevance of advertising. As intriguing as this aspect of the results is, there is no observable cause for this occurrence which can be defined by this study. Possible explanations might include individual differences, disinterest in light of continued presence of advertising, and student interest in other phenomena, among others. What I did find in this study was that, despite lack of memory recollection of particular brands, responses to the advertising the student participants experience at school were similar enough to lead to thematic consistencies. It should be noted that these brand names were not simply line-item listed by students; instead, the participants recollected them at various times throughout the focus group meetings. I will explore these findings in more detail in the paragraphs to follow.

In the process of asking the fifth graders in this study to try to recollect brand names they have seen at school, they were able to come up with at least three branded book series—The Magic School Bus, Harry Potter, and The Series of Unfortunate Events—that are a part of their learning experience at school. I call these branded book series because they are no longer defined merely as books; their titles could be mistaken for a television series, a movie, a set of collectibles, and/or some other consumer product. It is a phenomenon explored by Linn, specifically with regard to the Harry Potter experience, as well as Kenway and Bullen. Students were also able to recall the following technology labels: Dell, Apple/Mac, JVC, Google, Yahoo, Ask Jeeves, and Ask.com. Brands related to art supplies that students named include Rose

Participants at the middle school were also able to identify brand names in some of the same categories, although not quite as many. In technology, they identified Apple, Spy Guy (an internet game), Google, and Yahoo; one of the students replied that at home her mother chooses to use dogpile.com. I chose to include the search engines as recognized brand names since they do compete for consumer usability, although they do not necessarily fit within the parameters of other products for sale. Interestingly, brand names the students recognized in reference to food accessible to and/or advertised to them at school surpassed those related to technology. The food brands cited by the students include Cheez-it, Goldfish, Doritos, Dasani, Coke, Mayfield, and Mr. Gatti’s. Although she did not know the brand association, one of the students informed me that “the check healthy choice” (referring to the Pepsi healthy choice logo) on a label is indicative of a healthy snack. Students also misidentified two labels, the first being the milk brand in the cafeteria. The second was the magazine they purported to enjoy reading in the library, calling it Girls’ Stuff instead of the actual title Girls’ Life. Furthermore, upon asking students to speak about reality shows, deemed relevant because of reference to them in a state test guide for this grade level, students named Akeelah and the Bee, Survivor and CSI. And although I have not included them or dogpile.com in this particular thematic category because these specific trade names are not alluded to within the school environment, I will address these responses in the next chapter.
Finally, responses from high school students indicating the recollection of brand names within their school were far less encompassing than were those of the elementary and middle school students. Technology responses included Google Earth, Grolier, Info Track, and Texas Instruments. References to food were limited to Pepsi and Reese’s Cups, as well as a reference to McDonald’s via a discussion about the film Super Size Me. The only other response given was the title of the local newspaper. Considering the abundance of food items available to these students, and the regularity with which they make use of vending machines, I was rather surprised by the dearth of their responses. However, it is possible that even with their relatively complex understanding of advertising they do not associate the products with corporations. For example, when students were prompted to talk about whether they were encouraged to investigate corporate practices, Bailey’s response becomes telling: “…like in Lifetime Wellness we had to, not like from corporate companies like that sell Pepsi or something, but like fast food chains, we had to get like nutritional facts after we watched Super Size Me.”

**Student Agency vs. Student Manipulation**

In this last section I have combined the last two thematic categories, student agency and student manipulation, because of how they have the opportunity to inform one another in practice. By agency, I mean that students have not only become aware of an injustice, but they consciously and voluntarily take part in action that confronts and works to eradicate the injustice. Given that, the evaluation of each of the transcripts from the focus group interviews showed evidence of only one brief
instance of student agency beyond class requirements. Reference to this event is made during the discussion with high school students about their attitudes and actions after viewing the film *Super Size Me* in one of their classes. The students confided that although they initially made a point to become aware of nutrition information at fast food restaurants they frequented, that practice diminished within about two weeks. So while they remain aware of the negative aspects of consuming fast food, and they understand the hypocrisy behind the presence of vending machines in their school, they exhibit a dispassionate demeanor concerning action to change those conditions. Students at the middle school also made statements about recognizing hypocrisy in light of food choices that are made in the school, but showed no signs of motivation to confront the issue. In fact, both the middle and high school students were glad to have access to such foods. There were no indicators of student agency during the elementary school focus group.

It is at this point that I will address the issue of manipulation of student practices and/or attitudes. I want to be very careful not to imply that I believe that students are being directly manipulated by employees of the school system or the corporations that advertise there. What I do mean to express is that at some point students have stopped taking an active interest in their own health and well-being, and that the consistent introduction of products and brands that discourage them from doing so has the possibility of influencing that disinterest. The manipulation of which I am speaking is a very subtle one that merely offers a type of repetitive reinforcement of detachment from action, and it appears to have culminated in a
surrender of personal responsibility. This detachment is evidenced in the following student responses:

    Bailey: I don’t think it really affects it any, but I think it’s sorta hypocritical since they changed the lunches and stuff. You know we can’t have salt or, they don’t use like sugar. But then, like—vending machines!!

    I: OK

    Anna: But there’s no problem with that from my point of view, because it’s like, oh vending machines…Yes! They still left them there.

    I: ….what do you think of having those in schools as learning materials?

    Colleen: I like it.

    Abigail: Well, it’s good but it kinda has got a down side ‘cause its like—

    Dianne: —tryin’ to make you eat candy

    Abigail: Yeah

    Brianna: I will eat it.

These statements can all be paraphrased as “I know what has been made available to me and what I purchase at school are not healthy choices, but I continue to consume them anyway.” So although corporate marketers and school administrators may not be directly responsible for students relinquishing responsibility, making these choices available to them on a daily basis undermines the opportunity for them to exercise healthy habits in preparation for making healthy choices. Speaking on behalf of schools wherein funding has been cut, Susan Linn asks the question, “How are children going to thrive when educators are pitted against health-care professionals
and nutritionists, forcing us to choose between their health and their education” (2004, 88)?

