

## **Key Concepts of Media Literacy in Ad Deconstruction**

**Ad:** Microsoft Super Bowl 2020 TV Commercial, 'Be the One' Featuring Katie Sowers

<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/ZErb/microsoft-super-bowl-2020-be-the-one-featuring-katie-sowers>

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**Concept 1: Media are constructions of reality**

Ask: Who created this media product? Is the product believable?

Answer: This media product was created for Microsoft, one of the sponsors of the NHL. This product seems believable as the model was using the Microsoft Surface to write down football plays and movements, thus showing the viewers that with the surface not only can you use it for school or business, but also for drawing. It demonstrates how versatile it is and how even NFL coaches use it.

**Concept 2: Each medium has its unique aesthetic form. The nature of the medium determines which conventions, codes, and symbols are used in the construction of a product.**

Describe the following:

Models: The models in the advertisement were the football players of the team, San Francisco 49ers and Katie Sowers who was using the Microsoft surface product.

Setting: The setting is the place where Katie Sowers grew up as they showed some old home videos, in the San Francisco 49ers locker room, an old picture of her dad coaching in a gymnasium, and their field where they were doing demos of drills and plays being performed during their practice.

Light: In the beginning with the home videos it is all natural lighting, in the locker scene there is a bit of hair light, but it is mostly key light to make it look kind of dramatic, then in the rest of the advertisement it is mostly natural light from the sky plus some additional lights from the stadium.

Copy: words – whether written or spoken

Written: "Football, I hope someday I will be a good football player, Katie Sowers/ Surface, The first woman to coach the Super Bowl. Thanks Katie for being the one. Microsoft, proud sponsor of the NFL."

Spoken: I hope someday I will be able to join a good football team, Katie Sowers assistant coach for the San Francisco 49ers, I've never seen a female coach before, not ready to have a woman lead, we have all these assumptions about what women do in life and what men do, I'm glad my daughter is old enough to see this and understand how significant it is, I'm not trying to be the best female coach, I'm trying to be the best coach, All it takes is one.

Sound: Most of the voicing that goes on in the commercial is non-diegetic as she is talking separately from what is going on. However, some scenes are diegetic were the locker room scenes where she is talking directly to the camera as well as when she is giving instructions on drills while they were filming the commercial on the field. While talking the sounds were synchronous with the words that were coming out of her mouth. Furthermore, there were some atmospherics on the field with the crowd cheering at one point during a game and the grunts from the players while they were performing drills on the field. Furthermore, there was a song that carried through the ad, which makes it a sound bridge.

Story: This advertisement exemplifies the story of a woman, Katie Sowers, who defied all odds against her and became the first female to coach the Super Bowl when everyone else thought it would be impossible. She defined the word possibility and this commercial helps to define her story while embedding their brand by showing that she was using the Surface to make plays. It also demonstrates that Microsoft supports women playing sports; thus, pushing against the gender stereotype. The story additionally shows that even the best use Microsoft, whether they be professional coaches, etc.

Colour: San Francisco 49ers colours: red, white, gold, and black, darker colours like grey, green (grass), as well as dark blue(chairs in the stadium), and some orange.

Camera shots (and movement, if applicable): extreme close-up to the letter, medium shot/medium close-up/ close-up (the locker interview and while giving instructions on the field- slight low angle shot), full shot (where she is standing on the field near the beginning), pan at the end, some still photos with zoom, and a few handheld shots while filming the players on the field (some were on a slight low angle).

### **Concept 3: Audiences negotiate meaning = they interpret the same message differently**

Ask: How might different people see this media product differently? (Consider age, country of origin, gender, culture, profession, social class, education, life experience, religion, etc.)

Answer: I feel that many young aspiring females will be empowered to go for their dreams, because of the inspiration given in this ad and how she talked about how it only takes one woman to change everything in a particular field or job. Despite that, some older people might feel differently as they are a little bit more old-fashioned and might feel as though it doesn't make sense to do something like that. They may believe women shouldn't be able to have these jobs that are mostly occupied by men. However, I think for the most part the message will be well received with little conflict on its meaning as nowadays gender equality is becoming more and more popular. Thus, some people may gravitate towards buying Microsoft products because of how they are supporting gender fairness.

