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Sequential Rhetoric: Using Freire and Quintilian to Teach Students to Read and Create Comics

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Abstract

Our comic combines visual literacy, progymnasmata, and critical pedagogy to showcase a classroom study that used comics production to teach visual literacy. The comic first looks at comics criticism, visual rhetoric, and comics scholarship to set a base to build a methodology build in critical pedagogy and ancient rhetoric. Critical pedagogy's tradition of inviting students to find meaning in the origin of ideas fits in with having students design and study a medium that's often overlooked during their college experience. Such an approach echoes Freire's ideas of using critical strategies as an effective model for change. Progymnasmata, and Quintilian's work in general, allows students to approach the new medium of comics through reading and production through an ancient rhetorical practice that relies on a step-by-step process. Looking at Quintilian's pedagogy, we demonstrate a modern classroom study that uses progymnasmata to make the strange familiar while introducing visuality. The actual study is briefly discussed as well. This amalgamation of ancient rhetoric, comics studies, and critical pedagogy is the basis of the research behind this pieces' goal of exploring comics as a multimodal means of composition.

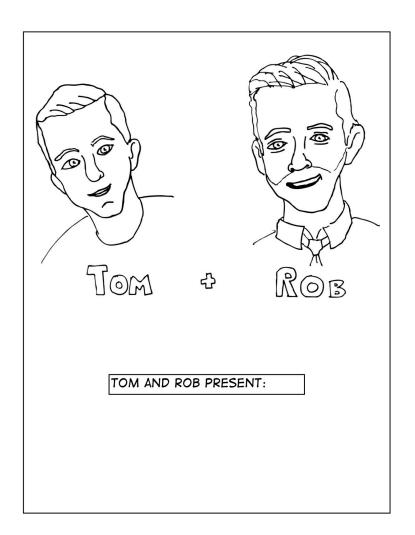


Figure 1.

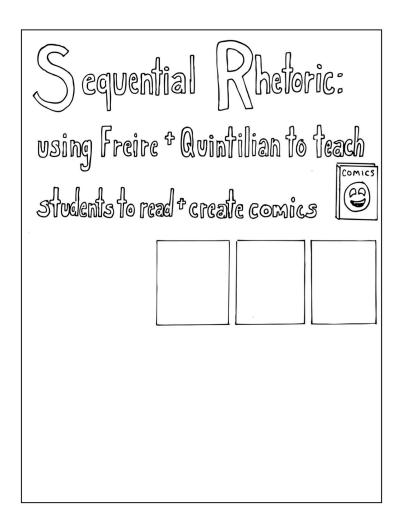


Figure 2.

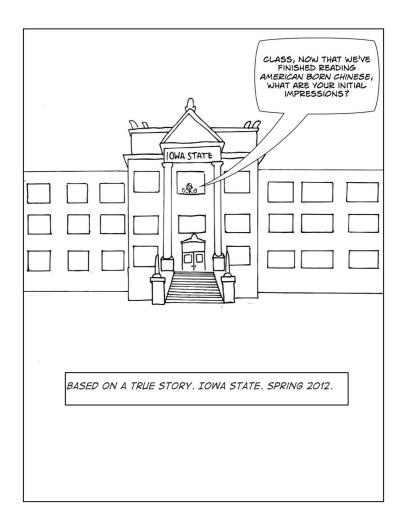


Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.

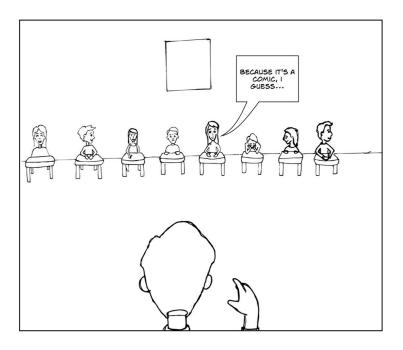


Figure 7.

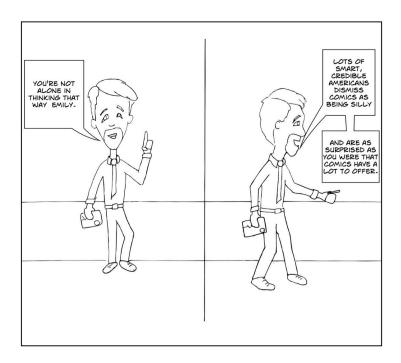


Figure 8.

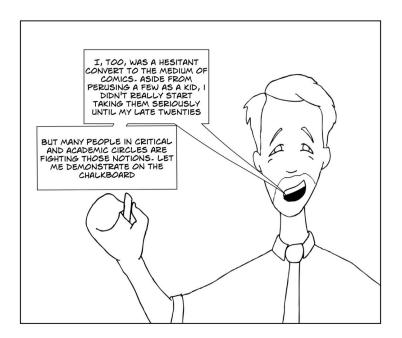
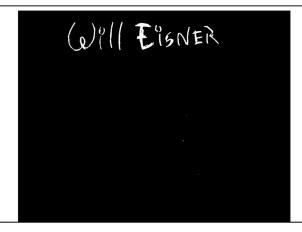


Figure 9.



WHEN THE COMICS CODE RULED AMERICAN COMICS PRIMARILY PRODUCING

OBEDIENT-TO-AUTHORITY SUPERHEROES SAVING DAMSELS IN DISTRESS, WILL

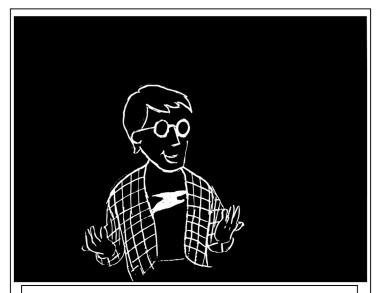
EISNER WORKED TO ELEVATE THE MEDIUM. EISNER PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN

LEGITIMIZING COMICS, AS HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO EXPLORE INSTRUCTIONAL

COMICS. HE CALLED THESE STORIES TO INSTRUCT.

HIS WORK IN PS MAGAZINE COMBINES INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS WITH HUMOR, ENTERTAINMENT, AND SHOCKINGLY SEXIST NOTIONS. HIS COMICS AND HIS WRITTEN THEORY ABOUT COMICS (E.G., COMICS AND SEQUENTIAL ART AND GRAPHIC STORYTELLING AND VISUAL NARRATIVE) PAVED THE WAY FOR LATER DISCUSSION.

Figure 10.



SCOTT MCCLOUD'S UNDERSTANDING COMICS HAS HAD A HUGE INFLUENCE IN
BOTH COMICS AND ACADEMIC CIRCLES IN MAKING THE CASE FOR COMICS'
LEGITIMACY. WHAT MAKES MCCLOUD STAND OUT IS HE ARGUED FOR COMICS
USING COMICS.

SIMILAR TO THIS DIGITAL HUMANITIES QUARTERLY SPECIAL ISSUE, MCCLOUD'S BOOK IS A COMIC BOOK ADVOCATING FOR USING COMICS. MCCLOUD'S DEFINITION IS ALSO WIDELY CITED AS THE DEFINITIVE COMICS DEFINITION.

Figure 11.



MANY OTHER COMICS PRACTITIONERS HAVE LABORED IN FOR ADVOCATING COMICS AS WELL. ALISON BECHDEL, FAMOUS FOR CREATING THE BECHDEL-WALLACE TEST, ADVOCATES FOR WOMEN, HOMOSEXUALS, AND OTHER LINDERREPRESENTED GROUPS FROM TRADITIONAL COMICS HISTORIES AND LIFE IN GENERAL. HER WORK, AMONG MANY OTHERS, IS INVALUABLE. IT'S ESPECIALLY RELEVANT CONSIDERING THE CRITICAL PEDAGOGY ASPECT OF THIS PIECE.

Figure 12.



Figure 13.

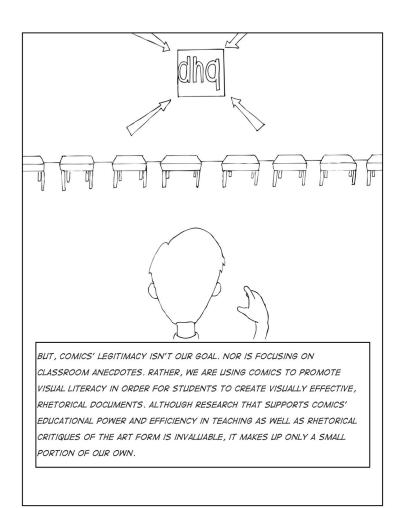


Figure 14.

