Engage your students, and maybe even your community!

One of the best ways to have a positive and significant impact on the environment is to be a smart shopper. (Here are some reasons why.) What does it mean to be a smart shopper?

Well, it means to think carefully before buying. Ask yourself if you really need and want the item. Do you love it? Will it give you joy one month from now? Is it worth the time you spent earning the money to pay for it?

Then, wait 24 hours before buying.

For this semester--or for a week or month between now and Earth Month--we challenge you and your students. Go seven days without buying anything new.

It's called the Unshopping Challenge, and can have many variations.
You and your students get to create the rules.

You may decide to go seven (or 21 or 30) days without buying water bottles. Or seven without buying any new clothing. (Fast, disposal, cheap fashion is passe in the environmental world.)

Or you can go 30 days without buying any new stuff. Some students at UNI recently tried this and it was life-changing. Listen to a 12-minute interview on Talk of Iowa while you are making dinner or read one student's abbreviated journal entries, or do both.

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Interested in doing this now with your students, after the holiday consumption frenzy? Or is it something you'll plan to do for Earth Month? Below are some resources for such an engagement project.

**Water bottle unshopping.** This NY Times quiz, this 8-minute Story of Bottled Water video, PBS Kids Don't Buy It lesson plan or Comedians' Penn and Teller's Water Bottle Survey (4-minute video) are four spectacular resources for introducing problems with water bottles. They may be just what you and your students need to give the Unshopping challenge a try.