The Pursuit of True Happiness
A Grade 9 Challenge

Overview

Fame? Family? Things? Money? Beauty? In today's world where both the real and virtual worlds bombard youth with images of the must-have-thing, essential-clothing, fabulous-vacations, products to enhance or change appearances, the understanding of what is true happiness and steps we can take to achieve it, becomes lost.

Design Rationale

MediaSmarts.ca states that trying to stay ahead of the next trend can be a tricky business however, as cultural critic Douglas Rushkoff explains. "The minute a cool trend is discovered, repackaged, and sold to kids at the mall—it's no longer cool. So the kids turn to something else, and the whole process starts all over again."

Some companies hire cool hunters to infiltrate the world of teens and bring back the latest trends. However, with the Internet just a click away, many companies prefer instead to let teens come to them, through online quizzes and personality tests. Often these forms of data collection use the language of empowerment and encourage teens to spread the word to their friends. For example, after completing a quiz on the COSMOgirl site, teens are told: *COSMOgirl! Has heard a lot of stories, so let's get yours straight. What makes you so CG!? Be sure to post this to your fave social networking site and link back to cosmogirl.com – your friends are probably interested in what you have to say (we know we are)!*

With these types of media tactics, advertisers manipulate teens as to what is cool, and will make them happy. But advertisers are creating a version of happiness that will generate money for the companies they represent. To find true happiness, teens need to consider the possibilities of happiness separate from advertisers and social media.

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Problem Scenario

Your Production Team will examine the varied perspective of true happiness from our elder generation who can reflect back on times when they were truly happy. Your Team's challenge is to consider the elder viewpoints in creating a short film that determines how youth can pursue a life of true happiness.

Your team will create a 4 1/2 minute video incorporating interview footage from 2 elders. Based upon your interview findings, and your own understandings, each team member will include their own explanation of how "I will live a life of true happiness."

Parameters

- Video interview 2 elders
- Team will collaborate to create a storyline & storyboard
- Team will create a pitch and present to teacher
- Teams will revise work based on feedback
- Team will create a 4 1/2 minutes film incorporating interview footage from 2 elders.
- Video will include: video, still images, sound scape. All imaging and audio will be original
- Each team member will include their own definition of true happiness within the video
- Each team member will reflect on their team's progress, and the final creation

Success will be determined by

- Alignment of the film to the storyboard
- Degree of appeal to audience
- Participation and completion of each step
- Creativity/originality of film