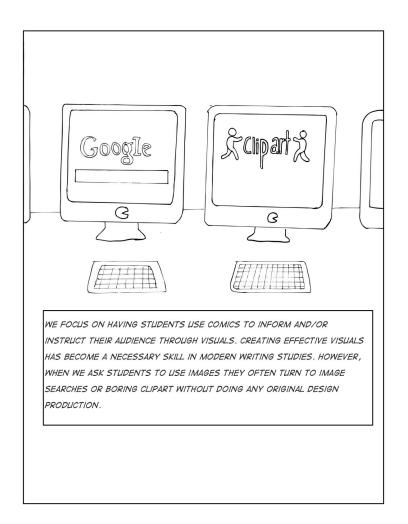
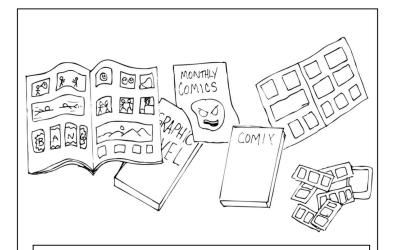
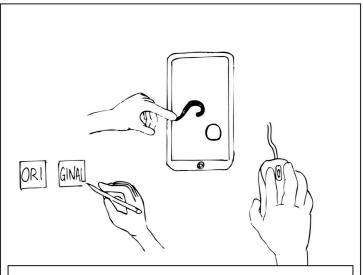


Figure 15.



COMICS DOES THIS BY HAVING STUDENTS INVENT A NARRATIVE THAT
COMBINES IMAGES AND WORDS. WHILE OTHER ASSIGNMENTS CAN ACHIEVE
THIS AS WELL, COMICS OFFERS A BROAD RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY (FROM
MINIMAL TO ELABORATE SOFTWARE) APPROACHES BASED IN A FAMILIAR,
CREATIVE APPROACH. ON TOP OF THIS IT EFFECTIVELY TEACHES
JUXTAPOSITION, CORE WRITING SKILLS, AND HIERARCHY IN A CASUAL AND
INTUITIVE FASHION THAT MAY BE UNIQUE TO THE MEDIUM.

Figure 16.



STUDENTS HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT VISUALS THEY WILL USE TO REPRESENT THEIR INFORMATION AND HOW IT CORRELATES WITH THEIR WORDS, ALL WHILE ENGAGING IN A REMEDIATION PROCESS. THEIR CHOSEN PRODUCTION MODES CAN LEAP OVER THE DIGITAL DIVIDE BECAUSE COMICS CAN BE CREATED THROUGH SIMPLE TECHNOLOGIES (E.G., PENCIL AND PAPER) OR MORE COMPLEX TECHNOLOGIES (E.G., SOFTWARE, APPS, DIGITAL DESIGN).

THE DIFFERING PROCESSES PRODUCE A SIMILAR PRODUCT WHILE ACHIEVING THE SAME GOAL: COMPETENT VISUAL LITERACY. STUDENTS ENGAGE IN DESIGN BY USING MULTIPLE MODES TO CREATE VARIOUS INFORMATIVE MEDIA, SUCH AS HAND-DRAWN, DIGITALLY DRAWN, JUXTAPOSED, SEQUENTIAL, AND PHOTOGRAPHED STORIES.

Figure 17.



Figure 18.

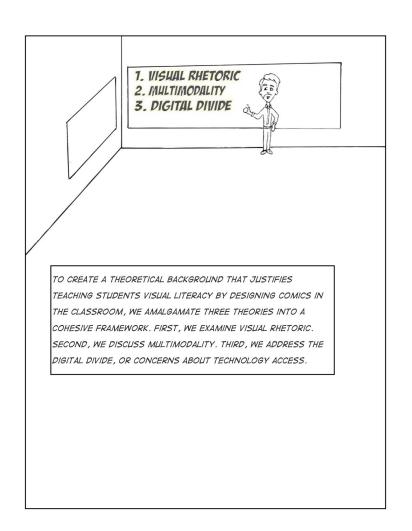


Figure 19.

STEPHEN BERNHARDT EVA BRUMBERGER PETER DALLOW CAROLYN HANDA JAMES ELKINS KATHRYN NORTHCUT MANY, MANY MORE

VISUAL RHETORIC IS COMPLEX, AND AS JO ALLEN MENTIONS WITH DEFINING PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION, GIVING IT A FIXED DEFINITION MIGHT HURT THE MOVEMENT (75). STILL, RELYING ON VARIOUS SCHOLARS, WHOSE NAMES I AM WRITING HERE, WE CAN FIND AT LEAST THREE UNIFYING PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP: USING GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY DESIGN ELEMENTS, DEMYSTIFYING DESIGN, AND USING TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL.

Figure 20.

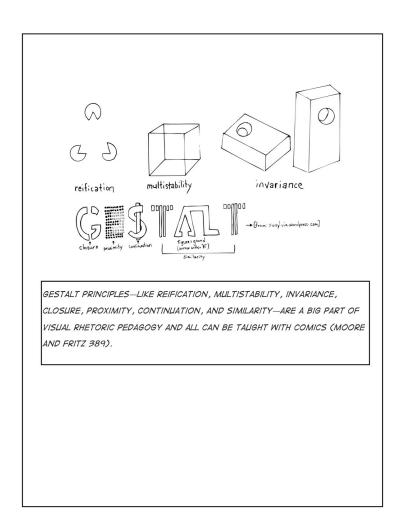


Figure 21.

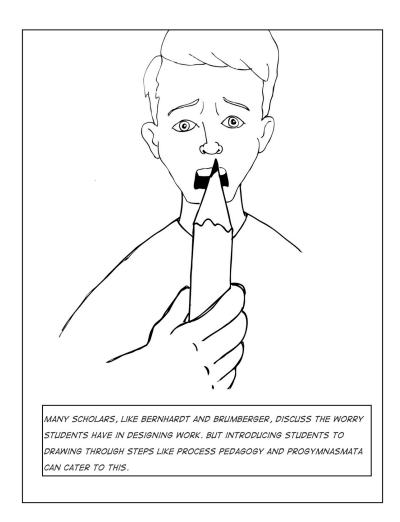


Figure 22.

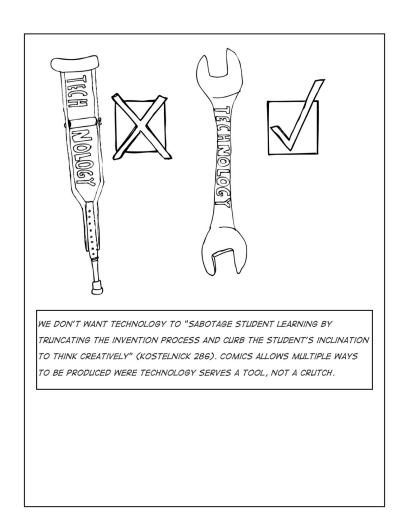


Figure 23.



THE NCTE HAS URGED ALL WRITING INSTRUCTORS TO EMBRACE MULTIPLE
MODES OF TEACHING WRITING. FOR THIS, IT'S USEFUL TO TURN TO
MULTIMODAL SCHOLARSHIP. CLAIRE LAUER ARGUES THAT THE CONCEPT OF
MULTIMODALITY HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE AT LEAST THE 1970S, BUT HASN'T
ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN UNDER THAT NAME. THE NEW LONDON GROUP'S USE OF
THE TERM OF MULTIMODALITY MADE COMPOSING WITH MULTIPLE MODES
BECOME MORE POPULAR IN THE 1990S AND GAVE IT AN ACADEMIC TITLE (39).
LAUER DID A SURVEY OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP AND FOUND
THE PHRASE MULTIMODALITY USED ONLY THRICE WHILE MULTIMEDIA WAS USED
243 TIMES (32).

Figure 24.

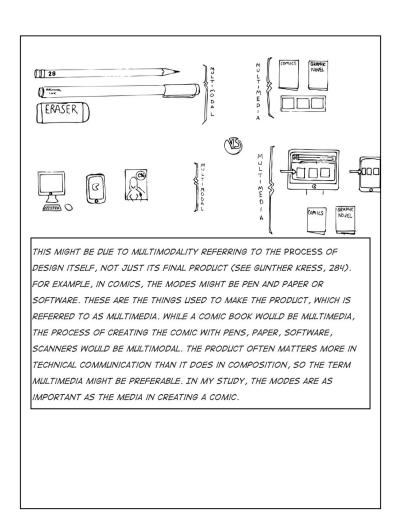


Figure 25.

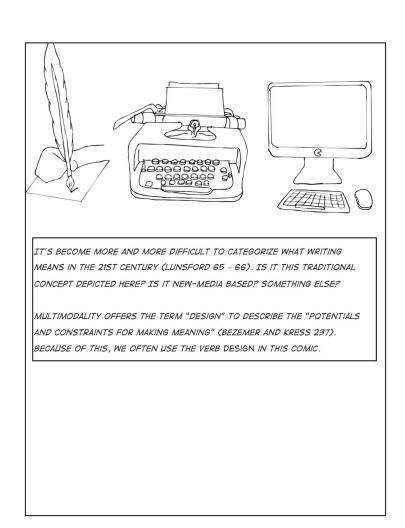


Figure 26.

