Chapter 3

Karma in Comics: Discovering Hidden Super Powers through Creating

Tonia A. Dousay

Ask an educator about using comics in the classroom, and the responses will likely fall somewhere along a spectrum from "absolutely" to "never in a million years." Historically speaking, comics lurked in the shadows of education, sometimes being accused of causing juvenile delinquency (Gavigan and Tomasevich 2011). For insight into American historical opinions about comics, see Zorbaugh's (1949) fascinating study on what adults thought about using comics as reading material for children. In particular, opinions regarding different types of comics, newspapers comic strips versus comic magazines, and the possible moral impact on readers highlight arguments that still plague classroom adoption today. Around the 1960s, though, scholarly articles and curriculum guides began to emerge that promoted the use of comics in the classroom. For example, Suhor (1967) was one of the first authors to suggest using comics to help learners understand the concepts of understatement and symbolism. One of the earliest documented examples of using comics for language learning curriculum came from Taylor (1973), who suggested comics as a means of connecting to learner's individual interests. Since these early days, studies on attitudes (Arlin and Roth 1978; Davies and Brember 1993; Cirigliano 2012), integration strategies (Jacobs 2007; Ranker 2007; Thompson 2007), and impact (Aubrey 2009; Short, Randolph-Seng, and McKenny 2013) of comics on learning have opened the proverbial floodgates for classroom adoption.

PRE PRINT

Using comics in the classroom extends beyond simply reading and interpreting visual elements text. At least, it should. From the National Council of Teachers of English (2005) to multiple scholars and professional writers (Lewin and Shoemaker 2011; Roswell 2007; Williams 2008), the resources exist to help teachers turn students into creators of comics. Even Common Sense Media (2014) provides a vetted list of apps, software, and websites for students to use as they create comics. Yet, much of the current classroom trend focuses on how struggling readers can improve through reading comics or how art instruction benefits from evaluating visual literacy and comic design components (Burton 2004; Yang 2008). One of the reasons teachers are reluctant to consider creating comics in the classroom relates to a fear of using the wrong terms or unfamiliarity with the genre (Connors 2012). Thus, effective and full use of comics in the classroom eludes the majority of teachers, but it does not need to be this way.

Types of Use

When looking at the different ways comics might be used in formal instruction, two possibilities stand out; reading and creating. Each type of use has its own purpose or intent with varying degrees of applicability. Based upon the earlier identified challenge of effective use, an overview of the two types might help reveal ways in which teachers might reach full potential.

Reading

As previously noted, some teachers have used comics to facilitate language acquisition or other literacy education for more than sixty years. Generally speaking, educators associate

reading comics with language arts classrooms (Jacobs 2007). Indeed, the visual layout, use of color, and often stylized dialogue provide ample frameworks through which learners can benefit. Whether teachers want to engage readers with selected comics to reinforce vocabulary or explore non-spoken communication cues, a bevy of books, articles, and websites exists to help teachers. For instance, Dong (2012) worked with more than a dozen scholars and teachers to compile an excellent guide for reading comics and graphic novels in tandem with historical texts to strengthen connections in American, ethnic, women's and gender, cultural, and genre studies. The power of visual communication and narrative dialogue within these various areas helps learners deconstruct and reconstruct meaning through iterative and engaging interaction.

More interesting, perhaps, has been the permeation of reading comics into other subject areas. Much like language arts, the visual appeal of comics combined with varied narratives makes the medium a valuable tool for science educators looking to pique student interest and engage learners (Tatalovic 2010). For example, Hosler's (2000) *Clan Apis* invites readers to learn about honey bees through the eyes of the main character, Nyuki, and Ottaviani's (2009) *Dignifying Science* graphic novel retells the stories of scientific discoveries from the perspective of famous women in science, like Marie Curie and Hedy Lamarr. To help bolster the argument for reading comics in science classrooms, Hosler and Boomer (2011) argued for and studied the replacement of standard science textbooks in introductory biology courses. The researchers found that both science majors and non-majors exhibited a significant increase in median content knowledge scores when using the science graphic novels in place of the regular text. Shifting into the social sciences, Christensen (2006) summarized how she used graphic novels to stimulate discussion among her secondary students about political and social conflicts in Bosnia, Palestine, Iran, Sudan, and Holocaust Germany. Similarly, Pustz's (2012) anthology on comics

and American cultural history provides an excellent overview of teachers using comics to investigate experiences related to cultural history and artifacts as well as historical identity and contemporary history. These examples illustrate the successful ways in which comics have grown from a lesser known tool in the language arts classroom in to other subject areas. However, more recent research on and practice with comics involves that of student-created comics.