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of data collected reveals that, while the students in this study have an understanding of the basic concept of advertising, they do not correlate the deceptive practices often used to attract consumers with the advertising they encounter at school. There is an overall lack of personal agency among the students for dealing with a corporate presence in a critical way, even when dishonest practices are revealed. Although they do recognize the presence of certain foods in vending machines as hypocrisy in light of recent health policies, they do not express agency in the form of action or by conveying the desire that the vending machines be removed from the premises or filled with only healthy choices. Also, students indicated that they do not view product placement in multiple areas of the school as advertisement, as can be seen by the relative shortage of brand name advertising recollected by some of the students. I will use the next chapter to discuss and address the implications of these analyses and to offer suggestions for working toward eliminating excessive advertising in public schools.
Chapter Four: Discussion

Implications

Have the minds of American students been appropriated by corporate interests, and are they paying the price with their minds and bodies? Has the effort to make education relevant to students actually led to ignoring them? Consider the student who prefers to read a book and “imagine up” the scenery, but who has movie-related books in the classroom; or the students who don’t have the critical skills to evaluate what reality television is, but who are required to take tests that refer to such a complex phenomenon? At schools across the nation, nutritional fare has been replaced with foods that have little or no nutritional value in exchange for money (which is being provided by the students and their parents) to make up for the lack of funding that is deemed necessary for the survival of the school system. And while many school boards may require that the foods offered by corporations be sugar-free, low sodium, and fat-free, many of those foods also lack nutritional value. So when a student consumes a product meeting the standards of the local school board, s/he may be satiating the physical feeling of hunger without satisfying the body’s need for valuable nutrients.

For example, when the students eat a package of Doritos (baked or not) for lunch, they are not eating a fruit or a vegetable; when they drink a Diet Coke, they are not drinking milk/100% juice/water. Also, there is recent research that may suggest that “It’s possible that children given artificially low-calorie snacks and diet sodas might not learn to properly regulate their food intake, according to lead study author
Dr. W. David Pierce” (Reuters 2007). In addition to these “foods” taking the place of nutritional meals, the opportunity exists for the foods to become planted firmly in the minds of the students as acceptable meal replacements with an attached brand name/logo/jingle.

Another important point to mention in regard to this study is that the availability of these products at schools is at odds with school goals. Although I can not specifically state the goals of the school system evaluated in this study due to confidentiality concerns, I believe that they can be adequately summed up by stating that those responsible for the education of the county’s children strive to provide an environment that fosters the needs of the children. As such, I was intrigued by the presence of certain snack foods and/or beverage choices available at each of the schools. I have made note throughout this text of many of these, including Doritos and sweetened cereals. In addition to these foods, the high school also provides sweetened snacks and beverages through vending machines. Clearly there is some inconsistency between the goals and the practices of the school system with regard to fostering an environment that meets the physical needs of the children.

Furthermore, schools are creating at best a confusing atmosphere for students by urging them to make healthy choices and insisting upon providing low-sodium and sugar-free choices in many instances, while advertising sugary treats at other times. The student participants of this study have been quoted attesting to the hypocrisy of encouraging a healthy lifestyle while providing food choices that clearly promote the opposite. What message does that send to them about other healthy learning habits promoted by the schools? The high school students weighed the issue based upon the
importance of the funds the school receives; middle school students merely recognized the double standards; and elementary school students did not show signs of the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate the dilemma, especially with regard to issues of health and nutrition.

In light of responses of students in this study who substitute meals with chocolate or chips, students appear to have subjugated their own knowledge and ability to choose healthy foods not just to schools trying to make up for a lack of funding, but also to corporations whose first and foremost concern is making a profit (consider the student response referring to the Healthy Choice logo). The question is, have they done so consciously, or has their confidence to question authority for the sake of their own health been honed down so skillfully that they no longer depend upon their own judgment for such simple tasks as choosing a healthy meal? Have we as a society given up on believing that children are able to make critically educated choices in their lives? Or have they? While these questions may need to be addressed on a larger scale before they can be determined to show consistency in trends, this study substantiates the need to ask such questions.

**Suggestions**

The true work of educators is not easy—it never has been, and it never will be. I do believe that the teachers and administrators who participated in this study are working hard to provide a valuable education to their students, but I also believe that to do so requires more than the hard work of educators. I believe that imbuing in children a sense of advocacy and empowerment can encourage them to become their own agents of change. Second grade students at William V. Wright Elementary
School in Las Vegas did exactly that when they became involved in a “poignantly polite letter-writing campaign to see less of [green beans] in the cafeteria,” so they requested broccoli, raw carrots, “‘stake’ and lobster,” and “‘chicken cordon blue’” instead (Associated Press 2007). It isn’t that they did not want vegetables, they just detested the taste of the green beans!

In his book *What to Look for in a Classroom…and other essays*, Alfie Kohn talks of the importance of limiting corporate control and reach into school systems, particularly focusing on partnerships between schools and businesses. He offers the following as advice for communicating this limitation to businesses:

Thank you for your latest list of what you would like schools to do, which skills you would like graduating students to have, and so forth. We appreciate your advice. As educators working with parents and with the students themselves, we will be happy to consider your opinions…right alongside the opinions of labor unions, college admissions officers, philosophers, social scientists, journalists, elected officials, and other interest groups. Your recommendations will carry particular weight when they comport with those of other parties—for example, in emphasizing the importance of making sure that students know how to think logically. When they seem out of step with what others are saying, and ultimately of benefit only to you, then those suggestions will be viewed with the appropriate skepticism. We recognize, of course, that as the leaders of giant corporations, you represent financial resources far beyond those of other interest groups. We are sure that you realize, however, that to give your recommendations any greater weight because of that fact would violate core democratic principles (1998, 204).

If school systems do not want to follow Kohn’s advice to the letter, there are other options that have been exercised across the nation. For example, instead of offering processed foods for sale by corporations, a school in the Upper West Side of Manhattan in New York has much tastier options prepared by Chef Robert Surles. Because he values “Nutrition, bold flavor, and keeping costs down,” he provides
healthy options like “salmon with orange soy glaze, tomato goat cheese baguettes,
and steamed asparagus with mustard salad vinaigrette,” and “cauliflower soup and
rutabega [sic] French Fries” (NPR 2003). And although he does this for a private
school, he claims that it only costs three dollars per meal (NPR 2003), relatively the
same price as a fast-food meal in a school cafeteria (Nestle 2002, 195). As possible
action in the national arena for reducing the advertising to which children are
exposed, Juliet Schor suggests urging Congress to legislate Commercial Alert’s
Parents’ Bill of Rights (2004, 195-198). But if action closer to home seems more
appealing, concerned parents could initiate a conversation with the local school board
and the businesses that advertise in their schools. Starting a conversation where there
was none before may highlight a common ideology among community members that
would encourage businesses to move advertising out of the schools in order to keep
their customers happy.