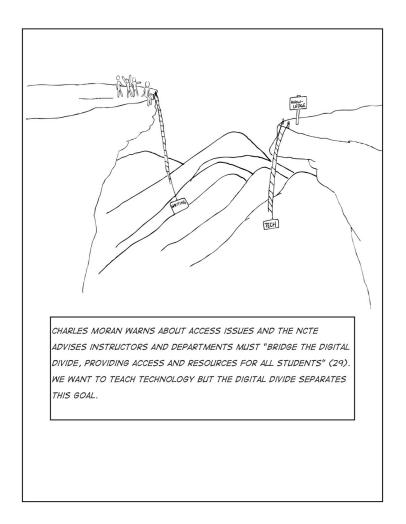


Figure 27.

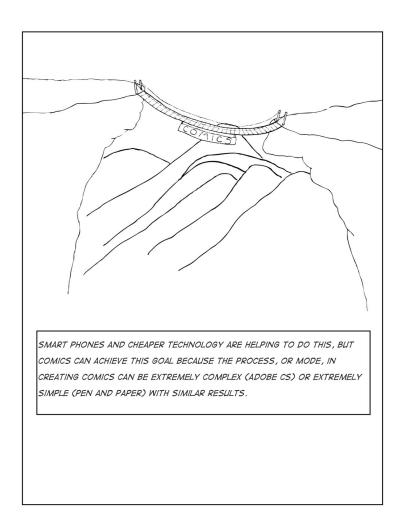


Figure 28.

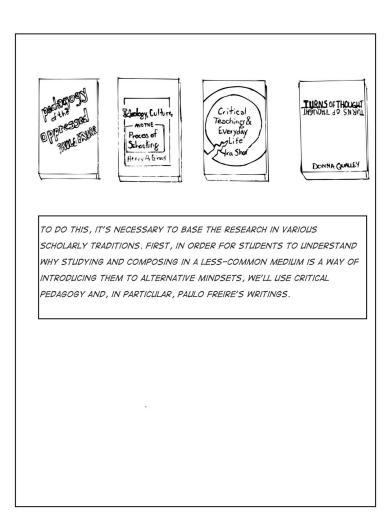


Figure 29.

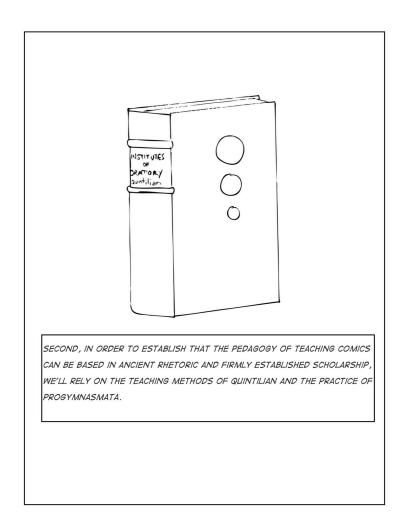
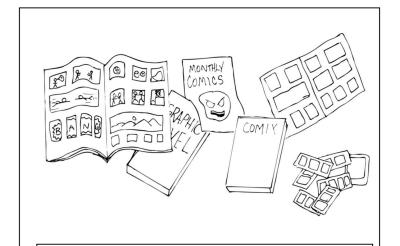


Figure 30.



AND FINALLY, WE'LL TURN TO COMIC BOOKS THEMSELVES. DRAWING ON EXAMPLES OF TECHNICAL AND ARGUMENTATIVE COMICS, AS WELL AS FICTIONAL AND THEORETICAL COMICS, WE'LL SHOW THAT THERE ARE CURRENT COMICS THAT SERVE AS EXAMPLES OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION, PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION, AND COMPOSITION SCHOLARSHIP.

Figure 31.



PAULO FREIRE IS WIDELY CONSIDERED THE FOUNDER OF THE CRITICAL
PEDAGOGY MOVEMENT. AFTER HIS DEATH, HIS FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE HENRY
GIROUX WOULD LAUD HIS WORK AND EFFORT. HE WOULD ALSO DEFINE CRITICAL
PEDAGOGY AS "THE EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT, GUIDED BY PASSION AND
PRINCIPLE, TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP CONSCIOUSNESS OF FREEDOM,
RECOGNIZE AUTHORITARIAN TENDENCIES, AND CONNECT KNOWLEDGE TO
POWER AND THE ABILITY TO TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION" (GIROUX). PAULO
FREIRE INITIALIZED THIS MOVEMENT BY PUBLISHING HIS WORK AMONG THE
LOWER CLASS IN BRAZIL TITLED THE PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED.

Figure 32.

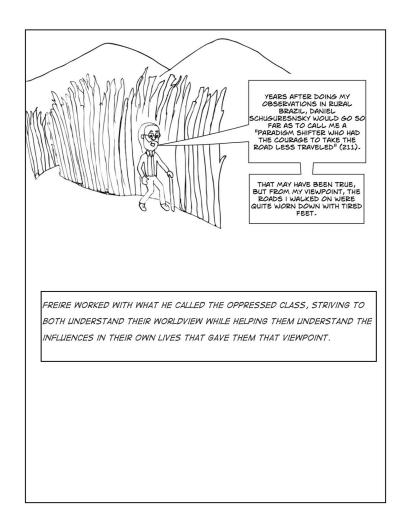


Figure 33.

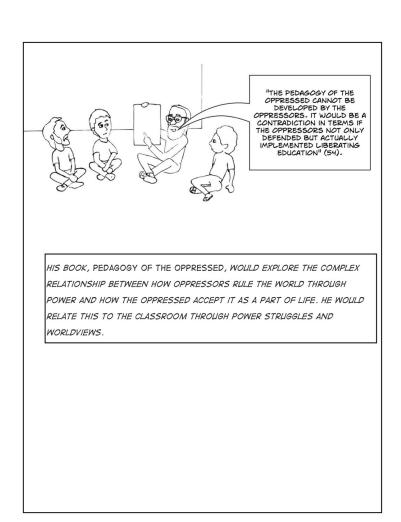


Figure 34.

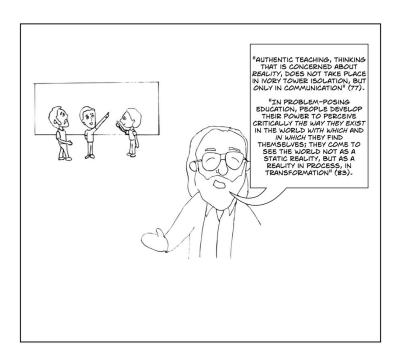


Figure 35.

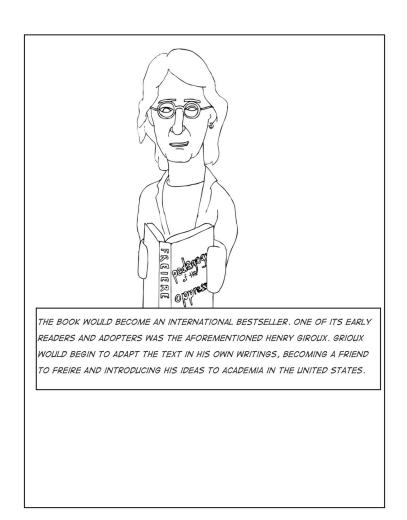


Figure 36.

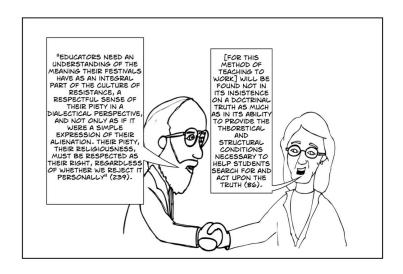
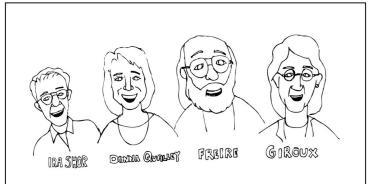


Figure 37.



OTHER SCHOLARS, LIKE IRA SHOR AND DONNA QUALLEY, WOULD JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION. THE MOVEMENT WOULD TAKE ON MANY FORMS AND NOOKS, BUT WOULD BE KNOWN AS CRITICAL THEORY OR CRITICAL PEDAGOGY.

MANY WOULD ARGUE FOR IT AND OTHERS CRITIQUE IT, BUT MANY OF THE MOVEMENT'S GOALS WOULD BE TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION BY STEPPING BACK AND REFLECTING ON WHERE THEIR OWN IDEAS COME FROM.

Figure 38.

