

RESOURCE HANDBOOK FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION



THE CONSUMER COUNCIL OF NORWAY
THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY AFFAIRS

FOREWORD

In 1993 the Consumer Council of Norway and the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs initiated the project «Consumer Education in School». The project's goal is to strengthen consumer knowledge in primary as well as secondary schooling, and in teacher education.

The project has been concerned with curriculum development, in-service and graduate training and the development of learning materials, both electronic via the Public School Network and via published material.

As part of this process, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research, there has been made, amongst other things, a guidebook and a plan for in-service training in consumer education for primary school teachers.

This resource handbook is written by assistant professor Victoria W. Thoresen at the University College of Hedmark. The handbook is for teachers and student teachers in their work with consumer related topics in school.

The Consumer Council of Norway



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Number print: 2000 10/2002
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Lay-out: Z•Mette graphic design
Print: Lobo Media

ISBN 82-7166-147-7
QF 0459

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INTRODUCTION

Everyday life is the frame of reference that students know best. But modern everyday life is complex, challenging and constantly changing. Consumer education deals with attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for functioning in today's society. This resource handbook offers a selection of interdisciplinary, methodical examples of how different consumer topics can be integrated into the teaching process in primary and secondary school. The activities that are suggested tend to stimulate the student's participation in the learning process, develop their abilities to be critical, and help the student reflect over the consequences of their actions.

This handbook is a supplement to *Consumer Education Guide for compulsory school* which was published by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, the Norwegian Consumer Council and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in 1998. The contents are also suitable for use in connection with *Guidelines for in-service training in consumer education* published in 2000.

Some of the activities that are presented in this handbook, are mentioned under several of the different consumer topics. This is because the activities can be used for focusing upon central themes related to different topics. Other exercises are only described in relation to specific topics, but are easily modified and expanded for use with other topics. It is up to the teachers to take initiative.

The use of problem-based case-related exercises, role playing and modern and classical literature are important methods of learning about consumer education, but the handbook does not have room for suggestions related to these methods. The ideas suggested in this handbook, can be used in addition with the above mentioned methods. The same goes for the use of ICT (information and communication technology) in consumer education. Many useful consumer facts can be found on the internet, and activities that invite the students to explore available material on the internet, should be included in teaching. You can find some useful web sites in the back of this handbook.

The ideas for the suggestions in this booklet come from many different sources. Some have been adjusted and adapted, but sources that should be mentioned are: *Global teacher, Global learner* by Pike and Selby; *NatuligVis*, by Dag Hareide; *The Objectives and Contents of and the Working Methods in Consumer Education for Teacher Training* (Tema Nord 2000:576) by Kaija Karpijoki and articles and guidance from professor Heiko Steffens.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Consumer education encompasses attitudes, knowledge and skills connected to functioning in today's society. It is responsibility learning which contributes to the individual's ability to manage his own life as well as contributing to the management of the global society's collective life. Consumer education deals with development – individual, social, economic and ecological. Sustainable development springs from the understanding both children and adults have of their own consumption patterns.

The intentions of consumer education are to:

- create insight in consumption in the past and at present
- increase awareness about the influences people are exposed to in relation to lifestyles
- contribute to increased awareness of the consequences of our choices and actions
- reflect over the quality of life and the definitions of “need”
- acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to become independent, critical and aware consumers

Consumer education is an important part of teachers' set of values.

Social democratic principles of equity, equality and social justice have been essential values in Norway. The Norwegian constitution, the universal declaration of human rights and the Christian cultural traditions provide a fundament for the values teachers are required to teach in schools. Consumer education encompasses among other things, the right to be heard, the right to know, the right to choose and to health and security as well as the challenge of just distribution of resources. Consumer issues are a part of the present values debate and are a part of the process, which schools also participate in, to define the quality of life.

Consumer education is an essential aspect of becoming liberally educated.

Critical thinking, understanding processes, insight into consequences of choices and change management in general, are all necessary skills connected to consumer education. They are also essential aspects of liberal education. Other important elements are being service-minded and creative which are both to be found in general liberal education as well as in consumer education.

Consumer education is a relevant interdisciplinary subject area.

Daily life and the future of the world are not divided into subjects areas. But general education is characterized by strict subject division. The core curricula for schools and teacher training emphasize the importance of using the students real life experiences as points of departure for learning. Students meet consumer situations where connections form a whole and demand integrated reactions and are thus relevant themes to deal with cross curricularly and interdisciplinarily.

Consumer education is a clear expression of global solidarity.

There are definite connections between our lifestyles and other's survival. The relation between poverty and the just distribution of the world's resources are central themes in consumer education. Cooperation for the community's sake, efforts to attain unity as to where the global society is headed and how humanity will get there, are unavoidable points of reflection for consumer education. Sustainable development based upon ethical, conscience consumption is the goal of consumer education.



CARRYING OUT CONSUMER EDUCATION

Learning is a cumulative process. The acquisition of attitudes, skills or knowledge occurs by building upon what one has previously understood. Even though educational theories describe the learning process in different ways, there is general consensus that learning takes place step by step and to a great extent is dependent upon the goals and capacities of students and teachers. In the event that the goal for learning is to develop critical, independent and informed consumers, it can be useful to look closer at the steps in the learning process which are characteristic for consumer education.

Reflect on one's own experiences

Students should practice looking at their own experiences and comparing them to relevant consumer issues, such as:

- How do my experiences create a certain lifestyle?
- Does my consumption cover my basic needs?
- What symbolic value does my consumption have?
- What consequences does my consumption have for nature and for other people?

Identify specific ways of posing a problem

When consumption was looked at as an exclusively economic issue, central questions were usually: Is the product too expensive? Is it too cheap? Is the quality acceptable? During the last couple of years people have realized that consumption is related to several different aspects of life, and thus ways of approaching the problem have expanded. A few examples of relevant ways of posing questions that students should learn to identify are:

- How does advertising influence me as a consumer?
- Is the product hazardous to our health or safety?
- Has anyone been exposed to any unfair treatment in the making of the product?
- Does the product change the quality of my life?
- Does my consumption create any unnecessary waste?

Acquire an understanding of systems

Everyday life in the postmodern society is complex. The competence required to deal with it, demands knowledge of numerous scientific subjects. To develop insight into the dynamics of the consumer society, the following is essential:

- Knowledge of economic principles and processes.
- Knowledge of psychological and sociological relations having to do with the forming of identity, personality development, morals and ethics.

- Knowledge of ecology and environment politics.
- Knowledge of laws and agreements made to protect the consumer, of consumer organizations, public councils and committees.

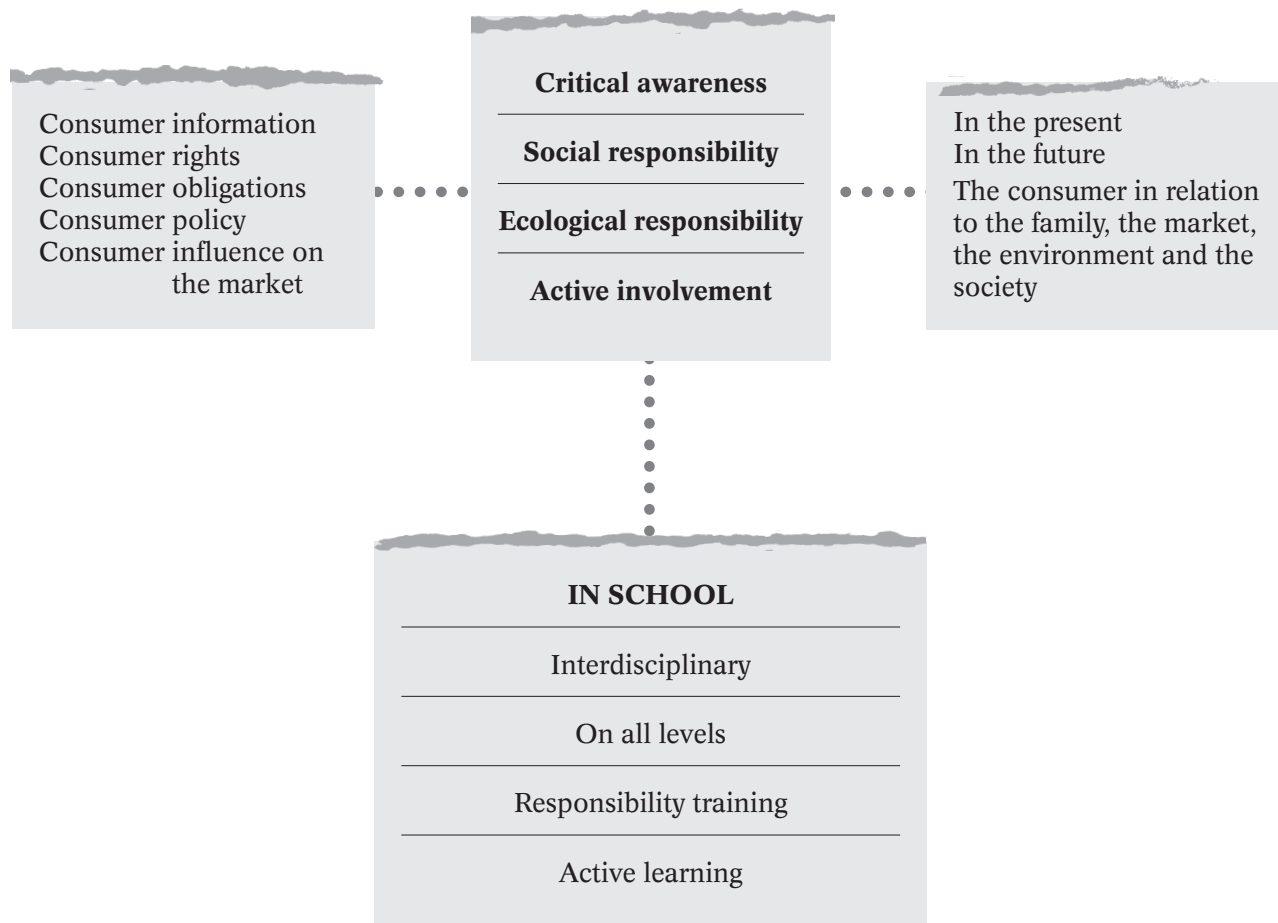
Map alternative solutions

Few consumer-related problems have only one “correct” answer. The students should have the opportunity to find different solutions, consider pros and cons, state the reasons both orally and in written form, and try out solutions as much as possible. If opportunities for realistic testing of solutions are limited, one might try acting them out.