Conclusion

If we value our democracy, we must value our educational systems. We must
remember that the future of our nation depends upon the ability of our next generation
of citizens to be insightful, creative, critical thinkers. It does not depend upon how
much money corporations can dupe children and parents into spending while
providing them biased information about the goodness of products and/or
corporations. Some of the students in this study have indicated some level of
knowledge of the negative effects of corporate practices in relation to educational
goals. But what significance is that knowledge if those students do not exhibit the
capability to turn that knowledge into actions? Does simply knowing that they have
bought into such practices mean that they have not been duped? It is our responsibility to broaden our collective definition of education not merely as a list of books to be read or trained skills to exercise, but as an opportunity to enlighten students with the ideas of freedom and democracy. Doing so requires community-wide support of educators and their challenging tasks; it also requires communities to see their schools as priorities. As such, citizens must demand that corporations keep their distance. If a corporation truly is good, the students should be able to use their own critical thinking skills to reach that conclusion without having to be sold on the idea in exchange for the latest shiny new toy. It is up to us to remind corporations that philanthropy is its own reward, and to insist that we will no longer sell space in children’s lives in exchange for what they rightfully deserve as human beings and as American citizens: an education that nurtures their desire to learn and that guides them in the direction of becoming thoughtful persons who will contribute in a positive way to a sustainable society.
References


Appendices
Appendix A: Sample Request Cover Letter to Conduct Research in School System
Dear _______________,

I am writing to request permission to conduct research at three ___________ Schools. I am a graduate student at the University of Tennessee, seeking a Master’s Degree in Cultural Studies of Educational Foundations. I have experience working in educational environments, including but not limited to, a position as Assistant Teacher at the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center in Washington, D.C., and employment with Knox County Schools as a Substitute Teacher. Enclosed are the following forms:

1. Outline format of required responses pp. 1-4
2. Focus Group Protocol pp. 5-6
3. Parent/Guardian Permission Form p. 7-8
4. Student Assent Form p. 9

Please feel free to contact me if you require more information about the proposed research. I am also submitting a proposal to the University of Tennessee Internal Review Board, and would be happy to provide you with a copy of the Form B application. I appreciate your time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Amanda G. Wilson
Appendix B: Sample Request Cover Letter to Conduct Research at Schools
Dear ____________,

I am writing to request permission to conduct research during the spring 2007 semester at Sunny Day Elementary School. I am a graduate student at the University of Tennessee, seeking a Master’s Degree in Cultural Studies of Educational Foundations. I have experience working in educational environments, including but not limited to, a position as Assistant Teacher at the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center in Washington, D.C., and employment with Knox County Schools as a Substitute Teacher. I have received permission to conduct research from the University’s Compliance Officer, Brenda Lawson, and from the Evaluation Specialist for ____________ Schools, ____________, pending approval of building level administrators from each of three local schools. Enclosed are the following forms for your review:

1. Approval letter from Evaluation Specialist for ____________ Schools
2. Approval letter from the University of TN Office of Research
3. Form B application submitted to the University
4. Parent/Guardian Permission and Student Assent/Consent Forms
5. Focus Group Protocol

Please feel free to contact me with any questions/concerns about the proposed research. I appreciate your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Amanda G. Wilson
Appendix C: Sample Parent Permission Form
Parent/Guardian Permission Form

Project: A study conducted by a graduate student at the University of Tennessee
An Investigation of How Students Experience Corporate Advertising in Public Schools

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Students at ___________ Elementary School are being sought to participate in a research project conducted by a graduate student at the University of Tennessee. The researcher would like to investigate student attitudes about corporate advertising in the school setting. The students who participate will be asked to take part in a Focus Group, where they will meet with classmates to answer questions and discuss the topic of advertising in schools (a total of four students will be selected from your child’s school). The meeting is expected to last between 30-45 minutes, and a school staff member (teacher or teacher’s aide) will be present during the meeting to ensure the comfort and safety of the students who participate. The Focus Group is scheduled for ____, 2007, and will take place in room ____. ____ has planned to be present during the meeting. While the Focus Group will be audio-taped for further review, the confidentiality of the students will be protected at all times—transcripts of the meeting will not include the names of the participants, and tapes will be destroyed within three months of the conclusion of the project. Throughout the duration of the project, the tapes will be kept in a locked compartment accessible only by the researcher. While the researcher will make every effort to protect confidentiality, she is not responsible for what students may share with each other outside of the focus group sessions. The time required of teachers and students is not expected to have a negative effect on the learning environment. Permission from all appropriate administrators & school personnel has been obtained. Some of the benefits for participating in the study might include an awareness of the marketing that surrounds students; the opportunity to participate in a research project and contribute to a field of knowledge; and the opportunity to communicate in a new setting while sharing ideas in a cooperative way.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you or your child experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,) you may contact the researcher, Amanda Wilson, by e-mailing her at ___, or by phone at ___. If you have questions about your child’s rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466. Your child’s participation in this study is voluntary; you or your child may decline to participate without penalty. If you give permission for your child to participate, your child may withdraw/you may withdraw your child from the study at anytime without penalty, without your child’s grades being affected, and without loss of benefits to which you/your child are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw your child from the study before data collection is completed your child’s data will be destroyed. If you give permission for your child to participate in this study, please indicate by signing below. Please understand that by signing below, your child is not automatically included in the study. Students will be chosen by the teacher from a pool of students who have obtained parental permission. Thank you for your time and cooperation!
Permission
Parent(s)/Guardian(s), if you give permission for your child to participate in the study, please complete this form and return this page to the school with your child.

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to give my permission for my child to participate in this study.

Parent's signature ___________________________ Date __________

Parent’s Name: ________________________ Child’s Name: ________________________
(Please Print)     (Please Print)

Investigator's signature ___________________________ Date __________

An Investigation of How Students Experience Corporate Advertising in Public Schools

