

EDER 669.73 L06
Language Teaching and Technology

University of Calgary
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“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.”

–Nelson Mandela

Hi, I'm Laura Brass.
I'm an ESL Teacher



A Little About Myself.

Hi everyone!

My Name is Laura Brass, and I have been an ESL/EFL teacher for over 15 years. Originally from Târgoviște, Romania, I grew up

straddling Communism and Revolution. As the world around me changed and the revolution gave birth to a new Romania, it brought with it an influx of Western-ism and ENGLISH! English and the pursuit of teaching it has been my passion since I was a teenager. I have been fortunate enough to teach and learn Internationally from England to Italy, the USA to my new home in Vancouver BC, Canada. Now I find myself on the precipice of a new chapter unfolding in that pursuit as I stare down the end of my MEd program. I look forward to starting this chapter with a renewed vigor and enhanced knowledge of my chosen profession with the hope of making a difference in my students' lives the way so many of my teachers impacted on mine.

LEARN MORE



WELCOME

About 3 years ago, my husband and I were eating dinner and talking about our goals and where we were at in our careers. It was during that conversation that I decided it was time for me to dedicate myself to taking the next steps in growing myself academically and professionally by achieving my Masters Degree. With this singular goal in mind, I started my hunt for my MEd program, my 3 main criteria being:
1. A highly reputable MEd program
2. A program that allowed me to learn interactively online
3. A highly ranked Canadian university

So here I am now roughly 6 months from achieving my goal and I couldn't be happier with my choice to attend the MEd program at the University of Calgary. This decision has allowed me to interact with amazing and inspirational professors and learn alongside some of the most intelligent and collaborative people I have had the opportunity to meet (even if only virtually).



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"Four Legged Friends" Rationale

What: Pets
Why: Passion
How: Digital storytelling
Goal: Encourage autonomous learning

While I was brainstorming ideas for how I could integrate technology into my classroom, I decided to choose a topic that I'm both passionate about and feel personally invested in. I have a four legged friend, Max, he's my pet, my loyal companion, loving friend, and my furry child. Max helped open my eyes to the joy a pet can bring to your life and made me a true advocate for animal rights. I was so excited to have found a topic I could bring to my classroom. The PDF below explains how I connect theory from relevant literature sources to practice in my teaching context.

It4_-_rationale.pdf
Download File



ACTIVITIES

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Activity #1a: Pre-viewing: Predict the Story

- In groups of three, students predict the story, and write collaboratively in a Word document (100-150 words).



Activity #1b: Viewing

- Students watch “The Present” on <https://vimeo.com/152985022>, then discuss it:
- What did you like most about the movie?
- What would you do if you were the boy in the story?
- What do you think happened next?

Activity #1c: Post-viewing

- Students share their prediction stories (written in Word) with another group that provides written feedback, using the Writing Assessment Rubrics.

