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Info Tech and Media Literacy By Anna Kerkorian

Thanks to a WFEE grant, all 8th grade students at McCall Middle School now have Information Technology classes which teach them to assimilate information retrieved from the Internet, and thoughtfully and carefully develop skills to validate websites authenticity. Students are taught how to evaluate websites for content, bias, accuracy, validation, and currency. This is the only time that this material is covered in their Winchester education.

The grant funded:

- a Canon Digital Video Camera
- the upgrade of the computers in the 2nd floor lab to Windows XP
- the addition of two new applications, Moviemaker and Adobe Photoshop Elements, to those computers.

Students use the camera and software to create their own Public Service Announcements. Moviemaker allows students to create, edit and share movies. Adobe Photoshop Elements enables students to create and modify images. Students use animation, movie making, and digital movie editing to develop critical thinking skills and analyze today's media while gaining an understanding of the purpose of a public service announcement (PSA) as well as the difference between a PSA and an advertisement. Students are shown and then must identify the various advertising strategies that companies use to promote their products. Class discussions include topics such as:

- Advertising industry spending over \$15 billion per year on ads targeted to children
- Targeting young audiences with persuasive messages through media such as television and the Internet
- Most children are exposed to more than 40,000 television commercials per year
- Over \$200 billion dollars are spent by children from ages 12-19 and over \$60 billion are spent by children from ages 4-11
- In households, over \$600 billion are spent because of direct or indirect influence by children

When creating their PSA students are developing ideas to raise awareness about a health, Internet safety or an environmental issue. They are working cooperatively to create a 30-second PSA that can air on a local access cable channel, be shown to the school, or posted on a school website.

For more information, please contact Anna Kerkorian at akerkorian@winchester.k12.ma.us



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