



## **Do We Really Need What We Want?: Consumerism and Second Graders**

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by Mary Grace Flowers

### **Objective: Do you teach the same population I do?**

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If your district requires you to complete home visits prior to the beginning of a school year, do these visits impact your teaching? Now try this thought experiment: What would be your reaction if on one of your home visits, you were to see all of the families "inside" possessions lying "outside" on their front lawn or sidewalk not because of an eviction but as a display to be photographed. Would this type of encounter change the way you teach your population of students? Based on your observations of the items exposed for all to see, would you be able to identify the economic status of the family or families by the possessions spread out on the ground or pavement? Once you began to assess the items and their value, would you have a better understanding of the particular families social class or status? Their way of life?

If I were to stumble upon such a scene as I describe above, when visiting my students' homes or apartments, I would not be preoccupied with how many things were spread out before me; I would be more interested in what the items could tell me about my students as adolescents, family members and consumers. All of the items together give you a glimpse into one family's life, but the kids' possessions tell a whole different story.

Even though my students are only seven or eight years old and impoverished, they have a kind of "purchasing power" and that agency is based on many different facets of their lives and that of their parents. My goal is to help them define that power and discuss their habits of consumerism, while making sure that I am aware of the social and economic factors that surround their everyday life in and out of school. Are your students like mine? If so, this unit, which focuses on consumerism, is designed for you and your students.

My district does not require me to make visits to my children's homes, but I feel it would be a very empowering experience and enable me to create a better picture of my class and their social and family parameters. I used the analogy of all of the "inside" possessions displayed "outside" inspired by Peter Menzel's visual anthropology, *Material World: A Global Family Portrait*. (1)

In my sixteen years of teaching impoverished children, it was not until participating in the National Delaware Teachers Institute held at Yale University that I realized that when I am teaching a topic such as consumer literacy, I have to be cognizant of the meaning "consumption" in the real circumstances of my students' lives, homes, and their families financial status. To teach this topic effectively and with fidelity, I have to consider

the culture, population and class of my students.

Peter Menzel's thought provoking book *Material World: A Global Family Portrait* is a round-the-world picture book that draws the reader in to the different full page photos that are presented. Using full-color photography, each country is highlighted first with a two-page photograph of an "average" family in the street (or a field) with their possessions and a listing of those basic possessions. Then, there is a summary of the country's history and the family's statistics, such as house size, family size, and income (which are average for the country). There is also an information bar with statistics relating to the country, such as fertility rate and country population. Text and photographs illustrate the daily life of the chosen families. (2)

This pictorial will be the first book that I show my students in order to springboard this unit. Beginning with such a strong visual prompt will set the academic tone, since it is the first opportunity for the students to begin hearing and using the terms "wants" and "needs. This strategy will also allow us the opportunity to discuss the author's purpose and the main messages to be taken from his pictorial collection. Menzel wants us to think about whether we as Americans, in a global economy, have everything we want.(3) The book will provide my students and me opportunities for rich discussions on population, culture and consumption. The pictures will also enable us to look deeper at whether the quantity or quality of the items matters, because students tend to look first at the number of things and/or the branding of the item.

The pictures will also lend a cultural feel to the lesson because it will allow for students to compare and contrast the availability and desirability? of items when learning about different cultures and customs. Culture is defined as the sum total of learned beliefs, values, customs, that, in this case, serve to direct and give meaning to the consumer behavior of members of a particular society. Allowing students to discuss and identify consumer choices is crucial when students are looking at the various pictures because they have the ability to expand on background and prior knowledge. My goal is to direct the students to look past the sheer quantity in order to concentrate on the particular items and begin to define them and categorize the items they feel are a want or a need.