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Students at __________________ Elementary School are being sought to participate in a research project conducted by a graduate student at the University of Tennessee. The researcher would like to investigate student attitudes about corporate advertising in the school setting. The students who participate will be asked to take part in a Focus Group, where they will meet with classmates to answer questions and discuss the topic of advertising in schools (a total of four students will be selected from your child’s school). The meeting is expected to last between 30-45 minutes, and a school staff member (teacher or teacher’s aide) will be present during the meeting to ensure the comfort and safety of the students who participate. The Focus Group is scheduled for _______ 2007, and will take place in room _______. _______ has planned to be present during the meeting. While the Focus Group will be audio-taped...
for further review, the confidentiality of the students will be protected at all times—transcripts of the meeting will not include the names of the participants, and tapes will be destroyed within three months of the conclusion of the project. Throughout the duration of the project, the tapes will be kept in a locked compartment accessible only by the researcher. While the researcher will make every effort to protect confidentiality, she is not responsible for what students may share with each other outside of the focus group sessions. The time required of teachers and students is not expected to have a negative effect on the learning environment. Permission from all appropriate administrators & school personnel has been obtained. Some of the benefits for participating in the study might include an awareness of the marketing that surrounds students; the opportunity to participate in a research project and contribute to a field of knowledge; and the opportunity to communicate in a new setting while sharing ideas in a cooperative way.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you or your child experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,) you may contact the researcher, Amanda Wilson, by e-mailing her at ___________, or by phone at ___________. If you have questions about your child’s rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466. Your child’s participation in this study is voluntary; you or your child may decline to participate without penalty. If you give permission for your child to participate, your child may withdraw/you may withdraw your child from the study at anytime without penalty, without your child’s grades being affected, and without loss of benefits to which you/your child are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw your child from the study before data collection is completed your child’s data will be destroyed. If you give permission for your child to participate in this study, please indicate by signing below. Please understand that by signing below, your child is not automatically included in the study. Students will be chosen by the teacher from a pool of students who have obtained parental permission. Thank you for your time and cooperation!

*___________ Parent(s)/Guardian(s), if you give permission, please initial here.

This page is YOUR COPY TO KEEP.
Appendix D: Sample Student Assent Form
Student Assent Form

Project: A study conducted by a graduate student at the University of Tennessee
An Investigation of How Students Experience Corporate Advertising in Public Schools

_____ I understand that I am participating in a study for a student at the University of Tennessee.

_____ I understand that my name and other identifying information will be kept confidential/secret, and will not be included in the write-up of the study.

_____ I understand that the other students in the study deserve the same confidentiality that I do, and that I will not discuss with others or repeat what they say during the Focus Group Meeting, unless someone is in danger. While the researcher will make every effort to protect confidentiality, she is not responsible for what students may share with each other outside of the focus group sessions.

_____ I understand that if I want to quit the study at any time, for any reason, that I may do so without it affecting my grades, and without being punished.

_____ I understand that a school staff member will be present during the Focus Group Meeting, and that I may leave the Meeting at any time if I feel uncomfortable for any reason.

_____ I understand that participating in this study is voluntary, and that my parents giving me permission does not require me to participate.

_____ I understand that the researcher will be asking questions throughout the Focus Group Meeting, and that by taking part in the study I agree to participate in a kind, respectful, and cooperative manner.

_____ I understand that the Focus Group Meeting will be audio-taped, that the tapes will be kept in a safe/secure location during the study, and that the tapes will be destroyed within three months after the completion of the study.

I have read and my teacher and/or the investigator have explained the above items to me. I have initialed each one as it was explained.
By signing below, I agree to participate in the study:

Participant’s Signature ______________________________ Date: ____________
Participant’s Name (please print): _______________________________________

Teacher’s Signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________
Teacher’s Name (please print): _______________________________________

Investigator’s Signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________

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Appendix E: Sample Focus Group Protocol
Focus Group Protocol
An Investigation of How Students Experience
Corporate Advertising in Public Schools
Investigator: Amanda Wilson

The following questions are designed to be conversation starters, and to guide conversation during a lull, or to bring focus back to the topic at hand…. All of the questions may not be covered, and following the flow of student responses may provide more relevant information than merely asking each question in sequence.

1. I have asked you to come to this Focus Group Meeting to try to better understand your experience(s) with some of the materials used in your classroom/school. So to get started, I’d like for you to tell me about some of the books/games/activities/special programs that are used in your classroom…. [I will bring with me relevant texts provided by the teacher, so that students may refer to them during the meeting.]
   a. Tell me about the things that make learning more fun/exciting/memorable in your classroom….

2. I would like for you to tell me any company names you may notice while you are at school (are there any banners, signs, popular magazines, etc… that you can think of)?
   a. Tell me about the products these companies sell…. Are they products that you use often? Are they products that you use only at school?
   b. Tell me a little about what goes through your mind when you see these company names…. Do they bring to mind certain events, emotions, memories…?

3. Tell me about the most memorable/common company name you have seen at school (commercial, billboard, sign, magazine, t-shirt, etc…)?
   a. Tell me about some of the products the company sells…. Which of these products do you use?

4. Have you ever noticed company names in any of your school books?
   a. If so, what companies?
   b. Tell me about the kinds of products that are mentioned in your textbooks….
   c. Tell me about extra materials you use in the classroom (magazines, games, rewards/incentives)…do any of them have company logos in them?

5. Tell me about Channel One…. [This question is only for schools currently using Channel One.]
   a. I’d like to hear the most memorable thing from this morning’s Channel One broadcast….
   b. Tell me about the commercials you see on Channel One….
6. Of all the company names we have discussed, tell me all of the ones you have seen at school promoting a healthy product to eat, drink, or use…. What about the ones promoting products that are not healthy….
Appendix F: Elementary School Images
**Elementary School Learning Materials**

**Scoring Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>My work on this problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exemplary (full credit)</td>
<td>• has no errors, has the correct answer, and shows that I checked my answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is explained carefully and completely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• shows all needed diagrams, tables, or graphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient (some credit)</td>
<td>• has small errors, has a close answer, and shows that I checked only the math.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is explained but I may have missing parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• shows most needed diagrams, tables, or graphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable (little credit)</td>
<td>• has some errors, has an answer, and shows that I did not check my answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is not explained carefully and completely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• shows few needed diagrams, tables, or graphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited (very little credit)</td>
<td>• has many errors and may not have an answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is not explained at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• shows no needed diagrams, tables, or graphs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**More Test Prep Help in Your Book**

**TEST TIPS**

Helps you think about the math and how to answer a question.

---

**Daily Review**

Helps you review key concepts and practice the lesson skills the way you will see it on a test.

---

**Cumulative Review**

Gives you more test practice as you review the math that may be on the test.

---

**Test Prep**

Gives you practice with questions like those that will be on tests.

---

**Test Prep on the Net**

Helps you review problem-solving strategies as you learn what tests are like.

---

**Student Handbook**

Textbook page showing images present throughout chapters
Cross-Calculations

Copy the puzzles onto grid paper.
Use a calculator to help you solve each problem.