Creating

When incorporating comics in classroom curriculum, they can also be used as a form of assessment, empowering students to take responsibility for the content they learn and how they demonstrate mastery in a variety of areas simultaneously. Rooted in the call to encourage shifting learners from consumers of media to creators (Dyson 1997; Alvermann, Moon, and Hagood 1999; Alvermann and Hagood 2000), Morrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat (2002) helped usher in the idea of student-created comics in all subjects of secondary education. Creating comics provides an opportunity for learners to constructively and reflectively engage in the learning process (Pelton and Pelton 2009). In other words, comic creation challenges students to select appropriate content; distinguishing between relevant and non-relevant components, writing suitable dialogue and narrative, applying applicable visual design elements, and reviewing the finished product for accuracy.

Depending upon the subject area, this process takes a few different forms. Adams (2000) summarized how the "Tin Drum" project helped students demonstrate text interpretation. The activity required students to create comics that illustrated a portion of Günter Grass' novel of the

same name. From an artistic standpoint, students drew upon illustrative techniques and devices used throughout traditional comics in order to depict depth and meaning, demonstrating both understanding of the text and the visual impact. Using illustrations from graphic novelists like Mandy Coe and cartoonists like Will Eisner and Scott McCloud, students explored the idea of comics and graphic novels as a serious medium and transitioned into analyzing elements of comic art techniques. This flow encouraged contextualizing how cultural perspectives and words are conveyed through line, shape, color, and arrangement. The teacher then assigned excerpts from the "Tin Drum" for students to graphically illustrate. The resulting artifacts demonstrated students' ability to translate a text-based material into one based entirely on visual literacy. For formative assessment, Pelton and Pelton (2009) worked with middle school students to create comics demonstrating math concept retention. The researchers began the activity by showing students a comic they had created over the scientific process of condensation as a way of modeling the expected outcome. Next, students worked with the researchers to create a collaborative comic depicting fractions in relationship to pizza slices. Lastly, the students created their own comics over a specified mathematical or scientific concept. The Pelton and Pelton project provides a clear example of scaffolding the creative process so that students are clear regarding necessary skills and expectations.

In terms of more discipline-specific use of comics as assessment, Wissman and Costello (2014) worked with an eighth-grade reading intervention class to examine aesthetic transactions, or the selection of images and extrapolation of text, comics in response to reading a young adult novel. Students in this research project were allowed to select a specific scene of the novel to illustrate in comic format, which included selecting appropriate images drawing upon the theme of the novel and writing the narration for the depiction. The researchers noted a much deeper

interaction with the content and reported improved demonstration of understanding. These projects illustrate the increased trend of creating comics, but questions and controversy still exist regarding how the medium works as a valid form of assessment (Kingsley and Brinkerhoff 2011).

Applying Comics as a Form of Assessment

To effectively consider comics as a form of assessment, the conversation must address pedagogy and standards in conjunction with expectations. Pedagogical foundations help frame why certain design activities like comic creation work better than others, and teachers can use this theoretical lens to better understand the rationale behind the assessment. Of course, the persistent need to connect all activities and assessments to prescribed content and skill standards also necessitates a conversation about relevant standards. Having this information readily available might help some teachers decide to adopt the lesson plan described herein or at least make it easier to justify the lesson in required documentation for administrators and stakeholders. Lastly, expectations related to rubrics and scoring artifacts concludes the assessment conversation, providing a foundation for how teachers might grade the created comics or encourage modifying the lesson plan for adoption.

Pedagogy

The act of asking students to create a comic demonstrates constructionism in its most basic definition. That is, the students derive meaning by way of constructing or learning by

making (Papert and Harel 1991). Knowledge and skills necessary to complete the creative activity converge as both content related to the core subject merges with the construction task. In the case of creating comics, students are tasked with taking a subject prompt (condensation, fractions, novel scene, etc.) and identifying appropriate images and narrative to recreate a visual message representing the prompt. A quick scan of this scenario reveals at least three ways in which the product could be used to assess student learning. First, accuracy of the content depicted in the comic demonstrates general mastery for the subject area. Second, images selected and sequenced for the comic provide an opportunity to evaluate a student's media literacy skill development, including attention to copyright, audience appropriateness, and cohesive design. Lastly, the narration written for and placed within the comic book serve as a prime opportunity to evaluate students' communication skills.