ACTIVITIES

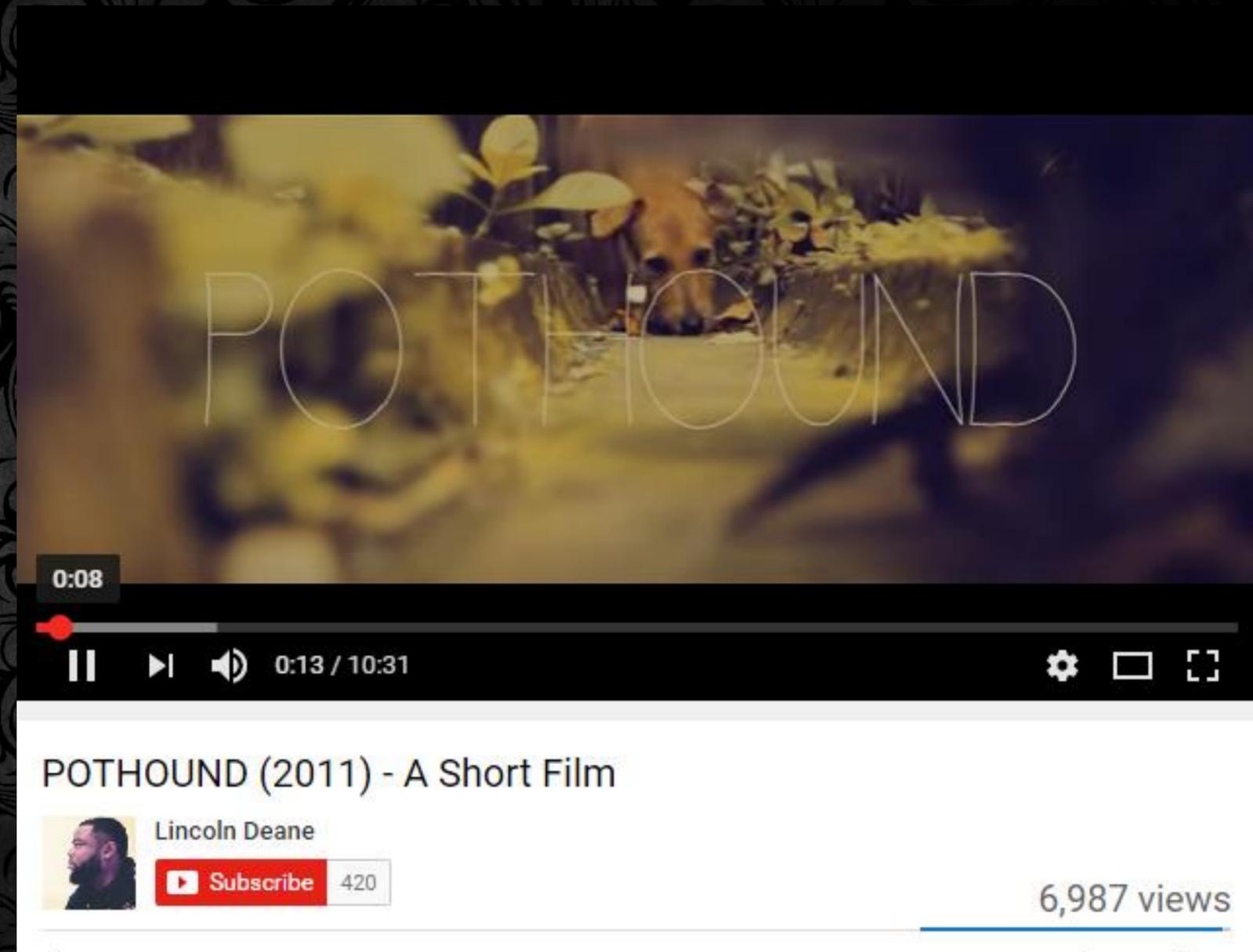
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Activity #3a: No-Word Digital Story: "Pothound"

- Students log on to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdM-V_10dO8, and watch a no-word digital story presented from the perspective of a dog, called "Pothound."
- Students take notes, then retell the story in their own words.
- Next, they compare stories to see what they might have missed, and watch the video again, adding to their notes, if necessary.

Activity #3b: Students' No-Word Digital Stories

- Students record different sounds (at the park, coffee shop, restaurant, shopping mall, bus/underground station, gym, at home, etc.), creating a one-minute pictureless video, which they bring to class for their peers to speculate about.
- While listening, students take notes, then compare them in groups.
- Students guess something that happened in the past, hence the grammar point they learn in this unit is Simple Past.