Ask: How does this make you feel, based on how similar or different you are from the people portrayed in the media product?

Answer: I would say that it also made me inspired to do what I want no matter what odds are against me and this advertisement demonstrates that with the right motivation everything is feasible. Even though I'm not exactly similar to the people portrayed in this media product I feel a sense of inspiration. This ad has given me a new perspective on the meaning of possibility, gender equality, and has allowed my mind to open up to the prospects of life. Thus, I don't believe that because I am different from the person portrayed in the commercial it does not apply to me.

#### **Concept 4: Media have commercial implications. Media production is a business and must make a profit.**

Ask: What is the commercial purpose of this media product (in other words, how will it help someone make money)? How does this influence the content and how it's communicated?

Answer: I don't feel as if this ad is very much towards making a lot of money as the ad is much more oriented on the story of Katie Sowers, compared to the product. However, I do believe that because of the positive message Microsoft is spreading by telling this story and supporting it, some viewers may be attracted to their products because of what they represent. Therefore, with more customers liking their image as a company it may generate them more profit.

Ask: If no commercial purpose can be found, what other purposes might the media product have (for instance, to get attention for its creator or to convince audiences of a particular point of view).

Answer: As stated before, there isn't a commercial purpose as it helps to inform us of the story of Katie and inspire us to believe that anything is achievable even if it feels as though the whole world is against you. The advertisement helps to shine a light on gender equality in jobs that may be dominated mostly by men and how women can be just as good or if not better in that career. In addition, it helps convince the audience that gender stereotypes should not be considered as

they are not true. Furthermore, it helps to demonstrate that it only takes one person to change the way people think and break the boundary on what it is known as the “norm” in our society.

**Concept 5: Mass media contain beliefs, values, and messages which affect how we live and how we view the world around us; in other words, media have social and political implications.**

Ask: Who and what is shown in a positive light? In a negative light?

Answer: What is shown in a positive light is women trying to achieve their dreams as the ad emphasizes the fact that it only takes one woman to make a difference in a field that is mostly made up of men. They show that anything is possible and it helps to inspire others to make a difference and strive to be the best you can be no matter your gender, race, or culture. What is shown in a negative light is how in a lot of jobs there is no gender equality as this ad underlines that she is the first woman to coach the Super Bowl. This highlights the fact that one coach out of many others is a woman because of the stereotype and bias against it. Microsoft seems to be pushing for equality as well as demonstrating how much progress has been made and how much more can be done.

Ask: Will this media product have influence on politics or promote social change?

Answer: This media product has a significant impact on social change as more people will have a better understanding of gender equality in the workplace and it demonstrates how women can do the same jobs that men can do. It will considerably change the way women are viewed as this advertisement demonstrates their capabilities. Moreover, it helps to combat stereotypes in addition to change the way society thinks about what men and women should do by making us think about each other as equals.

Ask: Is the message stated explicitly or implicitly (=is implied)?

What does the product say about values, power, and authority?

Answer: I think that the message is explicitly stated as Katie herself talks about how it only takes one woman to make a difference and how she doesn't want to be the best female coach, but the best coach in general. It demonstrates that she knows that there are stereotypes and people

against her, but she continues to fight on for equality. However, you can also imply that she is trying to inspire others to go for their dreams as well as to fight for equality, which isn't directly said in the advertisement. In the commercial, it talks about assumptions people make about men and women, as well as how women can do anything they want to just like Katie Sowers who became the first woman to coach the Super Bowl. Furthermore, it talks about how women can also be in positions of authority/power like the coach of a team going into the Super Bowl, the biggest NFL tournament of the year. The ad helps to exemplify that both men and women are equal and both can have authoritative roles, where they call the shots.