

eFuture lesson plan

Web 2.0 and/or Mobile learning

Title

Teaching Poetry through PicLits and Google Docs
Class: English/Irish

Author

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Description

This lesson aims to make the teaching of poetry – creation and comprehension – more enjoyable, more individual and more entertaining.

Outcomes include:

- Enhanced word skills
- Collaborative working
- Peer assessment
- Use of multimedia and Web 2.0 tools

Teaching Science with Dipity

We will be using two Web 2.0 tools for this lesson; PicLits at http://www.piclits.com/compose_dragdrop.aspx and Google Docs at <http://docs.google.com>.

PicLit is a simple but very usable tool that lets the users write poetry on the web - either with free-composition or through "drag and drop" from a preselected word list.

PicLit composes words over pictures and has a huge gallery of previous users efforts. It is encouraging, simple and accessible.

Google Docs is part of the Google Suite of products. It is an online word processor with some highly advanced capabilities - one of which we shall be using in this lesson, the ability for multiple users to contribute to and edit the same document.

Resources required

PicLit Account

To create an account on PicLit go to <http://www.piclits.com/signup.aspx>

PicLits.com is a creative writing site that matches beautiful images with carefully selected keywords in order to inspire you. The object is to put the right words in the right place and the right order to capture the essence, story, and meaning of the picture.

It is not necessary to create an account to use PicLit but all students should be asked to create an account - this will give them the ability to share, store and email their creative works to the tutor and to each other.

Google Account

The tutor, at least, must have a Google account to access and utilise Google Docs. We would recommend that all students have accounts too - this will make it easier to share and save work - it will also be useful for forthcoming lessons.

To create a Google account simply go to <http://www.gmail.com> and register for a new Gmail account. Once you have this you will be able to access all of Google's open software suite.

Lesson 1: introduction

Aim: to introduce the concept of creating poetry online and of peer/group assessment of outputs.

Using PicLit

Task 1: individual task

Direct all of your students to access PicLit. There they will be presented with a row of pictures at the top, a big (selected) picture in the middle and multiple keywords below.

They can change the middle picture by selecting an alternative from the top. When they have selected a picture they can drag and drop words from the keyword list onto the picture to create a poem.

The screenshot shows the PicLits website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like Home, Explore the Gallery, My PicLits, Learn It, About, Our Vision, and News. Below this is a row of small image thumbnails. The main area features a large image of a Ferris wheel at night with the text "Curve of fate consistently cold, almost glowing" overlaid. To the right of the image are social sharing options (Save, Blog or Share, Email, New PicLit). Below the image is a "CREATE" section with tabs for "NOUNS", "ADJECTIVES", "ADVERBS", "VERBS", and "UNIVERSAL". Each tab has a list of words. Below the word lists is a "Tweet" button and a small profile picture with the text "Switch back to Harry Greiner to use this social plugin."

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS	VERBS	UNIVERSAL	did	its	so	what
breath	black	above	believe	a	do	like	some	when
circle	blue	accidentally	blast	above	does	may	that	where
city	bold	all	blend	across	down	me	the	while
clock	cold	almost	caress	although	for	mine	their	will
curve	constant	boldly	change	am	from	must	them	with
fate	curved	carefully	discover	among	had	my	there	would
hand	faint	consistently	dream	an	has	near	these	you
journey	glowing	excessively	enjoy	and	have	no	they	your
light	impossibly	fondly	explore	are	he	nor	this	yours
metal	light	kindly	fear	as	her	not	those	,
pattern	new	more	glow	at	hers	of	through	,
rod	orange	nearly	imagine	be	him	off	to	!
sky	round	over	move	been	his	on	under	?
spike	shiny	passionately	panic	being	I	or	up	"
time	sleek	patiently	revolve	below	in	ours	us	"
wheel	slim	rarely	rise	but	into	out	was	"
wind	tiny	smoothly	spin	by	is	she	we	—
window	vibrant	sweetly	think	can	it	should	were	...

The advertisement features the Hilton HHonors logo at the top, followed by "PLATINUM VISA". Below this is a small image of the card and the text "18.9% APR Representative (Variable)". At the bottom, there is a "HILTON HHONORS" logo and a "VISA" logo.

Once all students have created their poems, they should email them

to the tutor via the site interface. The tutor can put them on display for discussion and examination.

Task 2: Individual activity

Try using the “freestyle” setting on PicLit – this removes the word list (although it gives you suggestions) and allows the user to compose freehand.

Task 3: Group activity

Using Google Docs

The tutor will need to familiarise himself with Google Docs in preparation. The system itself is simple but is different from offline word processors – the main difference being that Google Docs allows multiple people to edit and contribute to a single document, collaboratively.

Create a new document and name it “Class Poetry Share”. Add any instructions you require into the document and save it e.g. *“This is a class poetry assignment – each user should add a single line to the poem until all students have added a line. Make them rhyme! Once the poem is complete we will display it in the class for discussion and further group editing”*

In the dashboard of Google Docs click on the new document and, in the right-hand column, click on “Settings” next to “sharing”. This will pop up a box that allows you to enter email addresses of users. Enter the email addresses of your students – make sure that “Can Edit” is listed in the drop down box to the right.

This will send a link to all students entered that they have a new document that can be edited.

NOTE: if they do not have a Google account, students will be forced to create one to access this doc.

Once they have accessed the document all users will have the ability to edit and create comments on it.

Task 4: Group activity

Split the class into groups of 3 or 4 students. Give each student group a different subject to write a poem of 10 lines on. Each group must do this on Google Docs. Don’t let the groups know each others subject.

At the same time, get each group to write down 10 random keywords that must be used in one of the poems of the other groups. Put the keyword lists in a hat and each group draws.

At the end of the session each group must publish their work to be assessed by their peers. Assessment is based on poetic ability, adherence to original subject and inclusion of the set keywords.

Promote a class discussion around the ease or difficulty of matching words to subject matter in this way. What does it do to the nature of writing. How does working in a group on a creative venture such as this work – was there problems or did it help to collaborate?

Other uses for Google Docs

The collaborative nature – and the extended toolset within the Google Suite make it a powerful tool for learning online and via collaboration. We recommend that tutors take some time to familiarise themselves fully with all the tools and to think about how they could be used in the classroom. We will revisit Google in later lessons.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.