

# Promoting Critical Reflection via a Strategy of Ad Deconstruction and Video Annotation

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## Purpose

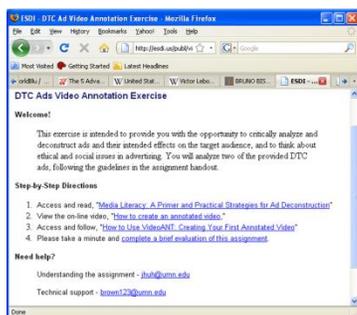
We are investigating the effectiveness of “video annotation” as a mechanism to promote critical reflection, and to provide students with practice identifying and deconstructing advertisements along several political and cinematic dimensions.

- ❖ We expected students to consider “ad deconstruction” as relevant to course objectives.
- ❖ We expected to promote continuing interest to learn more about “media literacy.”
- ❖ We expected students to view advertisements, in general, critically as a result of the ad deconstruction exercise.
- ❖ In addition, we expected to increase student awareness of the current issues in the arena of “direct to consumer” (DTC) advertising by the Pharmaceutical industry.

## Methods

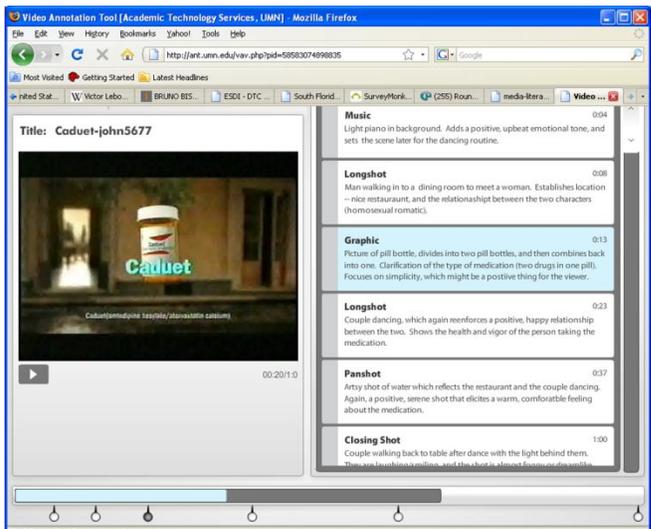
Students enrolled in “The Psychology of Advertising” (JOUR5251) were required to proceed to the assignment web page and:

- Access and read a brief introduction to media literacy and the conceptual framework associated with ad deconstruction;
- View a brief (on-line) video related to *How to create an annotated video.*;
- Access and follow instructions related to *How to Use VideoAnt...*
- Complete a brief on-line evaluation of the assignment.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://esdi.us/pub/videoant/>. The page title is "DTC Ads Video Annotation Exercise". It includes a "Welcome!" section, "Step-by-Step Directions" (1. Access and read "Media Literacy: A Primer and Practical Strategies for Ad Deconstruction", 2. View the on-line video, "How to create an annotated video.", 3. Access and follow "How to Use VideoANT: Creating Your First Annotated Video", 4. Please take a minute and complete a brief evaluation of this assignment.), and "Need help?" information.

Cinematic Technique	Goal
Close-up	Intimacy and focus either on actors or on our relationship with actor
Long shot with pans	Establishing context with the shot providing continuity and a sense of cohesiveness
Changing Frame Using Zoom-in or Zoom-out	Visual interest and imitation, or drawing us from a general to a specific focus
Justapposing text or other graphic visuals / simulations with close-up or medium close shots	Promoting clarity or emphasis related to key message of the ad.
Music and Background sounds	Strong influence on emotions. Distinct, inspiring, soothing, etc.
Clothing	The most powerful means to establish status, and/or setting (e.g., home, work, play) and socio-economic status.
Closing Shot	The final shot provides the "carry out" message. Is it a directive? A question? Why? What does it intend for you to feel, want, or do?



The screenshot shows the "Video Annotation Tool" interface in a Mozilla Firefox browser. The title is "Caduet-john5677". The video player shows a scene with a pill bottle and the text "Caduet". The right sidebar contains a list of annotations with timestamps:

- Music** 0:04: Light piano in background. Adds a positive, upbeat emotional tone, and sets the scene later for the dancing routine.
- Longshot** 0:08: Man walking in to a dining room to meet a woman. Establishes location -- nice restaurant, and the relationship between the two characters (homosexual romantic).
- Graphic** 0:13: Picture of pill bottle, divides into two pill bottles, and then combines back into one. Clarification of the type of medication (two drugs in one pill). Focuses on simplicity, which might be a positive thing for the viewer.
- Longshot** 0:23: Couple dancing, which again reinforces a positive, happy relationship between the two. Shows the health and vigor of the person taking the medication.
- Panshot** 0:37: Artsy shot of water which reflects the restaurant and the couple dancing. Again, a positive, serene shot that elicits a warm, comfortable feeling about the medication.
- Closing Shot** 1:00: Couple walking back to table after dance with the light behind them. This one is a bit more subtle, and the shot is almost frozen or as still as...

Additional materials and related resources can be found at:  
<http://esdi.us/pub/videoant/>

## Results

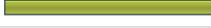
The DTC Ad Deconstruction assignment is definitely relevant to the discussion of direct to consumer advertising occurring in this course.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		46.3%	19
Agree		46.3%	19
Neutral		7.3%	3
Disagree		0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree		0.0%	0

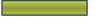
I will definitely look at advertisements differently due to the material I encountered in the DTC Ad Deconstruction assignment.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		36.6%	15
Agree		41.5%	17
Neutral		19.5%	8
Disagree		2.4%	1
Strongly Disagree		0.0%	0

I have more confidence in my ability to recognize and not be persuaded by advertisements, in general, due to this assignment.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		29.3%	12
Agree		53.7%	22
Neutral		12.2%	5
Disagree		4.9%	2
Strongly Disagree		0.0%	0

Partly as a result of doing this assignment, I would like to know more about the topic of Media Literacy.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		24.4%	10
Agree		41.5%	17
Neutral		22.0%	9
Disagree		12.2%	5
Strongly Disagree		0.0%	0

## Conclusions

- ❖ The ad deconstruction exercise was perceived as relevant to course objectives;
- ❖ Students wanted to learn more about the concept of media literacy as a result of participating in the ad deconstruction activity;
- ❖ Students reported that they will view all advertisements more critically as a result of the ad deconstruction exercise (coupled with a brief introduction to media literacy);
- ❖ The strategy of ad deconstruction, coupled with a brief introduction to the concept of media literacy and a rubric to support the process of deconstruction, appears to be an active learning strategy that can support course objectives, increase students' reflective abilities, and promote an appetite to learn more about related strategies supporting critical reflection.

## Future Directions

The study of the video annotation / ad deconstruction strategy will be expanded to investigate whether and how advertising targeted at other "subcultures of consumption" can be effectively deconstructed and how targeted populations can be affected by the ad deconstruction activity. For example, a similar strategy has recently been incorporated in a course studying hip hop videos within a framework of misogyny and gender stereotypes.

In addition, the deconstruction exercise will be both enhanced with additional features (such as a community discussion after participating in the ad deconstruction exercise), and expanded to include more comprehensive strategies focused on deconstructing ad/media campaigns, television shows, movies, and other media venues.

NOTE: These results were presented as a poster at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy; Spring 2010; Seattle, Washington. Please address inquires to Dr. Richard Brown ([brown123@umn.edu](mailto:brown123@umn.edu))