Given the interconnected nature of the output, either portfolio or performance-based assessment methods are appropriate frameworks to consider (Reeves and Okey 1996). When considering a portfolio approach, instructors need to build in opportunities over time for comic creation or alternating with similar constructionist activities to allow for observing growth over time (Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters 1992). The performance assessment perspective specifically focuses on a summary judgement of how the student performed in creating comic, considering technique and final output (Wiggins 1993). A possibility exists wherein the assessment is viewed as performance-based and used in conjunction with a portfolio depending upon an institution's assessment reporting needs. Additionally, in either case, standards must be identified to clarify assessment expectations (Sharikzadeh 2003).

Standards

To be clear, standards in this context applies to both content or skill standards that may be dictated by an individual institution, accrediting organization, and/or governmental agency as well as macro criteria by which individual skills may be evaluated. Example standards found in the United States classified in the former include Common Core State Standards [CCSS] (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers 2010), individual U.S. state educational standards, ISTE Standards for Students (International Society for Technology in Education 2016), and other similar inventories. Criteria standards that may be used in the case of the latter include visual aesthetics, grammatical construction, length/layout specifications, content accuracy, etc. The explanation provided herein is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather give direction for educators and administrators seeking practical guidance for implementing student-created comics as a means of alternative assessment.

Depending on the type of educational setting, content and skill standards take varying roles of priority in this assessment development. States participating in the CCSS Initiative likely also opt in to one of the methods of aligned computer-based testing developed in tandem with the standards (Porter et al. 2011). Thus, comic creation used as assessment must be enacted in close alignment with these standards. Alternatively, passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) presents opportunities for the use of more alternative assessments (National Conference of State Legislatures 2015). ESSA replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which served as the long-standing federal guideline for specific funding, standardized testing, school accountability, and teacher quality (Klein 2015). However, bringing ESSA to fruition began in

2014 and took most of 2015 for lawmakers to author, revise, and negotiate through differing opinions related to scaling back direct federal oversight, addressing poorly performing schools, and determining which agencies and/or executive offices would hold authority for different provisions (Severns 2015). The final legislation includes allowing for state-determined academic assessments that measure achievement, higher order thinking skills, and student growth with considerations for the use of portfolios and/or performance-based tasks (National Conference of State Legislature 2015). Thus, student-created comics represent an appropriate activity to explore further use. Regardless of standardized testing requirements, applicable CCSS (2010) include, but are not limited to:

1. CCSS.ELA-Literature.RL8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.[1]

2. CCSS.ELA-Writing.W8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.[2]

3. CCSS.ELA-Writing.W8.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.[3]

4. CCSS.ELA-Language.L8.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.[4]

5. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH6–8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.[5]

6. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6–8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.[6]

7. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6–8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.[7]

Note that standards presented here were taken from grades 6–8/grade 8, but are conceptually similar across secondary grade levels. Learning environments not bound by the CCSS should work within their expected content standards, and searching for concepts similar to those described above may help with alignment efforts.[8,9] Relevant ISTE Standards for Students (International Society for Technology in Education 2016) include, but are not limited to the digital citizenship goals of respecting the rights and use of intellectual property and engaging in ethical behavior when using technology; knowledge construction goals of locating and evaluating resources to create meaningful artifacts; and the creative communicator goals of creating original works to communicate complex ideas. Whether generating assessment rubrics or detailing standards alignment in lesson plans, the aforementioned content and skills standards should help any educator design and implement student-created comics activities.

Pedagogical Expectations

Having a pedagogical framework established and identifying relevant content and skill standards assists with identifying individual criteria by which a student-created comic might be evaluated. Generating a rubric closely aligned with the previously described standards provides an objective basis for grading student-created comics. Individual criteria include splash pages, image selection, script, content, message design, length, submission process. The splash pages represent a way in which students can mimic the standard comic book interface and meet requirements related to clearly identifying a title and authorship as well as giving credit for any attributed resources.[10] Through the image selection criterion, students demonstrate abilities to create all original imagery or appropriately source images to create a cohesive story. The comic script, to include all dialogue and written elements, provides a mechanism for assessing spelling and grammar as well as evaluating dialect or other linguistic techniques applied as a result of the subject area source content. Related to the subject area, content represents one of the most important aspects of assessment. The intent is to use comics as a medium for students to express understanding. Therefore, the content criterion checks for comprehension of the subject area concept used as the primary story element. Message design, as a means for grading the comic, addresses the overall construction of the comic, including color palette choices, readability of text and images, and layout considerations.

