



COMMIX

Empowering Literacy in Adolescents through Creative Engagement with Comics
Erasmus+ Project 2016-1-BG01-KA201-023657



COMMIX METHODOLOGY
OR
HOW TO APPLY COMICS IN EDUCATION
or how to make fun
when teaching and learning



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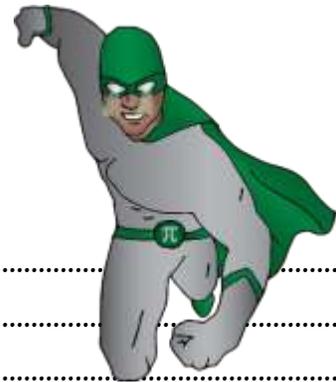
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What are comics?



Comics is a pictorial narrative



Definitions

Hayman and Pratt (2005)

characterize comics as essentially pictorial and sequential.

In order to clarify the concepts used and to prevent any potential confusion, the differentiation of the terms “cartoon”, “comic” and “graphic novel” According to the Dictionary of the Real Academia Española (RAE, 2014), are:

- **Cartoon** is a “series of drawings that make up a comical, fantastic, or adventure story, etc., with or without text and that may be a simple strip in the press, one or several pages, or a book”.
- **Comic** is defined as a “series or sequence of cartoons that tell a story. A book or magazine that contains comics”.
- **Comic book** tells a story over many issues, graphic novels more often have their storylines wrapped up in only one or two books. Graphic novels are much longer and tend to be much more complex (Admin, 2014). A simple drawing showing the features of its subjects in a humorously exaggerated way, especially a satirical one in a newspaper or magazine
- **Graphic novel**, in American and British usage, a type of text combining words and images—essentially a comic, although the term most commonly refers to a complete story presented as a book rather than a periodical. (Murray, 2008)

The variety and extent of usage of the picture continuity in instruction suggests the need for a technical analysis of the communication device in relation to instruction and learning. When taken apart the picture continuity has the following features:

- the narrative is presented in a sequence of pictures or cartoons;
- the focus of the narrative is always on people and rarely departs from the central character;
- animation is effected in the succession of pictures sensory appeal usually is heightened by the use of colors;
- attention is held by brevity;
- the theme and story are humanized to deal with popular feelings, thoughts, and actions.

Each of these structural elements caters to the popular inclination, in reading activity, for vividness, action, brevity, and personalization. Perhaps the latter, the personal and human elements, because of identification and empathy explains the moving influence of the medium.





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The modern picture continuity improves on primitive picture writing in that it supplements representation with textual additions of description, dialogue, even reflection. Picture and text are not only complementary, but frequently parallel structure.

Brief History

Some authors trace the origins of comics back to cave drawings, Egyptian or Greek wall paintings and Roman reliefs are generally considered to be their earliest manifestations. The visual narrations appearing in churches during medieval times are also relevant. The introduction of the printing press led to a true revolution.

Why to use comics in education?

Physiology

Following the definition sequence of cartoons that tell a story is important to know how storytelling affects the brain:

- a story activates parts in the brain that allows the listener to turn the story into their own ideas and experience thanks to a process called **neural coupling**.
- listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker
- the brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it **easier to remember** and **with greater accuracy**
- when processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.

Emotional simulation is the foundation for empathy and is particularly powerful for social creatures like humans because it allows us to rapidly forecast if people around us are angry or kind, dangerous or safe, friend or foe (Zak, 2014).

The comics call forth an activity common to most school children, and they employ a language that apparently is almost universal understood. It is generally admitted that instruction must begin in the on-going activities and concerns of the learner and that its effectiveness depends on the efficiency of the form of communication that is employed. Both of these relations with instructional method have been used as a basis for classroom practices.

The pros of comics have been presented in many articles. The arguments in favor of the comics may be summarized as follows:

- The comics constitute a kind of modern folklore corresponding to the Greek and the Norse myths.
- They meet children's needs for overcoming, in imagination, some of the limitations of their age and ability and for obtaining a sense of adventure denied them in real life.
- The comics offer the mental catharsis - the readers are released from feelings of inadequacy and insecurity and from fear of aggression toward or from others.



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- The comics supply to children of limited reading ability a form of reading experience which is thoroughly enjoyable to them.
- If the children actually read the text of the comics, they will profit by extensive supplementary reading and will be introduced to a wide range of vocabulary, including many words which they repeatedly encounter in other reading.