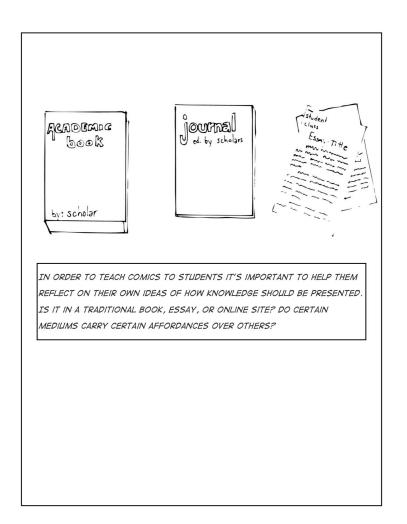


Figure 39.

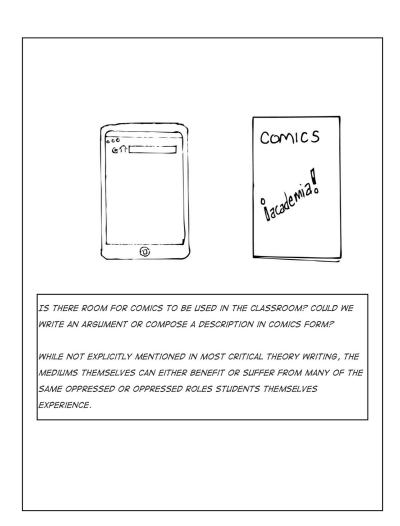


Figure 40.

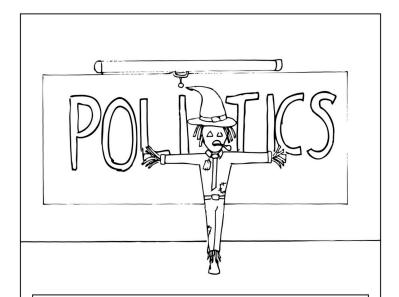




MOST LIKELY, STUDENTS WILL HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF COMICS IN A VAGUE SENSE (ALTHOUGH THERE WILL PROBABLY BE A FAN OR TWO). WHEN PRESSED THEY WILL ADMIT THEIR PREJUDICES OF THE MEDIUM INCLUDE THAT THEY DON'T EVEN CONSIDER IT A MEDIUM. INSTEAD THEY'RE KIDS' BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN EITHER BY BEING HILARIOUS OR BY BEING ABOUT SUPERHEROES.

THIS IS WHERE CRITICAL PEDAGOGY BECOMES IMPORTANT. STUDENTS SHOULD BECOME AWARE OF WHY THEY HAVE THESE PRECONCEPTIONS OF HOW MATERIALS AND KNOWLEDGE ARE PRESENTED.

Figure 41.



HOWEVER, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY CAN BECOME A PARODY WITH A STRAW MAN TEACHER SHOUTING "POLITICS" WITH NO SUBSTANCE (SEE FISH'S SAVE THE WORLD ON YOUR OWN TIME). ONE CONCERN THAT ARISES IS THAT ECHOES BY GREGORY JAY AND GERALD GRAFF, "IN THEORY CRITICAL PEDAGOGY SPEAKS OF DIALOGUE AND STUDENTS' AUTHORITY TO INITIATE AND FREELY PURSUE CRITICAL ANALYSES, IN PRACTICE SUCH A PEDAGOGY MERELY REAFFIRMS THE AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER WHO HAS THE 'POLITICAL CLARITY' (THE TERM IS FREIRE'S) STUDENTS LACK" (100).

Figure 42.

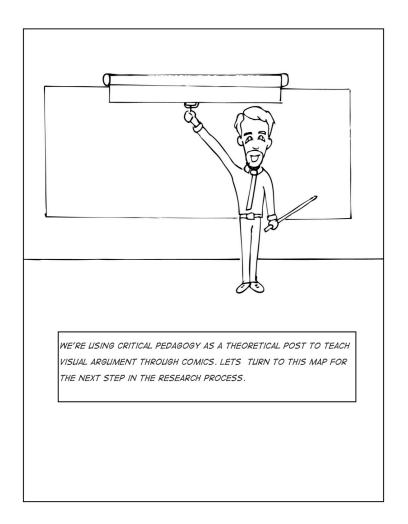


Figure 43.

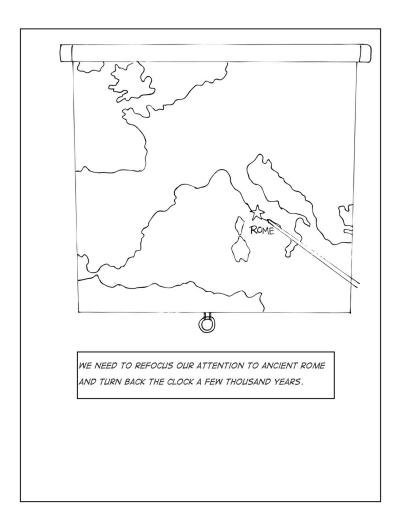


Figure 44.



WE TURN TO THE TEACHING PRACTICE OF PROGYMNASMATA, OUTLINED BY QUINTILIAN ININSTITUTES OF ORATORY, AND FURTHER EXPLAINED BY MODERN RHETORICIANS. WHILE AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS TEACHING METHOD, WHICH WILL BE EXPLAINED, MAY SEEM AT ODDS WITH CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, THERE ARE SIMILAR ELEMENTS THAT ALLOW BOTH APPROACHES TO BE USED SIDE-BY-SIDE TO TEACH COMICS.

Figure 45.

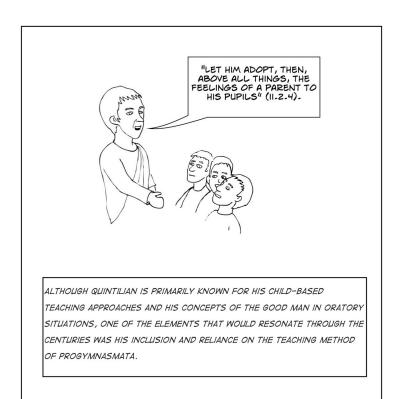
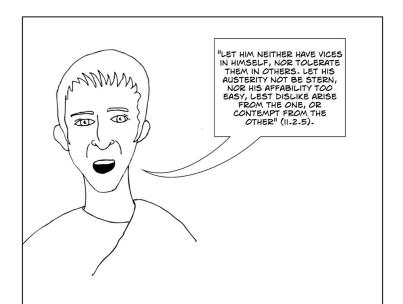
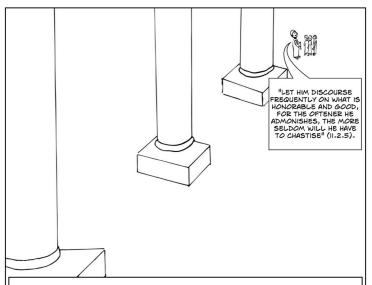


Figure 46.



JAMES J. MURPHY POINTS OUT THAT QUINTILIAN WAS "LESS THAN THOROUGH" WHEN DESCRIBING THE PROGYMNASMATA BECAUSE IT WAS COMMON PRACTICE TO HIS ROMAN AUDIENCE. IT WASN'T UNTIL LATER RHETORICIANS CAME ALONG, LIKE HERMOGENES OF TARSUS, APHTHONIUS, AELIUS THEON, AND NICOLAUS. THEY DEFINED THE NITTY-GRITTY ELEMENTS. YET AUBREY GWYNN OPINES, "QUINTILIAN IS STILL THE BEST AUTHOR ON THE SUBJECT" (202). BUT THIS STILL HASN'T ANSWERED WHAT PROGYMNASMATA IS.

Figure 47.



MURPHY EXPLAINS THAT THEY ARE A "SET OF GRADED COMPOSITION

EXERCISES . . . [WHOSE] NAME COMES FROM THE FUNCTION OF THE EXERCISES:

IF THE HIGHEST FORM OF SCHOOL TRAINING ARE THE DECLAMATIONS OR

FICTITIOUS SPEECHES (GYMNASMATA IN GREEK), THEN THAT WHICH PREPARES FOR

THEM IS PRE-DECLAMATION (PRO-GYMNASMATA)" (54).

MICHAEL MENDELSON ALSO EMPHASIZES THE PRO, OR PRE, OF THE GYMNASMATA BY DEFINING THEM AS "LITERALLY, 'PRE-TRAINING' ACTIVITIES, PRELIMINARY IN THE SENSE THAT THEY LEAD TO THE FULL-DRESS ARGUMENTS OF DECLAMATION AND, BEYOND THAT, TO THE KINDS OF DELIBERATIVE, FORENSIC, AND EPIDEICTIC SPEECH" (187). WHICH MEANS...

Figure 48.