Length refers to page limits placed on the assignment as a constraint. In some cases, teachers may want to determine if students are able to distill large blocks of content into a concise summary. Alternatively, teachers may want students to take a specific concept and extrapolate the idea into a broader context. Either scenario should result in a specified page limit for students to follow. Lastly, submission process may take a variety of forms depending upon the teacher's needs and intent. The learning environment that allows for flexible timelines may

opt to use this criterion to differentiate between an on time submission and a delayed submission for partial credit. Similarly, this criterion might be used to evaluate students' ability to acclimate to a new process or system for submitting assignments.

In all cases, these criteria represent an adapted rubric that has been used for assessing student-created comics in a post-secondary learning environment Dousay (2015). If using a portfolio assessment framework, additional criteria may be considered to evaluate growth over time. Having reviewed the idea of student-created comics and assessment possibilities, the practitioner looking to implement such a strategy would benefit from surveying a sample lesson plan. Student-created comics are appropriate for any secondary subject area, and the earlier examples in mathematics, science, and language arts provide an easy transition into exploring application in social studies.

Sample Student-Created Comic Lesson

The following example provides an overview of such an approach developed for the eighth grade secondary social studies classroom. Adams (2000) eloquently observed that incorporating comics creation in the classroom effectively changes the conversation of how media is perceived, thereby enabling learners to both comprehend and use something already embedded in an increasingly technological and visual world. Integrating student-created comics into social studies curriculum combines the notions of transforming media with the assumption that students often feel disconnected from historical events (McMichael 2007). The storytelling mechanism employed in this instructional unity requires students to engage with folklore

surrounding American historical figures and remix what they've learned into their own words and images.

Three individual lessons compose this sample instructional unit. The first lesson examines the folklore of several characters in the American Revolution with suggested primary and secondary sources to assist students with research literacy. The purpose of this lesson is to introduce key American historical figures and associated folklore in order to better understand the common thread of culture and how it is transmitted through literature and, by extension, history. In the second lesson, students explore the truths and fallacies behind the folklore from the first lesson. The discriminatory skill development behind this lesson allows students to see the development of the stories throughout history and time as they compare and contrast elements in alignment with subject standards. Folklore and popular culture are used to create a commonality within a given culture. The third lesson focuses on the actual creation of a comic by each student. The lesson does not focus on a specific technology, application, or operating system due to the fact that there is no unified technology throughout schools, however the aforementioned Common Sense Media (2014) resource provides an excellent list that teachers should consider.[11] The lesson should focus on the structure of creating the comic book, including visual and traditional literacies and writing styles that are commonly found in comics, and the appropriate retrieval and use of pictures.

This unit explores the development of culture, individual historical figures, and the influence of popular culture on storytelling. The American Revolution and the lore surrounding that time period of American history serves as the basis for the unit. However, these plans can be adapted easily for related areas, including religious and cultural studies, and are modular in design to cover other periods of American or world history simply by referencing in the relevant

historical figures and events. See Table 3.1 for a list of possible historical figures to use for specific time periods of American history. Focusing on key figures in culture aligned with the relevant grade level standards allows for analyzing documents with the main purpose of exploring culture and the development of culture within the context of history.

< INSERT TABLE 3.1 HERE>

Standards addressed by this unit include both national and state. First, the unit design focuses on Dimension 4 from the College, Career, & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS] 2013). The NCSS C3 Framework calls upon social studies teachers to help contribute to college and career readiness and organizes recommended standards into four dimensions; (1) Developing questions and planning inquiries, (2) Applying disciplinary tools and concepts, (3) Evaluating sources and using evidence, and (4) Communicating conclusions and taking informed action.[12] Specifically, the unit addresses standard D4.3.6–8. Presenting adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).[13] This particular standard encourages students to produce a variety of artifacts to demonstrate the ability to work individually and in groups as they transform content into new creations. Further, the lessons incorporate CCSS and state standards by having students look at primary and secondary sources and having students use digital technology to create a comic book using those sources. Note that this sample lesson includes Wyoming Social Studies Content and Performance Standards

Wyoming State Board of Education, "Wyoming Social Studies Content and Performance Standards." based upon the learning environment for which it was developed. The specific state standards addressed in this unit include:

1. SS8.2.2 Examine and evaluate how human expression (e.g., language, literature, arts, architecture, traditions, beliefs, and spirituality) contributes to the development and transmission of culture.[14]

2. SS8.4.5 Identify relevant primary and secondary sources for research. Compare and contrast treatment of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.[15]

The specific CCSS addressed in this unit include:

1. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6–8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.[16]

2. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6–8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.[17]

The specific NCSS (2004) thematic standard addressed in this unit is that of culture and cultural diversity, specifically encouraging learners to consider the connections between the assumptions, beliefs, and values of a culture and the actions, policies, and products of people in multiple situations. The central focus for this unit involves analyzing and understanding the creation of folklore to understand the implications within American culture.