Across
Row A: B = 162,609 - 24,247 = 138,362
Row B: C = 975,621 - 102,290 = 873,331
Row C: D = 839,620 - 8 = 839,612

Down
Column D: E = 963,221 - 10 = 963,211
Column E: F = 900,537 - 57,347 = 843,190
Column F: G = 12,300 = 12,300

Across
Row G: H = 540,369 - 220 = 538,169
Row H: I = 411,256 - 167,688 = 243,568
Row I: J = 175,012 - 61,042 = 113,970

Down
Column J: K = 688,311 - 492,381 = 195,930
Column K: L = 688,300 - 150,080 = 538,220
Column L: M = 554,200 - 952,040 = -397,840

Challenge: Write clues to go along with the cross number puzzle shown at the right.

54. Unit 1 Technology Time
A New Car

Get a horse! That's what people who did not trust the automobile said when it was first invented. One of the earliest cars was the Model T Ford, invented by Henry Ford. You can find out about early vehicles at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan.

Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village

| Number of Visitors Per Year | 1,600,000 |
| Number of Reopening Visitors Per Year | 65,891,114 |

Henry Ford

FAST FACTS

300,000 students visited the museum with their teachers in 2009. The museum has more than 100 cars. It has objects of everyday life from the 17th century to today.

Population of Dearborn, Michigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>97,756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the museum, you can see:

• more than 10,000 toys and games
• more than 600 musical instruments
• more than 400 posters from World War I
• farm tools from the 1800s
• mechanical calculators from the 1940s
• oven trunks from the 1800s

Data Hunt

Imagine you are a tour guide at the museum. Think about what facts you would tell visitors. Use the data on this page to write a script for your tour.

• Use comparisons of data in your script, including population comparisons.
• Include these comparisons as facts to tell to your tour group. For example, "The population of Dearborn grew by about 87,800 in 100 years."
**Car Facts**

The number of cars, the price of cars, and the weight of cars have all increased. Only the advertising has stayed the same. Early advertising sheets urged consumers to buy the best at the lowest price. Sound familiar?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1906–1909 Model T Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number Built: 1908–1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight: 1,200 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price: $890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1912 Model T Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number Built in 1912: 75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touring Car Price: $640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Roadster Price: $670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Car Price: $900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Car Price: $700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Hunt**

You have been asked to create math riddles for a booth at a school math fair. Use the data on these pages to prepare your questions.

- Your answers will be the data about the Model T cars or the museum.
- At least two riddles must involve multiplication and at least two need to involve division.

Example: You must divide my cost by 2 to get $425. Which car am I? Answer: The 1906 Ford Model T.

**Multiplication, Division, and Algebra** 679
Elementary School Hallways

1 Door Movie Poster

2 Gymnasium Exercise Poster

3a Hallway Movie Poster

3b Hallway Movie Poster

3c Hallway Movie Poster
Elementary School Hallways

4a Cafeteria Poster Campbell’s Labels for Education

4b Cafeteria Poster Campbell’s Labels for Education

4c Cafeteria Poster Campbell’s Labels for Education
Elementary School Hallways

5a Box Tops for Education
5b Box Tops for Education

6a Kroger
6b Kroger
Elementary School Hallways

6c Kroger
Appendix G: Middle School Images
Middle School Learning Materials

Pre-Course Skills Practice continued

In Exercises 113–117, use the line graph. It shows the temperature at different times on a winter day.

113. When was the temperature the highest?
   the lowest?

114. How did the temperature change from 6 A.M. to 9 A.M.?

115. Over which three-hour period did the temperature increase the least?
116. Over which three-hour period did the temperature increase the most?

117. What is the difference between the highest and lowest temperatures?

Photographs (Skills Review pp. 766-767)

In Exercises 118–122, use the pictograph. It shows the number of CDs sold on one day.

118. How many country music CDs were sold?
119. What is the total of the number of country and classical CDs sold?
120. How many more hip-hop than classical CDs were sold?
121. What kind of CD had three times the sales of classical CDs?
122. Suppose the key of this pictograph changed so that each symbol represented 20 CDs. How many symbols would represent the number of hip-hop CDs sold?
123. Students at a school named their favorite kind of television show. Use the data in the table below to make a pictograph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorite Kind of Television Show</th>
<th>Quiz</th>
<th>Reality</th>
<th>Comedy</th>
<th>Movies</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 TCAP Practice page referencing reality shows
Middle School Learning Materials

**Math Test**

Answer each question giving the correct amount of change returned to guest. There is a 3 minute time limit. (7 points per correct answer.)

1. If total of purchase is $3.25, you receive $1.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nickels</th>
<th>dimes</th>
<th>quarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. If total of purchase is $3.50, you receive $1.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nickels</th>
<th>dimes</th>
<th>quarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If total of purchase is $3.75, you receive $1.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nickels</th>
<th>dimes</th>
<th>quarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If total of purchase is $4.00, you receive $1.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nickels</th>
<th>dimes</th>
<th>quarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If total of purchase is $4.50, you receive $1.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nickels</th>
<th>dimes</th>
<th>quarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. If total of purchase is $5.00, you receive $2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nickels</th>
<th>dimes</th>
<th>quarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
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7. If total of purchase is $5.25, you receive $2.00.

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<tr>
<th>nickels</th>
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<td>$0.00</td>
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8. If total of purchase is $5.75, you receive $2.00.

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9. If total of purchase is $6.00, you receive $3.00.

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10. If total of purchase is $6.25, you receive $3.00.

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2 Required exam for working at Rally's, used by teacher.
M & M’s Color Count

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Red</th>
<th>Blue</th>
<th>Green</th>
<th>Yellow</th>
<th>Orange</th>
<th>Brown</th>
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3 Teacher created material for math activity
A lot of our best questions come from our fan mail. Here's a great example. This man writes, "I'm a huge fan of Red's -- I want to know: how come there aren't more Reds in my bag of "Industrial Candy & Magic"? Well, that's a very good question. In fact, I was...

Who wrote that?

Uh...someone. A fan...

Hey, isn't that your handwriting?

OK, my friend! Time to answer your question...

Corporate material used by teacher for math activity
Smart Board image used by teacher for counting/ratio activity
# Middle School Learning Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Shooting Stars</td>
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<td>Purple</td>
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<td>Horseshoes</td>
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<td>Green Clovers</td>
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<td>Blue Moons</td>
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<td>Pots of Gold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rainbows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Balloons</td>
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</table>

6 Teacher created counting and ratio activity
Middle School Library Materials

7 Girls’ Life magazine advertisement
8 Girls' Life magazine advertisement
9 Girls' Life magazine advertisement
10 Girls’ Life magazine advertisement
Middle School Library Materials

11 Girls' Life magazine advertisement
Middle School Library Materials

Who cares about Lindsay Lohan’s lip gloss or which shampoo Jessica Alba loves? Our real-life beauty clinic is for girls like you.