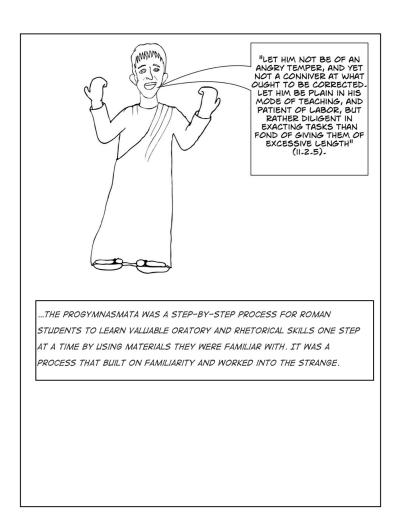
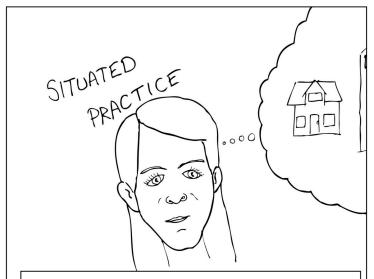


Figure 49.



USING PROGYMNASMATA TO TEACH COMICS PRODUCTION AND CRITICAL
PEDAGOGY TO JUSTIFY ALTERNATIVE TEXTS CAN BE SUPPORTED WITH THE NEW
LONDON GROUP'S DESIGN ELEMENTS. THE NEW LONDON GROUP ARGUES FOUR
MAJOR DESIGN CONCEPTS: OVERT INSTRUCTION, CRITICAL FRAMING, AND
TRANSFORMED PRACTICE.

SITUATED PRACTICE IS DEFINED AS "IMMERSION IN EXPERIENCE AND UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE DISCOURSES, INCLUDING THOSE FROM THE STUDENTS' LIFEWORLDS AND SIMULATIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS TO BE FOUND IN WORKPLACES AND PUBLIC SPACES" (207). BOTH IN DESIGN AND STUDY, HAVING STUDENTS START WITH THE FAMILIAR AND WORK TO THE STRANGE HELPS THEM ADAPT AVAILABLE DISCOURSES.

Figure 50.

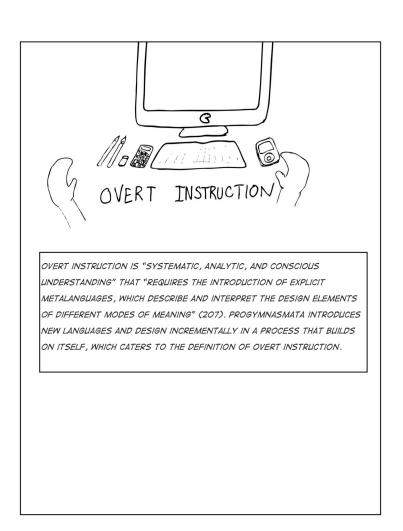
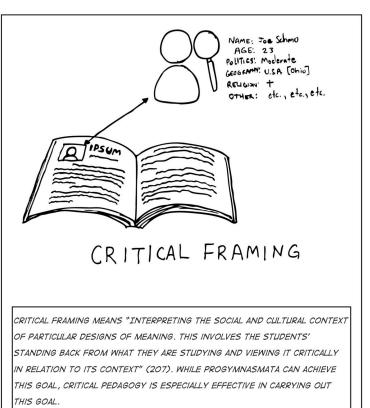
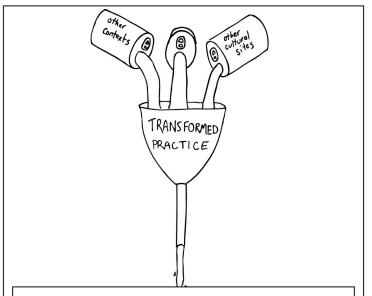


Figure 51.



THIS GOAL.

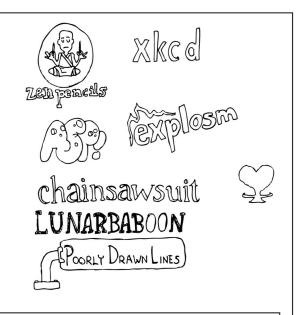
Figure 52.



TRANSFORMED PRACTICE MEANS TO "TRANSFER IN MEANING-MAKING
PRACTICE, WHICH PUTS THE TRANSFORMED MEANING TO WORK IN OTHER
CONTEXTS OR CULTURAL SITES" (207). STUDENTS TAKE THE CRITICAL IDEAS
THEY'VE LEARNED FROM THE MATERIALS AND THE MEDIUMS OF PRODUCTION
AND APPLY IT TO A COMIC THAT THEY DESIGN.

CRITICAL THEORY AND PROGYMNASMATA WEAVE TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. ONCE STUDENTS HAVE CONSIDERED THEIR WORLDVIEW AND DONE SELF-REFLECTION THEN MOVED THAT CRITICAL THINKING STRATEGY TOWARDS COMIC BOOKS IN GENERAL, IT'S TIME TO TEACH THEM HOW TO EITHER WRITE TECHNICALLY OR COMPOSE AN ARGUMENT WITH COMICS.

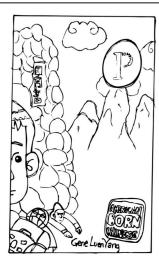
Figure 53.



TO START WITH, STUDENTS NEED TO WORK ON UNDERSTANDING WHAT COMICS ARE. TO DO SO, WE TURN TO THE PROGYMNASMATA APPROACH BY STARTING WITH SOMETHING THEY'RE FAMILIAR WITH AND WORKING UP TO SOMETHING EXTREMELY COMPLEX. STARTING WITH WEB AND NEWSPAPER COMICS, STUDENTS LOOK AT WHAT THEY'RE FAMILIAR WITH.

THESE EXAMPLES ABOVE ARE SOME OF THE SHARPEST WEB COMICS AVAILABLE
RIGHT NOW AND PROVIDE AMPLE EXAMPLES TO INTRODUCE STUDENTS. MORE
TRADITIONAL METHODS FROM NEWSPAPERS WORK AS WELL.

Figure 54.



THE NEXT STEP IS TO BUILD ON THE SMALLER STRIPS INTO A FULL-LENGTH, BUT FICTIONAL, COMIC STRIP. SINCE WE ARE WORKING WITH FICTIONAL STORIES, THIS IS THE LOGICAL BUILDUP. AMERICAN BORN CHINESE IS A FANTASTIC EXAMPLE OF FICTION DEALING WITH HEAVY TOPICS. THIS NATIONAL BOOK AWARD NOMINEE REALLY DRIVES HOME THE HEAVY MATTERS THAT COMICS CAN DEAL WITH. AS A BONUS, IT DEALS WITH WORLDVIEW PARADIGM SHIFTS.

Figure 55.



NEXT WE LEAP FROM FICTION TO NON-FICTION. THIS IS A CRUCIAL SWITCH FOR STUDENTS TO SEE HOW THE MEDIUM THEY'VE SEEN PRIMARILY HANDLE FICTION CAN BE USED TO PRESENT NON-FICTION TOPICS—AND HEAVY ONES AT THAT. IT'S NOT NECESSARY TO READ THE WHOLE BOOK OF UNDERSTANDING COMICS IN THIS CASE, BUT TO FOCUS ON CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO WHERE MCCLOUD DEFINES COMICS AND THEN DISSEMINATES VISUALS AND ICONS. IT HELPS STUDENTS TOWARD THE END GOAL OF ACHIEVING VISUAL ARGUMENTATIVE OR VISUAL INSTRUCTIVE MEANS.

Figure 56.

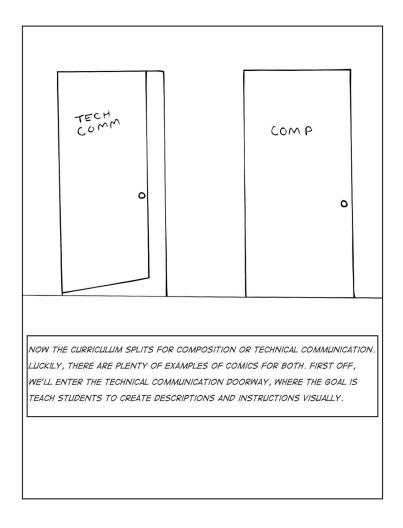
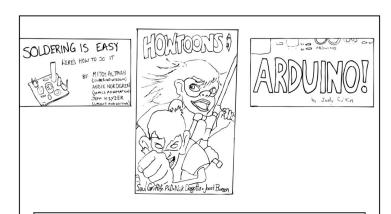


Figure 57.