## **My students**

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This upcoming year, my class list, which was created at the end of my current students' first grade year by their previous teachers, shows that I will have twenty-four students. The class is comprised of sixteen boys and eight girls. As in years past, because of the neighborhoods we serve, I have a very impoverished and diverse group of students. Of the twenty-four, fourteen are Hispanic, six are African-American, three are Caucasian, and one is of Asian descent. Colwyck, the school in which I teach, is located in New Castle, Delaware and 100% of our population qualify for free lunch. The school's population is currently at two hundred and sixty-five students enrolled, but enrollment always increases when parents register their children over the summer months. We have a high Hispanic population, which is the majority of our population, and continues to grow each year.

Academically this group of children looks to be a stronger group compared to my second graders of last year. Based on data from their beginning of year (BOY) and end of year (EOY), oral reading fluency (ORF) scores and reading comprehension assessments, the results show that 56% of my new students read below grade level, 32% are on grade level, and 12% read above grade level.

## Rationale

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Developmentally, the concept of consumerism, I find, is understandable for my second grade students. Typically they struggle with the concepts of time and money, among others, because at their young age of seven or eight, the adults in their lives control both their money and their time. But, because they see items or food being purchased and brought into their homes from a young age, they have an idea of consumerism as an important part of their lives.

I look at the consumerism, schematically as a strong tree. The consumer is the trunk and the branches are all the different types and groups of consumers. The number of leaves that hang from the identifiable branches depict particular groups of consumers. An ethnographer who researches and looks at the different facets of consumption (the psychological, social, sociological, cultural, and economic factors that influence customer behavior) would diagram a tree with branches laden with leaves. A person fighting for consumer rights would also show a numerous numbers of leaves based on their understanding and pursuit to protect and educate the consumer. A branch showing the purchasing power of a child would be sparse depending on the age and economic status of the child and their family.

This unit will explore the concept of second graders learning that they possess and control purchasing power from both a marketing and parental level. My focus is to instill in my students the skills they need to become responsible consumers even if their buying power is restricted based on their age or family income. Keeping the analogy of the consumer tree that I describe above, the ultimate goal is to increase their number of "leaves" which will result in an increase in their consumer literacy.

## Teaching Impoverished Children

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Key points about poverty need to be addressed prior to discussing the ways to work with those affected by it. I feel this unit allows me to get one step closer to making my teaching more effective and applicable to my group of students.

Economic class in the US feels more like a continuous line than a clear-cut distinction. In 1994, the poverty line was considered by the United States government to be \$14,340 for a family of four. Individuals move and are stationed all along the continuum of income.(4) Generational poverty and situational poverty are different. Generational poverty is defined as being in poverty for two generations or longer. Situational poverty involves a shorter time and is caused by circumstance, i.e. death, illness, divorce. As a teacher, I find it hard to determine which category of poverty my students fit into because the topic is not something that is comfortable for parents and grandparents. Usually, because our school houses kindergarten to fifth grade and because the majority of our population moves through all six grades, it's only in the latter years that we are able to determine the whether students' economic deprivation is situational or generational.

The above points are based on patterns. All patterns have exceptions. An individual brings with him or her the hidden rules of the class in which he or she was raised.

Schools and businesses operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of the middle class. These

norms and hidden rules are never directly taught in schools or in businesses. For our students to be successful, we must understand their hidden rules and teach them the rules that will make them successful at school and at work. We can neither excuse them nor scold them for not knowing; as educators, we must teach them and provide support, assistance, and high expectations. To move from poverty to middle class or middle class to wealth, an individual must give up relationships for achievement.(5)

## **Describing your consumer choice may change you as a consumer.**

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Today, children are immersed in cultures of consumption such that every aspect of their lives is touched by a buy-and-consume modality. In particular, children in North America are increasingly experiencing the effects of consumer culture at unprecedented levels of involvement. It becomes necessary, therefore, to examine the impact of consumerism in order to assess identity formation and development in youth. Young people are receiving an endless barrage of material messages encouraging them to spend in order to bolster their self-image. Indeed, children from the ages of 4 to 12 have increasingly been defined and viewed by their spending capacity. Girls especially are targeted by marketers to sell them a whole line of products they 'need' to emulate a feminine ideal. There is mounting evidence to suggest that the structure of childhood is eroding and children are suffering from serious physical, emotional and social deficits directly related to consumerism.(6)

