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Creative Content Lessons Supplement Core Curriculum



BACKGROUND

As the librarian and technology enrichment teacher for Taunton Catholic Middle School in Taunton, MA, Linda St. Laurent has a vested interest in teaching her students to use the Internet creatively and responsibly. She was frustrated that when she assigned multimedia projects, her students were incorporating images found solely through web searches. She found herself asking them on a daily basis, “Where did you find this information?” and “Are you giving credit to the appropriate party?”

Not only were they not giving credit to their sources, but Ms. St. Laurent was disappointed that students didn’t rely more on their own originality. Instead of creating their own work, they relied too easily on an Internet search. It was evident that the students and even the parents (when helping their kids with projects) often struggled with the use of digital content and overlooked the rights of the creator. As she prepared her middle school students for high school, where the stakes were higher, she understood the need to integrate lessons around creative content and its proper usage.

Needing more resources that spoke to rights associated with creative content, she came across the Digital Citizenship and Creative Content curriculum on the Internet. She was pleased to find that it aligned with her classroom goals and provided opportunities for her students to create their own content.

In general, her students respond very well to hands-on activities. Thus, it came as no surprise to her that the “By Rule of Law” unit, which features a fictional case study about a video game creator, and the “Music Mixer” feature at MyBytes.com were very



Teacher Profile:

Name: Linda St. Laurent

Hometown: Taunton, MA

School: Taunton Catholic Middle School

Grades Taught: 5-8

Subjects Taught: Technology Enrichment, Librarian

Years Experience: 7 Years



Thoughts on Teaching:

“The best part of being a technology teacher is seeing the students take the knowledge from their time in class and apply it to their life. In that context, each skill [whether downloading music or researching for the science fair] is a victory that builds their confidence, fuels their thirst to learn, and encourages a culture of continued learning. I can provide them with tools to learn, but they need to provide the desire.”

popular in her classroom. She noticed the students were able to empathize with the scenarios and pay attention to the activities for longer periods of time than they typically would. Her students also reported visiting the MyBytes website at home, where they experimented with creating their own ring tones and sharing them with their peers. The students reported that creating their own music and reading about the viewpoints of actual artists helped them better understand the creative process and the importance of honoring a creator's rights. Ms. St. Laurent was thrilled that the curriculum resources not only instilled these valuable lessons, but inspired student creativity as well.

OPENING A DIALOGUE

The curriculum opened a dialogue and has given Ms. St. Laurent's students a point of reference for further discussion. She says she continues to build creative content lessons into her assignments and has seen the students build in resource pages at the beginning of their projects, even without her direction. Next year, she expects to use the Digital Citizenship and Creative Content curriculum to supplement activities students experience in their core classes. She pointed to a possible use in a social studies class, where students write plays, make movies, and create brochures about historical events. Ms. St. Laurent believes the curriculum will benefit the students and the social studies teacher by preparing them to delve into the projects with a clear understanding of creative content already under their belts. She also plans on experimenting with digital music compositions next year, and knows that the curriculum will spark discussions around protecting this creative content.



Technology as a Tool

"I think this curriculum could be used with any subject area, but would surmise using it in a technology class would give the greatest flexibility... Technology is truly a universal language with multiple applications. I believe that students must be well versed in the language of technology in order to use [technology] effectively."

- Ms. St. Laurent

About the Program

The Digital Citizenship and Creative Content Curriculum program creates awareness around creative content and helps foster a better understanding of the rights connected with it. Targeting youth in grades 8-10, its goals are to instill in students an appreciation of the value that creative content has for the creator, and to establish a personal respect for creative rights in a way that changes their behaviors and perceptions about digitally delivered content.

The program consists of both student and educator resources. For students, an interactive website (www.MyBytes.com) provides multiple opportunities to explore the topic of creative rights and interact with creative content. For educators, a set of cross-curricular classroom activities provides a variety of ways to engage students in this learning experience. These activities received the Seal of Alignment from the International Society for Technology in Education and align with the American Association of School Librarians' Standards for the 21st Century Learner. For more information, visit www.DigitalCitizenshipEd.com.