Photographed by Dean Alexander

12 *Girls’ Life* magazine advertisement
Middle School Cafeteria

1a Cafeteria Breakfast Choice

1b Cafeteria Breakfast Choice

1c Cafeteria Breakfast Choice

2a Cafeteria Snack Choice

2b Cafeteria Snack Choice

2c Cafeteria Snack Choice

2d Cafeteria Snack Choice
Middle School Cafeteria

3a Cafeteria Poster Gatorade

3b Cafeteria Poster Snickers

4a Cafeteria Poster Milk the Rewards

4b Cafeteria Poster Milk the Rewards

4c Cafeteria Poster Milk the Rewards
1a Dasani water vending

1b Dasani water vending

1c Dasani water vending

2a Teamwork Poster

2b Teamwork Poster

3 Teacher’s Lounge Coca-Cola vending

2e Teamwork Poster
Middle School Hallway

4a Hallway Poster

4b Hallway Poster enlarged section

4c Hallway Poster enlarged section

5a NASCAR Poster

5b NASCAR Poster enlarged section
Middle School Classroom

1 Star Wars Posters Classroom

2 Pizza Hut Pizza Party Fraction Games Classroom

3 Screen Saver on Smart Board Classroom

4 Teacher Computer Classroom
Middle School Supplemental Materials

1 Pizza Hut Pizza Party Game
http://www.amazon.com/Pizza-Fraction-School-Specialty-Publishing/dp/1564516067
Appendix H: High School Images
High School Large Cafeteria

1 Large cafeteria chips display

2 Large Cafeteria Dasani Cooler

3 Large Cafeteria Drink Refrigerator 1

4 Large Cafeteria Drink Refrigerator 2
High School Small Cafeteria

5 Dasani water in cooler
6 Sara Lee Whole Grain White bread
7 Very Fine drink cooler
8 Powerade drink cooler
High School Small Cafeteria

1a Chips display  
1b Chips display

1c Chips display  
1d Chips display
Hallway vending machine near cafeteria
High School Hallway

2 Drink vending, main hallway

3 Drink vending main hallway

4 Drink vending main hallway

5 Drink vending main hallway
**6 Drink vending band room**

**7 ACT Poster main hallway**

**8 Disney poster band room**
High School Outdoor Photographs

1 US Army recruiter vehicle

2 Litter outside main entrance, products available in vending machines

3 Litter outside near athletic fields

4 Pepsi trailer outside athletic fields
Appendix I: Transcript Excerpts
Elementary School Transcript Excerpts

[ | ] indicates overlapping speech
(   ) indicates actions or other relevant unspoken information
I: Interviewer/Researcher

Discussion of books with movie tie-ins

I: I noticed that one of those is related to a movie, Ella Enchanted, and I want you to tell me how you feel about having books in the classroom that might be related to movies or TV programs or toys…

Donna: Actually, sometimes they’re pretty cool, and like the movie or show is very—very…like same as the book. And sometimes it’s different.

I: OK

Cassie: And I like it because um, some books, they have more details than the movies, and some movies have more details than the books.

I: OK

Donna: And when you read the books you get your own image of the people and animals in it, and the movie, it’s, you—

Billy: It’s just dull, it’s already there.

Cassie: Yeah.

Donna: And you don’t get to imagine it up.

Ariel: I like the books because they like tell more things and they act more than the characters on the movie.

Discussion about Incentive Program posters and advertising

I: When you see an advertisement for a product at school, what do you think about that product?

Cassie: In, in—

Donna: Sometimes I like it, sometimes I’m like, um OK, I don’t know why they have that up, but OK. (Brief pause) And sometimes it has nothing to do with the children.
I: Sometimes it has nothing to do with the children, like what?

Donna: Like, well there’s this Kroger one next to the workroom, it’s sayin’ that Kroger’s given them like a thousand dollars or somethin’…

I: Mm-hmm

Donna: It’s us—like, the advertisements just say that they’re givin’ us money, and it’s usually for like, the grown—for like the staff, so they can use that money for the school and stuff, and so sometimes it has nothing to do with the kids.

I: OK, so some of the advertising you think is not for the children, you think it’s for the adults?

Cassie: Yes, but like most of its for the children, because there’s more children than adults at the school, and they want to make sure that the children feel, like welcome at the school and not like it’s all about the teachers and everything, that they get what, like…

Donna: —they get some attention

Cassie: —they get more attention than the children.

I: OK, so you think maybe advertisements help children feel like they’re getting the attention from the companies?

Cassie & Donna: (nod yes)

I: OK

Billy: Um, some advertisements are bad, like they cheat you into buying one item for a lot of money, and that item would be, like cost ten dollars or something, and they um, make the cost higher, like twenty dollars, sometimes that happens.

I: Can you think of any in particular? I think you’re right, that sometimes that does happen.

Cassie: (very quietly) I know one.

Billy: Um…

Cassie: Like a scam for a free laptop or somethin’

Donna: Like on the computer
I: Are those things that you’ve seen at school?

Donna: Yeah, it’s like, ‘Winner!’ It’s, it was like flashing ‘Winner!’ and say ‘You win a free Apple,’ uh ‘free nano i-pod from the Apple store, claim your prize here.’

I: So, you’re talking about the computer, you’ve seen them on the computer at school?

Cassie: Yeah, because when we go to get on Google or Ask Jeeves or somethin’ like that, it will pop up.

**Discussion of Doritos at lunch**

I: I had this (shows the image of the Doritos bag with the brand name blocked out) [Cassie: Doritos] turned around, and I’ve got the name marked out, but [Cassie: Doritos (smiling)] one of you—

Donna: Doritos (laughing)

Billy: Doritos, yeah.

I: (smiling) I’ve seen that at your school. Have you all—

Donna: Lunch

I: At lunch?

Donna: Mm-hmm

…

I: So tell me about having those at lunch?

Donna: Well, it’s cool, especially if they—well, most of the time it’s not spicy, but it’s cool especially if the lunch isn’t so good.

Ariel: It tastes good.

Donna: Yeah, and

Cassie: If it’s like somethin’ that somebody doe[s]n’t like, and like you don’t like it, and…but you like some—you don’t like other things but you like that, you could just eat that, and at least have somethin’ to *have in your stomach.*
I: So does that happen?

Donna: [It’s good, but—]

Cassie: [Yes.]

I: How often do you think that happens?

Cassie: ‘bout twice a month (uncertain, smiling shyly, beginning to laugh)

I: (laughing with C) About twice a month?

Donna: A lot—for me it’s like if, like, at least once a week.