The one activity that I feel will answer and connect the students to the essential questions of this unit will occur when students bring in their "chosen" object from home and begin to explain the object and its significance. I feel that through our rich discussions, student will be able to gain a deeper understanding of consumer choices and the thought that goes into making them. The forum for this conversation will take place over many classroom meetings, the meetings being one of the six components of a research based program that has been implemented in our school as "The Responsive Classroom."

As mentioned above, the implementation of the RC program in its initial stages and the of the six components, we have implemented two of these behavior modifications. I described the importance and usefulness of conducting classroom meetings and the second behavior modification is the importance of using "teacher language." Teacher language involves being cognizant of how we speak and communicate with students, families, and staff within our school family. More information on RC program appear in my lesson plans that follow.

## **Marketing Tricks**

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Marketers want to hook children on shopping. Kids as young as 18 months recognize product logos. That fact isn't lost on advertisers, who spend \$15 billion a year pushing products and services aimed at children. Kids now watch an average of 40,000 TV commercials a year, and even McDonald's and PBS collaborate on brand promotion.(7) In order to lift the siege, Susan Linn, a Harvard graduate, medical school instructor of psychiatry and a writer considered one of the country's leading experts on how marketing and television exposure affect children, describes five ways to protect children against aggressive marketing campaigns. in her article

*Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood.*(8) Being an advocate for children, but knowing that the message comes through the adults in that child's life, she writes to both audiences and gives tips to prevent these uninvited marketers from coming into our homes — not through the front door but through our televisions and computers.

The number one way Linn advises parents and children to stop the siege is to simply turn off the television. On average, kids watch four hours of TV daily, with about 15 minutes an hour dedicated to commercials. They are the targeted audience at a certain time of the day when their watching habits have been minutely researched by marketing companies. The second way is to explain "the game." By "the game" Linn means teaching children the ability to distinguish programming from advertising. Help children build a healthy skepticism by talking with them about ads or marketing tricks. Remind them to always question every marketing message, not just on the television but on the other types of media that are now available to them and that surround them constantly. Depending on one's demographics the third step is to limit visits to the malls. Bright colors and store displays at kids' height are designed to incite nagging and impulse buying. If you have to shop with your kids, discuss in advance what you'll buy and stick to it. The fourth bit of advice is to always be a role model for children. "Parents need to look at their own consumption," says Linn, "because children learn through models." If you place a premium on having the latest styles, the largest house or the fanciest car, children will likely share the same values." The fifth and final strategy is to have discussions with children about something that they are likely to do which is "buy to buy", meaning that when they have money in their pocket, it usually feels as if it is literally burning a hole in it.

Talking and providing other opportunities for them to use their money in different ways is a powerful counter-message for young consumers. My students walk in each morning with little black bags full of chips and candy. Having taught this population for many years and being familiar with their demographics, I know that they are going to a store located across the street from the projects in which they live and making these types of purchases. Discussing and revisiting Linn's five strategies and tips throughout this unit will allow both us (students and teacher) opportunities to speak to the issue of what, when, and why they make the purchases that they chose to make and if they truly need what they want.

Because second-grade children are often unable to employ such judgment, they are more vulnerable to marketing. Preschool children, for instance, have trouble differentiating between commercials and regular programming on television. Slightly older children can make the distinction, but they are concrete thinkers, tending to believe what they see in a fifteen-second commercial for cookies or a toy. Until the age of about eight, children can't really understand the concept of persuasive intent—that every aspect of an ad is selected to make a product appealing and to convince people to buy it. Older kids and teens might be more cynical about advertising, but their skepticism doesn't seem to affect their tendency to want or buy the products they see so glowingly portrayed all around them. Linn attacks these issues head on and brings to the fore front the issue of targeting young consumers.(9) She has been sufficiently successful that marketers to children have made changes but the change has to start with educating the young consumers. Again, the ultimate goal of this unit is for children to understand marketing tricks, understand that they are the main target of those tricks or "games" and empower them with this knowledge so that when they enter into the big world of consumerism, they are better prepared to make wise, consumer-literate, purchasing choices.