Relevant questions for this part of the learning process are:

- What can I do?
- Is the solution a short term or long term one?
- What consequence does this particular solution have for me, for the environment and for other people?
- Why should I choose this solution instead of the other?
- Are changes apparent after having tried this solution?
- Has it led to any change in my own behavior?

FORBRUKERUNDERVISNING



CONSUMER EDUCATION AND THE (NORWEGIAN) CORE CURRICULUM

The main intention of consumer education is to better understand how we, as consumers, relate to and deal with consumption. Certain specific knowledge and skills enable the consumer to be critical and independent. Consumption patterns have changed with the times. Teaching consumer education has also gone through different phases emphasizing different aspects of being a consumer.

The present Norwegian core curriculum, L-97, points out, as did its predecessor M-87, the importance of «completeness and inter-relatedness» in all teaching.

“Goods assembled together in ownership make physical, visible statements about the hierarchy of values to which their chooser subscribes. Goods can be cherished or judged inappropriate, discarded and replaced. Unless we appreciate how they are used to constitute an intelligible universe, we will never know how to resolve the contradictions of our economic life”

Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood (1978:5)

Consumer education is not a specific subject, but has been included as a topic within many different subjects in primary and secondary school, and can be taken up interdisciplinarily in connection with topics such as: «contemporary society « and «individual and cooperation». Both these areas can contain elements from consumer education. Consumer education is about everyday life, about individuals and society. It is per definition training in daily life competence.

Social studies, language, art and handicrafts, mathematics, physical education, and religious education all have main topics that deal with consumer education issues. However, home economics is still the subject where consumer education is most visible. Home economics has traditionally concerned itself with teaching students practical, everyday activities like cooking, cleaning etc. In the modern technological society, our daily activities are, much more than before, influenced by knowledge and skills that go beyond the limits of home economics. Sociological insight into an international resource management and the eradication of poverty makes a difference when you are planning

dinner, going grocery shopping, or taking out the garbage. Economic considerations demand mathematical knowledge when buying different products, ordering via the internet, or going to the movies. Linguistic and artistic knowledge contribute to being able to interpret advertising and other media transmitted messages which one constantly meets.

The core curriculum recommends that organizing of content in an interdisciplinary manner should occur in all teaching. As much as 60 percent of the teaching in the lower levels can be presented as interdisciplinary topics. About 30 percent of the time in the middle levels can be used for interdisciplinary topics and projects, and 20 percent in the upper levels of basic compulsory schooling.

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, and The Ministry of Education and Research have published a «Guidebook to consumer education in primary and secondary school» which has been sent to all schools. An in-service training plan for teachers has also been approved and distributed. In the introductions of this resource handbook's chapters about personal economy, consumer's rights and duties, commercial influence, consumption and the environment, health and nutrition and the safety of the products one will find questions from the goals mentioned in core curriculum and the above-mentioned guidelines and plans.



LIFE QUALITY AND LIFE STYLE

Today's spending is no longer as much about getting the products and services you need as it is about acquiring the «good life».

Some researchers claim that people often show by their consumer patterns «who they are» and «where they belong». It is also said that personality and character are expressed through the choices one makes in the material world. Others claim that the degree of contentment one achieves, can be measured by the number of personal belongings or economic possibilities one has.

If these assumptions are correct, man's attitude towards the material world has changed from considering material goods as a way of visualizing human skills and spiritual values, to considering material goods as the motivation for and the goal of our life. The paradigm change which these altered attitudes represent, challenges our traditional interpretation of the individual and the society. It is therefore important that students reflect upon the purpose of their lives and their choice of life style.

Values form the foundation for our attitudes towards life and our choice of life style, whether they are political values, social values or personal values. To be able to understand the connections between the intentions of life, life style and life quality, it is important to have basic knowledge about values and changes in society and to be conscience of the expectations the people have towards each other.

«Education is supposed to advance versatile development of skills, in particular the ability to act morally, to be creative and to work together and in harmony with nature... The choices that are made, should be based upon knowledge of consequences and interrelatedness, but also be guided by value judgments.» (Norwegian core curriculum p. 50 unofficial translation)

Students should have the opportunity to participate in activities that will help them:

- Recognize which values form the basis of their own and other's behavior
- Identify different life styles
- Realize the consequences that different life styles have on the environment and towards other people's possibilities to survive and develop
- Be able to express what makes them happy and content.

Below are some examples of activities that can stimulate a discussion about choices of lifestyle.

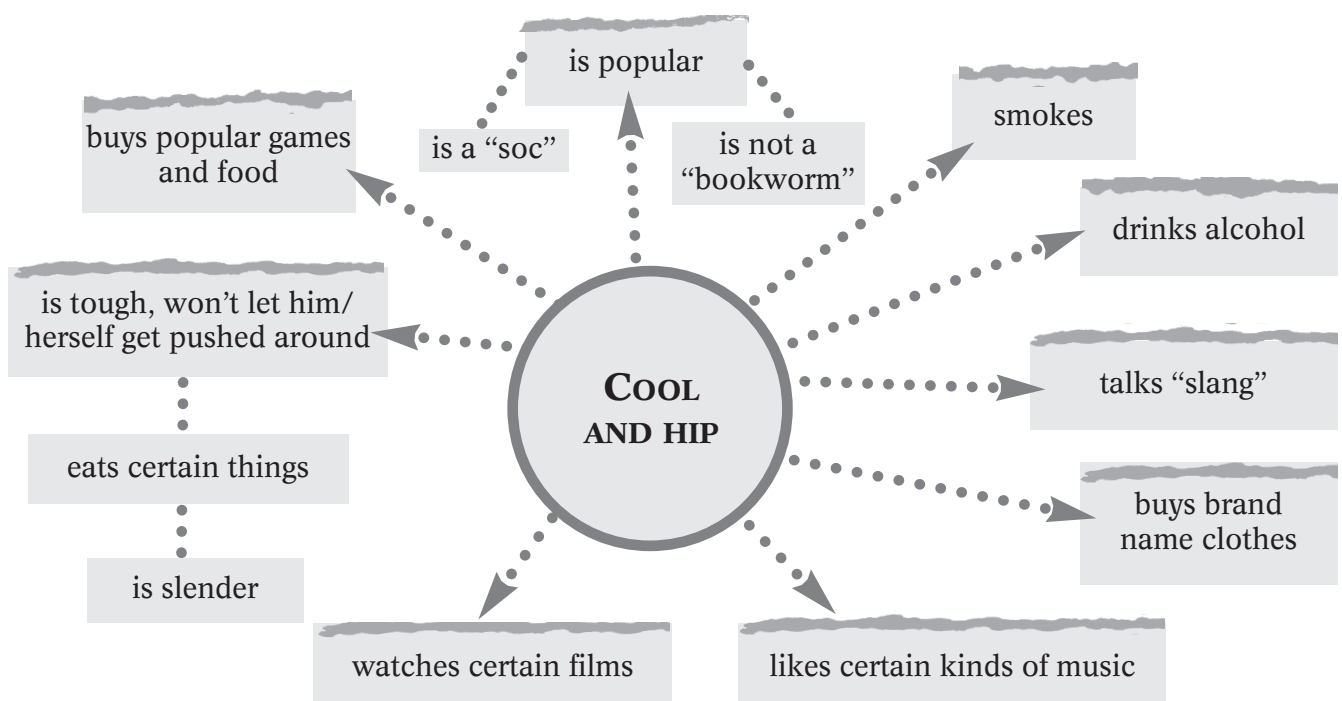
1. MIND MAPS

The student's interest and motivation increases when they are able to participate in the planning, carrying out and evaluating of teaching. Mind maps are one way for the teacher to map the student's knowledge about a specific topic, visualize the connections between different elements of the subject which are being covered, and, at the same time, give the student the possibility to participate actively in the process.

Mind maps are known by many names: association maps, brainstorming and connection survey. England is one of the places where many teachers use mind maps both at the beginning of a teaching session and in the end in order to chart how much the students know and what they have learned. Instead of thinking in a linear manner, from one main point and on to several smaller elements, mind maps allow you to present things connected with the main theme, but do not tie you down by having to organize the elements into a hierarchical order right away. Sorting contents by meaning, demands that the one thinking has to go through several phases at the same time. This can be hard for children as well as adults. When you make a mind map, you note down every idea that is suggested, which in some way is linked to the topic, and then you organize the contents. The two steps that are used in making a mind map can be exemplified in the following manner:

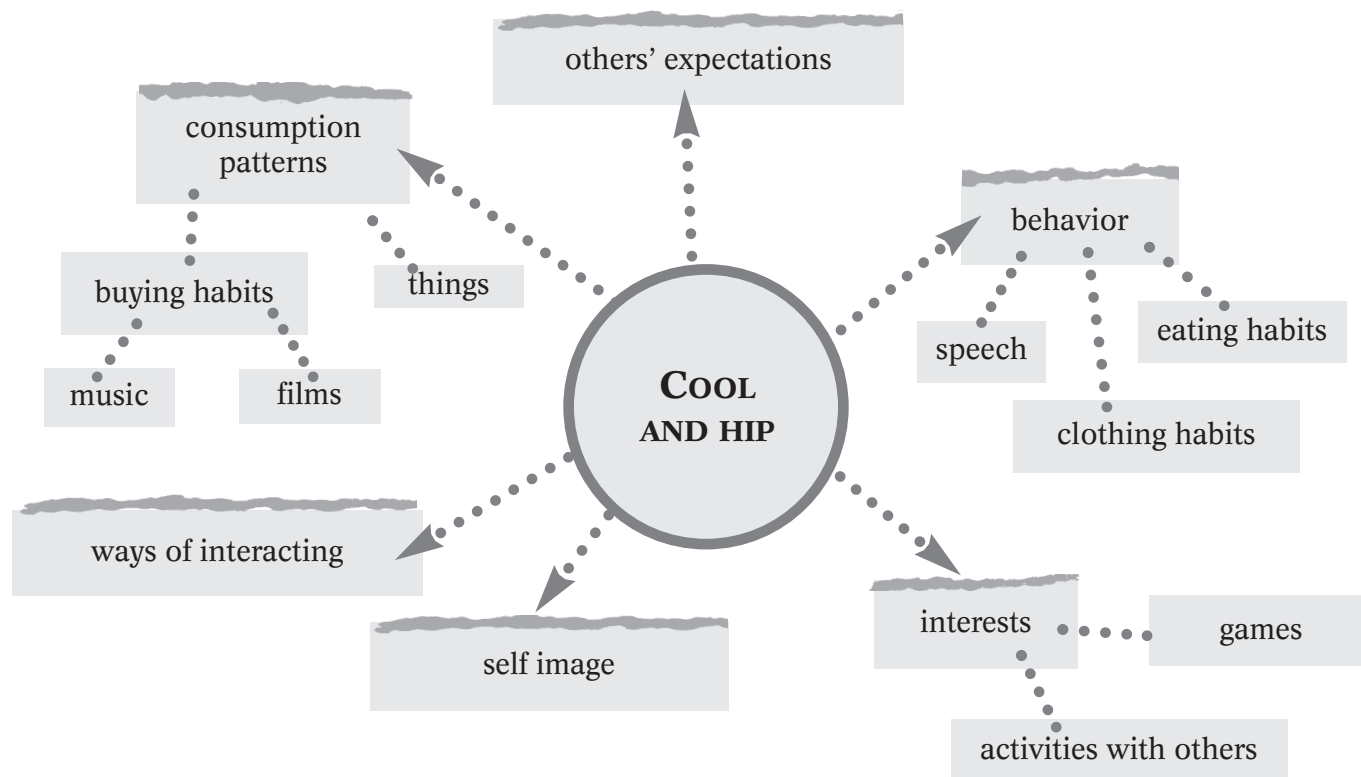
The main topic can be «*to be cool and hip*»

This is written in the middle of a sheet of paper and the students are asked to make associations to the words. The suggestions are written down as they have been suggested, in relation to what made the connection. .