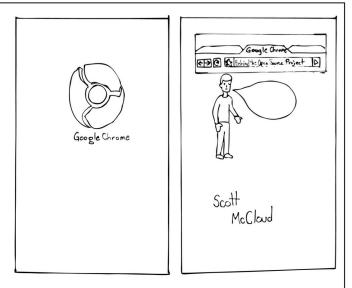


THE MOVE TO INSTRUCTIONS IS GUIDED FIRST BY THE CHILDREN'S BOOK
HOWTOONS WHICH COMBINES STORYTELLING ELEMENTS FAMILIAR TO
FICTION WHILE INTRODUCING INSTRUCTIONAL ELEMENTS.

SECOND, CULKIN'S WORK ARDUINO! IS A MORE INSTRUCTIONAL PIECE, BUT STILL FEATURES A FAMILIAR AVATAR.

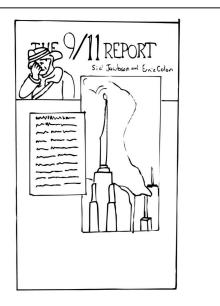
THIRD, ALTMA, NORDGREN, AND KEYZER'S SOLDERING IS EASY GOES MORE INTO THE TECHNICAL ASPECT OF THINGS BY HAVING NO NARRATOR—JUST INSTRUCTIONS.

Figure 58.



NEXT STUDENTS RETURN TO THE NOW FAMILIAR MCCLOUD DEALING WITH A TECHNICAL DILEMMA: TRANSLATING GOOGLE ENGINEER SPEAK INTO SOMETHING THE MASSES CAN CONSUME. GOOGLE CHROME IS A BALANCE BETWEEN INSTRUCTIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS AND SHOWCASES MULTIPLE NARRATORS TRYING TO INSTRUCT ON HOW TO USE GOOGLE CHROME. YET, THE CATCH HERE IS MCCLOUD IS ALSO DEALING WITH COPYWRITING—SO ADVERTISING COMES INTO PLAY TOO.

Figure 59.



THE FINAL BOOK TO GUIDE STUDENTS INTO COMPOSING TECHNICAL COMICS IS THE 9/11 COMMISSION REPORT: A GRAPHIC ADAPTATION BY SID JACOBSON AND ERNIE COLON. HERE IS A GOVERNMENT-APPROVED ADAPTATION OF A THICK, STUFFY 500+ PAGE BOOK INTO A DIGESTIBLE COMIC BOOK. STUDENTS CAN SEE THE ETHICAL REPRESENTATION OF FAMILIAR GOVERNMENT FIGURES AND HOW SENSITIVE MATERIALS AND TOPICS CAN BE TASTEFULLY REPRESENTED. THIS IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF ETHICAL COMICS-BASED TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION.

Figure 60.

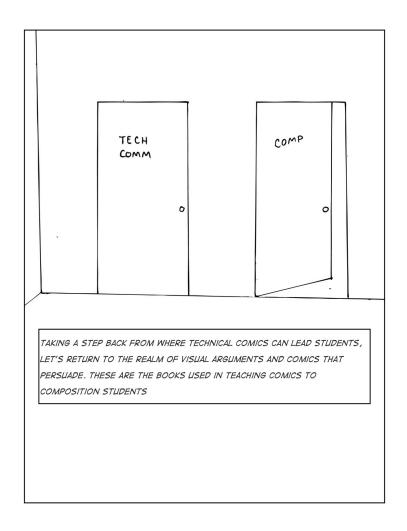
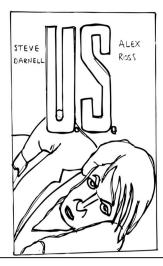


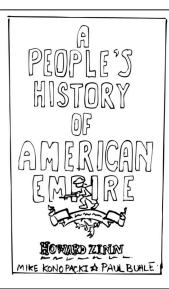
Figure 61.



THE FIRST STEP TOWARD PERSUASIVE COMICS IS A FICTIONAL COMIC, UNCLE SAM BY STEVE DARNALL AND ALES ROSS. THE JOURNEY HERE IS A FICTIONAL ONE OF UNCLE SAM WALKING THROUGH MODERN AMERICA TRYING TO SORT OUT HIS MEMORY FROM PATRIOTIC SPEECHES, ATROCITIES DONE IN WARS, AND OTHER COMPLICATED ASPECTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY.

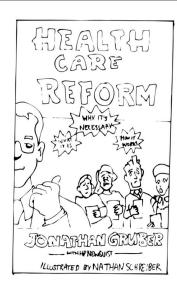
WHILE FICTIONAL, THE BOOK ACTUALLY RELIES ON SOURCES AND THE WORK OF SCHOLARS TO PRESENT ITS TALE—WHICH IS FAR MORE PERSUASIVE THAN MOST FICTION. BECAUSE OF THIS, IT'S ALSO A BIT ON THE NOSE.

Figure 62.



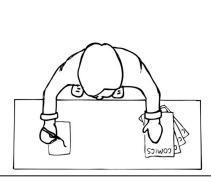
LAUNCHING FROM UNCLE SAM STUDENTS WILL GET A PRIMARILY NON-FICTION READING OF A SIMILAR THEME. NOW, INSTEAD OF THE FICTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE AMERICAN HISTORIES, THEY GET THE SOURCE MATERIAL FROM HISTORIAN HOWARD ZINN. THIS IS A CHANCE TO TIE IN CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION WHILE LEARNING ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH AN ARGUMENT. ZINN'S VIEW IS PRESENTED THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP AND BIOGRAPHY. IT ALSO ALLOWS STUDENTS THE CHANCE TO SEE THE PROBLEMATIC WAY IN WHICH CHARACTERS CAN BE REPRESENTED IN COMICS. COMPARED TO 9/11 THE REPRESENTATION OF HISTORICAL FIGURES HERE IS CLEARLY MANIPULATIVE AND PROBLEMATIC.

Figure 63.



HERE IS AN ARGUMENT DONE IN COMICS FORM. WITH LITTLE TO NO RELIANCE
ON BIOGRAPHY OR NARRATOR STORIES, THIS BOOK PRESENTS A VISUAL
ARGUMENT CONSTRUCTED THROUGH COMICS. IN HEALTH CARE REFORM
JONATHAN GRUBER ARGUES FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM AND PROVIDES A
CLEAN, USEFUL EXAMPLE FOR STUDENTS TO CREATE THEIR OWN ARGUMENTS.

Figure 64.



NOW THE STAGE IS SET FOR STUDENTS TO CREATE THEIR OWN VISUAL ARGUMENTS.

THEY'VE BEEN SCHOOLED IN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY TO VIEW HOW INFORMATION
CAN BE PRESENTED IN PRIVILEGED FORMS THAT RELATES TO THEIR OWN LIVES
AND WORLD.

THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO HOW IT CAN BE DONE THROUGH PROGYMNASMATA.

STUDENTS NOW RELY ON ONE OF THEIR WORKS FROM EARLIER IN THE
SEMESTER, EITHER A TRADITIONALLY WRITTEN PERSUASIVE ESSAY OR A
TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION OR INSTRUCTION. THEY'RE GOING TO REMEDIATE IT
VISUALLY.

Figure 65.



BEFORE THE ADAPTATION, IT'S HELPFUL TO LOOK AT JEFF RICE'S POINT OF WRITING ABOUT IMAGES NEGATES WRITING WITH IMAGES: "IN MUCH OF TODAY'S PEDAGOGY, THE PREFERENCE IS FOR WRITING ABOUT IMAGES, NOT WITH IMAGES" RICE RELATES THIS PROBLEM TO COMICS SPECIFICALLY IN SAYING IF COMICS ARE MENTIONED BY TEXTBOOKS, THEY NEVER ASK STUDENTS TO PRODUCE THEM, JUST TO CRITIQUE AND ANALYZE THEM (151 - 152).

IN THE SAME WAY STUDENTS WERE INTRODUCED TO READING COMICS, THEY
BEGIN CREATING THEM, STARTING WITH THEIR ORIGINAL WORK DONE EARLIER
IN THE SEMESTER, TURNING IT INTO A SCRIPT, SKETCHING IDEAS, AND
FINALLY CREATING THE COMIC.

Figure 66.

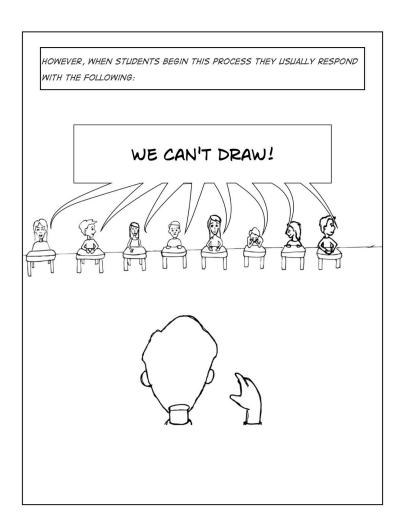
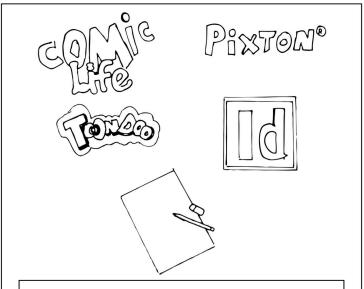
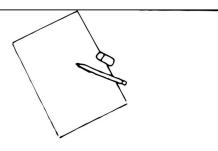


Figure 67.



