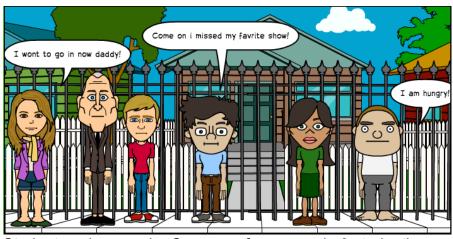


The SAMR Model: Integrating Bitstrips for Schools

Ministry Licensed Resource Title:	Bitstrips for Schools http://www.bitstripsforschools.com
Description of resource	Bitstrips for Schools is an online educational tool that allows teachers and students to create their own comic book characters and stories. Creating comics with Bitstrips for Schools engages students in many areas of the Ontario curriculum through a medium that they are both familiar and comfortable with. The online comic creator allows students to explore critical and creative thinking processes through character creation; drafting, revising, editing, and publishing their comics; and online social interactions with their peers. Students can create their own comic avatar, build fully poseable characters, props, settings, clothing, and stories, and can view and comment on one anothers' comic creations.
	Teachers can create classes, grouping students together, and assign activities from an extensive library. Activities are organized by subject: English, Science, Math, History, Social Studies, Arts, Civics, Values Education, Business & Law, Health & Phys-Ed, ESL/ELL, and Other. The library is searchable, and teachers can save activities to their own list, or create new activities of their own. Bitstrips also has a blog, where activities, ideas, and valuable how-to information is posted.
	Comics that students create can be shared to a Class Gallery, where all students in the class can view and comment on their peers' work. Students can even add facial expressions, emotions, or "laughs" to their comments to show just how they are feeling. Class galleries can also be made public so that parents and other classes can view students' work.
	Both class photos (a group of student avatars with their teacher's avatar) and comics can be saved to a computer. Comics can be saved as a .PNG image, a .JPEG image, HTML, or .PDF. Bitstrips offers a wealth of information and support for teachers and students, including webinars, videos, tutorials, and getting started guides.

Curriculum Connections	Reading 1. Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning. 1.1 Read a variety of literary texts, graphic texts, and informational texts 1.4 Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by identifying important ideas and some supporting details Writing 2. Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience 2.1 Write short texts using a variety of forms 2.2 Establish a personal voice in their writing, with a focus on using concrete images to convey their attitude or feeling towards the subject or audience Media Literacy 3. Create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques 3.1 Identify the topic, purpose, and audience for media texts they plan to create 3.4 Produce media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques
The "traditional" classroom practice and approach to the learning goals	Students choose a book to read and then write a book report that summarizes the text and explores the characters, setting, and theme. The students create a title page and/or illustrations to accompany their book report. The book reports are shared with other students and displayed in the room.
SAMR: Substitution	Students create a comic strip using Bitstrips for Schools by choosing characters, backgrounds and props from the Bitstrips for Schools collection. Students print their comics, and they are displayed in the class.



Student work example: One pane from a grade 3 student's comic summarizing "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"

SAMR:

Augmentation

Using some of the advanced features in Bitstrips for Schools, students create their own characters, backgrounds, and props to support their analysis of the text they are exploring. Students can add captions, text boxes, and speech bubbles to communicate their thinking. Characters can be posed in different positions and controls can be used to open and close their mouths, and eyes, and convey emotions on their faces.



Screen shot: creating and naming a character



Screen shot: An uploaded photograph becomes a background. The character's mouth is open, and he is posed to address his audience

SAMR:

Modification

Once students have started creating comics in Bitstrips for Schools, they can share their work in the class gallery, and download it to their computer. In the class gallery, students are able to comment, provide feedback and indicate their 'likes' with the 'laugh button.



 Comment: Student comments appear with a picture of their avatar's head. Students can change the facial expressions of their avatars to express their opinion about the comic they are commenting on.



Students can also collaborate on activities that their teacher has assigned,, by clicking the "work together" button and choosing a

student from the class list drop down menu. This allows students to work on the same comic strip together.



http://help.bitstripsforschools.com /knowledgebase/articles/100059collaborating-on-comics

SAMR:

Redefinition

After students have created their comics and experimented with the different controls and advanced tools to polish their work, the comics can be shared to the public Bitstrips gallery where a much larger audience can view and comment on it. When this feature is enabled, Bitstrips will generate a link that can be shared with parents and other classes as well.