Further processing occurs by the teachers and students trying to find collective categories that can describe natural connections between the elements that have been suggested. The work with step two contributes to expanding the students awareness of the concrete objects' social importance. As mentioned earlier, insight into the objects' sociological and psychological symbolic value is important to being a critical, independent consumer.

A further processed mind map about «*being cool and hip*» can look like this:



2. PROJECTS

Working with different projects is a didactic method which lower and upper secondary schools and teachers' colleges are supposed to use. This is in order to give the students practice in independent thinking and to develop scientific working methods and creativity. Project work is a method in which the students chose a specific issue or a current subject which they then define and work with. They proceed from an idea to a finished product, a concrete result or a practical solution. Even though the product is important, the intention of project learning is to focus on the process that the student goes through. Projects give opportunities for experiences and knowledge to be processed and eventually presented to others. Planning, carrying out and evaluating is the student's main responsibility, but is to be done in close cooperation with the teacher. In most cases, the project is defined as structured teamwork, but individual projects are both possible, and in certain situations recommended. Working with projects is a way of learning which can be adjusted to the student's individual knowledge and stage of development. In the

lower classes the requirement for documentation from the learning process is reduced, but not removed.

On the next page you will find suggestions for frames of different projects attached to consumer education. These are fit for being used the way they are on the lower and upper secondary levels. If they are to be used on the primary levels, the teacher has to change the headlines with symbols, and explain the individual categories orally and in a simplified manner.

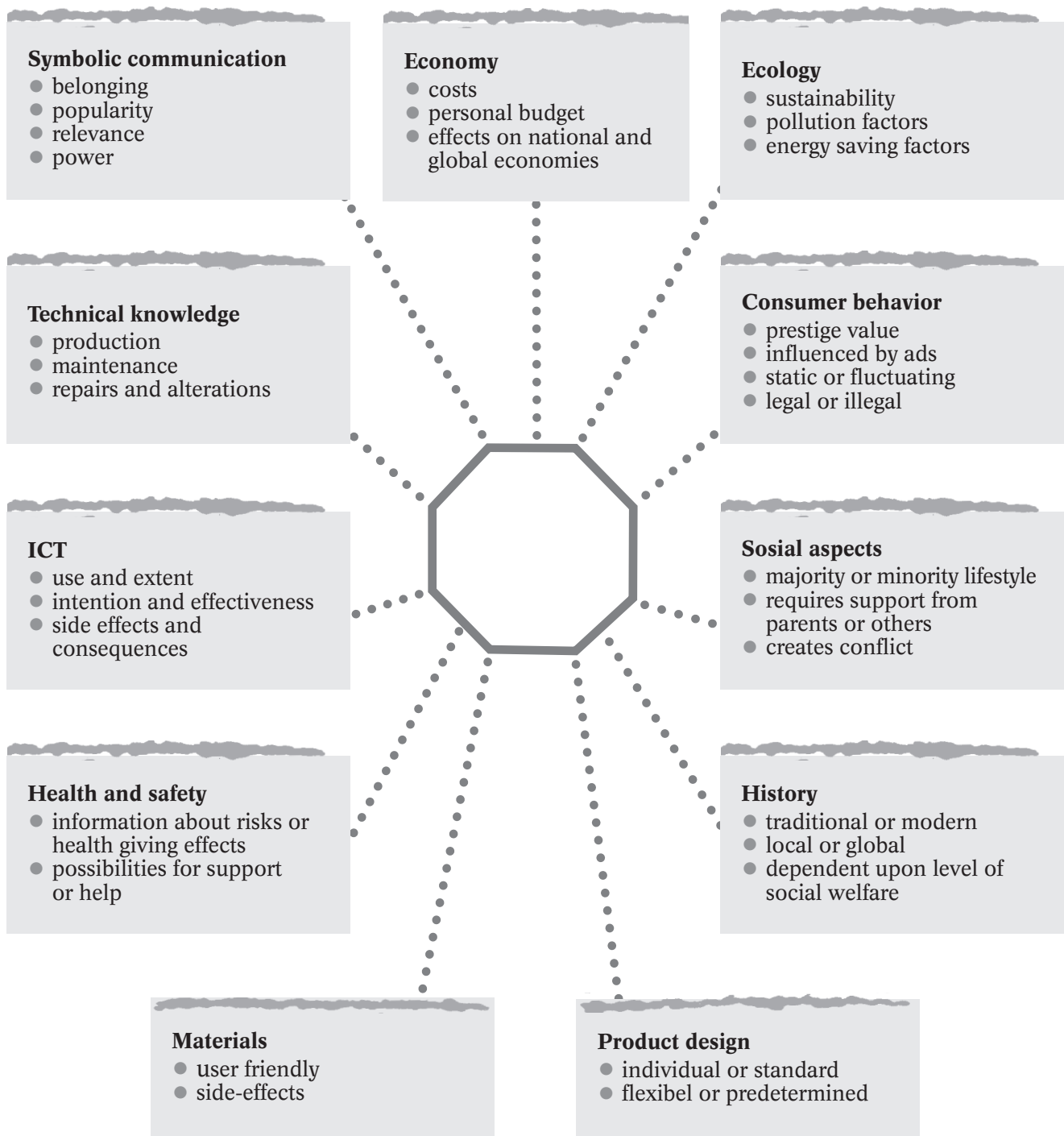


PROSJEKTARBEID

Lifestyle:

Learning goals in the work groups:

- To reach a mutual understanding of the assignment
- Decide upon appropriate working schedule
- Reach an agreement as to the value of one or several lifestyles
- Find and evaluate information about the lifestyles in question
- Make collective decisions about why a group of people prefer a specific lifestyle



3. TAKE A STAND

Gather the students in the middle of the room, where the teacher is as well. Explain that those that agree with what the teacher says, are to move to the right, and those who disagree to the left. If you only partly agree or disagree, you move along an axis, the middle of which is the outer points either to the right or the left. In this manner the students use their bodies to tell where they place themselves according to different questions. The teacher asks after everyone has chosen where to stand, why they choose that position. The students are allowed to move if they change their own minds after having listened to different opinions. Examples of different relevant assertions are:

- Children and youth are too preoccupied with clothing, fashions and brands.
- It is possible to be happy even though one is poor and has few material goods
- It is possible to buy security
- Humans are fundamentally self-centered and egotistical
- To have is more important than to be.
- Other peoples' well-being is dependent on my sacrificing something
- Consumers are responsible for letting the producers know what kind of products they wish to buy

4. SPECIAL NUMBERS

A paper with numbers like the example below shows, is given to each student.

| | | | |
|----|----|----|-----|
| | 3 | 12 | 4 |
| 11 | 20 | 2 | 100 |
| 1 | 14 | 5 | 8 |
| 10 | 7 | 0 | |

Examples of relevant questions:

Find the number that corresponds to:

- the street number of your house
- the number of televisions in your home
- approximately the number of shoes you own
- approximately the number of videos you have watched the last week
- the number of times you have complained about purchases which did not reach the standard you expected
- the number of times you have had accidents in your house (big or small)
- the number of times you have bought things over the internet.

Each student walks around the room amongst the other students, trying to find someone who can answer one or several of the questions above, with a number marked on the piece of paper. When he or she finds a person who can answer using one of the numbers, a cross is put over the number, and the student moves on until he/she finds others with a connection to the numbers etc. New numbers can be added (answers) in the two blank squares on the paper, if that is needed. The winner is the first one to cover all his numbers or the numbers on a line, as in bingo.

5. TRUTHS?

A «truth» is written on cards (one word on each card). The cards are handed out, and the students are told to link the words together to form a statement that makes sense. The exercise is not complete until all the cards have been made into a statement. There are several ways of acting out this game.

- 1) One «truth» is written in so many copies that everyone can participate.
- 2) Several «truths» are written and handed out at the same time, so that the students have to sort out the texts themselves into several statements.
- 3) The students are divided into equal sized groups. They are handed blank cards (the number of cards match the number of participants), and they make their own, consumer related «truths» that they write down on the cards. The cards are then mixed, and handed out to another group that try to solve the task.

If the activity is used on the primary levels, the words «start» and «finish» can be written on the backs of the cards that start and finish the «truths».

Examples of consumer related «truths» can be:

YOUTH TODAY WANT TO COPY THE LIFESTYLE

OF POPULAR POP-ARTISTS AND MOVIE-STARS

GREATER WELL-BEING HAS NOT CONTRIBUTED

TO MORE PEOPLE FEELING HAPPY

6. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The questions suggested here, can be asked to different groups of students, or to individual students. After they have found as many answers as possible, they sort the answers into prioritized sequence according to their own impressions of what are the most frequent answers their classmates would give.

How many leisure activities can you suggest that cost little or no money?

Examples of different answers that children have suggested:

- to go for a walk in town
- to go for a walk in the woods
- to visit art galleries or exhibits
- to play cards, games with family or friends
- to paint, draw, sew, build, bake or write
- to go fishing
- to work-out, sports
- read
- dance
- jump rope

7. ASSERTIONS

Below you will find some examples of different assertions and facts about consumption that can be used to start a discussion among the students. Let the students explain the assertions first.