## Books that influenced this unit.

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As mentioned in my introduction, my participation in this Academic Professional Development held at Yale University created the foundation for this unit. The excerpts that we read to foster and give us different perspectives on the subject of consumerism added validity and understanding to the idea of consumer culture. I encourage you, as a teacher, to read the three books that I have outlined and added to this unit's bibliography as a way of gaining a deeper understanding of "things", cultures, and purchasing power when teaching to a young population of students. I have organized all three books as subheadings to make the connection between why I used them and the influence they have had on this unit.

### **Daniel Miller, *The Comfort of Things***

This particular reading spoke to me on many different levels, which I discuss later. The main topic of the chapters I read is consumerism, understood as the social meanings attached to personal possessions; so Miller takes the reader on an ethnographic journey into the lives of different types of people and families and dissects their homes and the items in their homes and psyches. His descriptions of the items within the different homes allows the reader to gain a more in-depth look at each person in respect to their objects or "things" that form and order their home environment. Miller delves into the deeper understanding of "things" and how one views their own personal possessions. Two of the excerpts pulled me entirely into the topic of what certain "things" mean and say about us as individuals and how we chose to have and arrange things in our homes. Growing up, I was very much interested in the things that my mother had collected and saved. She was a stay-at-home mom and usually never spent any money on herself and treasured especially the things that were passed down to her from her grandparents who raised her. I was the only one of the eight children in my family to listen intently to her stories of how she acquired her beloved items —such as her Irish linens, Belleek China, and even the little plates that her grandfather rescued from a Wilmington Court House back in the early 40's when he was a fireman. All meticulously kept and treasured.

There was an intense connection that I made to the Clarke family that Daniel Miller depicts in his study. He explains that the Clarke's house was the place to be on holidays and how meticulous and time consuming it would be for the parents to prepare holidays and special events for their family members. The Clarke's cared and fussed over their possessions as my mother did hers which was very familiar to me. It's a type of deep affection that one feels for objects that provide memories of times past.

The "things" that I will ask the students to bring with them to school and explain the significance of them will serve two purposes. Once they present their item for the first time, as a class, we will decide and discuss whether that item is classified as a want or a need. The background knowledge the students will have to enable them to define the item(s) is based on our prior lessons on what makes an item a want or a need. (See lesson plans section) Once the item is presented, the children will describe their item aloud using certain criteria. For this initial part of the activity, I want them to simply explain to us what the item is, who gave them the item, and whether they think the item is a want or a need based on our prior lessons conversations. During the students conversations I will be informally evaluating each of the student presenters in terms of the curricula criteria posed at the beginning of the lesson. What I will be doing during this period is analyzing and thinking through their description of the items: what symbol this item represents for them and what it tells about them.

## Purchasing Power

*Purchasing Power* by Elizabeth Chinn explores the consumer lives of poor, working-class minority children. This ethnography delves into the forces bearing down upon the purchasing choices of her subjects and how they may be viewed as being in large part responses to structural oppressions, oppressions that are then reenforced through consumer channels.(10)

