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CLOTHING LINE-UP

Grades: 6 and up

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Four sets of clothes of various types and materials (see below); four clotheslines or stands and enough clothespins to hang clothes; four sets of fact cards with pictures; Caring Consumer Cards (see below)

Relevant Subjects: Social Studies, Science, Consumer Science, and Language Arts

Preparation:

- Gather four sets of similar clothes of different types and materials (e.g., leather, polyester, secondhand, sweatshop-made, hemp, organic cotton, conventional cotton, silk, wool, tencel)
- Create four sets of fact cards, one for each type/material of clothing that describes how the item is made and who/what is affected by/involved in the item's production. (See our Resources section for ideas.)
- Before class, hang up the four sets of clothes on the clotheslines/stands, with the accompanying fact cards attached to each appropriate piece.

1. Ask participants: "What were some choices you made today?" Eventually, lead them into the topic of clothing choices by asking "How did you decide what to wear today?"

2. Divide the class into four groups. Assign a perspective to three of the groups: Other Animals, Environment, Other Humans. The task of each of these groups is to line up their set of clothes from least harm to most harm on their clothesline, reflecting their group's assigned perspective. (So, the Animals group will focus on animal use and cruelty as primary factors, the Environment group on environmental impact issues, etc.) The fourth group has the challenging task of lining up their clothing based on considering all three perspectives (animals, environment, humans) – from least harm to most harm.

3. Once each group has read the fact cards for their clothing set and lined them up from least to most harm – according to their group's assigned perspective – have the whole

class tour each group's line-up, and have one representative from each group explain the reasoning for their order.

4. As a class, discuss the differences in perspectives that arose. Ask them to consider what other criteria they could use to choose clothing that causes less harm.

5. Ask volunteers to share what kinds of different choices they'll make about the clothes they acquire, using the new information they've learned.

6. Offer a Caring Consumer Card to each student.

Extensions:

1. Have students divide into groups and participate in the Choices Cards activity (see our additional Activities).

2. Have students (or groups of students) choose a type of clothing material (e.g., leather, wool, organic cotton, conventional cotton, hemp, bamboo, polyester) and research the details of its production method, considering the impacts on other animals, people and the planet through all stages of production, and share what they learn with the class.

Caring Consumer Card

When you are out making purchases, pull the card out and pause long enough to mindfully read the questions on the card. Many of the choices we make may seem to give us short term satisfaction or pleasure, but do not serve us in the long run or the big picture.

<p>Caring Consumer Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a Want or a Need? • How many do I already have? • How much will I use it? How long will it last? • Could I borrow it from a friend or family member? • Will having this add meaning to my life? • Is purchasing this item the best way to care for myself and the planet? • What is the true cost of this item to: My own health? Other species? The environment? Other cultures? • Is it made of recycled materials, and is it recyclable? 	<p>Caring Consumer Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a Want or a Need? • How many do I already have? • How much will I use it? How long will it last? • Could I borrow it from a friend or family member? • Will having this add meaning to my life? • Is purchasing this item the best way to care for myself and the planet? • What is the true cost of this item to: My own health? Other species? The environment? Other cultures? • Is it made of recycled materials, and is it recyclable?
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Activity by Sarah Dwight-Gilroy, Kathy Kandziolka and Stephanie Muzekari (M.Ed. Graduates)