- 1 Consumption is a sickness.
- 2 Consumption is the new religion.
- 3 You are what you have.
- 4 Some forms of consumption are unnecessary.
- 5 Anything can be accomplished with willpower.
- 6 There can never be enough entertainment and sex.
- 7 There is no problem (either big nor small) that we can't pay our way out of.
- 8 Whoever has little is always concerned with the price of things.
- 9 Consumption is what decides if you live the good life.
- 10 Material wealth is not satisfactory.

PERSONAL FINANCES



Personal finances

is about the knowledge and skills which enable the students to be responsible for their own and their family's economy, and to understand the relationship between private economy and the society's economy.

The teaching should contribute to developing the student's ability to:

- be aware of the importance of planning their own finances
- be able to plan their own budget, and keep track of their accounts
- be able to take responsibility for their own finances and play a part in their family's planning according to income and expenses
- understand the connection between the loaner and the lender
- know about the relationship between the society's economy and different housekeeping economies
- know how to find relevant advice and help with ones own finances
- be able to compare prices and evaluate price and quality
- be able to handle modern technology like computer-based information systems, banking and library services, etc.

Suggestions for activities that can be used in relation to personal finances:

1. CONSUMER BINGO

Bingo is a popular board game which is suited for sharing knowledge. The games can be made according to the age of the players. The starting-point is x number of boards with 25 squares with different words and phrases written on them. (Remember that the middle square is blank and that each board should have the words on it arranged in varying order, and not two boards should have exactly the same words on them). Each word or phrase on the boards has a definition which is written on the individual cards which the caller chooses from. The players cover the word on their board which matches the definition the caller calls out, with a small piece of paper. The winner is the first one to form a line across his board of covering pieces of paper.

The following words/phrases are good examples of terms that may be used in consumer bingo related to personal finances:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1 budget | 12 insurance | 24 loans |
| 2 methods of financing, | 13 bonds | 25 deposits |
| 3 methods of payment | 14 shares | 26 security |
| 4 regress | 15 downpayment | 27 mortgage |
| 5 tax | 16 guarantee | 28 pawning, etc. |
| 6 law of purchase | 17 interests | |
| 7 advertising law | 18 mass media | |
| 8 law for returning merchandise | 19 trend setters | |
| 9 credit laws | 20 marketing costs | |
| 10 laws dealing with debts | 21 value | |
| 11 exchange rates | 22 hidden advertisements | |
| | 23 savings | |

2. TRUTHS?

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of consumer related «truths» that can be used:



3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Students can be asked the questions suggested here, either in groups or one by one. When they have found as many answers as possible, they put the answers into prioritized sequence in relation to their own impressions of what are the most frequent answers.

«Why should I bother making a budget for my money?»

Examples of answers that some children have suggested are:

- to know where the money goes
- to have money so that I can buy the things that I want
- to be able to plan the things that I want to do
- to avoid having to borrow from friends
- to avoid being embarrassed over having too little money
- to have fewer arguments concerning money
- to have better control over my own life
- to avoid future problems with debts
- to contradict impulsive buying
- to be able to save more money

4. PURCHASING JOURNAL

Often children and teenagers use money without reflecting over why they use it. Journals are an easy way of helping children realize why they buy the things they do. Here are two different ways of keeping a journal.

| WHERE DOES MY MONEY GO? | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Write down everything you have bought the last week | | | |
| Monday | What did I buy? | How much did it cost? | Why did I buy it? |
| Tuesday | What did I buy? | How much did it cost? | Why did I buy it? |
| Etc... | | | |

WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT IT?

| Decision related to money: | How do I do it? | Good results: | Bad results: | Consequences: |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ex: Borrow NOK 100 for a birthday present | I have to borrow from my family | My friend will be happy | I have to pay back the money that I have borrowed, leaving less money for other things | The consequence is that I buy a card and a small gift, instead of a gift that costs NOK 100 |

5. ASSERTIONS

Below you will find some examples of different statements and facts about consumption that can be used to motivate a discussion amongst the students. Each statement has to be explained.

- 1 Shops should be kept open for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- 2 Life is work, and we work to earn money. Money is for buying things.
- 3 The spending party is over.
- 4 Consumer behavior is an individual responsibility.
- 5 Buying at sales, is always the best way of buying cheap things.
- 6 Smoking is expensive.
- 7 Money always shows up from somewhere.
- 8 It is more expensive to get things repaired, than to buy new things.
- 9 Starting a swapping circle among friends, is an easy way to save money.
- 10 In Norway every citizen uses approximately 50 kg writing and printing paper (exclusive of newspapers)

6. THE POSSIBILITIES – DILEMMA

The students are divided into groups. Each group has a name:

- 1 Mr. Blue
- 2 Mrs. Red
- 3 Ms. Green
- 4 Bachelor Brown

The group try to find out what the person whose name the group was given, is most likely to buy with 500 NOK. The groups have to explain their choices. (If they do not know the price of something, they can check after school hours and the activity can be divided into two parts, and be finished the following day).

Eventually the groups come together and tell each other what results they found, and why Mr. Blue, Mrs. Red, Ms. Green and Bachelor Brown chose to use the money the way they did. Let the class discuss the different answers. Does everyone agree on how the money was to be used? Has anyone got any different suggestions?

CONSUMER RIGHTS AND DUTIES

The consumers rights and duties

The students should acquire knowledge of their consumer rights and become conscious of their duties as consumers.

The teaching should contribute to developing the student's ability to:

- know consumer laws and seek information about consumers rights, duties and opportunities for complaint
- know about how international trade affects our rights and duties as consumers
- understand basic rules in relation to agreements and contracts
- know about the rules concerning financing and payment possibilities for households
- know about rules concerning product labeling

Suggestions for activities that can be used in relation with consumer rights and duties:

1. «YOU'RE RIGHT!» A GAME ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS

Students are divided into groups of five. The teacher presents the term «rights» and mentions a few examples that the students might have suggested (like «my right to play» or «my right to watch tv») Then the teacher asks the students to have a brainstorming about what rights they feel children should have. The suggestions are written down and sorted into categories. Each group tries to find a way to summarize the suggestions attached to each category, so that they find descriptive titles for the categories.

Afterwards the teacher presents the UN's convention about children's rights. The groups are encouraged to make additional conventions containing ten more rights each (one convention per group). To do this, they should refer to the titles of the collective categories that they made. Some of these categories might be changed, others excluded in their new list of rights. When this has been done, the groups present their additional suggestions about children's rights and compare the results.

The work is continued in two ways:

- 1 The teacher introduces different consumer rights and asks the students to what extent these have been covered by the groups suggestions (for example the right to a clean environment with a diversity of animals and plants).
- 2 The teacher tries to focus the students' attention away from their own origin as members of a wealthy society, to that of being a member of the global society which does not provide equal opportunities for everyone. Do the suggested rights change then?

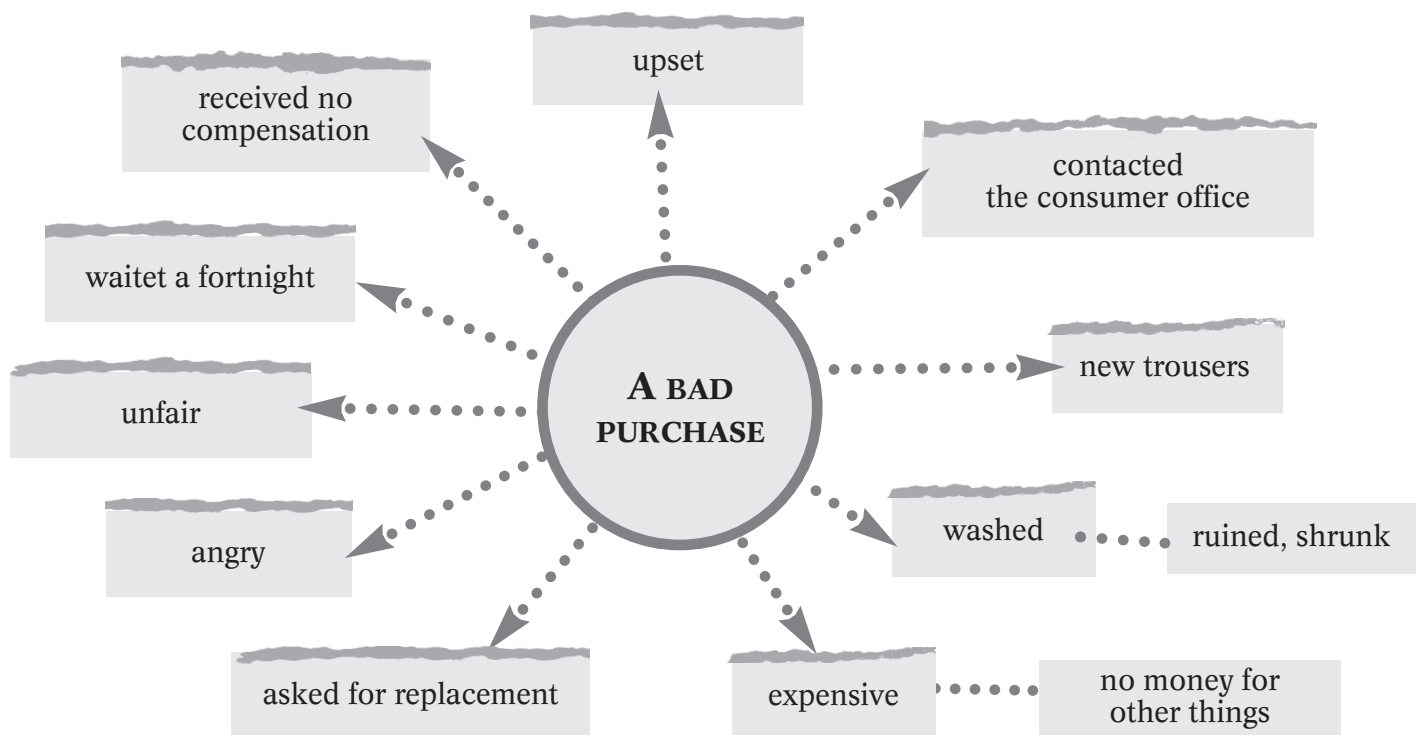
2. MIND MAPS

When making a mind map, you note down every thought or idea that occur in relation to the topic in some way or another, and then, in step two, you organize the contents. The two steps used to create a mind map, can be exemplified in the following manner:

The main topic can be «A failed bargain».