Teaching tool

Comics are part of a hybrid genre, sharing characteristics with literature, art, cinema and illustration. Considering the prevailing “culture of the image” in today’s society, some education professionals have argued over the role of the comic in our culture, understanding it to be a communication resource that establishes a perfect link between paper (associated with active reading) and audio-visual supports (associated with passive reading), combining narrative and dialogue, and highlighting its great entertainment value, all of which are aspects to be taken into account when considering it as a teaching resource.



Comics are an excellent means of transmission and education of values:

They facilitate the understanding of the surrounding social and cultural reality.

They promote the development of a critical activity in the student’s environment.

They favor collaborative work.

They are economic, permanent, accessible and familiar measures.

Didactic comics have been created in countries having a greater cultural connection with this genre, such as the United States, Canada, Japan and certain European countries such as France and Belgium. In other countries, however, their development continues to be limited (Rocamora-Pérez et al 2017).



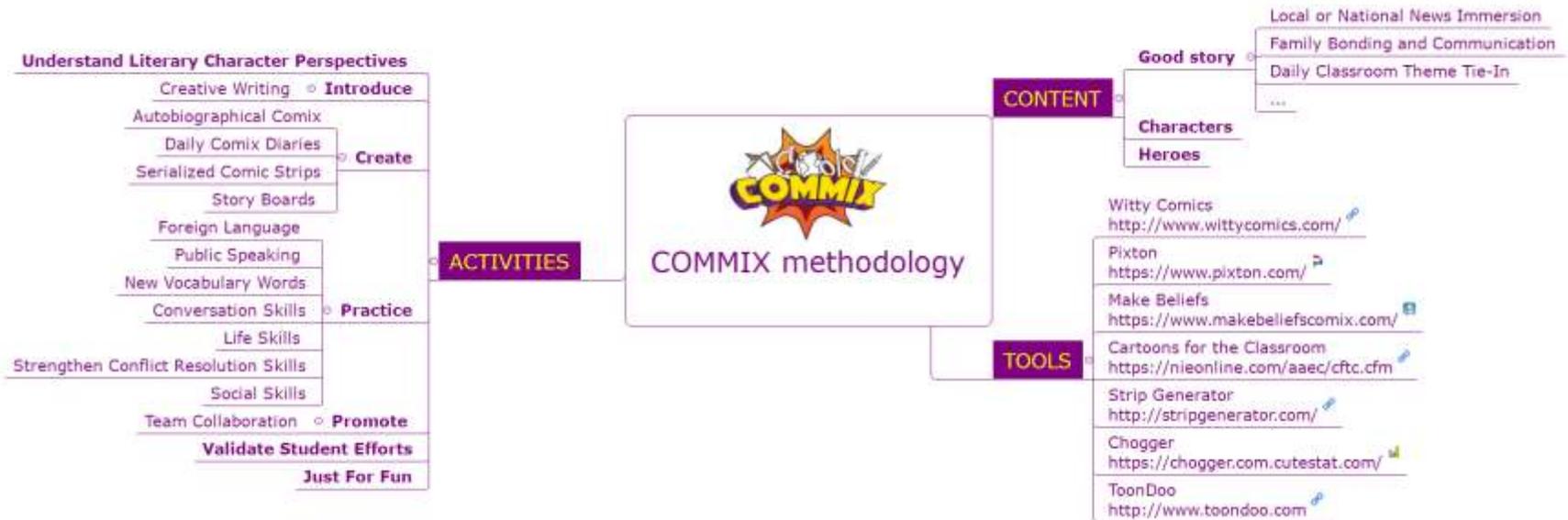
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How to use comics in education?





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How do teachers
can use comics in
the classroom?

Oh- yes, to create:
Autobiographical Comix, Daily
Comix Diaries, Serialized
Comic Strips, and Story
Boards



Let each student select a cartoon character as a surrogate to represent her or him at the beginning of the school year to present themselves, their family and summer experience. After students complete their strips, encourage them to exchange their comics with classmates to learn more about each other. Students can also create strips that summarize what their individual interests are to help a teacher to learn more about them. These autobiographical comic strips can become the opening pages of a daily comix diary that students can be encouraged to keep throughout the school year. These provide a way for students to digest and integrate what they are taught each day as well as to reflect on their lives and experiences. At the end of the year, let the students serialize their comics by creating a new strip each day as part of a continuing story. They can print and color them, too. And present their comic books to the parents.