Discussion about nutrition of school foods/products

I: So I wanna know what you think about whether the products are healthy or not, that you see at school.

Cassie: Some of ‘em are, but some of ‘ems not too healthy.

I: Like which ones?

Cassie: Um…this is gonna be hard—

Donna: Some of them are—like they just look gross, like they’ll look, like the fruits, will look bruised and they’ll look like they’ve been left out for like three days—

Cassie: —and they’ll—

Donna: —like they won’t have any mold on it, but it’ll be all brown and gushy and stuff, and it’s—

I: OK, so that’s the fruit. What about some of the brand names that we’ve talked about?

Cassie: Raisins, um Sunshine?

I: Sunshine [raisins]?

Donna: [Yeah, they have] California Sunshine raisins.

I: Are there any here at school that you think maybe aren’t healthy?
Donna: Yea—well, um, see they usually don’t, they usually don’t use brand names, we don’t usually know. ‘Cause all we know are the Doritos and Fritos, and the raisins.

I: OK, so those are the brand names that you all get at school in the cafeteria, what do you all think about whether they’re healthy or not healthy?

Donna: —but sometimes we don’t know what, if it’s a brand name or not, and sometimes they’re just gross.

Cassie: And sometimes they have a little tra—a little thing and it’ll have like raisins in it, strawberry pieces—

Donna: —Yeah—

Cassie: —and a mixture of just fruits and vegetables—

Donna: —yeah, it’ll be like cauliflower with broccoli and cheese and raisins, and it’ll be stuff like that.

I: OK (laughing incredulously, sharing disgust). Well, for one last question, I would like to ask, when you see a product at school, what seeing it at school makes you think about that product?

Cassie: If you try like at school and you like it, you can get your parents to buy it while you’re at the store and you can have them buy it so you can let them try it and eat it more.

I: OK. So what does it tell you all about seeing a product at school?

Donna: Sometimes you’ll know, like if you try it or somethin’, which most of the people always do if they see somethin’ new, you’ll try it, and if its not so good you’ll know not to get it next time, and if its really good, like Cassie said, you can get it at home. And if they don’t have, if you don’t know what brand, then you can just find something that looks like it, any brand.

Discussion about advertising at school

I: And I want to ask you, and I would like for each of you to answer if you have a feeling about it, how you feel about seeing these company names at school and how you feel about advertisements at school.
Ariel: I think it feels right because like, if you look at an advertisement and you don’t know what it’s about, then you can like, look at it and say stuff about it.

I: OK

Donna: I like it, especially, ‘cause sometimes people might not know about um, a company and they’ll come and advertise about it and people might turn out to like it and usually when they come to advertise its really fun. Like the chicken, the—not the chicken, the [cow], [C: cow] the um, [C: Santa] the Santa Claus, and, and people know about new places that they’ve never heard of before.

…

I: OK and how do you feel about advertising at school?

Cassie: I think it’s good, because um, if we haven’t heard of it or anything like that we could maybe give it a try someday, and it just, like, if we do get to try it, then it would help the people that like, control it.

I: OK. Was there a certain way (addressing B)—

Billy: I think it’s natural because, they’re just trying to adver—to convince you to um, go to their place and get something so they’d make more money to um, I don’t know, do something (laughs).

I: OK (laughs)

Donna: To make their, to make their place better, and to have more customers.
Middle School Transcript Excerpts

Discussion about creating products

Brianna: But ok, we were talkin’ about, as we were saying in language arts we get to make it um, (inaudible speech) for a project she tell us to make uh, create a food, and you had to make your own—

Abigail: —Yeah, you had to make a box—

Brianna: —yeah, and you had to—

Abigail: I—[and the food]

Brianna: —[and write an essay about it], stuff like that…(inaudible speech)…stood up in front of the rest of the class—

I: ok, can you tell me more about that, like what did you create?

Colleen: ok, I created, it was like—(looking to B & D to help her remember)

Dianne: whispering to C (inaudible speech)

Colleen: No, it was like a big ol’ cake, and…—

Abigail: Oh, yeah, and we had to like make our own food brand, and we could make it, like—

Brianna: —like—

Dianne: I—her essay was—

Brianna: —it had, I already knew the name of it!

Dianne: Like your own, like Lucky Charms have their own cereal—

Colleen: (Whispering & speaking quickly) Oh! Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Dianne: —you had to have your own kind of food—

Abigail: And if we bring in foods for projects like cake and stuff, we can eat it, so.

Colleen: Yeah.
I: ok

Brianna: Mine was called Delicious Chocolate Buddy

Dianne: *Shopping Buddy*

I: Delicious Shopping Buddy?

Brianna: Yeah

I: That was the one you made up?

Brianna: Yeah

I: Do you remember what products you used to make it?

Dianne: (quietly) Chocolate

Brianna: I used flour—

Abigail: (quietly) Sugar

Brianna: —eggs, sugar, milk, and chocolate, and I believe some white—ok it was two cakes I made, so I made one totally chocolate, and the other one chocolate-white

Dianne: I like, used icing on mine, and like I, we used cream cheese and my mom used that, you know that really, it helps to make the icing thicker? It tasted like that. It like made it thicker when we used cream cheese, and we used like, what did I use for ingredients, it was really good? (looking to others for help remembering) I don’t know.

Discussion about implications of advertising at school

I: ok, and to kind of wrap up and make sure I got your impressions, what do you think of having the Pizza Hut game and the M&Ms and the Skittles in schools as learning materials?

Colleen: I like it.

Abigail: Well, it’s good but it kinda has got a down side ‘cause its like—

Dianne: —tryin’ to make you eat candy

Abigail: Yeah
Brianna: I will eat it.

Dianne: Like my parents were talkin’ with me about how they made this illegal, you know how before you start a movie with this like clip thing where it shows you like a corn dog or somethin’ like that and it makes you crave having it, or something like that, it goes to your brain, and now it’s illegal, or it makes you wanna buy more of it, or somethin’ like that.

I: ok

Abigail: In Carmike theatres they have this big thing before the movie where it’s like you need to get your drinks and your popcorn and stuff—

Dianne: Your refreshments.

I: So you like it, but you realize that there’s a downside to it?

Colleen: Yeah.

Abigail, Brianna, Dianne: Yeah

Discussion about school fundraising

I: Is there anything else that you wanna say about the things that you see here at school that are for sale or that you buy in the cafeteria?

Dianne: Um, well in chorus we have these t-shirts that we sell. You don’t have to buy them, but I have t-shirts from other chorus concerts that we were selling.

