

TRUTH VS. REALITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

OBJECTIVE:

To teach students about the marketing practice of ethnography studies. An ethnography study involves the video documentation of a teenager in his or her own home environment by a marketer. These studies are used by marketers to create a profile of an average teenager to be used in TV shows, advertisements, etc.

DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Have the class explore the “Truth vs. Reality” section of CultureSpy.com. Make sure to view all of the video clips. One clip documents the creation of an ethnography study by an MTV marketing executive. The other clips are examples of the type of ethnography studies that MTV conducts. Have the class view an episode of an MTV reality show such as The Real World, Road Rules, True Life, etc. As they are viewing, have the students look for particular instances in the program they think might have been inspired by an MTV ethnography study. Here are some questions for further class discussion:

- What is “reality”?
- Can a TV show ever truly depict reality?
- How is the reality that you see on TV different from your real life?
- What do you think is real on reality shows and what is fake?