COMICS AS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

v. 3
Hello!

- I’m Ms. Branham. I teach art at Marblehead High School. I like to draw and I like to learn.

I drew this when I was 12
WHAT I DID

• Created a graphic novel for my master’s thesis
• Self-published, then picked up by Teachers College Press
• Revised and redrew manuscript while teaching and taking classes
• Adapting ways to use comics as a means to communicate information in new settings
WHAT I’M DOING

• Adapting ways to use comics as a means to communicate information in new settings

• Bringing comics into my classroom and my reflective practice

• Figuring out what to do next
MY TIMELINE

• January- May 2013- wrote thesis manuscript at RISD
• September 2013-October 2015- looked for a publisher
• October 2015- TCP editorial board reviewed book
• December 2015-February 2016- five rounds of corrections based editorial review
• February 2016- redraw 80% of book based on editorial review
• March 2016-present- ink, scan, Photoshop all pages; more reviews
My “office” and my revised manuscript
“WHAT’S SO GREAT ABOUT ART ANYWAY?”

• Exploring the history and current state of American arts education
• Offering a baseline of understanding for preservice teachers and those outside of the field
• Sharing personal experiences and anecdotes as a means to find common ground and grow professionally
These kinds of disabilities may be mild or severe, obvious or subtle...

but should we even call them "disabilities"?
Are they learning differences? Or preferences?

One of my best experiences as a teacher has been working with students who struggle with spatial relationships, which are essential in visual art. These students work so hard to draw a line, or a circle, always trying to get it just right.

They challenge me to explain concepts in new ways.
Okay, let's see that.

They challenge both my patience, and my ability to deliver the individualized instruction they deserve. Whether or not these students want to continue art as a career, or even a hobby, is not the goal.

If they were able to try, to overcome an obstacle, then I know I'm doing my job.
Another time, I overheard what I thought to be some serious profanity from a young student. I might have overreacted.

**WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?!**

I made disciplinary moves...

But ultimately, I didn't handle it right.

I wrote out a referral... I sent him to the office for the rest of class...

We'll take care of it.

Things became heated.

Why didn't the teacher call me first??

This is happening in all his classes.

*Then why is this the first time I'm hearing about it??*

I was avoidant, and I felt terrible. Does that make me a bad teacher?
Can I use purple?

Well, it depends on what color relationship you want...

If you have only blue & black, your using what?

IDK, it has to match.

...Mono...

...Monochromatic...

Ok.

So, if you include purple.

Then what color relationship would you use?

So can I use purple?

Yes or no?

Hey, listen.

I'm trying to help you understand the project, if you're not being very nice about it.

So can I use purple?

Yes or no?

Sure, yes, you can use purple.
### What's good to say about Ugly Jugs

- Notice similarities in form in old ones to new ones.
- Highlight how little is known about them given the limited history of disenfranchised peoples / slaves.
- More expression in new ones.
- Accessibility of materials.
- Value in American history re: cultural "melting pot".
- Mysteries.
- Many features.
- Cultural ties to west Asia, Caribbean, etc.

### What not good to say about Ugly Jugs

- Ugly.
- Ugly.
- Ugly.
- Ugly.
- Voodoo only.
- Ugly.
- Ugly.
- Liquor.
- Ugly.
- Ugly.
- Crafts.
- "EU slaves."
WHY THIS APPROACH?

• Visualization assists problem-solving
• Captures moments for further processing
• Creates something tangible/humorous/thoughtful out of philosophy, data, and other lofty concepts
WHAT ARE COMICS

• words+pictures

• Some structure, with some wiggle room
COMICS UNITE VISUAL AND WRITTEN

- Line, shape, value
- Figure drawing, proportion, expression
- Balance, rhythm, movement
- Symbolism, hidden meanings
- Grammar
- Story arc, pacing, timing
- Syntax, semantics, pragmatics
- Onomatopoeias
- Symbolism, hidden meanings
FOR TEACHERS

- Keep a journal
FOR DEPARTMENTS/PLC’S

• Keep a journal, and hold each other accountable
• Use for mediation, conflict resolution, etc.
• Share best practices- see what worked
• Run a professional development session
FOR STUDENTS

- Graphic Organizer
- Crystalizing ideas, making predictions
- Self-identity and personal growth
- Communicating information and reteaching - math, science, history, etc...
MEDIA

- Pen and paper
- Pre-cut shapes/bubbles
- Digital tools- *just search “comics generator” on Google*
BEST PRACTICES

Ivan Brunetti

Lynda Barry

Scott McCloud
THE AVATAR

• An avatar is an icon of yourself, represented in another format (in comics, in video games, etc.)

• An avatar is like a self-portrait, but it doesn’t have to be…
THE AVATAR

• An avatar is an icon of yourself, represented in another format (in comics, in video games, etc.)

• An avatar is like a self-portrait, but it doesn’t have to be…

An avatar represents different sides of you!
Representation is fluid!

Also Lynda Barry
OK LET’S TRY IT!

• Let’s use Lynda Barry’s writing techniques!
OK LET’S TRY IT!

- “REVELATION”

- What comes to mind? List 5 memories
BUILDING THE STORY

• “REVELATION”

Who else is there?
Where are you?
What are they doing?
What are you doing?
Why are you there?
How old are they?
What are you feeling?
Why are you there?
What season is it?
What is the mood?
What does the room look like?
FRAMEWORK, THEN FORMAT

• With an idea of the story, we can create a comic using some basic formats and guidelines

  • Panels
  • Speech bubbles
  • Transitions
PANELS

• Panels are frames- boundaries of each image that capture a moment

• What is pictured in the panel? What can the viewer see or not see? How much is left to the viewer’s imagination?
Two-Shot

Extreme Close-Up

Over-the-Shoulder

Close-Up

Medium Shot

R. Crumb
SPEECH BUBBLES

- Consider writing text before the bubbles
- Pay attention to how we read
- Boxes for "narrator voice"
- Bubbles can also have personality
  - Shape, lines, font choice
I SPEAK, THEREFORE I AM HEARD.

I THINK, THEREFORE I AM.

I SPEAK WHEN I DON'T THINK, THEREFORE I WHISPER.

HEAR ME, STUDENTS! DANGER IS NEAR!

HEAR ME, STUDENTS! DANGER IS NEAR!

I SEE YOU'VE COME BACK, DEAR DOCTOR!

I SEE YOU'VE COME BACK, DEAR DOCTOR!

http://www.blambot.com/articles_grammar.shtml#
TRANSITIONS

• What happens in “the gutter” (the space between the panels)

• How much time passes? what is left to the viewer to interpret?
TRANSITIONS

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.

Scott McCloud
LET’S MAKE A COMIC!

• Your first panel should be an “establishing shot”
• The next panels show the event transpiring
• How to end it??
AUTHENTICITY OVER ARTISTRY

screen shot from American Splendor (2003)
CONNECT WITH ME!

• rachelnbranham@me.com

• behance.net/rnb

• Linked In