Because of both the economic make-up and the diversity of my class, the book *Purchasing Power* provided me with a different perspective when approaching the topic of impoverished children and consumerism. Chin describes her experiences working with African-American children, especially the shopping trip she sponsors by giving each of her child-informants \$20 to spend. She discovers that the children spend their allotted \$20.00 to buy items to share rather than status-items that help them fit in socially. A girl buys a bag of candy to share with her sister. A boy buys a pair of walkie-talkies instead of a Wolverine action figure (which every other boy in the neighborhood has) that will allow him to play with his brother. These kids easily choose 'needed items' over 'wanted items'. A boy buys school supplies, another child buys new shoes. These children also consider their parents. At such a young age, a girl buys a pair of shoes for her mother and curlers for her grandmother. Their purchases are well-thought out. Chin's extensive research for her book correlates with my vision for the activities and objectives for my unit. My goal is for my students to learn to be as conscientious as Chin discovered that children can be when faced with decisions on when and how they spend their money, even at a young age.

Vast differences separate white middle class children from the young children of Newhallville who participated in Chin's study. The most glaring to me was the fact that growing up, in my white middle class home, I never knew how the money within the household was spent and I was continually told that it was simply none of my business. I am one of eight children and the topic of money or income, whether it was available or not, was never discussed with my siblings and me. The majority of the time, I don't even think my father discussed the disbursement of money with my home maker mother. There were shortages at times but we seemed to get through them with no mention or discussion of how and where the money came from.

Chin explains that from an early age, the Newhallville children are not only made aware of the amounts of available income, if any, but they know the amount of each bill and expense and are expected to use their own money to pay for personal necessities such as socks and underwear. Chin shows this as an example of how these family units, which are not traditional "units" in the mainstream sense — nuclear households with father, mother, and children — pull together to survive. I feel that if my siblings and I had been more knowledgeable about the everyday expenses within our household, maybe our spending habits later in life would have been different. An example of how socio-economic rules exist in families and classes. The above descriptors show that even though children are economically disadvantaged, they can be savvy and conscientious consumers.

## The Big Idea

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Every individual has a different idea about what separates a "need" from a "want," depending on his or her cultural and economic situation. Although every person has different ideas about what is necessary for him or her, there are certain basic needs that all humans share, including biological needs (food, water, air, shelter);

social needs (clothing, feelings of belonging and protection); and spiritual needs (faith, love, hope).

This unit correlates with Delaware Prioritized Standard Two, which states that students will understand how barter, money, and other media are employed to facilitate the exchange of resources, goods, and services. This unit also targets lesson six of our current social studies series published by Harcourt Brace and entitled "About My Community." The content that is covered within lesson six includes the current economic teaching strand that defines "wants" in term of trade-offs and scarcity and not in contrast to "basic needs." In this series, there are only two pages dedicated to this subject matter of wants and needs. In summary, because of the age appropriateness of both content base of the topic and age of my students, Harcourt focuses on students knowing that a need is something you cannot live without and a want is something you would like to have, but not necessary for survival. My unit encompasses the outline of our curriculum unit, but the activities that I have created allows for a more in depth analysis of the topics.

## **Technology tools and classroom meetings**

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I introduce my second graders to a lot of technology in my classroom and am currently the technology coordinator for my building. In my attempt to obtain a Master in Applied Technology degree, I have been fortunate enough to have taken classes that have not only enhanced my instructional strategies but have gotten me away from the typical pencil-and-paper type of instruction and taken my students and me in a totally different educational direction.

Two tools that I will use in this unit to enhance both student learning and interest are WebQuests and GoogleDocs. Another research-based teaching tool that I use to enhance and extend my teaching time is called the Responsive Classroom, which I discuss later in this section.

### **WebQuest**

A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet, optionally supplemented with videoconferencing. There are at least two levels of WebQuests that should be distinguished from one another. WebQuests follow an organized format and depending what your instructional goal is, there are two different levels of WebQuests that are based solely on your instructional time line. The WebQuest that I designed for this unit is considered a Long Term WebQuest because of the two week time period that I will allot to teach the content of the unit. My instructional goal is to extend and refine knowledge. After completing this longer term WebQuest, students will analyze a body of knowledge and demonstrate an understanding of the material by creating the GoogleDoc at the end of the unit, which is considered the on-line finished product to a WebQuest. A Short Term WebQuest centers around acquisition and integration and has a shorter time line of one to three class periods.

