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WE HAVE YOU SURROUNDED....

Grades: 9 through 12

Time: Several weeks

Materials: Black/white board and chalk/markers; images and logos, either on poster board or via PowerPoint (see below); scratch paper & pens; tape; marketing quotes (see below); large sheets of paper to stick on walls; McCarthy quote (see below); art supplies; 2 poster boards (or similar) for each student; articles from *Rethinking Globalization* (see below); research resources (Internet, online databases, etc.); pro- & anti-globalization articles (see samples below); excerpts from marketing/sweatshop videos (optional)

Relevant Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts, and, with modifications, Science, History, and Health

Pertinent Information: This is a series of activities that could be used to explore issues of branding, marketing and globalization over the course of several weeks. Some of the individual activities could be used on their own.

1. Lead a brief discussion on:

“What most affects your life? What issues, resources and goods are essential to your survival, health, and well-being?” (Record answers on the board.)

“What does society tell you is essential to your survival, health and well-being?” (Record answers in a second list on the board.)

2. Show students images of a series of product/corporate logos, as well as some alternative/sustainable logos -- logos related to environmental, animal and social justice issues & organizations (see below for examples) -- and have students try to identify them. (These images could be cut & pasted onto poster boards, or copied & pasted to a PowerPoint presentation.) Most likely, students will be able to recognize most of the product/corporate logos, and will know very few of the “issues” images.

Have students discuss questions such as:

- With which images/logos are we most familiar? Why?
- What do we think about that?
- What, if anything, should we do about that?

Alternative or Extension:

- A. As an alternative (or addition) to the above, you could quiz students on a series of questions related to pop culture (especially characters & celebrities tied to products) and important current events/cultural knowledge to find which they know more about.
- B. You could also give them a series of first names of people/characters from pop culture sources (movies, TV, music) and ask them to identify “Where are they from?” and then do the same with important world leaders they should know (chief justices, heads of state, prize winners, etc.) to see how many of each they can identify.

3. Divide students into small groups of about four. Have each group take themselves step-by-step through a part of their typical day and write down all the products/brands they use. For example:

One group might focus on morning activities, such as:

- Wake up & turn off alarm (brand?)
- Get out of sheets and pajamas (brands?)
- Shower (soap, shampoo, towel brands?)
- Put on clothes (brands?)
- Eat breakfast (brands?)
- Brush/floss teeth (brands?)
- Listen to music or check email, or phone messages? (electronics brands?)

And so on. You could have each group do a different part of the day, or have each group do the same part of the day, in order to compare different brands.

Then, have groups go back through their lists and write down (or talk about) WHY they are using that brand of product. What does it do for them? How does it make their lives better/easier, etc.?

Post this information for all groups to see.

Ask students about their reaction to the prevalence of all this “stuff” in their lives. Ask them to discuss: Is marketing a good thing? A bad thing? Is all this stuff we buy necessary? If not, why do we have it?

4. Use quotes from resources such as *The Merchants of Cool*, *Marketing Madness* and *No Logo* (see below) to inspire additional discussion about marketing, its effects, and its appropriate place in society.

5. Have students choose one brand or company and one social, animal or environmental issue, and during a certain period of time (from one day, up to a week or more, depending on the time you choose), mark down the number of times they encounter each of them, whether via print, TV, the web, billboards, conversation, ads, etc. Have students report their findings to the class and discuss their perceptions of what they discovered.

Collate the data onto a big wall chart to show the frequency and breadth of visibility for the various brands and issues.

Quote: “Q: Why are we violent but not illiterate? A: Because we are taught to read.” – Colman McCarthy

6. Using the quote above from Colman McCarthy’s book *I’d Rather Teach Peace* as a jumping off point, lead a discussion about what the impact is of being surrounded by one type of information or message, while another type of information or message is sparingly present. What are these messages teaching us? Is that good? Bad? Neutral?

7. Divide students into teams of about four. Have each team choose a social, animal or environmental issue or concept and create a representative logo that will be identifiable and understandable worldwide. Have them develop one idea for marketing that brand/logo to the public. Have them share their new logos and marketing plans with the class.

8. Have students conduct a survey of their own rooms at home and make a list of 15-30 of the brands present, noting in which countries the items were manufactured. Have students share the brands and countries of origin, and compile those onto a giant wall chart.

9. Have each student choose a brand from his/her list, and then a product from the chosen brand. Have him/her find at least one print and one web ad for that product and bring the ads to class (Students can bring a screenshot of the web ad). Ask students to determine and discuss issues such as:

- What experience or lifestyle is the company selling through its product?
- How does the ad make you feel?
- How does the item make you feel?
- What does the item do for you? (How is it supposed to make your life better?)
- What relevant information is missing from the ad?

