Comics, Storyboards and Video: Scaffolding Essential Writing Skills for the 21st Century Student

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• Teaching the Relationship Between Reading and Writing
Cont’

• For the last hundred years, if you wanted to communicate, you needed to know how to type. In the next hundred years, it is possible that 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.
This presentation helps you to create comics or storyboards to tell a story.

Writing has justifiably held a position of prominence as being the “flip side” of reading, a critical survival skill in our era. In considering writing, though, educators often fall short of helping students developing writing skills that will enable them to be successful in our digital age.
This presentation intends to help educators close the gap between what students currently learn and what they need to learn by outlining a process for early introduction of visual writing skills.
This presentation will discuss and offer suggestions for:

1) Developing student’s visual literacy skills
2) Using online comic creation sites for the development of stories and storyboards
3) Explore the relationship between writing, cartoons, and storyboards
4) Explain why drawing skills are no longer a necessary prerequisite to developing effective storyboards
Developing Visual Literacy through Graphic Novels

- Exposure to a wide variety of graphic novels helps the student see different visual styles as well as different writing styles.

- Movies are time constrained, graphic novels are not. This CAN allow for more reflection on how the images work with the text.

- Movies have difficulty displaying thinking. Graphic novels do not - shows richer motivations.
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.”
What are they?

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

DON’T WAIT to get started!!
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
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.
John McCourt, who teaches non-native English speakers at Chula Vista High School, recently incorporated graphic novels into his lessons. "A lot of the vocabulary is college level," he said. "A lot of the words are SAT words. And it's incredible how fast these kids will read through these. They're like, 'When are you going to get new ones, Mr. McCourt?' "
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
The teenage audience is comfortable with “reading” the combination of words and pictures. They may not understand the connections between the two.

Visual learners seem to connect with graphic novels in a way they cannot with text-only books.
Lesson Plans

http://www.teachingcomics.org

Author and Book Sites

DON’T WAIT! USE IN EVERY SUBJECT AREA!

Being perfect is not the goal, getting better at it and enjoying it more can be.
Teaching Resources

Exercises

Visual Storytelling
- As Easy as Changing the Film
- Basic Storytelling... Lights, Camera, Action!
- Closure Exercise
- Definition of Comics
- Design vs. Drawing
- Editing
- Images Playing off Words
- Show Time Passing
- The Wrong Planet: Timing, Closure, and Editing
- "Show Time Passing"

Technique Exercises
- Describing the Complex World
- Expressive Lettering and Balloons
- Intro to Inking
- Intro to Lettering

Communication & Theme
- Autobiography: Do and Don't
- Comic Strip: Character/Place/Situation
- Comics and Poetry
- Iconographic Language in Comics
- Scenes as Building Blocks
- Silent Gag Cartoon Exercise
- The Irony of Humor
- Think Before You Ink
Youtube had more content in five years than NBC, CBS & ABC combined did in their previous 75 years.

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
After dinner he took me into my old room...

COME-WE'LL TALK WHILE I PEDAL...

IT'S GOOD FOR MY HEART, THE PEDALING.
BUT, TELL ME, HOW IS IT ON YOU? HOW IS
GOING THE COMICS BUSINESS?

I STILL WANT TO DRAW THAT BOOK ABOUT YOU...

THE ONE I USED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN POLAND, AND THE WAR.

IT WOULD TAKE MANY BOOKS, MY LIFE, AND
NO ONE WANTS ANYWAY TO HEAR SUCH STORIES.

I WANT TO HEAR IT. START WITH MOM... TELL ME HOW YOU MET.

BUT, IF YOU WANT, I CAN TELL YOU- I LIVED THEN IN CZESPOCHOWA,
A SMALL CITY NOT FAR FROM THE BORDER OF GERMANY...

I WAS IN TEXTILES-BUYING AND SELLING- I DIDN'T
MAKE MUCH, BUT ALWAYS I COULD MAKE A LIVING.
After dinner he took me into my old room...

COME - WE'LL TALK WHILE I PEDAL...

IT'S GOOD FOR MY HEART, THE PEDALING. BUT, TELL ME, HOW IS IT BY YOU? HOW IS GOING THE COMICS BUSINESS?

I STILL WANT TO DRAW THAT BOOK ABOUT YOU...

THE ONE I USED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN POLAND, AND THE WAR.

IT WOULD TAKE MANY BOOKS, MY LIFE, AND NO ONE WANTS ANYWAY TO HEAR SUCH STORIES.
It would take many books, my life, and no one wants anyway to hear such stories.
Story Builder – Emotional Hook

- Funny
- Mad
- Scary
- Sad

Topic
Ex: Dog
CONSIDER WHAT YOU WANT FROM EACH PART OF YOUR STORY! DO YOU WANT TO JUMP AHEAD TO A KEY EVENT? DO YOU WANT TO PUT ON THE BRAKES AND FOCUS ON SMALLER MOMENTS? DO YOU WANT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO CONVERSATIONS AND FACES?

DEPENDING ON YOUR ANSWERS, YOU'LL FIND THAT CERTAIN TYPES OF TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PANELS MAY GET THE JOB DONE BETTER THAN OTHERS.

THESE PANEL TO PANEL TRANSITIONS COME IN SIX VARIETIES*, INCLUDING:

1. 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.

6. NON SEQUITUR
A SERIES OF SEEMINGLY NONSENSICAL, UNRELATED IMAGES AND/OR WORDS.

* SEE UNDERSTANDING COMICS PAGES 70-99 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

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

TRANSITIONS FROM ONE ASPECT OF A PLACE, IDEA OR MOOD TO ANOTHER.
Well of Souls, from Indiana’s Point of View
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 SCULPTURE

CAREFUL INDI

LOOK ONLY BELOW

I HOPE I CRUSHED SOME SNAKES
Curricula Focus

ComiCLife

- Create "comic book" summaries of literature

- Or re-write science into narrative format!

HA, DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH! YOU KNOW I AM MADE FROM 100% METAMORPHIC ROCK. I AM MADE FROM LAYERS OF CRYSTAL, AND OVER TIME HEAT AND PRESSURE MADE ME SUPER HARD AND STRONG.
ComicLife
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.

Am I for the middle?

Good hit!!

Can I pitch to you?

Wow!! You got a strong throw.

This is fun.

Now we will play catch!

Now we will play catch!

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 - ABCs
- Collaborative Planning
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'm 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 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!
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
“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
Food for Thought

"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
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/
Thanks for coming!

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http://www.homepages.dsu.edu/mgeary/comics/comics.htm

Booktrailers