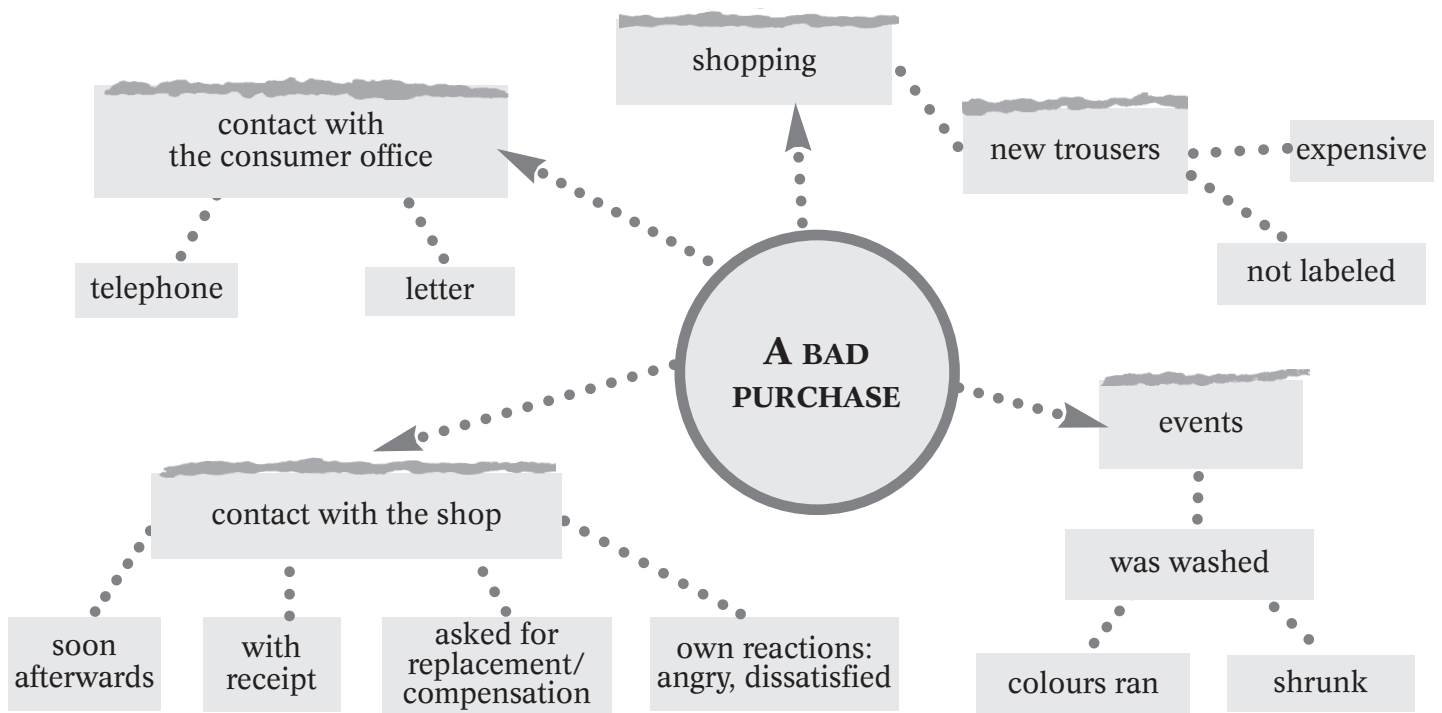
This is written in the middle of a sheet of paper and the students are asked to associate.

These are written down on the paper as they are mentioned, in relation to what made the association.



The processing happens when the students and the teachers try to reach superior categories which can describe the connections between the elements suggested. The work with step two contributes to expanding the students consciousness about the direct sociological meaning of different things. As mentioned earlier, insight into the sociological and psychological symbolic meaning of things is essential to be able to have a critical view, and to be an independent consumer.

Et bearbejdet assosiasjonskart over “En mislykket handel” kan se slik ut:



3. TAKE A STAND

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

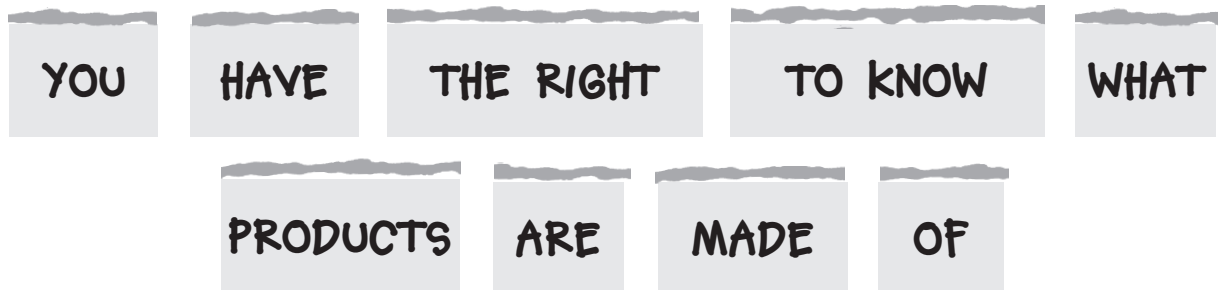
Examples of relevant assertions:

- Owning things and earning money is a human right.
- Telephone sales should be prohibited.
- Children under the age of 13 should be allowed credit cards.
- Internet purchases do not need international rules.
- Products made by workers who do not have suitable working circumstances, should not be sold in our country.
- All products should be marked as to how environmentally friendly they are.
- Credit in stores should be valid for more than three years.
- It should not be necessary to require a receipt when returning a previously bought product.

4. TRUTHS?

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of consumer related “truths” which can be used:



5. ASSERTIONS

Below you will find a few examples of statements and facts about consumption that can be used to start a discussion with the students. All the assertions have to be explained and discussed.

- 1 You can always trust the validity date on groceries.
- 2 Any consumer has the right to refuse getting advertisements in the mailbox.
- 3 You are allowed to cancel a purchase, if you deal with Norwegian internet shops.
- 4 You commit yourself for at least a year if you make an automatic payment contract with a bank.
- 5 Bonus cards are mainly used by companies to map which products consumers are willing to buy.
- 6 The producers place the responsibility for possible damage of clothes and textiles on the dry cleaners by indicating that dry cleaning is necessary.
- 7 There are no hidden expenses linked to internet trading.
- 8 The law of purchase gives you the right to return any product which does not have any faults.

6. CONSUMER «MEMORY»

Two sets of cards are needed. One marked with red, the other with green. On the red cards, which are alike on the back, write down faults or defects that may occur with products or services. On the green cards you note down what rights the consumer has. All the cards are placed with the text side turned down against the table. The first player turns two cards (one red and one green) and considers whether or not the fault matches the right. If they do match, the player takes the two cards, and draws two new cards. If the cards don't match, the cards are turned back, and it is the next player's turn. When all the «fault» cards have been used, the game is over.

Suggested cards:

Fault cards:

- the product has no fault, you just decided that you do not like it any longer.
- a fault that decreases the sales value
- an essential lack, causing a disparity between what you got and what you had expected.
- a deficiency that causes the consumer economic damage
- a deficiency that causes the consumer physical damage
- the product does not meet the safety requirements
- the product can not be used for the purpose it was intended
- after repeatedly being used, minor faults appear

Right cards

- you have the right to a reduction in the price
- you have a right to cancel the sale
- you have the right to get a replacement
- you have the right to exchange the product with a similar one, without the deficiency
- you have the right to a credit in the same store
- you have no right to get your money back

7. CLOTHES AND TEXTILES

Textiles are important to everyone. Today there are many textiles with different qualities. The purchase law offers the consumer rights when buying clothes and textiles, but the consumer has to know about the different fibers, their usage, and how to treat the garments.

A GAME OF CARDS

This game is based on a deck of cards, made by the teacher. The first deck of cards contains three sets: plant-materials, animal-fibers, and man made-fibers. One card is a card describing recycled and reused fibers. In the other three sets the following are to be found:

plantfibers: cotton, linen, jute, rami, manillasisal, henequen, maguey kapok, coconut

Animalfibers: silk, wool, goat(kasjgora and kasjmir), rabbit (angora), camel (vikunja, lama, alpakka, guanaco), cattle (yak).

Manmade fibers: viscose, lyocell, modal, cupro, acetat, etc.

The cards are mixed and dealt out. One card is picked from the hand of the neighbor, and another one is passed on to the next player.

Each time a player receives three cards of the same set, these can be put down on the table. The person left with the one card representing reused and recycled materials, wins.

SYMBOLIC GAMES

The teacher makes small cards with pictures and symbols marking maintenance of textiles. The teacher also makes a sheet of paper with the correct answers and explanations. One of the students is a judge, and the others make up two teams. One from the first team draws a card and tries to describe the symbol. If the answer is correct, the team receives one point and can draw once more. If the answer is wrong, the other team gets to draw a card.



7 COMMERCIAL PERSUASION

Commercial influence:

The students should have knowledge of the purpose of advertisements and be able to translate, analyze and critically view advertising and other commercial messages.

Teaching should contribute to developing the students' ability to:

- know about the mass media's role in the society
- learn to identify advertising and understand the difference between information and commercials
- have knowledge of laws and rules regulating commercials
- be able to analyze, interpret and critically study the contents, message and language used in commercial pictures
- have knowledge of the use of electronic medias such as tv, vcr, computers, modems, cd-rom and other significant technology used to spread information and entertainment
- be able to use electronic information sources in a critical and reflected manner
- understand how the media creates different lifestyles that are reflected in, for example, gender roles and body ideals

1. TAKE A STAND

(See the information about the method in chapter 4.)

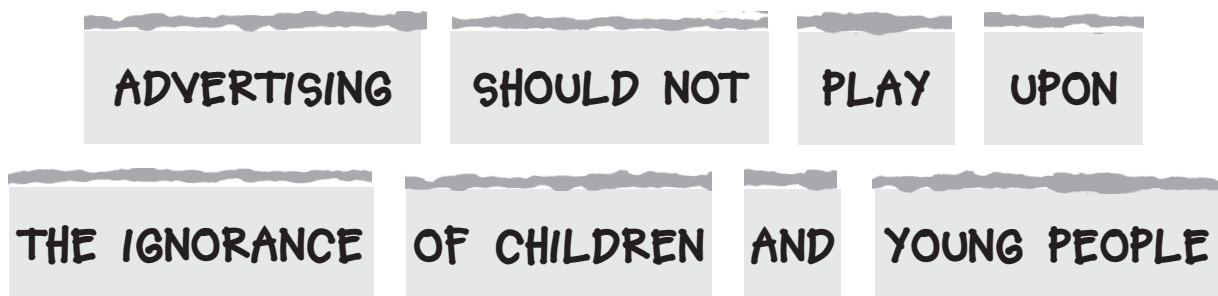
Examples of relevant assertions:

- School should be a commercial free zone
- To sell most products, one has to use sex as a frame of reference in the advertisement
- Small children are important targets in advertising
- It is a good thing that some countries does not allow advertising for drinks containing alcohol
- Products have to live up to the standards promised in the advertisements
- It should not be allowed to put up advertising billboards everywhere
- Advertisements often exaggerate or contain doubtful statements

2. TRUTHS?

(See the information about the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of consumer related «truths» that can be used:



3. ASSERTIONS

Below are some examples of statements and facts about consumption which can be used to start a discussion amongst the students. The statements should be explained and discussed.

