Post Practicum Best Practice / Resource Sharing

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**Battle on the Western Front – Graphic Novel Jigsaw Activity**

**Directions**

In this activity, students are given a comic life strip without any captions on one of the four major battles on the Western Front (Canadian). They then work in groups to fill in the graphic organizer with information they find in the textbook. Images and progression in the comic are chosen to correspond with textbook information.

After students have completed the comic strip for their own battle, they pool information together with other groups to complete all comic strips. Finally, a representative from each group gives a summary presentation to the whole class. This is an opportunity for the teacher to do “damage control” and to ensure that all important information was included.

My goal in designing this activity was multifaceted. Because our school had limited resources, I knew that students would not be able to create a comic life strip from scratch. However, I also knew that visual component of the exercise would appeal to several of them. I particularly liked the open-ended nature of the captions as it allowed for both creativity and critical thought. This class was weak at making inferences which this activity forced them to do. Finally, the students had not done much group work previously in the class and this was a good way to get them working together.

**Advice / Modifications**

If you were in a school with more resources and/or you had more time, this activity could be done as a take home project where students create their own comic life strip from scratch. The downside, however, could be that you would lose the collaborative jigsaw aspect of this assignment where students pool their information.

Because it uses the comic book format, this exercise runs the risk of seeming flippant about a serious topic. In order to prepare students for this, I showed them pages from the Graphic Novel MAUS as an exemplar. The teacher should be sensitive to the maturity level of the class when introducing or assigning this activity.