"Pothound" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdM-V_10dO8,

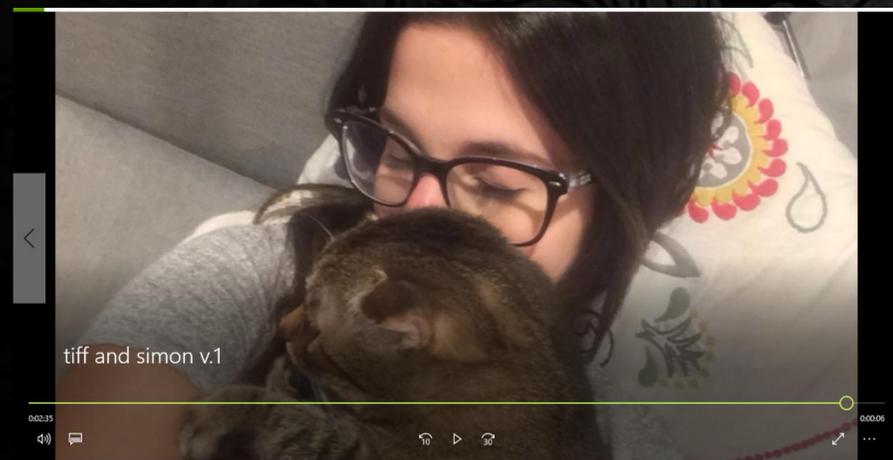


ACTIVITIES

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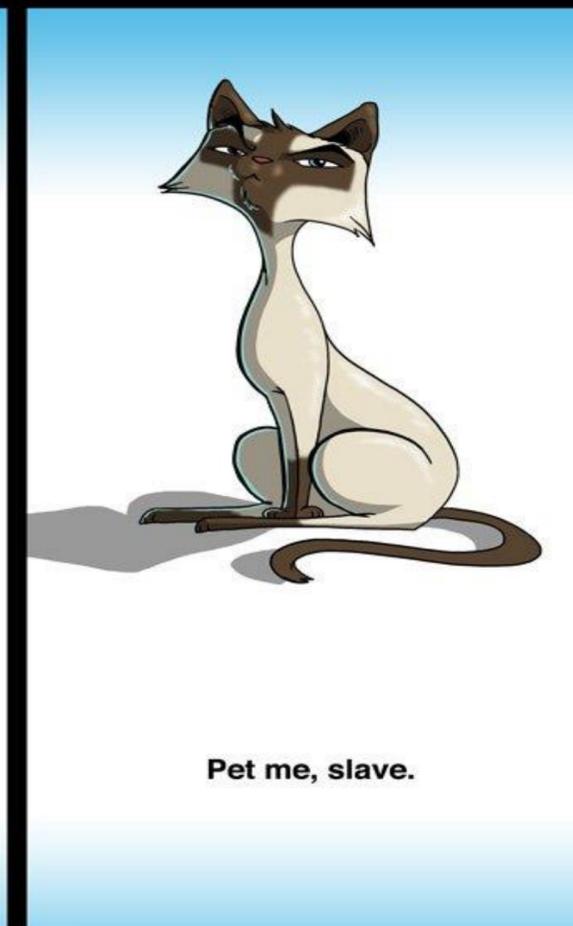
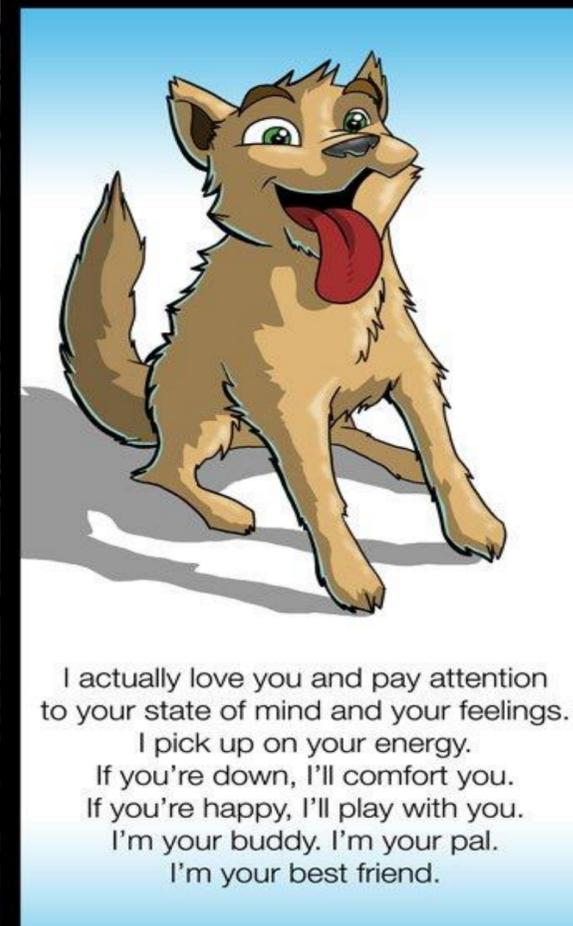
Activity #4a: While Viewing: Two Digital Stories: Information Gap.

- Half of the class (students A) watches the man's story, the other half (students B) watches the woman's story, then they get together in pairs, and tell each other what their digital story was about.
- To check for accuracy, students A watch students B's video, and vice-versa, noting all the verbs in the simple past that they hear.



