

Lesson Plan

1. Content:

Grade: 8th Grade

Subject: Language Arts

Topic: Creating a science fiction story

Rationale:

Students will be taught how to use the Pixton comic creator website as part of a culminating activity for their science fiction unit. When this lesson begins, students will have finished reading science fiction novels in literature circle groups, will have read the Fahrenheit 451 graphic novel, and will have learned about specific elements of the science fiction genre. This assignment will allow students to show their understanding of the elements of the science fiction genre by creating their own science fiction story that faces a problem and proposes a solution. One challenging concept that students may struggle with is how to write a creative story completely on their own. Students are used to being assigned very specific guidelines and do not have much opportunity to participate in creative writing. They also may struggle with the idea of utopias/dystopias or futuristic societies, and how to present these through a graphic novel format. This unit was one of the first times many of them had studied the elements of science fiction.

Standards- From the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for 8th grade ELA

3.02 Continue to explore and analyze the use of the problem-solution process by:

- constructing essays/presentations that respond to a given problem by proposing a solution that includes relevant details.
- recognizing and/or creating an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.

5.02 Study the characteristics of literary genres (fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry) through:

- evaluating what impact genre-specific characteristics have on the meaning of the text.
- evaluating how the author's choice and use of a genre shapes the meaning of the literary work.
- evaluating what impact literary elements have on the meaning of the text.

Materials:

- 28 computers with access to the Internet
- One overhead projector to model for students how to use the Pixton program
- One copy of *Fahrenheit 451* graphic novel
- Document projector
- Each student will have their own iTouch (they have these every day)

Instructional Outcomes:

- Students will incorporate specific elements of science fiction into their story including: problem, solution, futuristic (or alternate time) setting, protagonist, antagonist/s, evidence of advanced technology, unique society (utopia/dystopia), and theme.

- Students will write, graphically represent, and produce a unique science fiction story in the format of a comic
- Students will learn to use Pixton to create their comic
- Students will view classmates' comics and provide feedback in an effort to constructively collaborate

Accommodations:

I have a very wide range of ability levels this year with students ranging from a 2nd grade reading level to an 11th grade reading level. The science fiction novels students read in their literature circles were geared towards their reading level and were where they first learned about the science fiction genre. To accommodate for this wide range of levels, the following will be provided:

- My EBD and OHI students who are at a 2nd-3rd grade reading level will be with a teaching assistant throughout each class period
 - These students will have the option of creating their own story, writing what would come next in the novel they read, or re-writing a section of the novel they read (my lowest ESL students who are at a 4th grade reading level will have this option as well)
- Students with LD's will be provided any modification required by their IEP's including preferential seating, copy of notes, and extra time for assignments
- Students in the gifted program who have been identified with DEP's and IDEP's will be given the additional challenge of establishing an alternate political or social system within their story, which is in line with the novels they read

Anticipatory Set:

- As you know, we have been learning about science fiction. Each of you has had a chance to read a science fiction novel and discuss these novels in depth within your literature circle. You've also had a chance to see a real science fiction novel told through a unique format when we read the *Fahrenheit 451* graphic novel.
- For our next activity, you will be combining what you learned about what makes a novel or a story part of the science fiction genre, and what we learned about the visual effects that a story told through a graphic novel format can have on a reader. You will be creating your own "graphic novel," although, a much shorter version, of your very own science fiction story.
- This assignment will require you to use your imagine to develop your very own science fiction story.
- Before we begin, let's review the elements of science fiction that we have studied- (*anticipated responses: problem, solution, futuristic (or alternate time) setting, protagonist, antagonist/s, evidence of advanced technology, unique society (utopia/ dystopia), and theme*). For any of these elements that are not said, I will prompt students by giving examples of what we saw in the graphic novel that the whole class read. I will have the graphic novel open and visible to the class with the document projector. For example, if they forget to say protagonist, I will ask them what type of character Montag was.
- Afterwards, I will write each of the elements on the board and have students write them on a sheet of paper