- 1 Advertising is pressure to make you buy things.
- 2 The consumer doesn't have the common sense to resist commercial influence.
- 3 Consumption is unconscious behavior guided by relations beyond the individual's control.
- 4 Children want to eat at McDonalds because of the toys and gifts they get there.
- 5 Television and computers can rightfully be called «plug in drugs».
- 6 Children are never frightened by watching violence on tv.
- 7 A television is a reliable babysitter.
- 8 Students fall asleep during lessons because they watch tv and video's late at night.
- 9 Advertisements tell children and youth how to behave in order to be popular.
- 10 Violent movies and advertisements create violent children.

4. PROPAGANDA

The students are divided into groups, and each group is handed a card with one of the following propaganda techniques on it:

- Blinding generalization: exaggerated assertions about the product in vague or un-specific contexts.
- Testimony: individual statements concerning personal experience with the product.
- Mixed approach: the product is presented by using, amongst others, the following methods: generalizations, facts, comparisons, lifestyle associations.

With the help of the propaganda techniques that the groups are given, the students try to convince the rest of the class to:

- 1 watch a film
- 2 eat a different type of food
- 3 travel to Kilimanjaro with their family

The groups work together at first, and if they need to gather more information about the activity, they can proceed the following day. When the group agrees to how they are going to convince the rest of the class, all the groups come together and try out their methods.

5. PROJECT WORK

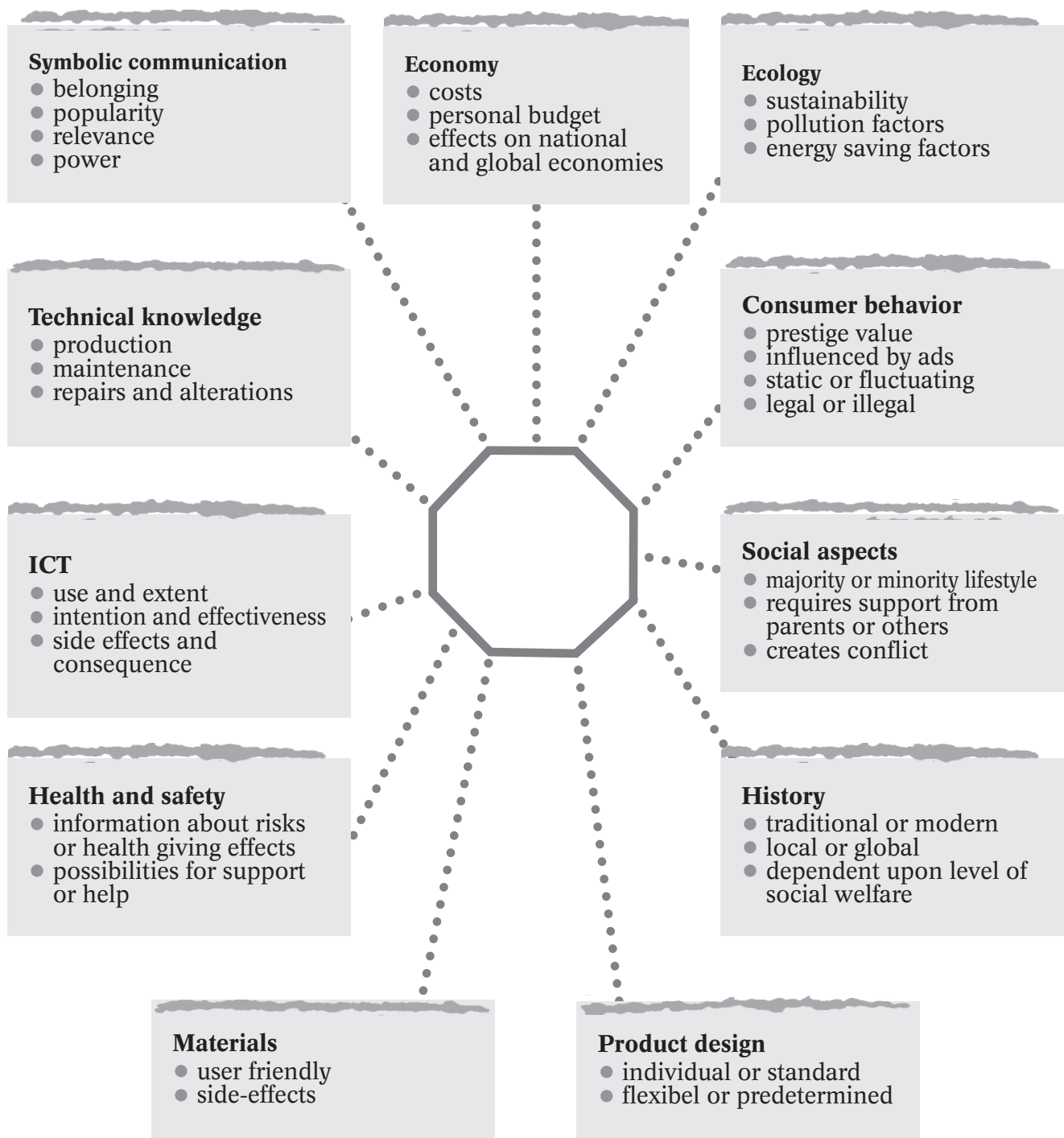
Project work is explained in chapter 4.

On the following page you will find some examples of frameworks for project activities related to commercial influence.

PROJECT WORK

Commercial influence

- Learning achievements for the project group:
- to reach a common understanding of the exercise
- to decide on a suitable work plan
- to reach an agreement on the effects of commercial influence
- to gather and evaluate information about different forms of advertising
- to make mutual decisions about why the group feels that some methods of advertising are to be preferred rather than others



6. CONSUMER BINGO

See the explanation chapter 4.

The following words/expressions are well suited for consumer bingo about commercial influence:

- 1** psychic numbing
- 2** body language
- 3** sponsoring
- 4** attitude campaigns
- 5** prestige advertising
- 6** non-verbal communication
- 7** section of a picture
- 8** perspective
- 9** connotations
- 10** denotations
- 11** symbolic values
- 12** commercial expenses
- 13** main message
- 14** hidden messages
- 15** false flags
- 16** classic commercial
- 17** advertising without using direct advertisements
- 18** polarization
- 19** exclusions
- 20** exaggerations
- 21** doubtful assertions
- 22** idol influences
- 23** role models
- 24** learning from role models
- 25** motivation
- 26** «teaser»-commercials
- 27** «teaser»-films

CONSUMPTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Consumption and the environment

This topic is about being aware of the effect one's consumption has on the environment. The students should be able to critically judge different life styles and consumer patterns from an environmental perspective, and develop an environmentally conscious behavior pattern in relation to consumption

The teaching should contribute to developing the students' ability to:

- understand how our consumption affects the environment
- be aware of environmentally friendly production and why it is called that
- be conscious of the humans responsibilities as a consumer who is also a part of nature
- know what different environmental labels mean, and learn how to use them
- choosing a complex meal which takes into consideration both health and environment factors
- sort garbage
- be aware of how to act in order to reduce the wasting of resources
- reflect upon resource usage and distribution
- know about hazards which industry, farming, transportation and housekeeping cause the environment

Suggestions of different activities which may be used in relation to the topic «consumption and the environment»

1. TAKE A STAND

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of relevant assertions.

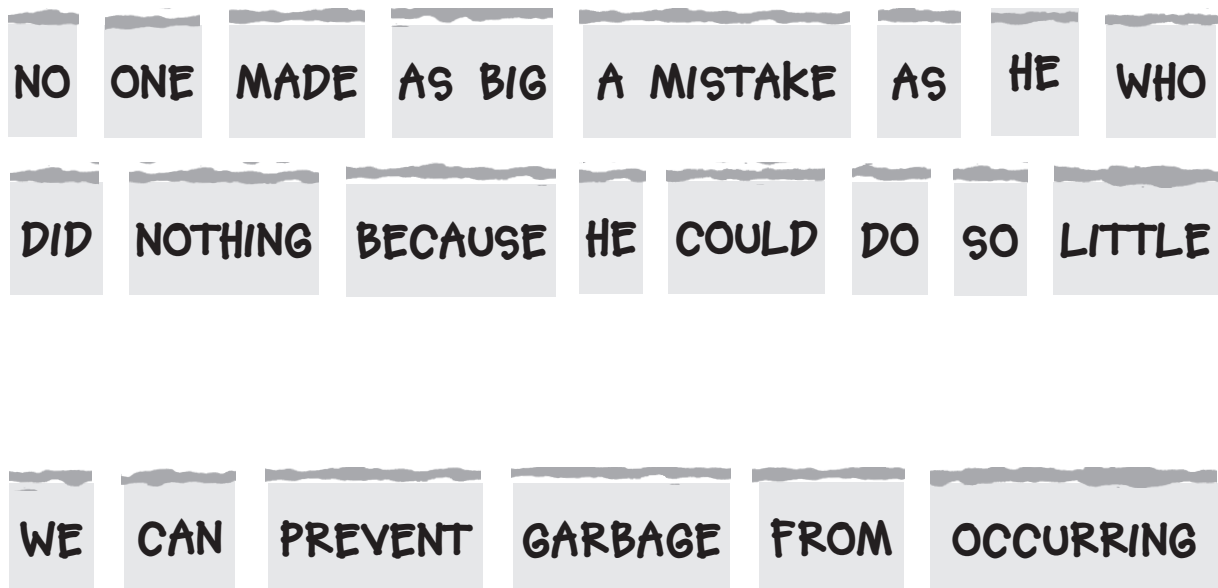
- A household of four people can save nature from the effects of 600 kilos of garbage every year.
- Some animal and plant species are extinct because of humans intervention with nature
- It is almost impossible to reduce the amount of packaging materials when the amount of consumption is constantly growing.