THIS IS THE CLASSIC KNEE-JERK REACTION. NOW IS THE CHANCE TO REMIND STUDENTS THAT COMPOSITION IS THE GOAL HERE, NOT THE ARTWORK. THAT SAID, A GOOD COMPOSITION IS VITAL AND THERE ARE MANY TOOLS TO DO IT. THERE ARE WEBSITES LIKE PIXTON AND TOONDOO AND SOFTWARE LIKE COMIC LIFE 3 (WHICH HAS A FREE MONTH TRIAL). OR THEY CAN USE TRADITIONAL ADOBE CREATIVE SUITE METHODS. IF ACCESS CONCERNS ARE AT STAKE, OR IF ELECTRONIC COMPOSITION IS AT STAKE, THEN A TRADITIONAL PAPER AND PENCIL CAN GET THE JOB DONE. THE GOAL HERE IS FOR THE VISUAL CONNECTION.

Figure 68.



AFTER STUDENTS FINISHED THEIR COMICS I GAVE THEM A QUESTIONNAIRE
ASKING FOR THEIR REACTIONS TO THE PROCESS. THEIR RESPONSES WERE
FASCINATING AND COPIOUS. IT LED TO MULTIPLE THEMES AND CONCEPTS
THAT APPEARED THAT I FULLY EXPLORED IN MY DISSERTATION. BUT FOR THIS
COMIC, I WILL FOCUS ON FIVE THAT ARE EITHER UNIQUE TO OR ENHANCED
BY COMICS.

Figure 69.

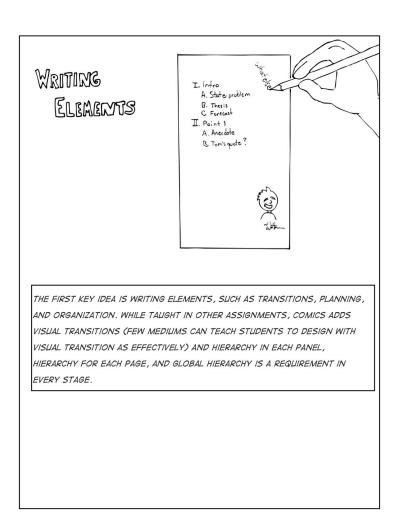
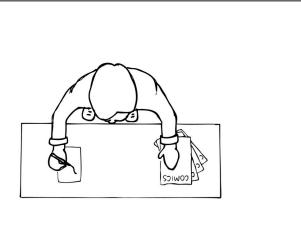


Figure 70.



THE SECOND KEY IDEA IS CORE WRITING. WHILE TAUGHT BY OTHER

ASSIGNMENTS, COMICS ADDS MANDATORY CONCISE WRITING (PANELS LIMIT THE

AMOUNT OF TEXT AND STUDENTS HAVE TO PLAN ON EVERY STAGE TO ADAPT

THEIR MESSAGE BOTH VISUALLY AND TEXTUALLY), REMEDIATION SKILLS DUE TO

MULTIPLE ADAPTATIONS OF STUDENTS' OWN WORK IN MULTIPLE STAGES (BY

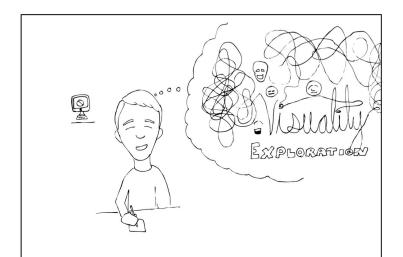
PARTICIPATING IN A NEW MEDIUM, STUDENTS REMEDIATE TECHNICAL

COMMUNICATION GENRE), AND PLAGIARISM CURBING (DUE TO THE RARITY OF

TECHNICAL COMICS AS WELL AS THE THREE-STEP PROCESS OF WRITING, IT

BECOMES NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO PLAGIARIZE).

Figure 71.



THE THIRD KEY IDEA IS VISUALITY EXPLORATION, SUCH AS USING ORIGINAL GRAPHICS AND ORIGINAL DESIGN. THIS ONE ISN'T ALWAYS TAUGHT BY OTHER ASSIGNMENTS. ADDITIONALLY COMICS ADDS ORIGINAL GRAPHICS (STUDENTS CAN'T RELY ON CLIP ART OR GOOGLE IMAGES AS EASILY AS WITH OTHER ASSIGNMENTS. WITH COMICS THEY HAVE TO CREATE THEIR GRAPHICS TO FIT THEIR GOALS) AND DOCUMENT DESIGN (STUDENTS CAN RELY ON SOFTWARE TEMPLATES, BUT THEY HAVE TO DECIDE ON THE BEST WAY TO VISUALLY INCORPORATE THEIR INFORMATION INTO AN ASSIGNMENT).

Figure 72.

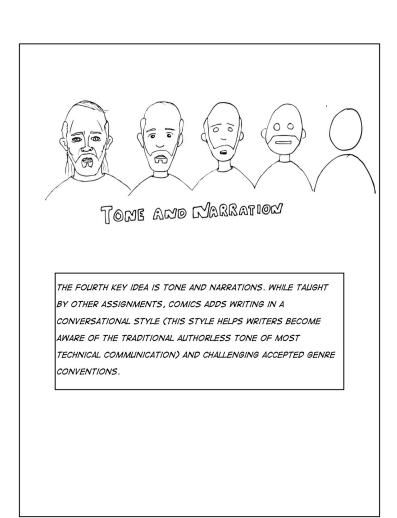
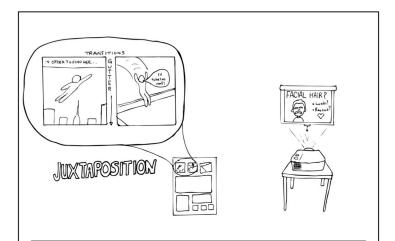


Figure 73.



THE FIFTH KEY IDEA IS JUXTAPOSITION. STUDENTS HAVE TO COMPLETELY ENGAGE IN JUXTAPOSING GRAPHICS WITHIN ONE ANOTHER AND DESIGN THEM SO THEY FORM A COHESIVE STORY. NOT ONLY DO THEY DESIGN EACH IMAGE, BUT THEY HAVE TO PLACE IT WITHIN A LARGER STORY AND TEXT—COMICS MAY TEACH THIS SKILL BETTER THAN ANY OTHER MEDIUM OR GENRE.

JUXTAPOSITION ALSO APPLIES TO SLIDE PRESENTATIONS IN THAT THEY TEACH THAT IMAGES AND TEXTS WORKING TOGETHER TO PRESENT ONE MESSAGE, NOT REPEATING EACH OTHER.

IT ALSO TEACHES GENERAL JUXTAPOSITION (THE VALUE OF TEXT PLACEMENT, MULTIPLE VISUAL ELEMENTS WITHIN EACH VISUAL, AND EACH VISUAL FORMING A LARGER VISUAL IS EXTREMELY VALUABLE).

Figure 74.

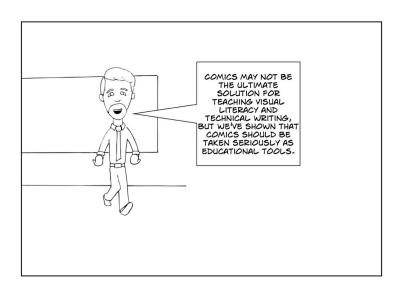


Figure 75.

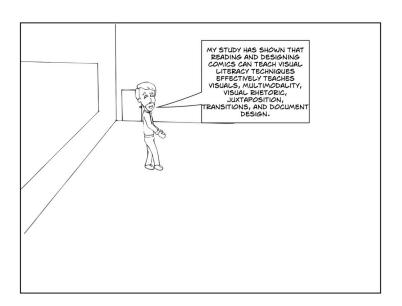


Figure 76.

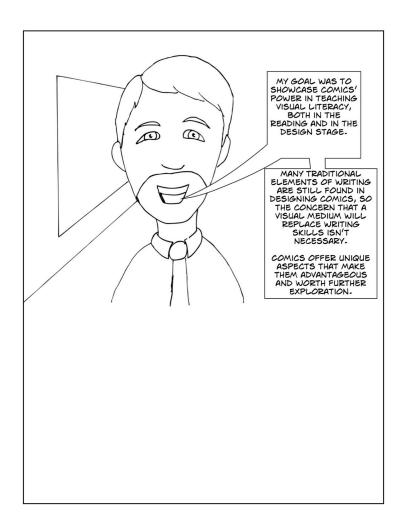


Figure 77.

