

Project 2 Reflections

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Introduction

In Project 2, I was assigned to write a comic strip story and present it using the ComicLife application. To draft the story, I made a storyboard consisting of seven chunks for seven days. The ComicLife application was used to transform my storyboard draft into an interactive comic strip story.

Challenges

From my experience, I found Comic Life to be a fun, easy application that can be used by educators to bring comics to classrooms, in no time. Besides the pricing of the application, it seems to be a beneficial resource to add to my repertoire of instructional strategies. One inconvenience I encountered while building the pages of my comic strip story was the inability to apply the same background automatically. Instead, I had to manually apply the background and styles for all five slides. I think this is an excellent tool considering I am being asked to form a comic strip story. This application easily creates panels with a varied selection of styles and elements. Adding titles and texts is a breeze and uploading or dragging picture files to the panel is even easier. I honestly cannot imagine completing this project without the Comic Life application.

Lessons Learned

After completing this project, I learned that children need to develop visual literacy skills and using comics in the classroom is a great way to accomplish that. All of the research I conducted on comics in the classroom resulted in positive feedback. The strongest suggestion was made by Claudia McVicker in *Comic strips as text structure for learning to read*. She stated that comic strips appeal to those of all literacy levels and abilities (McVicker, 2007). This means that readers, nonreaders, and those who can read, but choose not to, are drawn to comics. This is a profound realization because as an educator I understand the importance of capturing and keeping a student's interest during instructional time.

Also, a personal insight was gained when I recognized my own enjoyment of comics and comic books. I remember reading the Sunday Funnies in the newspaper every Sunday. I loved the colorful illustrations and, of course, the different styles of humor. Being that I enjoyed reading comics as a child, and even now as an adult, I believe it would be useful to incorporate comics into my classroom. I remember learning in undergraduate school that students learn best from teachers who enjoy what they are teaching. If I incorporated comics into my classroom, my students would feed off of my positive energy and reflect the same enthusiasm and effort towards the lesson.

Value

There was also mention of the benefits of using comics in ESOL instruction in a few of my peer's postings. Author Jason Ranker conducted a study on a first grade ESOL classroom with a teacher who read comics to her students frequently. The ELLs in the class learned a variety of reading and writing skills while exploring critical thinking, comprehension strategies, dialogue, and narrative structures (Ranker, 2008). Professionally, I gained insight on the benefits of using comics in an ESOL classroom. I teach ESOL in the primary grades where reading is the foundation of all subject matter. My role is to build good readers and writers while developing listening and speaking skills as well. To help achieve this, I will implement comics into my ESOL curriculum mainly because comics are the most exciting option and have been proven to be successful in the classroom.

Conclusion

I am grateful for this project because I have now been introduced to a tool that can improve my instruction and my students' learning experiences. The information I learned from reading several journal articles about comic strips has given me the knowledge needed to understand the importance of comics in the classroom. Students can learn any concept or skill through the use of comics. Even better, students can express their learning in the same format that catches and keeps their attention and interest. I plan to use this application in many ways with my Kindergarten and second grade English Language Learners. I believe they will enjoy learning while reading and making humorous, short-worded, comics with interesting visuals. With the convenient technology of the Comic Life application, this is made easier to accomplish by teachers and students all around the world.

McVicker, C. (2007, September). Comic strip as a text structure for learning to read. *The Reading Teacher* 61(1) 85-88. Retrieved from <https://westga.view.usg.edu/d2l/le/content/1162530/viewContent/20010500/View>