Comics, Graphic Novels & Online Comic Creation Sites

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Rocky Mountain Reading Conference
Group Up!

• Share with your partners
• One Literacy Success
• One Technology Success
Thanks to:
Dr. Larry Bedenbaugh
& Dr. Sharon Schpesise

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What are they?

Graphic Novels:
Book length, complete story told through a combination of text and sequential art. They encompass many genres; romance, action, horror, drama, sci-fi, comedy, etc.
What are Graphic Novels?

Will Eisner who initiated the term graphic novels, said they are “Sequential Art...the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatise an idea.”
Why use them?

They Promote Literacy

Graphic novels motivate poor and reluctant readers.

Students *voluntarily* select them based on interest in format and topics covered.
Graphic Novels Help Students:

- Develop an increased interest in reading
- Increase literacy in the broad sense of the word
- Develop language skills and a rich and varied vocabulary
- Foster interest in a variety of literary genres
- Foster interest in a broad range of topics
Graphic Novels Help Students:

- Stimulate a creative imagination
- Develop an appreciation of art
- Develop the ability to discuss and critique art and writing
- Increase understanding of how meaning is found in visual phenomena
- Enhance understanding of popular culture and other media
Graphic Novels Address Current, Relevant, Complex Issues
Nonconformity
Prejudice
Coming of Age
Social Injustice
Personal Triumph Over Adversity
Graphic novels appeal to highly motivated readers. Gifted kids are captivated by the believable details of well-crafted imaginary worlds portrayed in words and pictures.

Michael Lavin
Visual Literacy

The teenage audience is comfortable with “reading” the combination of words and pictures. Visual learners seem to connect with graphic novels in a way they cannot with text-only books.
And, Stephen Krashen notes in his book *The Power of Reading*, that comic books often serve as an intermediary, helping readers become more linguistically proficient before moving on to heavier reading.
“graphic novels are beneficial for young people who read English as a second language or for those who read on a lower reading level than their peers because the simple sentences, visual or context clues, and educated guessing allow them to comprehend some, if not all, of the story.”

*Stephen Krashen*
The average comic book introduces children to twice as many new words as the average children’s book and more than 5 times as many as the average child-adult conversation.

*from a 1993 study in The Journal of Child Language*
Higher Order

Combination of images and text provides an excellent opportunity for critical analysis.

Increased understanding of how meaning is found in visual phenomena

Enhance understanding of popular culture and other media
As well as working with literary devices such as:

- foreshadowing - Bone
- irony – Ghost World
- allegory - Maus
- symbolism - Sandman
Using Them

• They inspire writing assignments
• They bring new life to what might otherwise be considered “bland” content
• Offer subject matter that students might never consider
Use them to teach:

- Discrete Language Skills
- Colloquial Language
- Prediction
- Sequencing
- Literary Genres
- Character Analysis
- Identifying Themes
- Creative Writing
- Impact of Visuals
Lesson Plans

http://www.teachingcomics.org

Author and Book Sites
Teaching Resources

Exercises

Visual Storytelling
- As Easy as Changing the Film
- Closure Exercise
- Design vs. Drawing
- Images Playing off Words
- The Wrong Planet: Timing, Closure, and Editing

Basic Storytelling... Lights, Camera, Action!
- Definition of Comics
- Editing
- Show Time Passing

Technique Exercises
- Describing the Complex World
- Intro to Inking

Expressive Lettering and Balloons
- Intro to Lettering

Communication & Theme
- Autobiography: Do and Don't
- Comics and Poetry
- Scenes as Building Blocks
- The Irony of Humor

- Comic Strip: Character/Place/Situation
- Iconographic Language in Comics
- Silent Gag Cartoon Exercise
- Think Before You Ink
Can Comics develop 21st Century Writing Skills?

For the last hundred years, if you wanted to communicate, you needed to know how to type.

In the next hundred years, is it possible that the video medium is the primary force of communication?

To be successful in that medium, students need to know how to storyboard to communicate their ideas.

We don't need ALL of our students to be Steven Spielberg, BUT - We do need to teach them how to communicate effectively using video in the 21st Century.
CHOICE OF MOMENT

Deciding which moments to include in a comics story and which to leave out.

CHOICE OF FRAME

Choosing the right distance and angle to view those moments --
-- and where to trim them.
**Choice of Image**

Rendering the characters, objects and environments in those frames clearly.

**Choice of Word**

Picking words that add valuable information and work well with the images around them.
CHOICE OF FLOW

Guiding readers through and between panels on a page or screen.

These are the five arenas where your choices can make the difference between clear, convincing storytelling and a confusing mess.

