

Call for Manuscripts, Study and Scrutiny, Volume 5, Issue 2

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 15, 2021

Image and Text: Critical and Empirical Research on the Use of Comics and Graphic Novels in Literacy Instruction

Comic books and graphic novels have long been considered a medium that has little to no place in formal literacy instruction. This stance, however, has begun to change in the past decade. What is more, these texts are not only aimed at stories about superheroes but also treat a variety of lived experiences and stretch across a range of genres. Author/artist George O'Connor writes in the introduction to *Using Graphic Novels in the English Arts Classroom*, "Nowadays, comics do not have to be funny," though these books have been often regarded as "silly kids' stuff."

Voices from professional literature have suggested that graphic novels and comics have served as spaces for teaching (Simon, 2012), that they are popular (Botzakis, 2009), that they work in a number of rich ways (McCloud, 1994), and that they contain affordances for composition instruction (Sousanis, 2020). Indeed, comics are viewed as far more than kids' stuff by many scholars and teachers. Yet, some voices continue to push-back on the pedagogical possibilities, textual complexity, and importance of the medium.

Jones and Woglom (2014) pointed to the tensions that sometimes exist around using comics and graphic novels as literary work in the classroom. It is from this noted tension that we arrive at a call for both critical and empirical studies that examine this issue more closely. If, indeed, graphic novels have potential for instruction, then in what ways are teachers using them across educational settings? Beyond popularity, how do children and adolescents respond to these works? How do educators align themselves with the counter-narrative of comics as texts worthy of analysis and exploration, and how do they send this message to critics of the medium? In what ways do graphic novels sit within the context of antiracist and social justice-oriented pedagogy?

A wide range of graphic novels and comic books continue to be published and a number of potential threads emerge - (please note the examples provided immediately come to mind, although there are myriad examples to choose from):

- Expanding middle school literacy to include comics and graphic novels: The work of Raina Telgemeir, Svetlana Chmakova, and Victoria Jamieson
- Boundaries and definitions between middle school and high school comics and graphic novels.
- Examining personal memoir and nonfiction as an affordance of comics and graphic novels: *Hey, Kiddo* (Krosoczka, 2017), First Second's *Science Comics* series, *Stargazing* (Wang, 2019)
- Exploring trauma, mature topics, and edgy content in visual literature: *Speak: The Graphic Novel Adaption* (Anderson & Carroll, 2018), *Daytripper* (Ba & Moon, 2011), *Saga* (Vaughan & Staples, 2012)
- Expanding representation in comic book and graphic novel format: *New Kid* (Craft, 2019), *American Born Chinese* (Yang, 2008), *Spinning* (Walden, 2017)

Send critical or empirical studies with a title page, as a Microsoft Word file to dehartjd@appstate.edu and crag.a.hill@ou.edu. Manuscripts should be approximately 8,000-12,000 words, including tables, figures, and references, and should be written in Times New Roman 12-point font. Manuscripts should be double-spaced with 1" margins and should follow the 7th edition of the APA style guide.

All references to the author(s) should be removed from the body of the manuscript in preparation for blind review. However, the title page should include author contact information, a 100 word abstract, 5-8 keywords, an originality statement, and a 2-3 sentence bio.

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