**Creating a Comic to explore a core subject area**

**Audience:** 5th grade social studies classrooms

**Purpose:** To review important World War II political figures, and to use a software or web based application that creates a comic strip for students to showcase their writing about these figures.

**Learning Objectives/Outcomes:** Students will summarize their understanding of important World War II figures and the roles they played in the war by creating a comic strip that identifies the figures and discusses their role in World War II.
Students will utilize a software application such as Comic Life, Pixon, or Toon Doo to create a comic strip.

**Materials:** Readings about World War II, computers and appropriate software, internet connection, printer, paper, pencil, overhead projector, instructional power point presentation about software, rubrics and checklists for assessment

**Step-by-Step Procedures:**

**Day 1**
1.     Students are directly instructed with a power point/lecture about how to use Comic Life, Toon Doo, or Pixon.
2.     Students practice using the application for 20 minutes.  While students are practicing, teacher will circulate the room and offer assistance and answer questions as needed.
3.     Students create a practice comic strip about their day in school using the chosen application.  As students are creating their comic, teacher circulates the room and offers assistance and answers questions as needed.
4.     When students complete the comic of their day at school, teacher views the comic and marks it off the checklist.

**Day 2**
5.     Students work with a partner to write a story about important World War II figures.  They will pick a minimum of 2 figures focus on.  The story must include a main character and have a beginning, middle and an end.  The story can be brief, because it will be what the students use to create their comic strip.
6.     Students will turn in their story to the teacher for review.  The teacher will proofread the stories and conference with each group.  During the brief conference (2-5 minutes), teacher will offer suggestions for improvement in the story and guidance as necessary, as well as clarify and answer any questions group members have.
7.     Students adapt their story to a comic strip using the chosen application.  Teacher briefly reviews the text for adaptation.
8.     Students create the comic strip using Toon Doo, Pixon, or Comic Life.
9.     Depending on the chosen application, students either publish, save, or print their final comic for the teacher to review.
10. Teacher assess each comic strip using a rubric and provides specific feedback to each student via written comments on the rubric.

**Assessment Strategies:** Students will be graded using multiple assessment tools, including observation, completion checklist and rubric.

**Follow up strategies:**
Students will be required to reflect up their comic experience by writing a journal entry about the experience.  In the entry they address the following:
a.     their opinion of the assignment
b.     any challenges they faced with the assignment
c.      their favorite part of the assignment and the worst part of the assignment
d.     if they could do the assignment again, what would they change?
e.     Three things they learned from the assignment.

**Reflection:** **Challenges, Surprises**
In implementing the above lesson plan, there were a few challenges and surprises.  The lesson needed to be split into parts, the fist part consisting of students learning how to navigate and effectively use the software, and the second part in which students apply their new skills to practice a standard.  It would be helpful to have another adult in the room during all parts of the lesson to ensure students are staying on task, and to help address student questions.  While the teacher is conferencing with a group about their story and adaptions, it is important that other students are able to move forward with their work and continue producing their comics.  One of the challenges of the lesson was to ensure that each group was proficient in using the chosen software. In the lesson it indicates that students could use one of three possible software applications, but in reality, it is easiest if the teacher chooses one and centers the lesson around that particular software.  If a school does not have access to Comic Life, it would be a challenge for the teacher to ensure that software is downloaded on all the computers. Therefore it would be easiest to use a web based application, such as Pixton and Too Doo.  However, if a web based application is used, it is important that the teacher know that students will have to have a login and password, or will have to create their own accounts, which requires an email address. All in all, students would benefit from the above lesson because they would not only be practicing a standard, but also be incorporating reading and writing across the curriculum, as well as enhancing their technical and computer skills.