- Choice of moment
- Choice of frame
- Choice of image
- Choice of word
- Choice of flow
Story Builder – Emotional Hook

Funny

Mad

Topic
Ex: Dog

Scary

Sad
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Action to Action</td>
<td>A single subject (person, object, etc...) in a series of actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Subject to Subject</td>
<td>A series of changing subjects within a single scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scene to Scene</td>
<td>Transitions across significant distances of time and/or space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Aspect to Aspect</td>
<td>Transitions from one aspect of a place, idea or mood to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Non Sequitur</td>
<td>A series of seemingly nonsensical, unrelated images and/or words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See Understanding Comics pages 70-81 for more information about the six transitions.*
I. MOMENT TO MOMENT

A SINGLE ACTION Portrayed in a series of moments.
2. ACTION TO ACTION

A SINGLE SUBJECT (PERSON, OBJECT, ETC...) IN A SERIES OF ACTIONS.
3. SUBJECT TO SUBJECT

A SERIES OF CHANGING SUBJECTS WITHIN A SINGLE SCENE.
4. SCENE TO SCENE

TRANSITIONS ACROSS SIGNIFICANT DISTANCES OF TIME AND/OR SPACE.
5. ASPECT TO ASPECT

TRANSITIONS FROM ONE ASPECT OF A PLACE, IDEA OR MOOD TO ANOTHER.
CAREFUL THIS COULD BE DANGEROUS

I THINK I HEAR SNAKES

LOOK! THE TREASURE

LOOK SNAKES

THEY HAVE ESCAPED

I WILL USE MY WHIP TO BRING DOWN THIS STAGE

CAREFUL, INDY

LOOK OUT BELOW

I HOPE I CRUSHED SOME SNAKES
Curricula Focus

ComicLife

• Create “comic book” summaries of literature
Softball Fun

I wish I knew how to play softball.

I can teach you.

Keep your eye on the ball.

Keep your eye on the ball.

Rats!!!

Aim for the middle.

Good hit!!!

Now we will play catcher.

Can I pitch to you?

Wow!! You got a strong throw.

This is fun.

You did awesome!!

That was fun can we do that again?

Of course some time next week.
XtraNormal.com

• Creates movies from text
• If you can type, it can talk
• http://www.xtranormal.com/watch/6320537
Oh No....I forgot my books at home! What am I going to do... I need them for class today!

Hi, Mom! You are going to be disappointed in me! I forgot my books for class at home today!

Well Honey... I am in the middle of baking, so you are going to have to wait to get them until later!

Ugh... Seriously Mom need them now!!! I will not get a good grade in class if I don't have them!

I am going to teach her a lesson about being responsible with her books!

I'm am sorry dear, but you are going to have to fend for yourself and deal with your own mistake!

Looks like I won't be getting my books any time soon. My pencil and paper will hopefully get me through the day.

Class take out your books for class today, if you don't have yours please go to the office until the hour is up.

Can I please stay in class today. I promise I won't forget my book again!
“On the basis of my personal experience and the research available, I would go so far as to say if you have a child who is struggling with reading, connect him or her with comics. If an interest appears, feed it with more comics.”

~ Jim Trelease
Author and Educator
"Graphic novels are terrific in that they have a good story but they have pictures and images that teens can relate to and enjoy. So you get the combination of the words and the images that help pick up on the power of images in teens’ lives."

~ Maurice Freedman, President American Library Association
"Readers in the 21st century need to be able to analyze what they read and understand the motive of the author and the accuracy of the reading. They need to see themselves as active users, not merely vessels to be filled. Graphic novels offer a forum for these essential discussions."

~ Nancy Frey
Educator and Author
The 101 Best Graphic Novels by Stephen Weiner

Developing and Promoting Graphic Novel Collections (Teens @ the Library Series) by Steve Miller

Getting Graphic: Using Graphic Novels to Promote Literacy with Preteens and Teens by Michele Gorman

http://noflyingnotights.com/
Writing Visually TEXTS

*Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud

*Making Comics* by Scott McCloud

*Back of the Napkin* by Dan Roam

*Comics and Sequential Art* by Will Eisner

*Graphic StoryTelling and Visual Narrative* by Will Eisner

http://scottmccloud.com/
Suggested Skills Sequencing

Kamishibai w KidPix       K-1st

Webkinz Studio            2nd -3rd

Photostory/Online Comics   4th on up

XtraNormal/Adobe Story    6th-7th on up

Adobe Premier Elements - High School
Booktrailers

Non-Google Web 2.0 Apps

Games

Graphic Novels by Subject Area

Daishaw    WebKinz