In order to keep this unit organized and enticing for the students, I have created a WebQuest that will be the map that I use to complete this unit. Because students truly look forward to the use of technology, the first activity we will complete will be to introduce what a WebQuest is and how we will utilize the WebQuest both from school and home. Because students already have access to my WikiSpace site, which creates an online e-mail for them, I will use that e-mail for my WebQuest account and then share the WebQuest with each



student so he or she can access the site and get to work.

There are six components to a WebQuest that I had to create and correlate to this unit topic of consumerism. They are an introduction, task, process, resources, evaluation, and conclusion. These components allow me to create and store all essential elements, worksheets and resources that I will use through the course of this unit. The WebQuest site that I have created is found under Teacher Annotated Bibliography at the end of this unit.

## **GoogleDoc**

A GoogleDoc is a non-linear, easy-to-use online word processor, spreadsheet and presentation editor that enables you and your students to create, store and share instantly and securely, and collaborate online in real time. You can create new documents from scratch or upload existing documents, spreadsheets and presentations. There's no software to download, and all your work is stored safely online and can be accessed from any computer.

## **The Responsive Classroom**

The Responsive Classroom (RC) is a widely used, research-based approach to elementary education that increases academic achievement, decreases problem behaviors, improves social skills, and leads to more high-quality instruction.(11) The components of the RC program that are woven throughout this student behavior modification are morning meeting, rule creation, interactive modeling, positive teacher language, logical consequences.(12) This has been recently implemented in our school, so we are slowly adding the different components each year. Currently, we have implemented both the morning meeting and teacher language components into our school schedule. Morning meetings will be used to discuss the center of this unit: their possession, selection and explanation of their personal object; this is the reason I want to include background information on the RC program in this narrative.

To hold an effective morning meeting, it is extremely important to supervise the rhythm of the process and to implement all of the elements daily to promote consistency for students. When my students enter my classroom in the morning, they enter to the sound of soft jazz being played on my computer using the Pandora website; this is not a facet of the RC program but it is just as important and sets the tone for our day. The next thing that they routinely look for is my morning message, which I prepare for them each day.

Each daily message is different and is based on the "big ideas" that we will address on that particular day. This important message is written on a large easel and sits by the entrance of my classroom door. There is also a participation survey question that accompanies the daily message; students are expected to participate by way of writing, tallying, or simply just thinking and sharing when called to the rug to share. Following our morning announcements, the students understand, without being asked, to quietly "join me on the rug." I have a large rug that is positioned in the front of my classroom which the students use to read and complete activities on, but the main function of the rug is a meeting place for our daily morning meetings. They all know to sit on the perimeter of the rug, allowing personal space for each of them and making sure that no one is left out and not part of the circle. Sharing-time begins with those first four children who signed up on the easel as they entered. In order to model both fairness and fidelity, I keep track of the sharing participants so that those that are reluctant to speak in front of the class are also given a chance and are gently encouraged by both their peers and me. These classroom meetings are the forum that encourages rich and engaging discussion, and it will be through those whole group discussions that the students will gain understanding of the essential questions to be asked and answered throughout this unit.

As mentioned above, the implementation of the RC program in its initial stages within our building; of the six components we have implemented two of these behavior modifications. I described the importance and usefulness of conducting classroom meetings; the second behavior modification is the importance of using "teacher language." Teacher language involves being cognizant of how we speak and communicate with students, families, and staff within our school family.

## Classroom Activities

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### **Activity One: Introduction of the WebQuest**

The students will familiarize themselves with a technology tool called a WebQuest.

The students will identify wants and needs from a pictorial on our WebQuest task page.

The students will respond in writing to questions that correlate to photos that appear on the WebQuest task page.