To begin the unit, students should have access to one primary document and multiple secondary documents on the first day of the lesson with the guidance that they will retell the historical figure's story in his or her own words. Concept mapping and storyboarding serve as practice activities to help students document and process the content. These tools help students organize research related to the historical figure, indicating which of the documents provided specific details and beginning the narrative writing process. Considerations for image selection may also be made by way of placeholder sketches or notes. Dedicate ample class time to working on the storyboard, allowing for feedback from both teacher and peers. Actual creation of the comic occurs during the third lesson of the unit, and an opportunity should be provided that allows students to showcase, share, and read one another's comics. Additionally, students need to be familiar with the following terms and concepts in order to complete this unit:

- Subject area
  - folklore
  - primary source document
  - secondary source document
- Comic composition
  - splash page
  - storyboard
  - script
  - frame

Discussion within this unit focuses on folklore and its relationship to American culture. Careful attention should be paid to the use of exaggerating characteristics of a historical figure and how the traits relate to cultural norms. Folklore should come from a variety of sources including songs, images, poems, and stories. Through deconstructing the historical events surrounding the figure, further discussion should address folklore formation. A review of historical events and relevant documentation should dominate the guided instruction. The formative assessments in this unit are used to check student understanding and contribute towards the creating a comic book based upon the folklore and historical research. During this lesson, students should be focused on being responsible digital citizens and adhering to copyright laws.[18] Provide class time to create the comic so that troubleshooting and redirection may be provided in a timely fashion, allowing students to focus on the artistic and academic skills needed to complete the activity.

Lesson 1: Folklore of the American Revolution

Compelling Questions: (1) Is folklore an important part of American cultural ideas? (2) How does it matter if the stories are true?

Supporting Questions: (1) What are the pieces of folklore trying to convey? (2) Is folklore always about an individual? (3) When is folklore developed?

Learning Targets: Explain the folklore that has been presented. Analyze documents from multiple sources to determine perspective and relevance.

Preview/Opener: Play the song "John Paul Jones" by Johnny Horton as soon as the class begins. The song helps illustrate the retelling of folklore or a legend. At the conclusion of the

song, engage students in a discussion about prior knowledge, relevance, and song composition. Extend the discussion by introducing other historical figures, including Betsy Ross, George Washington, and Paul Revere. Have students generate a concept map illustrating how many students knew about which figures, how the students knew about the individual, and any examples of folklore regarding the figures. As students exhibit difficulty identifying with the figures, transition into guided instruction.

Guided Instruction: Focus on one figure and display a collection of photos and paintings depicting him or her while reading excerpts from documents detailing the figure's life and folklore; e.g. "Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Ask students if the details of the poem are plausible and accurate, adding responses to the earlier drafted concept map. Conclude the guided instruction by providing students with historical documentation to use in the practice along with the folklore. Transition into the practice activity.

Practice Activities: Display a list of potential historical characters from which students may elect to research. A supplementary handout primary sources for each character should be made available to facilitate the activity with guidance on conducting research for secondary sources. Students should mimic the class-generated concept maps to begin the process of deconstructing the folklore surrounding the figure. Inform students that this concept map will help them in the next lesson.

Closure: Spend time with each student as he or she creates a concept map for the activity. Provide redirection where necessary, paying special attention to the relevance of resources identified by students, distinctions between historical fact and folklore, and helping students identify pertinent details. Ask for one student to share with the class which figure he or she researched and up to three interesting details regarding the history and folklore discovered.

Lesson Assessments: This lesson is assessed informally as a formative appraisal of student progress in meeting the aligned standards. Group discussion and individual conversations form the basis for determining redirection.

Lesson 2: Truth Behind the Folklore

Compelling Questions: (1) How is folklore generated from historical events? (2) How do the traits of a character exemplify values of the culture?

Supporting Questions: (1) What characteristics are most often exaggerated? (2) How do we reconcile the historical and folklore differences of a historical figure?

Learning Targets: Illustrate the difference between folklore and actual history. Analyze documents from multiple sources to evaluate trustworthiness and applicability.

Preview/Opener: Replay "John Paul Jones" by Johnny Horton as students ready their notes and research. At the conclusion of the song, divide students into pairs and have them collaborative rewrite the story. Ask students share their retelling with the class and record similarities and differences between stories and historical documentation. Allow for up to 20 minutes of sharing before transitioning into guided instruction.