Activity #4b: Post-viewing: Cats and Dogs Picture Based Discussion

- In pairs, students discuss the two digital stories (e.g., what they liked, disliked), and make a list of the qualities the owners mentioned about their pets, and answer Taffy Raphael's QARs.
- Next, students discuss the cartoon (see below).



ACTIVITIES

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Activity #4c: Cats versus Dogs: Social Media Questionnaire

- Students log on to <http://www.tricider.com> and post for and against arguments to statements uploaded by the teacher.

www.tricider.com/admin/2v8dseqchmt/4sexpSMSfOf

Who makes better pets: cats or dogs?

Add a description

Ideas

Dogs are better, because they are loyal and loving.
by Laura Brass

Pros and cons

- And yet, there have been cases of dogs attacking humans.
by Laura Brass
- + Dogs are man's best friend.
by Laura Brass

[Add argument](#)

[Add idea](#)

Activity #4d: The Battle of the Pets: Debate

- Students A think that cats are better; students B believe that dogs are better.
- Students do a 5-minute debate, then change partners.
- Useful debate expressions (see below).

Stating an opinion	In my opinion... The way I see it ... If you ask me ... As far as I'm concerned ...
Asking for an opinion	What do you think? What's your idea? How do you feel about this?
Agreeing	You're absolutely right. I couldn't agree more. That's for sure. That's exactly how I feel. No doubt about it. Absolutely. Tell me about it.
Disagreeing	Not necessarily. I don't think so. I'm not sure about that. I'm afraid I disagree. I'd say the exact opposite. No way!
Interrupting	Can I add something here? If I might add something. Sorry to interrupt, but ... Sorry, go ahead.
Settling an argument	Let's just move on. I think we're going to have to agree to disagree.

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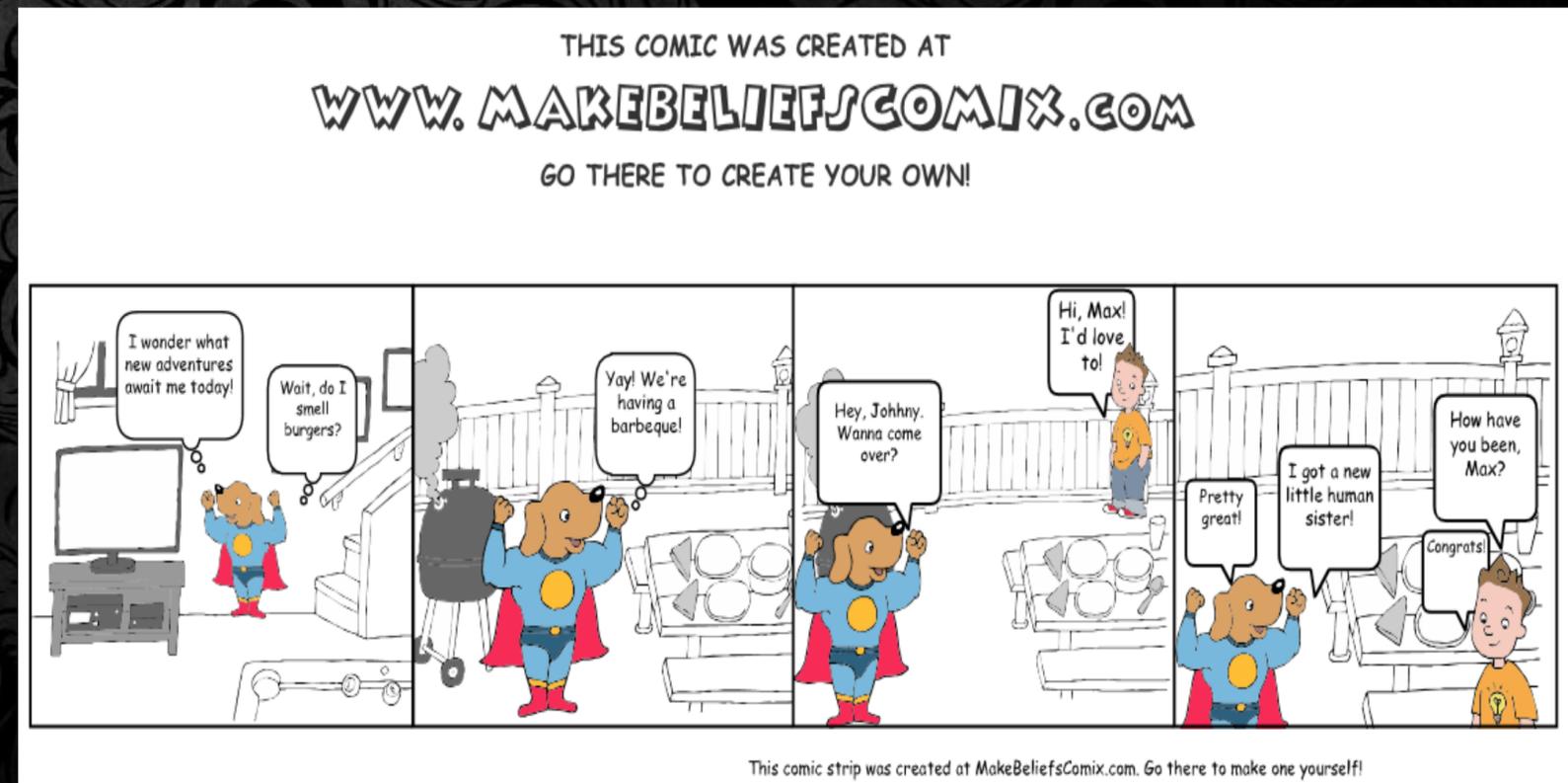
Activity #5: Field Trip: Visit to the SPCA and the Vancouver Aquarium Before the Field Trip:

- Students learn about dog breeds, ways they can help animals at the shelters (e.g., volunteer, donate, foster, adopt, etc.) on <http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/branches/vancouver> and read about marine animals on <https://www.vanaqua.org/>.
- Next, students complete the “Know,” and “Want to Know” sections of the KWL chart, which they bring with them on the field trip, when they also fill out the “Learned” section.

K-W-L CHART			TOPIC:
K now	W ant to K now	L earned	

Activity #6a: Collaborative Writing: Scaffolded Writing: Comic strips

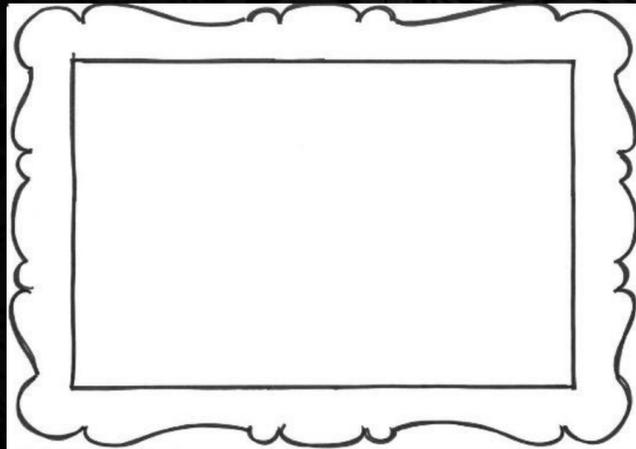
- Using <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com>, students collaboratively write comic strips, which they then print, and post on the classroom walls for everyone to read.
- Using <http://www.tricider.com>, students can vote for the funniest, most original, etc.



ACTIVITIES

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My Wild Pet



People call him/ her _____.

He/ She normally lives in _____.

He/ She usually eats _____ but also _____.

He/ She doesn't eat _____ or _____.

He/ She is afraid of _____,
but _____ is/ are afraid of him/ her.

He/ She gets on well with _____.

He/ She loves to _____

but doesn't like to _____.

During the day, he/ she _____.

At night, he/ she _____.

He/ She normally lives for _____, but if humans take care
of him/ her, then he/ she can _____.

He/ She is endangered because _____

_____.

People should _____ and shouldn't _____

in order to protect other animals like my wild pet.