Before the Learning: To keep this unit organized and enticing for the students, I have created a WebQuest that will serve as a curriculum map that we will follow to complete this unit. Because students truly look forward to the use of technology, the first activity we will complete will be to introduce what a WebQuest is and how we will use the WebQuest both from school and home. Because students already have access to my WikiSpace site which creates an online e-mail for them, I will use that e-mail on my WebQuest account and then share the WebQuest with each student so they can access the site. Students will watch a YouTube video of other second graders using their classroom WebQuest. We will then use the video and discuss the benefits of using this site. Students will then be directed to go to the first activity which directs them to view a picture that I have uploaded from Peter Menzel's book "Material World" and begin to think of the needs and wants that appear in the picture.

During the Learning: Students will be paired up with a buddy and be provided a worksheet to complete while looking at the picture from the book. Students will be asked to collaborate their findings both orally and in written form.

After the Learning: Each group will share out what their findings were and we will begin to define "wants" and "needs."

### **Activity Two: "Do You Want or Need It?"**

The one activity that I feel will answer and connect the students to the essential questions of this unit will occur during this lesson when students bring in their "chosen" object from home and begin to explain the object and its significance. I feel that through our rich discussions, student will be able to acquire a deeper understanding of consumer choices and the thought that goes into making them. The forum for this conversation will take place within many classroom meetings which is one of the six components of a research based program that has been implemented within our building called The Responsive Classroom.

The students will choose an object or item from home and bring the item into school to share.

Students will sign up to present their object to the class using certain criteria of whether the item falls under the definition of a "want" or "need."

Students will write about their object and describe how they obtained the item, the symbolization of the item, and what the item means to them.

Before the Learning: We will discuss what we learned from the previous lesson on using the WebQuest and looking at the pictures from our pictorial book *Material World* and compare the results of the assigned worksheet. The forum for this discussion and lesson is done during a morning classroom meeting. We are all seated on our classroom rug and incorporate the predetermined norms and rules when engaging in conversations. Those students that signed up to present their object will be asked to present in random order.

During the Learning: While students are presenting their objects, audience members will be able to ask three questions to the presenter about the object. The questions will focus on who gave them the object, how they obtained it, what the object is, whether they purchased the object or whether it was a gift from someone. The presenter has to decide whether the item is considered a "want" or a "need" following their presentation. Audience members who chose to participate in the discussion can either agree or disagree with the presenters definition of the item. If audience members disagree with the presenter, they must support their stance and explain why they disagree with the presenter. Presenters will ask for any additional questions that pertain to their object or presentation and thank the audience for their attention and participation.

After the learning: Students will gain a better understanding of what a "want" or "need" is based on the different conversations that we have about the items that were presented.

### **Activity Three: "Do You Have Purchasing Power?"**

Students will analyze their object and write on how their item was obtained and whether they feel that they had an influence or not on obtaining the object.

Before the Learning: As a class we will discuss the definition and different types of purchasing power. The two types of purchasing power that we will concentrate on will be marketing tricks that are used to attract young consumers and the "nag factor" that marketers refer to when children beg their parents to obtain an item. Students will write about which criteria they think was used in order for them to obtain their object.

During the Learning: Because students were asked a series of questions for homework before bringing in their object, knowing who and how they obtained the object has already been completed. Students will use that prior knowledge and apply their newly acquired knowledge.

After the Learning: Students will share out using one word to describe and classify their item as a marketing trick or nag factor. Considering students descriptions, classification, and explanation will determine whether they grasped the idea of these two types of purchasing-power.

### **Activity Four: "What Does Culture Have to Do With It?"**

Students will identify the cultural needs and wants of the families depicted in the book "Material World" that I have uploaded onto the class WebQuest.

Students will compare and contrast the objects or possessions in the pictures to their own shared object.

Students will analyze the possessions or objects and decide what continent the family depicted in the picture is from using the object as clues.