- Consumers should stop buying products containing materials that are poisonous to the environment
- In our country an increasing number of people are exposed to air pollution above the limits which are declared dangerous
- Local Agenda 21 offers opportunities to take part in activities concerning projects that care for the environment
- If we can reduce one of the main environmental problems, we will eventually be able to get rid of others, as in a chain reaction

2. TRUTHS?

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4)

Examples of consumer related «truths» that can be used:



You make a set of pictures that present a relevant topic about consumption and environment. The pictures are put into envelopes, and the envelopes are mixed. The students are divided into groups with the same numbers of participants in each group as the amount of pictures handed out. The students are each handed an envelope containing one picture. The students are to take out their picture and look at it for two minutes without talking to each other. Afterwards the pictures are put back into the envelopes, and the students try to describe it to the other members of their group without looking at it again. Then, when all the pictures have been described, the group tries to figure out a context in which to lay out the pictures. When they have reached an agreement the photos are taken out of the envelopes and put together on a table or on the floor. When this is done the students can discuss whether the sequence of the pictures should be changed. The results are presented to the other groups.

A way to proceed with this activity is to ask the students to discuss what will happen next, and ask them to draw three more pictures representing this. They can also be asked to discuss and draw the things they wish would happen next.

4. CONSUMER BINGO

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 5)

The following words/expressions are easily used in consumer bingo related to consumption and environment:

- 1 nutrient additives
- 2 deforestation
- 3 warning labeling
- 4 reuse
- 5 sorting of waste
- 6 recycling
- 7 additives
- 8 genetically modified plants
- 9 ecological labeling
- 10 labeling of clothing
- 11 allergies
- 12 nutrition council
- 13 green house effect
- 14 sun cells
- 15 ecological poisons
- 16 acid rain
- 17 artificial fertilizer
- 18 special waste
- 19 radio activity
- 20 over fishing
- 21 water shortage
- 22 soil erosion
- 23 biological diversity
- 24 ozone layer
- 25 ozone destructive substances
- 26 energy saving



5. ASSERTIONS

Below are some examples of assertions about consumption and environment that may be used to start a discussion among the students. All the statements should be explained.

- 1 The government should increase taxes of energy and resource use rather than increase taxes on workers' pay.
- 2 Public transportation is cheaper and more environmentally friendly than private transportation.
- 3 To lower the temperature in a room, has almost no influence on saving energy.
- 4 99.9% of all species that ever existed on earth are extinct today.
- 5 Every year we buy cotton that needs farm land as large as 10% of Norway's entire agricultural area.
- 6 White-out liquids, medicines, computer equipment, batteries and nail polish are toxic wastes that house-holds have to get rid of in a responsible manner.
- 7 Dripping sink faucets can provide us with as much as 7000 litres of water which is normally wasted.
- 8 Cigarette smoking is the biggest source of polluted climates in homes.
- 9 The easiest way to diminish the destruction of nature is by buying less.
- 10 By the car's motor going when one is not driving, turning off saves the environment for much pollution.

6. AT OUR PLACE

The students are divided into groups. Each group is given an «area of activity» and tries to find at least five specific ways of reducing environmental damage, that can be carried out in their area.

- school
- a circle of friends
- neighborhood
- farm or a village society

To get started, a few examples of initiatives are given, such as: a day without use of cars, composting etc. If necessary, the groups can look around the neighborhood, their home, their town or city as homework, in order to get ideas for the project. The groups have to add up the time the different initiatives will take, and what expenses are connected to them. If it is necessary to have official approval to carry them through, the group has to explain how this may be acquired.

The groups each present their solutions to the rest of the class, and make a display of all the suggestions.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Health and nutrition

The students should learn to choose and prepare nourishing and proper food. They should also know in what ways food habits influence health, mental concentration and economy.

The teaching should contribute to developing the students ability to:

- understand the influence diet has on one's health and life quality
- know what guiding prices are, and be able to use them when buying groceries
- treat and keep different foods based on economic and hygienic considerations
- understand the consequences the consumption of food has on the environment

Suggestions for activities that may be used in relation to the topic «health and nutrition»:

1. TOPIC WEBS

A topic web is a way of analyzing products, that shows different aspects about the products that are not always obvious to the students. Focus is put on the production, distribution, usage and waste of the product, as well as its sociological and psychological symbolic value. As opposed to mind maps, the structure of a topic web is given in advance. The students contribute by answering questions in the following categories: health, economy, security, legal relations and environment.

The modern consumer society is a global society characterized by interdependencies stretching beyond national borders. A topic web can contribute to an understanding of the global connections that products and services we use have to each other. By using a topic web students may also find links to the consumers ethical responsibilities related to global problems, created by consumer patterns.

A topic web may be used in connection with all products. The following suggestions might catch the interest of students in primary and lower secondary school: chocolate, ice cream, hamburgers, chewing gum etc...

The following is an example of a topic web:

“A TOPIC WEB”

Health

- Is it healthy?
- Is it nutritious?

- Has its production led to any sickness among the workers?
- Is it manufactured in sanitary circumstances?
- What influences does it have on the social health of the people?
- Does it undermine the health system?

Environment

- Does it pollute?
- Does it create a waste problem?
- How do I get rid of it?
- Is the wrapping biologically friendly?

- Does it contribute to the expanding of desert?
- What resources are used in the manufacturing?
- Is toxic waste a bi-product of the product?

- Are there any dangers for the workers during the production?

Safety

- Are there any chemicals in the product?
- Are the ingredients of a respectable quality or standard?

Economy

- Do I need it?
- Can I afford it?
- Will my economy or lifestyle be changed if I buy it?
- Are there alternatives?

- How is it made?
- Who produces it, and where?
- How and where is it distributed?
- Have the workers got acceptable work and pension agreements, and do they get part of the profit?
- How does it influence the country's foreign debt/excess?
- foreign debt/excess

Legal relevance

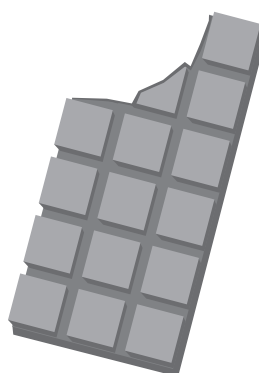
- Is it labeled?
- Does it have a validity date?
- If date labeling is missing, can I return it?

- Is the production completed in relation to valid safety contracts?
- Does the company respect the workers' rights?
- Is it «dumped» in foreign countries?

Social relations

- Are the commercials to be trusted?
- Have the commercials in any way influenced my buying it?
- Have they nature created any needs for me?

- Have they undermined my values?
- Has the advertising changed the lifestyle of the society? Has it caused any new social problems? Has it created new values?
- Was it crafted by working children?
- What are the social expenses by manufacturing and selling this product?



CHOCOLATE

2. TAKE A STAND

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4)

Examples of relevant assertions:

- To get a boyfriend you have to be thin and pretty.
- Synthetic food (food containing artificial additives) is dangerous to your health.
- Pizza and hot dogs are better for your body than fruit and vegetables.
- It is better to buy food that is produced locally.
- The reason why the average Norwegian weighs more today than in previous years, is that he gets less exercise than he used to.
- It is important for our health that we eat fruit and vegetables at least five times each day.
- The consumer has a right to demand information, labeling and control of food that is bought in shops.
- It should be illegal to advertise to children for diets and other ways of losing weight.
- Smoking cigarettes has no influence on eating habits.

3. TRUTHS?

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of consumer related «truths» that can be used:



4. ASSERTIONS

Below you will find examples of assertions and facts that may be used to start a discussion among the students. All statements should be explained.

- 1 Drinking water straight from the tap is more environmentally friendly than drinking bottled water.
- 2 Four out of five Norwegians prefer ecologically grown food, but due to lack of information, low accessibility and high prices, few buy them.
- 3 On the average, each Norwegian drank 132 litres of soda in 1999.
- 4 Avoiding fast-food is positive for the environment.
- 5 To counteract modern lifestyle sicknesses, we should eat less fat in general and choose the right types of fat, less sugar and more fibers in our food.
- 6 Overeating contributes to expanded gross national income because it results in more people going to health studios.
- 7 A correct diet means eating less meat and more vegetarian food.
- 8 Eating fruits and vegetables that can be found locally during the season, will reduce the need for transportation, processing and storing of agricultural products.
- 9 The children decide the choice of food in most Norwegian homes.

5. LEFT-OVERS ARE RIGHT

Saving left-over food is good economy. Let the students make their own recipes for dishes put together with left-overs. Divide the class into groups, and give each group their kind of food:

- fish
- meat
- vegetables
- bread
- cheese

Put the finished recipes together into a homemade cookbook. If it can be done, the students can make some of the dishes, take photographs of them, and serve the meal to parents or other classes. The photos can be put into the cookbook.

6. DOES IT KEEP?

Storing of food has great influence on its durability, both in stores and at home. The students can make surveys in stores and in their own homes and note to what degree the food is stored the way it should be. Let the students in advance find out the proper methods of storing food (at what temperature, with the right amount of air, in the proper packaging and in the right places) This can be done individually or in groups. Then the students are divided into groups and are given lists of ten food items. The groups are to check in the local food stores and at home to see how the food is kept, and if it is kept according to the information they have found earlier.

Product safety/ safety

The students need to be conscious of safety risks at home and in their society. They need to have knowledge about product safety, as well as to develop responsibility for their own safety.

The teaching should contribute to developing the students ability to:

- understand information and labeling concerning the safety of products
- know how to handle hazardous materials for example chemicals and inflammable materials
- learn how accidents at home and in the society- in school, after school, at work - can be prevented
- be aware of important safety equipment for children who are active
- be aware of safety precautions concerning devices at home and in school
- be able to handle ordinary technical devices at home and in school, and to know how they are to be secured when being used around children
- knowing about possible dangers linked to toys

Suggestions for activities that can be used in relation to the topic safety:

1. TAKE A STAND

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of relevant assertions:

- When involved in high risk activities, it is your duty to act responsible towards yourself and others.
- Rescue actions should be paid for by the victim when it has to do with base jumping and similar accidents.
- Because the risk of getting hurt is big, skate-boards should not be allowed to be sold in our country.
- You do not have to be an electrician to install electrical devices in a house.
- Products should be examined more thoroughly by the government before they are sold.
- The producers should be held responsible if someone gets hurt because the product did not meet promised standards.

2. TRUTHS?

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of consumer related “truths” that may be used:



3. ASSERTIONS

Below you will find some examples of assertions and facts about consumption that can be used to start a discussion among the students. All statements should be explained.