Guided Instruction: Direct instruction should focus on the documented history surrounding the figures introduced in the previous lesson. Use the opportunity to discuss historiography and how folklore and truth intertwine. Refer back to the student-created concept maps and ask students to identify exaggerated characteristics and/or events. Conclude the guided instruction by engaging students in a discussion about how the historical events transformed into the folklore known today.

Practice Activities: Instruct students to use their concept maps to begin generating a storyboard for retelling their historical figure in a comic book. Provide resources illustrating the visual communication basics of comics; for adaptable handouts, see Dousay (2015). Also provide the grading rubric so that students may plan accordingly.

Closure: Spend time with each student as he or she works on the comic storyboard and allow for peer to peer reviews of storyboards. Provide redirection where necessary, noting where students plan to procure images or issues with accuracy in the generated narrative.

Lesson Assessments: This lesson is assessed informally as a formative appraisal of student progress in meeting the aligned standards. Group discussion and individual conversations form the basis for determining redirection.

Lesson 3: Retelling the Story

Compelling Questions: (1) How do written and oral accounts influence folklore? (2) How do historical discoveries influence established folklore?

Supporting Questions: (1) When retelling a story, what parts are most important to convey? (2) How do you depict a character, exaggerated or realistic?

Learning Targets: Depict a historical or folklore story about a historical figure based off of primary and secondary sources.

Preview/Opener: Begin class by playing a well-known theme from a television show or movie based on a comic; e.g. Spiderman, Batman, Superman, X-Men, The Avengers, etc. If possible, also provide a selection of comic books available from the school library. This opener

allows students to immediately immerse in the emotional draw of comics and provide a context for the practice activity.

Guided Instruction: Guided instruction should refer back to the comics resources provided in Lesson 2 and focus on how to transform the concept map and storyboard into a comic. Introduce or reinforce the concept of intellectual property and resources related to finding images available for use in the public domain or licensed through Creative Commons (2014).[19] This component of the unit specifically addresses standards related to media literacy.

Practice Activities: Depending upon the technology available, provide initial guidance on how to use the app or software for creating the comics (see the Unit Resources section for more detail). Then, instruct students to begin developing their comic from the storyboard.

Closure: Spend time with each students as he or she creates the comic, answering questions as necessary. Encourage peer troubleshooting for technological issues that arise. Once comics are submitted, arrange to have all comics printed. Optionally, bind the class set of comics for cataloguing in the school library. Provide time in class for students to share, present, and showcase their comics.

Lesson Assessment: This lesson assessment is summative and encompasses the entire unit. The sample rubric in Table 3.2 provides a rubric that can be adopted or adapted depending upon selected standards and learning environment priorities.

< INSERT TABLE 3.2 HERE>

Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief overview of the history and trend of integrating comics in the classroom. Initial discussion revealed the more common use of reading comics to assist with literacy education and subsequent progression of comics into other subject areas as a means of stimulating interest. Kingsley and Brinkerhoff (2011) noted increasing interest in student-created comics, but questions still persist regarding integration and assessment strategies. Therefore, a sample unit for adoption and adaption has been provided in the hopes that practicing teachers will use, modify, and reshare in addition to sharing experiences with the lesson and proposed assessment strategies. The alignment of the activity with state and national standards provides an easy to implement curriculum primed for use along with suggested research studies. Together, teachers can use this proposed strategy to help students unlock the powers of creation.

Bibliography

Adams, Jeff. "Working out Comics." *Journal of Art Design Education* 19, no. 3 (2000): 304–12. doi:10.1111/1468–5949.00233.

Alvermann, Donna E., and Margaret C. Hagood. "Critical Media Literacy: Research, Theory, and Practice in 'New Times.'" *The Journal of Educational Research* 93, no. 3 (January 2000): 193–205. doi:10.1080/00220670009598707.

Alvermann, Donna E., Jennifer S. Moon, and Margaret C. Hagood. *Popular Culture in the Classroom: Teaching and Researching Critical Media Literacy*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1999.

Arlin, Marshall, and Garry Roth. "Pupils' Use of Time While Reading Comics and Books." *American Educational Research Journal* 15, no. 2 (1978): 201–16. doi:10.3102/00028312015002201.

Aubrey, Scott. "Creating a Global Cultural Consciousness in a Japanese EFL Classroom." *English Language Teaching* 2, no. 2 (2009): 119–31.

Burton, Lee. "What Is This Media Literacy Thing? Primary and Secondary Classroom Ideas from across Australia." *Screen Education*, no. 38 (2004): 93–98.

Christensen, Lila L. "Graphic Global Conflict: Graphic Novels in the High School Social Studies Classroom." *The Social Studies* 97, no. 6 (2006): 227–30. doi:10.3200/TSSS.97.6.227–230.