Students will make predictions

Before the Learning: We have used a couple of the pictures from the book at the initial part of the unit, now we will look at the various pictures that we have not looked at. These have been uploaded to the WebQuest so that each child can view the pictures instead of my holding the book. I want them to dissect and look very closely at the pictures. As they are looking at the pictures, I will be using GoogleMaps to show which continent the families in the pictures are from based on the captions that accompany the pictures. In order for students to gain an idea of "here" and "there", the "here" will be our school and the "there" will be the location of our search (country in which the family in the picture is from). The visual that this will create for students will be useful in their ability to gain an understanding that "there" is located outside of the United States, and cultural cues from the pictures will allow for them to make important geographic connections.

During the Learning: Once I feel that students have grasped the idea of using the items in the pictures to help with an overall understanding of "here" being within the United States and "there" being outside of North America will allow students an opportunity to differentiate between our culture "here" and other cultures "there."

After the Learning: Students will follow the activity created within the WebQuest that will guide them through a series of questions that compel them to look at objects from different countries; they will have to locate the different countries where the items were derived from using both internet and GoogleMap.

## **Appendix A: Implementing District Standards**

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Economics Standard One: Students will analyze the potential costs and benefits of personal economic choices in a market economy

K-3a: Students will understand that individuals and families with limited resources undertake a wide variety of activities to satisfy their wants.

Economics Standard Two: Students will examine the interaction of individuals, families, communities, businesses, and governments in a market economy

K-3a: Students will understand how barter, money, and other media are employed to facilitate the exchange of resources, goods, and services.

## Annotated Teacher Bibliography

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Chin, Elizabeth, *Purchasing Power*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

This book is an ethnography of the consumer lives of poor, working class minority children and their spending habits and consumer choices. Chin provides an up-close and unique perspective of how consumer savvy these children truly are.

Menzel, Peter, *Material World: A Global Family Portrait*, San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 1994

This pictorial study gives a twist to the ordinary ways in which we look at the possessions of others around the world. The pictures depict family portraits and include the items that would normally be displayed "inside" of their homes, Menzel includes them in the portraits, but displays them "outside" of their homes. A very powerful portrayal of both consumer and cultural similarities and differences.

Miller, Daniel. *The Comfort of Things*. Cambridge: Polity, 2008. Print.

This set of ethnographic portraits takes you into the homes of thirty different individuals and families and dissects the possessions and objects with which they surround themselves. Miller interprets the attachments that each person has to different objects. In one of his case studies is a gentleman by the name of George, Miller shows how empty his life is in every sense of the word based on the fact that he surrounds himself with nothing.

<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/webquests/index.html>

This website gives a clear and concise definition of what a WebQuest is and the concepts that support its use.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6e46g\\_QcnY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6e46g_QcnY)

This is a YouTube video of second graders explaining what a WebQuest is and how they use WebQuests within their classrooms. This is the same video that appears on my WebQuest created for this unit.

Wilson, Margaret Berry. "Home Responsive Classroom." Home Responsive Classroom. N.p., n.d. Web. 3 Aug. 2012.

<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>>.

This is the main website for this research-based behavior modification. The site explains the six components and the research that supports its implementation into both schools and districts.

## Endnotes

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- Peter Menzel and Charles C. Mann. *Material World: A Global Family Portrait*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994
- *ibid*
- *ibid*
- Thalia Mulvihill, "I Fight Poverty. I Work!" Examining Discourses of Poverty and Their Impact on Pre-Service Teachers." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* Apr. 2006: 99.
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- *ibid*
- Susan Linn, *Consuming kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*. New York: New Press :, 2004.
- *ibid*
- *ibid*
- Elizabeth Chin, *Purchasing Power: Black Kids and American Consumer Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) 8
- Margaret Berry Wilson, *Home Responsive Classroom*, n.d. Web. 3 Aug. 2012. <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>>.
- Caltha Crowe, *Home Responsive Classroom*. N.p., 11 July 2012. Web. 11 July 2012.

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