Give each student a piece of recycled poster board. Have each student paste his/her print and web ads on the paper/poster board and write a list of descriptors (in response to the questions above) below/above/around the ads. Post these around the classroom.

10. Have students research their chosen product to answer questions such as:

- Where is this product made?
- Using what materials?
- Using what processes?
- Creating what waste products?
- Who assembles the product? Where?
- What is the impact of this product on other people? The environment? Nonhuman animals?
- To whom is this product marketed?
- How is this product marketed?
- How long can the product be used? (Once? Many years?)
- What happens to the product when its “useful life” is over?

Note: It may be helpful to have students read “Just a Cup of Coffee?” (p. 243) and “Tomasito’s Tour (p. 240) from *Rethinking Globalization* ahead of time to give them a guideline for completing this activity.

11. On poster board, have students create a “cradle to grave” illustrated life history of their product that shares all the information they discovered about the product and its creation, noting important positive and negative elements. You can have students post this poster board below their poster board with the sample ads, so that the two can be compared.

Note: If time is a factor, you may want to have students do #9- #11 in small groups.

12. Divide students into small groups of about four. Have each group choose any one of the brands mentioned in any of the previous exercises and research the business practices of the corporation that created that brand. Groups should look for evidence of corporate violations of human rights, labor, environment, animal abuse, discrimination, and other social and environmental practices, as well as for positive information on the corporation’s business practices. Sample resources might include:

- Bad Corp – www.badcorp.org
- Co-op America’s Responsible Shopper – www.responsibleshopper.org
- Corp Watch – www.corpwatch.org/search.php

Students may wish to use other sources to find out about potential corporate violations or unethical practices, and may use resources such as the corporation’s annual report, website and news reports to identify positive practices.

Have groups develop a list of the positives and negatives they discovered about their corporation and share those with the class.

13. Have the class develop a list that defines what good corporate citizenship entails, and then have them rate the researched corporations accordingly. Which are good corporate citizens? Which are not? Why?

Note: For #13, you may wish to share/discuss information ahead of time about what exactly a corporation is, the rights and obligations of corporations, why some corporations include socially responsible practices and others don't (and examples of what those practices are), others' ideas about what constitutes good corporate citizenship, etc.

14. Have the same small groups each choose a country affected by their chosen corporation (it could be the country of origin, a country in which the corporation does business or exports products, etc.) and conduct a literature search on that country and its relationship with economic globalization. Have each group search for Internet sources and online databases (available through most public/school libraries) for articles and information related to their chosen country and economic globalization. Have each group collate and summarize the information they found, looking for themes such as:

- What social and environmental issues were mentioned?
- What information about the influence of your chosen corporation within this country was mentioned?
- What points of view were represented? What points of view were missing or underrepresented?
- What stakeholders advocated for economic globalization? What stakeholders advocated against economic globalization?
- What positive and/or negative impacts of economic globalization were cited?
- What were the sources of information for the articles – what bias might they have?

Have each group share their findings with the class.

15. Share a variety of pro- and anti-globalization articles with students, as well as sample photos and other items, and have the class discuss the different views represented (as well as their own) regarding economic globalization. (See sample articles below.)

16. Divide students into small teams. Have them find an example from the media of a situation involving a multinational corporation's contested activities in another country. (Examples: a corporation that tried to open up a "sweatshop" in another country; a corporation that tried to secure logging rights in another country's forests, etc.)

Based on the selected example, have the team delineate members to play the roles of the different stakeholders involved. For example: a representative of the corporation, a member of the governing body, a citizen, a consumer, an indigenous member, one or more animals affected, etc.

Alternative: You could already have several examples available for teams to choose from.

Have each team role-play the scenario, advocating for their person's/being's views, and try to come to some resolution that works for everyone. Additionally, have the groups outline the positive and negative impacts (for people, the animals, the environment, etc.) of their proposed resolution.

Have each team share their experiences with the class, and then compare their resolution – if any – to what actually happened in the real situation.

Alternative: You could use the Huaorani Indians role play from *Rethinking Globalization* (p. 268) and then discuss.

17. Encourage students to write a reflective essay about everything they've learned and explored regarding branding, marketing and globalization so far. Invite volunteers to share some of what they wrote.

18. Lead students in a discussion to address the question: "Now what?", responding to questions such as:

- Based on what they've learned what, if any changes will students make in their lives?
- How can we as citizens promote and support products and services that are humane for all concerned (people, animals, environment)?
- What should be done – if anything – about economic globalization and multinational advertising?
- How do we ensure we're not being branded?
- How do we help those who are experiencing the negative effects of economic globalization and marketing?