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- The first thing you will do is decide on the main elements of your story. Will you have two characters or more? What year will it be set in? The biggest thing you will need to decide is what will the problem of your story be and how will you resolve it? You will get to spend the next 15 minutes thinking of some of the details. I don't expect you to have your whole story developed in that time, but you should have a good idea of what you will write about. Are there any questions?
- *Give the students 15 minutes to begin filling in these details. Walk around room and assist students. Specifically work with EC students to ensure they understand the assignment and provide starter ideas as needed.*
- *Get class attention and ask 1-3 volunteers to share what their stories will be about. Now that you have started to get an idea of your story I will be showing you how you can use an online site to help you create your own graphic novel story.*
- *Using the LCD projector, model how to create an account on Pixton, and then give students time to create their own accounts on their iTouches. Provide assistance as needed.*
- After you've created your account, you will want to experiment a bit with the different characters and settings, but be sure not to spend too much time on deciding what your characters will look like. The important thing to focus on is that you have included the specific elements of science fiction that we have been talking about.
- *Model how to choose characters, setting, dialogue, and how to save the project. Ask students for suggestions of which characters/settings to use. Show students the tutorial on the Pixton site for trouble shooting and provide a screencast on my website of the lesson I taught.*
- *Take students to the computer lab and walk them through the opening steps: choosing backgrounds/ characters/etc.*
- *As students work on their projects, walk through the room to monitor and provide guided instruction. Many students will need to be walked through how to choose characters/ settings/dialogue/etc. Remind students to use the tutorials provided as a guide as well. Allow students to work independently, but provide assistance as needed.*

Closure:

- *Students will have three to four class days to work on this at school. On the third work day, model for students how to save their final product and copy the link. They will then paste the link to their class Edmodo page.*
- When you finish you will post your final product to Edmodo so you can share your stories with the rest of the class. You will write a comment on at least three other classmates' posts. Your comment should provide constructive feedback. You've had many opportunities to provide constructive feedback with other assignments we've posted on Edmodo, but let's review. What would a constructive comment look like? (*anticipated answers: respectful, always give a positive, comment on the actual work, talk about the science fiction characteristics*).
- You have now had become science fiction authors. What did you think about writing science fiction? What made it challenging? How did it feel to finish your work?

2. Pedagogy:

I am using modeling, guided practice, and independent practice to teach this lesson. The learning theories used are constructivism and social constructivism. Constructivism is seen through the active learning components of allowing students to discover how to use the Pixton site and create a comic that meets their vision by learning the site on their own. Students assimilate their knowledge about how to use creation websites and their understanding of the elements of science fiction to understand this new website. Social constructivism can be seen once students turn in their projects to Edmodo and students collaborate and provide feedback on each others' assignments, allowing them to learn from each other. I took into consideration that I have all different types of learners and this lesson allows students to work at their individual levels. I have provided accommodations for all of those who need them.

3. Content & Pedagogy:

These strategies allow me to teach the content because they show the students step-by-step how to create the content, allow them to begin working on their own with assistance, and gives them time to work independently. These strategies are best because students get time to both view and then practice the task at hand. I knew I would not be able to show them the lesson in the computer lab, so they had to mostly watch when in my classroom and practice independently. If the LCD projector wasn't limited to my classroom or the computers weren't limited to the computer lab, I would have allowed time for guided practice with me.

4. Technology:

The technology we are using is Pixton comic creator and Edmodo for sharing the finished project and providing collaborative feedback about it. These technologies are essential to the learning goal because they make the graphic novel in order to combine what they've learned about characteristics of the graphic novel format (dialogue, setting up a story with minimal text) and what they've learned about the elements of science fiction from reading and class discussions. This technology makes meeting the learning goal more achievable because it does not make students who struggle with writing legibly or with drawing feel limited or frustrated. It is also just more time efficient than having the students create the graphic novel by hand. By displaying the finished product on Edmodo, students are turning their work in digitally and also opening their stories up for feedback from peers. If this were done on paper, not all students would be able to view all of them and provide feedback.

5. Technology & Pedagogy:

The technology I have chosen allows students to work independently after seeing the instruction modeled. It allows them to assimilate what they know about science fiction with what they know about graphic novels, from what has been experienced in my class, to create their own science fiction graphic novel.

6. Technology & Content:

The technology chosen helps me to teach the big idea of using the elements of the science fiction genre to write an original story because it allows students to create their own graphic novel in an efficient manner that does not require students to have artistic talent or waste time worrying about the drawings, since that is not the focus of the assignment. It allows students to easily create characters, setting, dialogue in an easily accessible format.

7. Assessment:

I will assess that students have written an original graphic novel using each of the required science fiction elements discussed in class. I want to know that students understand the elements of science fiction and are able to use them to construct their unique stories. I also want them to show they can write in the unique format of a graphic novel. The technology used allows them to create these stories and allows me to see how they responded to each others' stories. Edmodo will also make it possible for students to turn their stories in digitally.