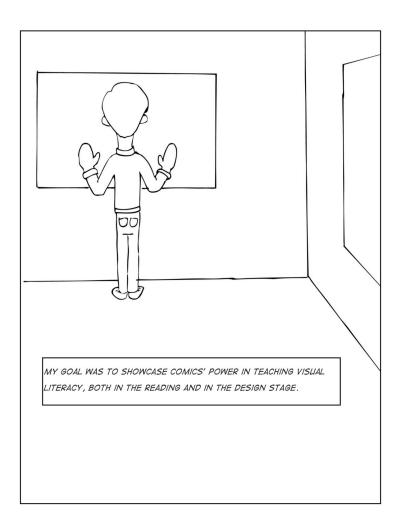


Figure 78.



Figure 79.

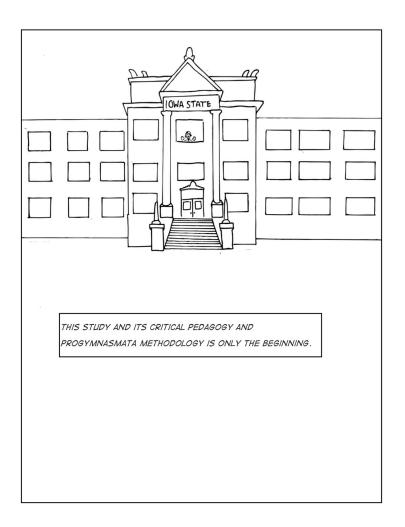


Figure 80.

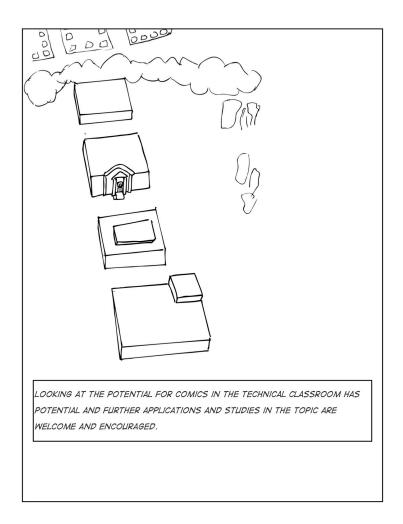


Figure 81.

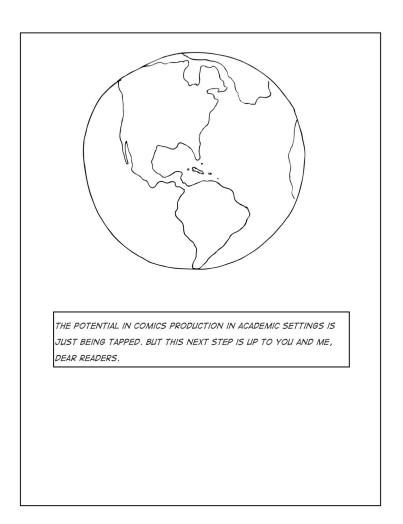


Figure 82.

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Figure 83.

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Figure 84.

Creator's Statements

We decided to present our argument through an omniscient narrator that mimics the tone and moves of the academic genre's tones and invisible (and partially objective) narrator. This means that instead of relying on a traditional avatar like most comics do, it relies on academic writing and technical instruction techniques (like Jody Culkin, Mitch Altman, Andie Nordgren, and Jeff Keyzer have done), where the narrator occasionally shows up, but primarily lets the findings and arguments do the work. That said, the teacher that bookends the story serves in many ways as the narrator as do some of the characters.

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Ideally, our comic would have been done by an artist, someone like Jeff Lemire, Emily Carroll, Alex Ross, Scott McCloud, Richard McGuire, Seth, Kate Beaton, Vitaly S. Alexius, Hope Larson, Gabriel Rodriguez, or any other talented artist. However that defeats the purpose of our argument: that students and instructors can engage in the comics medium and gain from its affordances. This is why the art relies on a simple style based in examples of the medium, but done with inadequate art training. However, this isn't a weakness; instead it embodies the call of the paper to get students and scholars to write visually no matter the skill level involved.

Original Contribution of Work

The goal of many contemporary compositionists, rhetoricians, and professional/technical communication scholars is to incorporate multimodal elements and visual rhetoric into the classroom. Research in this area, as well as the desire to use multimodal texts, is nothing new or unique, but the practice itself has been adopted slowly. Many reasons for this exist: courses are already brimming over with content, competing mediums don't carry sufficient academic weight, and

accessibility concerns abound. These are legitimate critiques; multimodality is complex and taxes an already crowded composition and technical communication field. Yet, a simple form of multimodality already exists and has legitimate research to support it — comics. Comics is a medium capable of handling many genres and incorporating comics as a form of multimodality in research, composition, rhetoric, and professional communication is a practice that is simple. Since publishing in comics is usually not at option, in order to justify the analysis and creation of comics in the classroom — and in turn, academia — one can turn to established practices, in particular, critical pedagogy and the ancient rhetoric practice of progymnasmata.

Comic Studies

Comics in academia isn't a new idea either, though it's usually limited to being the subject of rhetorical analysis in published articles or as a catalyst for analysis in the classroom. If it's used as a means for composing or creation, it's primarily for reflective and autobiographical writing. These approaches are helpful and important, but comics can be used in other academic formats, including peer-reviewed research. Comics use rhetorical skills to teach important lessons and students can compose with comics to create arguments and instructional texts. In the process of composing with comics, students learn visual rhetoric and effectively realize multimodal writing. This isn't the end though. Teaching students to compose with comics is the first step toward arguing that comics can be a means of publishing research in addition to the traditional essay.

Comics studies is a steadily growing trend in academia across multiple disciplines. The medium was once considered merely pulp-art or a children's genre (and in some audiences still is), but many scholars (both in popular culture and in academia) have worked for years to show its potential and depth. Research has already been done proving comics' usefulness in the classroom (from elementary to higher education) as a medium to teach from and to analyze. Although many have argued for comics' positive influence, and there are comics that have been accepted as textbooks and readers (see McCloud; Losh, Alexander, Cannon; Gonick; etc.), the majority of instructors and scholars are either unaware such a movement exists, indifferent to the movement, or unconvinced it's legitimate.

Important and Academic-esque Comics

Usually titles like *Maus*, *Persepolis*, or any of McCloud's non-fiction work come to mind when serious comics are mentioned. These are a great start, but they are only the surface of many more works that deserve further exploration. The non-fiction genres that stray from memoir and lie on the margins of academic scholarship are a great place to start. These pieces include Colon and Jacobson's 9/11 pieces (the first a graphic adaptation of the 9/11 commission report and the second a history of the wars that followed), the journalism cartoon movement (including Sacco's books), McCloud's Chrome instructions (and earlier work), Paul Buhle's editorial work on multiple academic-themed comics — including historical texts like Zinn's adapted *People's History* — biographies, history tomes, technical communication done in comics format (like Eisner's work and other instructional comics), post-modern philosophical debates like in *Logicomix*, and the textbook *Understanding Comics* done in comics form (see Losh, Alexander, Cannon). This is the line where entertainment and scholarship blur, which are explored in the justification in our piece.

Comics, Progymnasmata, and Multimodality

Although the overall goal is to see the acceptance of comics as a means to publish research findings (not to replace the essay format, but to be a companion when appropriate), this piece focuses on the initial steps — teaching the idea to students as a goal to teach visual rhetoric and multimodality. This piece looks at a method of teaching that draws on critical pedagogy, analyzes comics that read like scholarship, and has students compose in that format. Critical pedagogy's tradition of inviting students to challenge the authority and looking below the surface level to see where meaning lies fits in with the idea of having students compose in and study a medium that's often overlooked during their college experience. Such an approach echoes Freire's ideas of using critical strategies as an effective model for change. He writes, "the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, an re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own" [Freire 1993, 81]). In order for an acceptance of new media and mediums to occur, it's often necessary to engage students in the process of discovering. Empirical evidence based on

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students' experiences can provide valuable evidence to support the bigger goal of having the larger academic community accept such a medium as a way to compose arguments.

Progymnasmata, and Quintilian's work in general, make up another significant section of our piece. Combining ancient rhetorical pedagogical practices with comics studies hasn't been explored. In addition, this piece draws on critical pedagogy concepts of otherness and oppression, in this case making a literal observation of the inherently "other" medium of comics compared to the safer essay and textual pieces. This amalgamation of ancient rhetoric, comics studies, and critical pedagogy is the basis of the research behind this pieces' goal of exploring comics as a multimodal means of composition.

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