- 1 Thorough maintenance of your bicycle is important.
- 2 In 1997, 30 000 children got hurt at school in Norway.
- 3 The bindings on the slalom skis should automatically open if you fall.
- 4 It can be dangerous to borrow slalom equipment from friends, if you do not use the exact same size.
- 5 Every third youth gets hurt in an accident related to leisure activities.
- 6 The one approaching from behind in a skiing facility has the responsibility to avoid a collision.
- 7 Horse back riding is one of the most dangerous things you can do.
- 8 Skate-boards should not be used by anyone under the age of 12.
- 9 «Blades» and skate-board users should use helmets, elbow-, wrist-, and knee protection, and tooth protection.
- 10 If someone gets a cut from using a scouts knife, it is the producers responsibility.

4. SPECIFIC CONTEXTS

A set of big lego blocks (duplo) is borrowed. Words or small drawings describing words, are made on post-its that are stuck on the sides of the blocks. The words/drawings describe the contexts between knowing and following safety precautions, and the

consequences that might occur if you follow them, or if you don't. The lego blocks with pictures/words are mixed. The students are to put them together on a table or on the floor in the sequence that the group agrees on, and which seems logical from seeing the words/pictures. The results can be mixed, with several consequences connected. The results are presented to the rest of the class.

Examples:

- A bicycle helmet protects your face and head from damage if you fall off your bicycle, or are involved in a collision.
- Sand and dirt in the bindings of your skis or between the boot and the binding can lead to it not working the way it is supposed to.
- If you ride a bicycle in the dark without a light or reflector, the risk of hitting something, or being hit yourself, is great.



11

INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS

«The flows between the nations – of ideas and instruments, of capital and commodities, of materials and machines – have become more extensive, formidable and inexorable. Our environment is affected by the pollution of other countries, our industries, our are subject to competition in the world market, modern mass media direct a stream of news and views at everyone simultaneously...

The international culture of learning links humanity together through the development and of new knowledge to better the human condition. Adults living now and the young growing up today must acquire the vision and wisdom which equip them for such universal endeavors, especially those that can help the world's destitute » Norwegian core curriculum p. 39.

Suggestions for activities:

1. TAKE A STAND

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of relevant assertions:

- Consumer protection will not necessarily be reduced because of international free trade.
- The consumer should be given information about how the product was made and sold (fair trade).
- Our country should try harder to help create a more just distribution of the world's resources.
- Multinational companies and international industry need more ethically responsible management.
- The deserts of the world are expanding, and this has consequences for our country, even though there are no deserts here.

2. MINE? YOURS? OURS?

Today's consumer habits lead to increased internationalization. Music, fashion, foods and much more that used to belong to one specific country, have now become ordinary in other countries as well. This activity is about teaching the students to reflect over what things/ activities/ habits are typical for other cultures, and whether or not they have replaced Norwegian things/ activities/ habits. Ask the students to work in pairs or in

groups. Each pair is given 30 bits of paper. First they write down 15 things that they think used to be typically Norwegian, and that represent the traditional Norwegian way of living. (one thing on each piece of paper). Then they do the same thing with things/ ways of living that they think typical for foreign countries. Eventually the two piles of paper are mixed, and the students choose 15 ways of living that they think are typical for their own country today. The pairs (groups) present their results to the rest of the class, and everyone discuss the various results.

3. SANNHETER?

(See the explanation of the method in chapter 4.)

Examples of consumer related “truths” that can be used.

AN AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME
IN AFRICA IS 2362 NOK

IT IS POSSIBLE TO BUY PRODUCTS THAT GUARANTEE
THE WORKER IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FAIR PLAY

4. GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

This activity is a good opportunity to mix students of different ages. Groups can be made up of students from primary and lower secondary school. The students take a trip into town to gather information for a booklet that they will put together later, and that is going to show how the town is connected to the rest of the world. The students are to look in store windows for things that come from countries other than their own.

They should visit:

- local industries and ask about export and import of products and services
- upper secondary schools and colleges/universities to find out what connections the institutions have with other countries (teacher- and student exchange)
- the library to check what foreign news papers and magazines they have
- tourist information to find out how many tourists are in town, and where they come from
- hospitals, schools, other institutions to find out if they have employees from other countries, and if that is so, what countries are they from

After gathering the information, the students put together a booklet.

5. THE WORLD INSIDE YOUR WARDROBE

Part 1 The students examine the clothes they have at home in their wardrobe. They write a list over where the clothes were manufactured (from the information on the tags on the clothes) and what the clothes are made of.

Part 2 The students then do research to find out where the fabrics come from (for example cotton from India, wool from Scotland).

Part 3 A big map of the world is taken out, and put up in a way that makes it possible to string up colored threads of wool from your own country to each of the countries where any of the students have clothes from.

6. ASSERTIONS

Below you will find a few examples of assertions and facts about consumption that can be used to start a discussion among the students. All statements should be explained.

- 1 Each child born in Norway, will pollute the world 30- 50 times more than a child born in a poor country.
- 2 In China only one in a hundred people have their own car.
- 3 The world has to reduce the waste of CO₂ with 60% to stabilize CO₂ in the atmosphere and counteract the green house effect.
- 4 Too much fishing in the oceans leads to the extinction of species of fish.
- 5 Lack of water and soil erosion are two of the greatest challenges that the global society is facing.
- 6 To own a cat in the Nordic countries costs the owner about 1600 NOK each year, while 1.2 billion people live for less than 2500 NOK each year.
- 7 Malaria takes 1.1 million lives each year, and it would cost seven billion NOK to reduce this number by half. That is the same sum that Pfizer each year makes by selling the potency pill Viagra.
- 8 Air pollution from road traffic kills 80 000 people in Europe each year.
- 9 50 % of the worlds population live without water of adequate quality.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

12

« The students need to learn to view things in context and maintain an overview- learn to look ahead and into the world. Teaching should strengthen the belief that actions of solidarity and common effort can solve some of the larger global problems.»
Norwegian core curriculum p. 48

Suggestions for activities:

1. ALTERNATIVE PATHS

The students work in small groups and write on a very big piece of paper.

On the left they write a problem such as:

- How can we be sure that the food we eat, is healthy?
- How can we avoid getting in debt?
- What can be done to prevent accidents in our society?
- How can you protect yourself against people abusing your credit information when shopping on the internet?

The group draws on the paper using arrows, alternative processes that might lead to a solution to the problem. It is important that the students are aware of the fact that different solutions sometimes are dependent of partial solutions on another path (or manner of approach), see the example below. After the group has finished writing the alternative paths, they present them to the other groups, and they discuss the different solutions. Example of activity «alternative paths» see page 54.

2. POSSIBLE FUTURE SOLUTIONS

«The future in our hands» project took initiative to create several projects where students from schools and universities have been able to make suggestions about things that the society will need in the future. But there are still many students who have never gotten the opportunity to see what alternatives might exist, and how to use their own imagination to create new alternatives. Practice like this contributes to constructive attitudes and diminishes feelings of despair, depressive reactions and negative discussions. Let the students have a brainstorm on the following topics (among others):

- Alternative ways of informing consumers about their rights and duties
- New ways of using tv's, radios, and the internet
- Alternative entertainment to competition sports
- Alternative economic systems
- New ways of reducing the consumers dependency of experts
- Alternatives to «use and throw away» mentality
- New reward systems concerning ecologically conscious companies
- New ways of reducing the numbers of accidents in homes
- New ways to advertise alternative life styles
- Alternative ways of spending an allowance

After the brainstorm, the groups can organize the ideas (see the paragraph on mind maps chapter 4)

3. DOUBTS AND HOPE

The activity has four phases:

- A** «to think what the worst outcome might be»
- B** «That won't happen because...»
- C** «It will be a better future because...»
- D** «From ideas to action»

The students sit in a ring with plenty of space on either side. Each student is handed four blank sheets of paper and something to write with.

- 1** The teacher explains that on the first sheet of paper everybody is going to write one or two sentences that start something like:

«What worries me most about the future, is...»

«The thing that scares me, considering the world today is...»

«Something that I don't want to think about, but which may happen is...»

Avoid giving examples. Give the students three or four minutes to write. No one writes their names on their paper. When the students have finished writing, the teacher collects the papers, mixes them, and reads them out loud. No comments are allowed.

- 2** On the second piece of paper, the students write a few sentences starting like this:

«There will not be (starvation and poverty*) on earth because...»

«Problems concerning (violence and killings*) will be solved because...»

* Here the teacher can use examples from the things written in phase one. Funny answers are allowed. After four or five minutes, the sheets of paper are collected, mixed, and the suggestions are once again read out loud. Again, no comments or discussion is allowed.

- 3 On the third piece of paper the students write a few sentences starting like this:
«The world will be a better place in fifteen years because...»
The pieces of paper are collected, mixed and read out loud.
- 4 Main problems are noted on the black board, and the group is asked to have a brainstorm about what each individual can do to help solve the problems.
«Things I can do to contribute to a better world, in relation to...»

The purpose of this activity is to make the students talk about their concerns for the future, and to realize that there are positive solutions to the problems as well, if one tries to find them. It is important that the mood around this activity is light, and that both funny and serious ideas are brought into the open. Usually the problems that are suggested are consequences of different consumer related topics. This is not always obvious to the students at first, but becomes clearer as the activity evolves, and the students start reflecting on specific solutions to the problems.

4. ASSERTIONS

Below you will find a few examples of assertions and facts that may be used to start a discussion among the students. All statements should be explained.

- 1 We should produce waste that is biodegradable.
- 2 Genetic manipulation of plants, animals and microorganisms can disturb ecological systems and lead to the spreading of contagious diseases.
- 3 By saving electric energy, we can provide our neighboring countries with electrical power, so that they can stop using nuclear power stations.
- 4 Acid rain can be reduced by (among other methods) driving fewer cars.
- 5 Non-renewable resources found in the wild should be left alone, and not used all at once.
- 6 By taxing consumption instead of income, we can change consumption's status as a socially prestigious activity.
- 7 A «no shopping» day other than Sundays should be introduced.
- 8 All bottle return machines should be made so that the money is given to a charity.

1. LABELING TOMORROW

Students are asked to work in groups and propose labels that could be used in the future. When the groups present the drawings they have made of the brands that they made up, they have to explain why they think that the labels are important, and what effect the labeling might have. The results can After having looked at and discussed different varieties of labeling foods, textiles, films, etc, the be laid out as a display at their school.

ALTERNATIVE PATHS

