

1:1 netbook scenario, N°6

Comics and cartoons in the classroom

Subjects: foreign language, all subjects

Level: primary and Secondary school

Time: +/-45 min. work in class:

- 10 minutes for introduction phase
 - 20 minutes for creating the cartoon strip or cartoon film
 - 10 minutes for presenting and discussing students' work
 - 5 minutes for reflecting on the activity
- Homework phase

Description:

Student will create their own comic strips or cartoon movies in which they express their views or things they have learned on a chosen topic in a creative way. This activity should be ideally used as a post-viewing activity, so that students already have basic information on the topic. Using free online tools the students will choose backgrounds and characters and they compose the related dialogue for their comics. Students can also be explained about the traditional forms of comic writing and newer graphic novels. Placement of images and text can have an influence on meaning in a comic, and are worth exploring when viewing students' works. There are several online tools that can be used by students on all levels.

Tools

Netbooks

- Students connect to Internet to create their online cartoon strips/cartoon movies.
- Using netbooks and projector for presenting students' work.

Other

- Projector
- Cartoon strip or cartoon movie creator tool e.g. <http://www.xtranormal.com/>

Lesson preparation

- Decide which cartoon strip or cartoon movie creator tool suits your students best.
- Get to know the cartoon movie creator to be used, e.g. Xtranormal.com
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42c8Gf_0_RE
- Find information on the traditional forms of comic writing.

- Decide how you will share students' work, that is, the links to their works. (Use e.g. tinyURL to shorten the URLs <http://tinyurl.com/>.)
- Create an account at YouTube if you want to upload the movies there.
- Decide on what way you will discuss the work of your students (pairs, small groups, whole class).

Process

1. Introduction at classroom

Offline | Full class | Tools: notebook, projector, mind mapping tool or just a blackboard

Teacher revises the main points that students have learned from the previous lesson(s) in connection with the chosen topic and introduces the cartoon strip/movie creation activity.

The class can discuss the traditional forms of comic writing. Optionally teacher could say a few words about Captain Planet (<http://www.turner.com/planet/>) and encourage students to create their own comic hero/heroine.

2. Presenting a sample movie and demonstrating how to create a cartoon strip/movie

Online | Full class | Tools: notebook, projector, cartoon strip or cartoon movie creator tool

Teacher shows an example of a video created by Xtranormal, e.g. www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xBXCWLfcxM

Teacher shows how to make a 3D cartoon movie with Xtranormal: www.youtube.com/watch?v=42c8Gf_0_RE

3. Students create their cartoon strips/cartoon movies independently or in groups

Online | Individual or group work | Tools: netbooks for creating online cartoon strips/movies

Students go to the cartoon strip or cartoon movie creator website, for example www.xtranormal.com, and they work independently or in groups creating their movies in connection with the topic. Students upload the movies to YouTube and send the links to the teacher.

4. Presenting and discussing students' work

Online | Tools: teacher's netbook for presenting students' work, projector

Based on the presented strips/movies, the students carry out a short discussion.

5. Homework (optional)

Online | Individual work | Tools: netbooks, online cartoon strip/cartoon movie creator tool

Students can continue with the activity as homework. They can try out another tool and a topic. At the next lesson they can present their creations.

6. Additional work (optional)

If the teacher decides so, comics can be used also in a larger context, e.g. campaigning on sustainability, biodiversity, traffic safety in the city or against drugs. In this case, the students can find at the World Comics site (<http://www.worldcomics.fi/>) a set of materials to guide social activists to use comics for campaigns. The resources explain how to develop the comic keeping the intended audience and the aim of the comic in mind. The resource also includes tips for writing a manuscript and making jokes, as well as examples of campaign comics.

Links

- Make Beliefs Comics <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/>
- Dvolver Movie Maker <http://www.dfilm.com/live/moviemaker.html>
- Xtranormal Create you 3D Cartoon movie <http://www.xtranormal.com/>
- How To Make a 3D Cartoon: With Xtranormal.com http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42c8Gf_0_RE
- Go Animate <http://goanimate.com/>
- NCTE | Comic Creator <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/comic/>
- Comiqs <http://comiqs.com/editor/>
- Larry Ferlazzo's recommendations (create comic strips) <http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2008/06/04/the-best-ways-to-make-comic-strips-online/>
- Larry Ferlazzo's recommendations (create online animations) <http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2008/05/11/the-best-ways-for-students-to-create-online-animations/>
- Nicenet (create your virtual classroom) <http://www.nicenet.org/>
- Bubbl.us (free online mind mapping tool) <http://bubbl.us/>
- FreeMind (free downloadable mind mapping software) http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page
- Captain Planet <http://www.turner.com/planet/>
- World Comics <http://www.worldcomics.fi/>
- U4energy project website (pan-European energy initiative) <http://u4energy.eu>