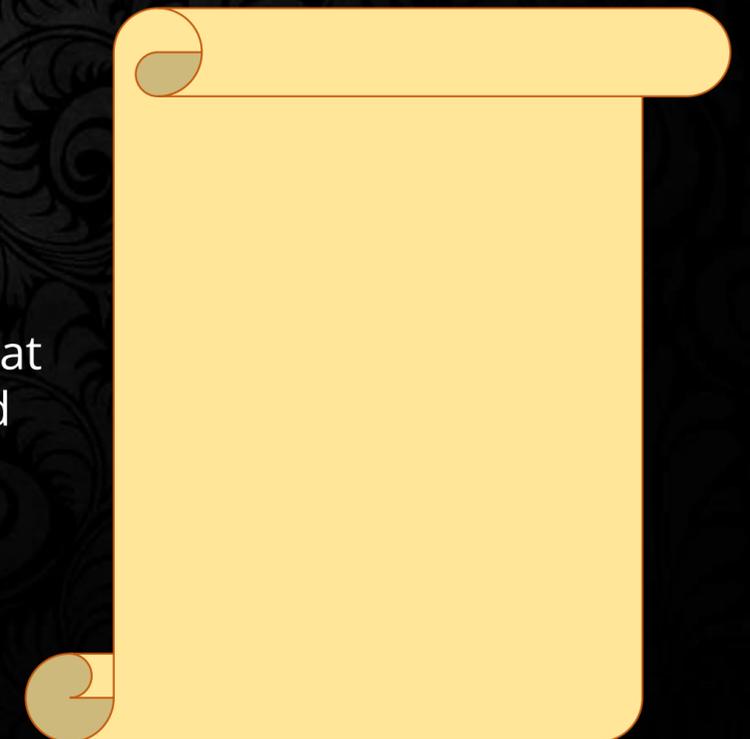
We can all _____ to show that we care about our friends, the animals.

Activity #7: Digital Stories

- Students create stories about pets, wild animals, endangered species, or their visit to the SPCA and the Aquarium.
- Using the Keyhole format, they write a draft, which is shared with peers for feedback. Next, they edit, add pictures and sound to their digital narratives.
- Students upload their digital stories on <https://screencast-o-matic.com/> or <https://spark.adobe.com>.
- While students present their digital stories, and participate in a Q&A follow-up session, the teacher evaluates them using the Speaking Assessment Criteria.

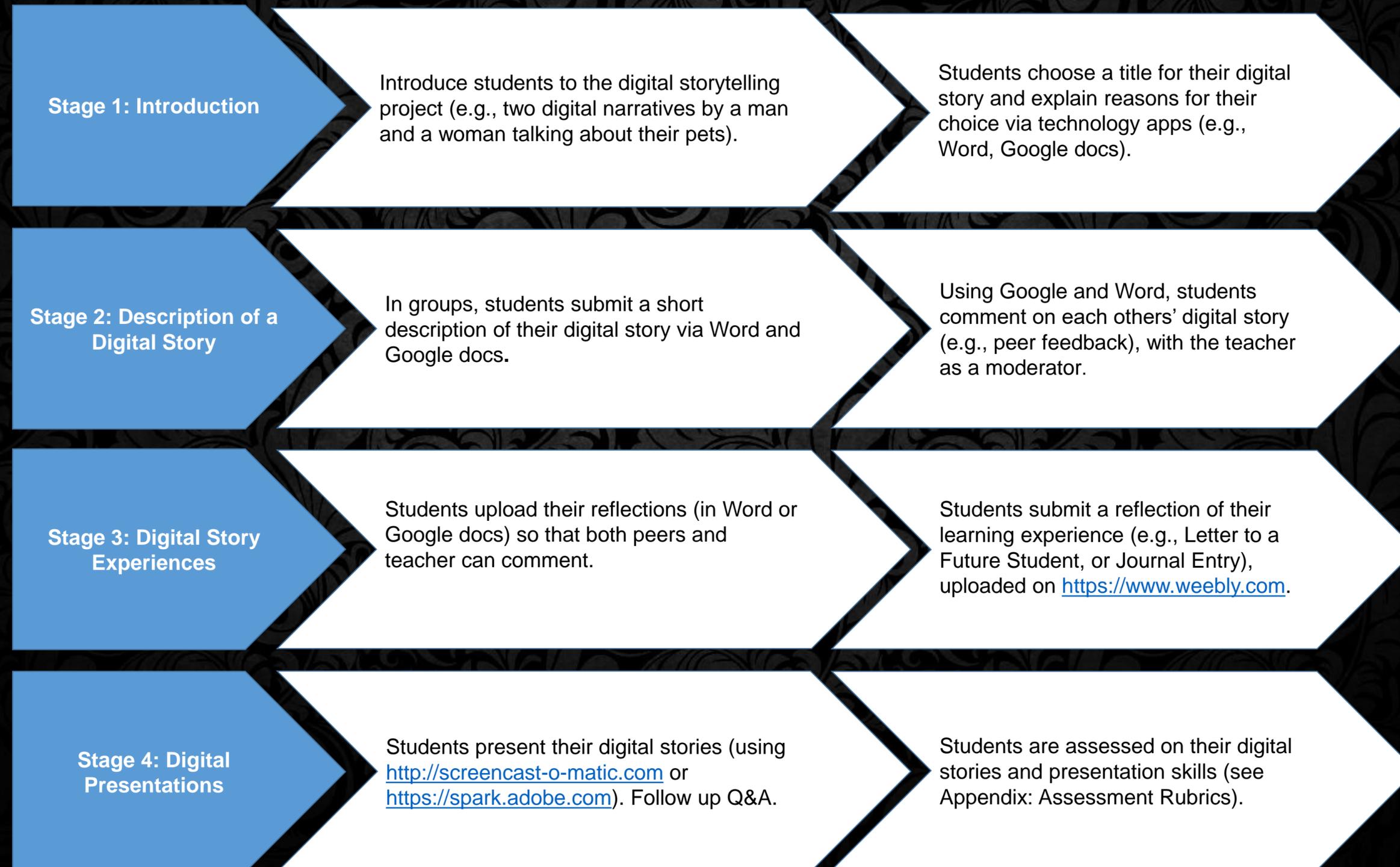
Activity #8: Individual Writing: Letter to a Future Student/Journal Entry

