COMICS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE:

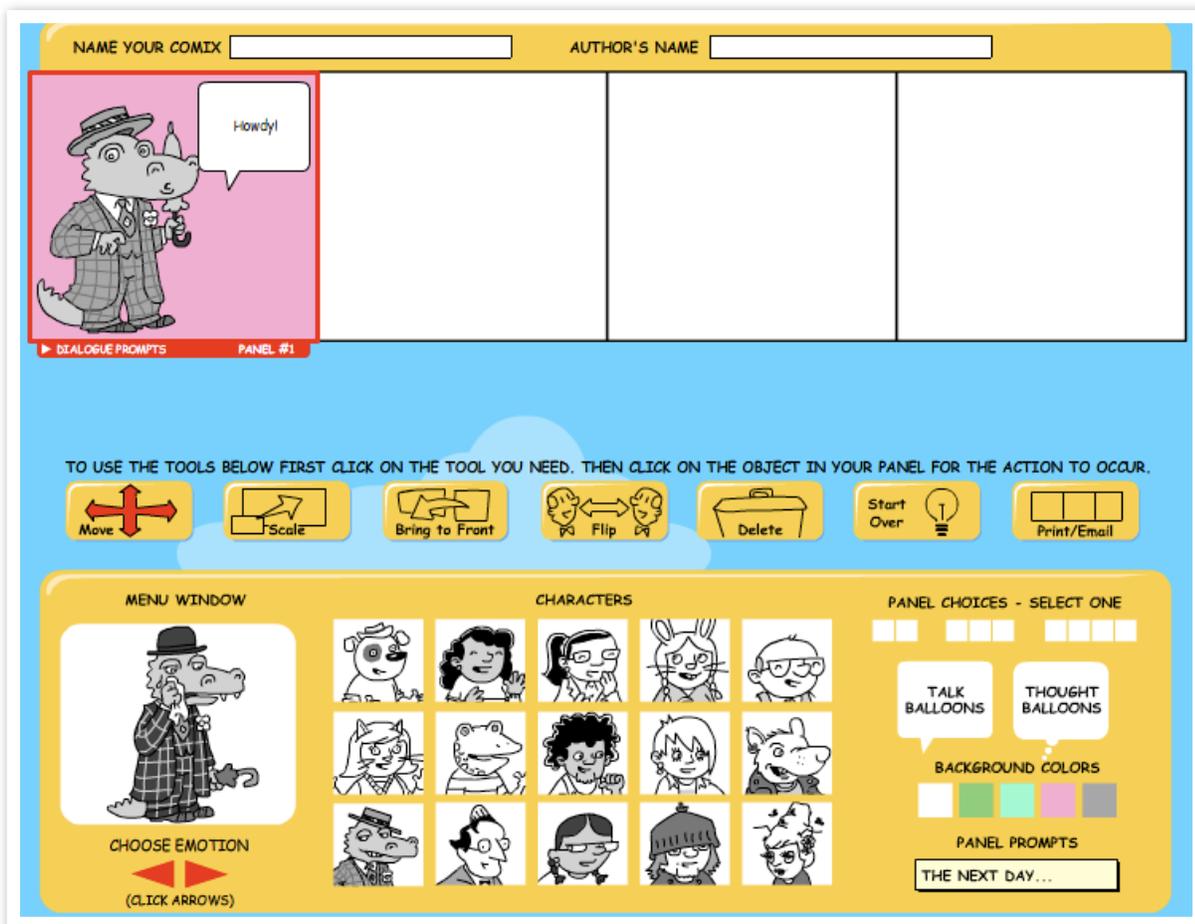## Creating and using comic strips in the foreign language classroom.

In a foreign language class, one of the primary objectives is for students to express themselves in the target language. A free tool like www.makebeliefscomix.com is a great platform that encourages students to create comic strips using the vocabulary they have learned. Teachers can easily create comic strips and use them as reading activities that convey the essence of the lesson in a fun and effective way.

Created by Bill Zimmerman and illustrated by Tom Bloom, this site is extremely user-friendly.

Let's explore the many ways that you can use this tool in your classroom…

CREATING THE COMIC STRIPS

- First decide on how many panels you are going to use. Panels range from 2 to 4.

- Then select your character. You can choose the emotion of your character by using the arrows below the chosen image in the menu window.

- You can also change the color of the background.

- Next, choose a talk balloon or a thought balloon. You can choose the size and the direction by using the arrow under the chosen balloon in the menu window.

- Once the balloon in placed in the panel, begin writing.

- Once you finish your comic strip, you have to click on the Print/Email button and either print your comic strip or email it and print it later.

USING www.makebeliefscomix.com IN THE CLASSROOM

- Teachers can assess students' knowledge of the target language by making students create comic strips using the target language. Some examples of students' work are given below.

5th grade students created comic strips to showcase their knowledge of the Spanish greetings.

7th grade students created comic strips while studying the verb 'gustar', which is used to express likes and dislikes.

8th grade students created comic strips while studying the food unit.

CREATING ACTIVITIES USING www.makebeliefscomix.com

· Teachers can make reading comprehension activities by creating their own comic strips and then having students answer questions based on the comic strip.

An example of a activity created for a Spanish class is given below:

Nombre

Fecha

El señor Cocodrilo

Contesten las preguntas.

1.   ¿De dónde es el Sr. Cocodrilo?

2.   ¿Cuántos años tiene él?

3.   ¿Cuántas personas hay en su familia? ¿Quiénes son?

4.   ¿Cuál es su profesión? ¿Dónde trabaja él?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I think that **www.makebeliefscomix.com** is a great website for teachers and students. It provides students an avenue to express themselves. This tool has really helped my students to apply the vocabulary and grammar that they learn in class.

Presently, the only drawback seems to be that there is no provision to save the incomplete comic strips. However, don't be discouraged. When I contacted the creator of this site regarding this issue, he said that realizes the problem and is working towards addressing it.

My suggestion to overcome this minor hurdle is to ensure that my students write their draft copy in class before we go to the computer lab, thereby saving enough time for them to type and create their comic strips on the computer in one sitting.

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