Cirigliano, MM. "Exploring the Attitudes of Students Using an Edutainment Graphic Novel as a Supplement to Learning in the Classroom." *Science Educator* 21, no. 1 (2012): 29–36.

Common Sense Media. "Digital Literacy and Citizenship Classroom Curriculum," 2014. http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/curriculum.

Connors, Sean P. "Toward a Shared Vocabulary for Visual Analysis: An Analytic Toolkit for Deconstructing the Visual Design of Graphic Novels." *Journal of Visual Literacy* 31, no. 1 (2012): 71–92.

Creative Commons. "About - Creative Commons." Accessed May 10, 2014. http://creativecommons.org/about.

Davies, Julie, and Ivy Brember. "Comics or Stories? Differences in the Reading Attitudes and

Habits of Girls and Boys in Years 2, 4 and 6." *Gender and Education* 5, no. 3 (1993): 305–20. doi:10.1080/0954025930050306.

Dong, Lan. "Reading and Teaching Graphic Narratives." In *Essays on Theory, Strategy and Practice: Teaching Comics and Graphic Narratives*, edited by Lan Dong, 5–10. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012.

Dousay, Tonia A. "Reinforcing Multiliteracies through Design Activities." In *Essentials of Teaching and Integrating Visual and Media Literacy*, edited by Danilo M. Baylen and Adriana D'Alba, 27–47. New York: Springer International Publishing, 2015. doi:10.1007/978–3–319–05837–5.

Dyson, Anne Haas. *Writing Super Heroes: Contemporary Childhood, Popular Culture, and Classroom Literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1997.

Gavigan, Karen W., and Mindy Tomasevich. *Connecting Comics to Curriculum: Strategies for Grades 6–12*. Denver, CO: ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2011.

Herman, Joan L., Pamela Aschbacher, and Lynn Winters. *A Practical Guide to Alternative Assessment*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1992.

Hosler, Jay. *Clan Apis*. Columbus: OH: Active Synapse, 2000.

Hosler, Jay, and K. B. Boomer. "Are Comic Books an Effective Way to Engage Nonmajors in Learning and Appreciating Science?" *CBE-Life Sciences Education* 10, no. 3 (2011): 309–17. doi:10.1187/cbe.10–07–0090.

International Society for Technology in Education. "ISTE Standards for Students," 2016. http://www.iste.org/standards/standards/for-students-2016.

Jacobs, Dale. "More than Words: Comics as a Means of Teaching Multiple Literacies." *English*

Journal 96, no. 3 (2007): 19–25. doi:10.2307/30047289.

Kingsley, Karla V, and Jonathan Brinkerhoff. "Web 2.0 Tools for Authentic Instruction,
Learning, and Assessment." *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 23, no. 3 (2011): 9–
13.

Klein, Alyson. "No Child Left Behind: An Overview." *Education Week*, April 10, 2015.
http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-
summary.html?scrlybrkr=54f9ffc7#.

Lewin, Larry, and Betty Jean Shoemaker. *Great Performances: Creating Classroom-Based
Assessment Tasks*. 2nd ed. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum
Development, 2011.

McMichael, A. "PC Games and the Teaching of History." *The History Teacher* 40, no. 2 (2007):
203–218.

Morrison, Timothy G., Gregory Bryan, and George W. Chilcoat. "Using Student-Generated
Comic Books in the Classroom." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 45, no. 8
(2002): 758–67.

National Conference of State Legislatures. "Summary of the Every Student Succeeds Act,
Legislation Reauthorizing the Elelmentary and Seconday Education Act," 2015.
http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/ESSA_summary_NCSL.pdf.

National Council for the Social Studies. "College, Career, & Civic Life (C3) Framework for
Social Studies State Standards." Silver Spring, MD, 2013.
http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf.

———. "National Standards for Social Studies Teachers." Silver Spring, MD, 2004.
http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/teacherstandards.

National Council of Teachers of English. "Comic Book Primer." *Lesson Plan: The Comic Book Show and Tell*, 2005. http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson921/ComicBookPrimer.pdf.

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, and Council of Chief State School Officers. "Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects." Washington, D.C., 2010. http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA Standards.pdf.

Ottaviani, Jim. *Dignifying Science: Stories About Women Scientists*. 3rd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: G.T. Labs, 2009.

Papert, Seymour, and Idit Harel. "Situating Constructionism." In *Constructionism*, 1–11. New York: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1991.