Brianna: Um, in band we’re selling, you get to buy like books, and you get to buy like bells, or rent ‘em if you want to for like three months, then you get to rent ‘em again, then it’s probably over.

Abigail: My friend Elvin is in band, and they had like a cookie dough sale.

Brianna: Oh yeah, we sure did.

Dianne: Like fundraisers.

Brianna: We show like, who’s gonna get the prize—

Abigail: Yeah, you got like fruit snacks or somethin’.

Colleen: Yeah, if you get so much money, whatever—
Brianna: Yeah, we’re gonna do, uh like get the money next Tuesday, which is our band concert, and that’s really, it’s just fun, band.

I: ok, tell me what you think about the cookie dough sales.

Brianna: Um, we get to eat chocolate, and really because it’s helping like your school raise money…

Abigail: Cookie dough’s not really good for you, it’s more of a craving really, ‘cause I like cookie dough, and like most people, I mean I know they have their other opinions, but most people do like cookie dough as a craving and they probably buy it, my mom bought it for my brother, so I think that’s a good thing to sell for your school for money. Like for new equipment for band, or like for risers for chorus and stuff like that.

Discussion about meanings behind products at school

I: Tell me what you think when you see a product at school, what seeing it at school makes you think about that product. [Like the Dasani water.]

Abigail: [It’s a really good product.]

I: ok

Dianne: Yeah, people give it credit more.

Brianna: Yeah, cause there are like signs tellin’ you not to smoke, and showin’ pictures, like in the bathroom girls room there’s a picture on the door sayin’ You Don’t Have to Smoke to Fit In.

Abigail: Yeah, Ms. Lane’s got one, it’s got a bunch of little animals smoking on it, it says It Just Looks Stupid When You Do It.

(Others laugh quietly)

I: (Laughs with them) Well I’m sure that does, the animals smoking. Ok, the products that you mentioned in the cafeteria, the Doritos, and I think you mentioned the hundred calorie packs, when you see things like that at school, and you see the name of the product across the front of it, and you know it’s a certain company that’s put it out, what do you think about that product when you see it at school?

Abigail: If the school trusts it, it’s probably a better product.
Colleen: Yeah.

Dianne: But they do sell ice cream.

Abigail: Yeah, they sell low-fat ice cream.

Colleen: Yeah, Mayfield ice cream.

Abigail: I think it’s better for you, because the school really wants you to be healthy and not obese, and you know a better life for you, so I think you trust it...
High School Transcript Excerpts

Discussion about understanding advertising and manipulative practices

I: OK, I want you to tell me a little bit about your understanding of advertising in general, and then use that understanding and relate it to what you see at school in terms of advertising, like the Pepsi, the vending machines.

Bailey: I guess it’s just like they advertise where people will want to use it cause they see it all the time, and then if they put it into the schools, they’re like, maybe we can get all these teenagers to start using our product, and then they’ll use it more, (quietly) I don’t know.

…

Anna: I know the food always looks better on TV.

Bailey laughs

Bailey: And the statistics the commercials use, they’re usually made up.

Anna: Yeah.

I: OK

Bailey: Or they might be truthful statistics, but they’re still misleading because they chose who they want—like they say nine out of ten doctors, then the people who took the survey usually choose the doctors.

I: Tell me more about where you learned that.

Bailey: We talk about it in English, because she tells us we can use statistics in our paper, but most statistics are usually untruthful.

I: OK, and how do you go about finding out which products are being truthful and which aren’t?

Bailey: Um, I don’t think you really can (laughs).

I: OK. Does she ask you to verify in any way—

Bailey: No.
I: —you said she’s talked to you about that companies do that, and when you’re using something as a reference to be aware of that.

Bailey: She usually just wants us to stray away from using statistics, and so, like you can’t really determine if they’re truthful or not.

I: OK.

Anna: And sometimes they just tell you the good part of it, and not the bad part of the product.

I: OK. Is that something you’ve seen outside of school, or at school?

Anna: Well, like on TV commercials.

I: OK. And do you think that that happens with the products here at school?

Anna: Not really.

Bailey: No.

Discussion about vending machines at school

I: OK, tell me what you think about the school having those? How does that affect your experience at school?

Bailey: I don’t think it really affects it any, but I think it’s sorta hypocritical since they changed the lunches and stuff. You know we can’t have salt or, they don’t use like sugar. But then, like—vending machines!!

I: OK

Anna: But there’s no problem with that from my point of view, because it’s like, oh vending machines…Yes! They still left them there.

All laugh

Anna: We’re lucky on that part.

I: OK, so even though they changed the lunches, the vending machines are still available to you all.

Bailey: Yeah

Anna: Yeah
I: You think it’s hypocritical, but you still use them.

Bailey: Yeah

Anna: Yeah (eyes wide, smiling and nodding head yes)

I: OK

Anna: (Quietly) Yeah, but not much.

…

I: Tell me more about that, about why you think that’s hypocritical, the fact that they’ve changed the lunches and they still have the vending machines.

Bailey: Well, it’s like they’re trying to tell us to be healthier, and then trying to enforce that, but I don’t think that they’ll take the extra step to get rid of vending machines, because we get money from vending machines.

I: OK. Do you think that…what do you think they would have to do if they got rid of the vending machines?

Anna: I don’t know

Bailey: We’d have to find other ways to get money

Anna: Right

I: OK, and in the vein of fundraising, I’ve noticed some of the fundraisers that you’ve experienced, either that you’ve participated in, or that you’ve seen other students use. Tell me a little bit about the other fundraising that happens at the school.

Bailey: Well, um some of the math teachers sell candy bars—they’re the best candy bars ever—

Anna: Yeah, they’re really good, um, and there are a couple, a bunch of clubs do car washes, and some people do like pancake breakfasts…

I: OK.

Anna: Um, like during homecoming they sell like baked goods and stuff, and um, this year the cheerleaders made t-shirts that highlight the school.
Vita

Amanda Gail Wilson was born in Knoxville, TN. She graduated from Knox County schools in 1994, after which time she attended the University of TN at Martin. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology she moved to Northern Virginia. Once there she worked at a bookstore before discovering her passion for early childhood education. She values her experiences as an Assistant Teacher at the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center, where for approximately sixteen months she was fortunate to be mentored by truly talented and dedicated educators. During the summer of 2002, she left Northern Virginia to move back home to Knoxville, where she spent time working as a substitute teacher. In 2004, she enrolled in the Graduate program at the University of TN, Knoxville, where she sought a Master’s degree in Cultural Studies with a major in Instructional Technology/Educational Studies.