Pixton Practices Handout

Teacher Use of Pixton

For Use With Pixton PowerUp Webinar

Best Practice #1: Integrate New Knowledge

Prep

First, create a comic about a topic that the students are already familiar with. For example, when teaching about atoms, prepare two panels, one with helium balloons and one with a scuba diver and air bubbles. The students will use these as a discussion tool to review what they already know about atoms. Then, create a comic that expands and connects the familiar information to the new information you are trying to convey. You can also prepare a T-chart or some other graphic organizer to help retain or clarify the new information.

Activity

Review existing information by having students discuss the comic or panels you have prepared. For example, students may discuss how the gas inside a balloon differs from the gas in the bubble from a scuba diver and note that both involve elements that are made of atoms. Next, introduce a comic that extends their knowledge. For example, the new comic may show how atoms can combine to form compounds, and then it can introduce any important key terms. You can also include a T-chart or some other graphic organizer and summarize what students know about atoms and compounds. Pixton offers a variety of graphic organizers you can choose from in the Printables under the Resources tab.

PowerUp Variations

Ask students to evaluate the comic using the Rate Your Comic feature and its printable rubric. This feature includes example comics that are rated as “Oops,” “Fair,” “Fine,” or “Mint” to help you guide students to choose appropriate ratings. The rating categories are “Background & Focus,” “Characters & Expression,” “Captions & Dialog,” “Spelling & Grammar,” “Theme,” and “Sharing.”

Differentiation

Scaffolding Support: Include additional detail in the original images or provide multiple images to support student recall.

Directed Resources: Direct students to specific supporting resources by adding captions in the panels. Students can refer to the resources to support vocabulary or concepts.

Include Guiding Questions: Write guiding questions to help students think about the differences between two concepts.

Give Visual Aids: Add images or sketches to the graphic organizer to help students recall concepts.

Best Practice #2: Reduce Cognitive Load

Prep

Find an article with an appropriate reading level. Give students digital access or print the article. Also, print the News Article graphic organizer from the Printables section of the Resources tab in Pixton. Prepare a comic that summarizes the main points of the article and gives visual clues that enhance student understanding of the topic.

Activity

Students will read the article and the comic and analyze them to determine the topic and relevant themes. For example, you may assign an article on the Asian elephant, an endangered species. This activity reduces cognitive load by introducing the comic for support and context. Students don't have to remember everything in the article because they have the critical information in a format that is highly visual with less text—a comic. This reduces mental fatigue, helps students process information, and prevents students from simply quitting.

PowerUp Variations

Provide a graphic organizer template, such as the News Article printable resource. Allow students to team up and fill out the organizer. Then, ask students to discuss the relevant themes and topics in the article and comic.

Differentiation

Adjust Reading Levels: Create multiple versions of the article or find a site that will adjust Lexile reading levels.

Scaffolding Support: Provide or allow aids as reference resources.

Ongoing Check-Ins: Regularly check in with students during independent work to provide feedback and support, ensuring all students participate and understand the task.

Best Practice #3: Offer Choice and Collaboration

Prep

Prepare a sample comic that models the task you will assign and includes panels that instruct and challenge students to complete an open-ended task. Choice fosters engagement, so provide multiple options to allow students to choose the design or topic of the comic that you assign. For example, you may share a comic asking students to write their own word problem and include a specific number of vocabulary terms from a list. As a fun twist, you can tell students what the answer to the word problem must be in the comic. Use the AI-enabled activity generator to create an activity and assign it to the class with the comic available to remix.

Activity

Place the students into teams to encourage collaboration, which helps ensure engagement. Students will work collaboratively, make choices, and complete the assignment. When using the assignment feature for activities, Pixton stores the class comics and you can easily view them in one place or display them for all to see.

Differentiation

Group Composition: Form heterogeneous teams to ensure a mix of abilities and skills, fostering peer support and collaboration

Role Assignments: Assign varying vocabulary as appropriate for the team. A larger number or more challenging vocabulary can be assigned to a team with greater proficiency.

Associated Research

Apostolou, D., & Linardatos, G. (2023). Cognitive load approach to digital comics creation: A student-centered learning case. *Applied Sciences*, *13*(13), Article 7896. https://doi.org/10.3390/app13137896

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Zhou, Y., Yi, F., Dong, B., Zhang, G., Zhang, Y., Xu, T. (2024). Mental imagery scaffolding: The effects of detail richness and text load on geography learning. *Education and Information Technologies*, *29*, 16929–16956. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12540-2