Pelton, Leslee Francis, and Timothy Pelton. "The Learner as Teacher: Using Student Authored Comics to 'Teach' Mathematics Concepts." In *EdMedia: World Conference on Educational Media and Technology*, 1–9. Honolulu: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), 2009.

Porter, Andrew, Jennifer McMaken, Jun Hwang, and Rui Yang. "Common Core Standards: The New U.S. Intended Curriculum." *Educational Researcher* 40, no. 3 (2011): 103–16.

Ranker, Jason. "Using Comic Books as Read-Alouds: Insights on Reading Instruction From an English as a Second Language Classroom." *The Reading Teacher* 61, no. 4 (2007): 296–305. doi:10.1598/RT.61.4.2.

Reeves, Thomas C., and James R. Okey. "Alternative Assessment for Constructivist Learning Environments." In *Constructivist Learning Environments: Case Studies in Instructional*

Design, edited by Brent Gayle Wilson, 191–202. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, 1996.

Roswell, Jennifer. *Family Literacy Experiences: Creating Reading and Writing Opportunities That Support Classroom Learning*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2007.

Severns, Maggie. "How Congress Finally Killed No Child Left Behind." *Politico* December (2015): 1–8. http://www.politico.com/story/2015/12/paul-ryan-congress-no-child-left-behind-216696.

Sharikzadeh, N. "Assessment in Constructive Learning Environments." In *International Conference on Emerging Technologies*, 21:1–7. Minneapolis, MN, 2003.

Short, Jeremy C., Brandon Randolph-Seng, and Aaron F. McKenny. "Graphic Presentation: An Empirical Examination of the Graphic Novel Approach to Communicate Business Concepts." *Business Communication Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (2013): 273–303. doi:10.1177/1080569913482574.

Suhor, Charles. "Comics as Classics?" *The Teachers Guide to Media & Methods* 3, no. 9 (1967): 26–29.

Tatalovic, Mico. "Science Comics and Cartoons." *Science in School*, 2010. http://www.scienceinschool.org/2010/issue14/web.

Taylor, Harvey M. "The Role of the Reading Teacher in Adult Basic Education - TESL." Ann Arbor, MI, 1973. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED119488.

Thompson, Terry. "Embracing Reluctance When Classroom Teachers Shy Away from Graphic Books." *Library Media Connection* 25, no. 4 (2007): 29.

Wiggins, Grant P. *Assessing Student Performance: Exploring the Purpose and Limits of Testing*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1993.

wikiHow. "How to Design Comic Books: 11 Steps (with Pictures)," 2016.

> http://www.wikihow.com/Design-Comic-Books.

Williams, Rachel Marie-Crane. "Image, Text, and Story: Comics and Graphic Novels in the

> Classroom." *Art Education* 1, no. 6 (2008): 13–19.

Wissman, Kelly K., and Sean Costello. "Creating Digital Comics in Response to Literature:

> Linking Arts, Aesthetic Transactions, and Meaning-Making." *Language Arts* 92, no. 2
>
> (2014): 103–17.

Wyoming State Board of Education. "Wyoming Social Studies Content and Performance

> Standards." Cheyenne, WY, 2014. https://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/standards/social-
>
> studies/.

Yang, Gene. "Graphic Novels in the Classroom." *Language Arts* 85, no. 3 (2008): 185–92.

Zorbaugh, Harvey. "What Adults Think of Comics as Reading for Children." *Journal of*

> *Educational Sociology* 23, no. 4 (1949): 225–35.
>
> http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2264558.

Notes

_____

1. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, "Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects," 36.

2. Ibid., 43.

3. Ibid., 43.

4. Ibid., 53.

5. Ibid., 61.

6. Ibid., 61.

7. Ibid., 61.

8. Wyoming State Board of Education, "Wyoming Social Studies Content and Performance Standards," 10.

9. Ibid., 17.

10. wikiHow, "How to Design Comic Books: 11 Steps (with Pictures)," accessed October 13, 2016, http://www.wikihow.com/Design-Comic-Books.

11. Common Sense Media, "Digital Literacy and Citizenship Classroom Curriculum," accessed October 13, 2016, http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/curriculum.

12. Ibid., 12.

13. National Council for the Social Studies, "College, Career, & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards," 59.

14. Wyoming State Board of Education, "Wyoming Social Studies Content and Performance Standards," 10.

15. Ibid., 17.

16. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, "Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects," 61.

17. Ibid., 61.

18. "Digital Citizenship," Common Sense Media, accessed October 13, 2016, https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/digital-citizenship.

19. "Use & Remix," Creative Commons, accessed October 13, 2016, https://creativecommons.org/use-remix/.