A variety of rich lessons can be explored once the students are

more familiar and comfortable with Bitstrips for Schools. For example:

- In reading, students could examine a text form and have a comic book character identify the features of that particular type of text (1.4 Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by identifying important ideas and some supporting details).
- In writing, students could explore point of view and the development of their own personal voice by retelling a story read in class from a different character's point of view in Bitstrips (2.2 Establish a personal voice in their writing, with a focus on using concrete images to convey their attitude or feeling towards the subject or audience).
- In Media Literacy, students could write a sequel to a favourite graphic novel, or invent one of their own and share it with their classmates. Students could even collaborate in a writing project to create their own class graphic novel, with each student being responsible for writing and controlling their own character (3.4 Produce media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques)

Using the controls in the gallery, students can also share their finished comics with their classmates, and use the "blog" button to get both an embed code to add their comic to their blog or website, and an image code to add an image of their comic to something else they are publishing (i.e. a Google document or presentation)

Considerations for Digital Citizenship:

Bitstrips for Schools has a collection of scenes, characters, and props that are free for students to use and share. In addition, students can search from the Flikr Commons bar that is also included in Bitstrips.

In addition to using the images from the collection and the Flikr Commons bar, creating backgrounds, characters, and props in Bitstrips provides the opportunity for teachers and students to explore the issue of copyright and learn about using Creative Commons or advanced search options to find their images.

Bitstrips for Schools provides a social aspect in which students can learn how to create a positive comment and interact online with their classmates. In addition, students will be able to observe their impact in a public gallery by reading and responding to comments from others.

Sharing their comics in a blog or on a website teaches students to be creators and contributors to a global digital society. In sharing comics, they will need to learn about privacy when posting and sharing work. They will also need to recognize that the work they publish online reflects their attitudes and opinions and impacts their digital footprint.

Reflections from the author....

What impact did using this digital approach have on your instructional practice?

Bitstrips was one of the first software tools I used when I started teaching Media Literacy to my primary students. What I have found is that it is very easy to use, and that students are very engaged with it. I have also found that it can be used across the curriculum particularly when tied to Media Literacy and Writing.

One major impact Bitstrips had on my instructional practice was in learning to allow students the time to tinker with something. One of the students' favourite things to do with Bitstrips is to create the avatar that represents them. When I first started using Bitstrips, I wanted to get right to the activity and have the students creating comics so that I could assess them. But after several times of trying to hurry them through, I stepped back and realized that in creating their avatar, not only were they learning how to use the software, but they were also creating a safe image of themselves and developing their digital citizenship, they were also developing their personal voice and honing their writing skills by creating a character!

Now, whenever I introduce a new technology tool, I take the time to let the students play before we get too serious about completing assignments.

In terms of SAMR, I absolutely started with Substitution when I started using Bitstrips, and in fact I still start with Substitution whenever I introduce a new group of kids to this tool, or any other. Everyone needs to feel comfortable wading in the shallow end of the pool before they dive into the deep end. Giving the students a simple activity to start, such as introducing their avatar by creating a simple comic can be a substitute for creating an "All About Me" poster at the beginning of the year. That way, once you are ready to redefine the way you teach and present activities to the students, they are ready.

The impact this approach has had on my instructional practice is huge. I take things a bit more slowly, and I listen to the students and what they want to do with Bitstrips. I give them the time to play and learn about the tool, and then we create activities together. I have found that my students' response is overwhelmingly positive. They are

so invested in their avatar characters and they work very diligently to make sure their work is worthy of publishing when they know it will be seen by their classmates.

How did you know the approach had impact?

I know this approach has had an impact on my students. They talk about how their avatar is a safe picture of them, and they spend time on their own when they are at home working on their comics. My students are always asking to use Bitstrips, and the work they submit to me when they use the tool is always very high quality. Because they don't have to worry about how their illustrations work, they focus more on their writing, and because they are writing in a more relaxed format (graphic novel) I get more ideas from them. I can see that my students enjoy using Bitstrips, and that it is a fun, safe activity for them.