- In a letter addressed to an imaginary friend (or a journal entry), students write about what they have learned, enjoyed, and was challenging about the unit (250- 275 words).



Digital storytelling outline

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Assessment

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Writing Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Fails to Meet Requirements (C+ or lower)	Meets Requirements (B- to B+)	Meets All and Exceeds Some Requirements (A. to A+)
Accuracy	Uses basic grammar structures. Makes a lot of grammar mistakes which affect the meaning.	Uses simple grammar structures. Makes some grammar mistakes, meaning can still be understood.	Uses a wide range of grammar structures. Makes very few to no grammar mistakes which do not affect the meaning.
Vocabulary	Uses a narrow range of vocabulary. A lot of repetition of lexis.	Uses a limited range of vocabulary. Occasional repetition of lexis.	Uses a wide range of vocabulary. Occasional inappropriate use of less frequently used lexis.
Organization	Ideas and arguments are poorly organized. Uses very few to no basic linking devices.	Ideas and arguments are adequately organized. Uses a limited number of simple linking devices.	Ideas and arguments are effectively organized. Uses a variety of linking devices.
Peer feedback	Shows little to no incorporation of peer feedback.	Shows some incorporation of peer feedback.	Clearly shows incorporation of peer feedback.
Task completion	Fails to complete the task. Content is irrelevant to the task. Reader is little to not informed.	Somewhat completes the task. Minor content irrelevances to the task. Reader is somewhat informed.	Successfully completes the task. All content is relevant to the task. Reader is fully informed.
Overall impression	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent

Speaking Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Fails to Meet Requirements (C+ or lower)	Meets Requirements (B- to B+)	Meets All and Exceeds Some Requirements (A. to A+)
Accuracy	Relies on memorized structures. Makes numerous grammar mistakes which affect the meaning.	Uses simple grammar structures. Makes some grammar mistakes, meaning can still be understood.	Uses simple and complex grammar structures. Makes very few to no grammar mistakes which do not affect communication.
Vocabulary	Uses simple vocabulary to convey meaning. Makes frequent errors in word choice.	Uses vocabulary with limited flexibility, with some inappropriate word choices.	Uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions.
Fluency	Speaks with long pauses. Makes frequent repetition and little to no self-correction.	Usually maintains flow of speech, with some repetition and self-correction.	Speaks fluently with rare repetition and self-correction.
Pronunciation	Speech is often impossible to understand.	Speech is generally understood. Mispronunciation reduces clarity at times.	Speech is effortlessly understood, with only occasional mispronunciation.
Task completion	Fails to complete the task. Content is irrelevant to the task.	Somewhat completes the task. Minor content irrelevances to the task.	Successfully completes the task. All content is relevant to the task.
Overall impression	Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent

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