Have students develop a list of potential actions to take, based on their initial conclusions.

Extensions:

1. Offer additional activities on globalization and marketing, such as those available in *Rethinking Globalization*.
2. Show students clips from documentaries such as *The Merchants of Cool*, *Sweating for a T-Shirt*, etc.

3. Have students explore how they are branded and labeled. (Geek? Jock? Slacker? Goth?) What brands do you buy? Who usually buys those brands? To whom are those brands marketed?

Have students create their own brand/logo, which reflects what's special and important to them about themselves.

Activity by Marsha Rakestraw (HECP Graduate)

Sample Image/Logo Ideas:

Product Logos:

- Apple
- BMW
- Budweiser
- Gap
- NBC
- Nike
- Playstation
- Red Bull
- Shell Oil
- Taco Bell

These are a small sampling. There are many more viable examples. It's telling to include examples of product logos that are "too old" for your students (if they can't drive, buy alcohol, etc.).

Alternative/Sustainable Logos:

- Amnesty International
- Doctors Without Borders
- Fair Trade logo
- Habitat for Humanity
- Leaping Bunny (certification for no animal testing)
- PETA
- PBS
- Red Cross
- United Nations
- USDA Organic label

You can also use samples from local/regional well-known organizations.

Sample Marketing Quotes:

“Reach a girl in her Seventeen years and she may be yours for life.” (MM 21)

“If you own this child at an early age, you can own this child for years to come. Companies are saying, ‘Hey, I want to own the kid younger and younger.’” (MM 21)

“Logos, by the force of ubiquity, have become the closest thing we have to an international language, recognized and understood in many more places than English.” (NL)

“The message is clear: get the kids and you’ve got the whole family and the future market.” (NL 119)

“Every company with a powerful brand is attempting to develop a relationship with consumers that resonates so completely with their sense of self that they will aspire, or at least consent, to be serfs under these feudal brandlords.” (NL 149)

“The underlying message is that culture is something that happens to you. You buy it at the Virgin Megastore or Toys ‘R’ Us and rent it at Blockbuster Video. It is not something in which you participate, or to which you have the right to respond.” (NL 178)

“Corporations have grown so big they have superseded government...unlike governments, they are accountable only to their shareholders....We lack the mechanisms to make them answer to a broader public.” (NL)

“The MTV machine doesn’t listen to the young so that it can make the young happier....The MTV machine tunes in so it can figure out how to pitch what Viacom has to sell.” (MC)

“Teens are exposed to an estimated 3,000 ads a day.” (MC)

“Last year, U.S. teens spent an estimated \$105 billion and influenced their parents to spend an additional \$48 billion.” (MC)

“In 1998, U.S. companies spent nearly \$200 billion on advertising. Worldwide ad spending is estimated at \$435 billion.” (MC)

MC = *Merchants of Cool* (video)

(<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/>)

MM = *Marketing Madness* by Michael Jacobson & Laurie Ann Mazur

NL = *No Logo* by Naomi Klein

Sample Pro/Con Globalization Documents:

“Child Labor is Cheap—and Deadly.” (from *Rethinking Globalization*, p. 204)

Corporate Cash Chart (from June 1999 *Multinational Monitor*, p. 27) showing the top 70 entities (governments & corporations) by revenues – 41 of which are corporations.

“Free Trade & Globalization vs. Environment & Community” (from Herman Daly’s *Beyond Growth*)

Global Income Distribution Chart (from David Korten’s *When Corporations Rule the World*) – showing world population arranged by income and the distribution of that income.

“Globalization is Grrreat!” (excerpts) by Tom G. Palmer
(<http://www.cato.org/pubs/letters/palmer-catoletters.pdf>)

“Globalization Myths.” (from *Rethinking Globalization*, p. 14)

“Globalization: Threat or Opportunity?” (excerpts) by International Monetary Fund Staff
(<http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2000/041200.htm>)

“Human Rights for a New Millennium” by Eduardo Galeano (from *Rethinking Globalization*, p. 323)

“Sweatshop Fact Sheet.” (from *Rethinking Globalization*, p. 158)

“Ten benefits of the WTO System.” (from *Rethinking Globalization*, p. 100)

“Two Cheers for Sweatshops.” By Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (from *New York Times Magazine*, September 24, 2000)

“Water, Water Everywhere?” (from *Rethinking Globalization*, p. 284)

Books Mentioned Above:

Beyond Growth by Herman Daly

Rethinking Globalization by Bill Bigelow & Bob Peterson (www.rethinkingschools.org)

When Corporations Rule the World by David Korten (www.davidkorten.org)