In this case teachers validate the efforts they put into creating the strips and gives them a sense of ownership. and they can add the completed work to their school portfolios or share with friends and family.



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In the classroom comics can support students skill practice in: Conversation, New Vocabulary Words, Foreign Language, Public Speaking, Life Skills, Conflict resolution, Digital Citizenship Lessons and Social Media Etiquette

Teachers and students can create together comic posters on responsible behavior related to technology use, including what not to post, digital literacy, ethics, etiquette and security. Subjects might include: email etiquette, online privacy, sexting, cyberbullying and copyright rules. Translate the posters in different languages. Students can practice real-life, practical scenarios, such as looking for a job, or learning how to deal with a school bully, or interacting with a difficult boss or fellow worker or classmate creating the comic strips. Tell in story their point of view.



Think of the student sharing her cartoon with someone important to her and the smile this brings to the face of the recipient. Wouldn't such an experience reinforce learning?

What is a good story?

Any story has 5 parts: introduction, *incident*, stakes, event, resolution. For a good stories is necessary to:

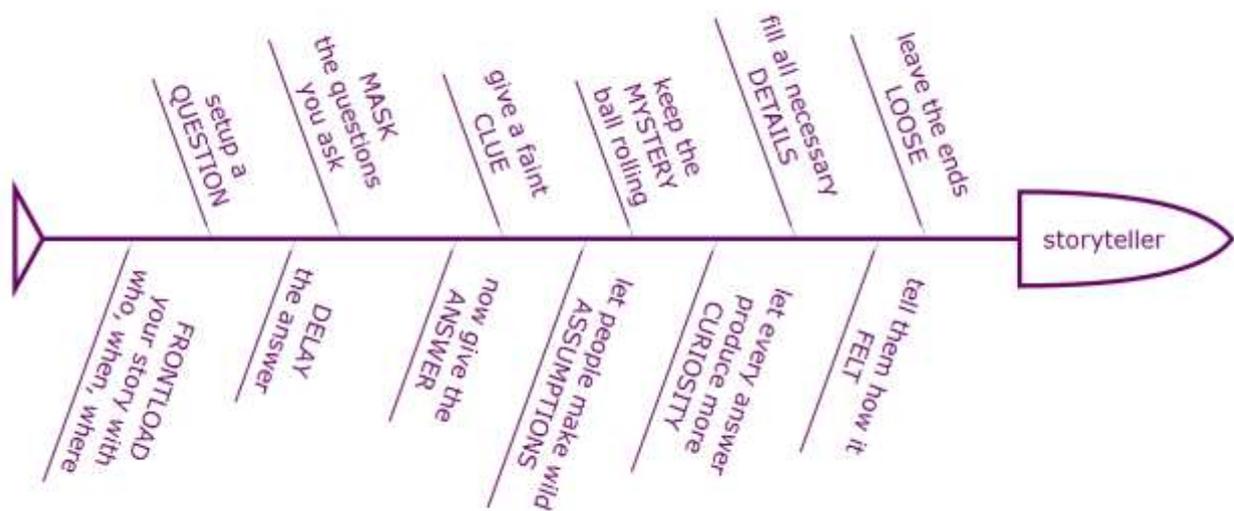
- Know students – Empathy
 - create the stories interesting to them
 - rely on hard data about the students' likes, dislikes, interests, values and so on.
- Create the main character (hero) – this is who the students will identify – let me like him/her – and other protagonists.
- Make story as real as possible - Authenticity goes a long way in telling stories effectively.



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- Every story needs a good conflict. Conflict is that moves it along and keeps the audience tuned in.
- Make short stories in sequences – set the scene, present the conflict and get it resolved
- Start with a key moment that sets the scene, and then fill in the details
- Make me care – a story needs to draw the students sympathy. Pack stories with emotional punch – the emotions inspire the students and drive them to take action
- Use less statistical data
- Delight me – chart and fascinate the audience
- Be international



How to conclude?

Comics is a narrative form consisting of pictures arranged in sequence – underling sequential art as the unique character of comics. It is a form of visual art. Pictures and text in the comics can be describe as the visual narrative and textual narrative respectively.

Mankind from ancient times has sought to visual art. We perceive a picture better especially in modern times where everything can be found illustrated. Committees in the training process can be used on both sides - both as a means of providing information and as an activity in **classroom**.

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