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# Art Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Combining Literacy Learning and Artistic Processes

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Art Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Combining Literacy Learning and Artistic  
Processes

Liya Harris-Harrell

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### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to take this space to say thank you to Diane for being very patient with me through this entire thesis writing process. I would like to thank my mom for trying to help me with my thesis even when there was not much she could do for me because of my stubbornness to try and figure out my lesson plans on my own. I'd like to thank my friends who I consider family [Faith, Chris, Chioma, Angel, Viv, Jack, & AV] for being sounding boards when I just wanted to do anything else but write.

### **Introduction**

For as long as I can remember, I have been a reader. My mom frequently tells me about how she would read to me every opportunity that she could when I was little. That was until I began to read to her instead. My relationship with books and reading only continued to grow exponentially through grade school. There was even a point where I read so many books that rather than keep newly purchased books my mom would return them to the store as soon as I finished them. Looking back I think I consumed books more than I did read them.

In addition to being a reader, I have alternated on whether I identify myself as a writer in the same respects. It seems like I have always know the importance of being able to explain one's own ideas and a part of my process of explanation includes being able to covey it through writing. However, even in this understanding, I realize that somewhere along the line I would not consider myself a writer in the same way that I did when I was younger and knew less about the conventions that govern writing. Recently I have rediscovered my love for reading through the medium of comics. It seems that this medium of storytelling captures many of the parts of reading and writing in a way that does not seemed to be bogged down with expectations. At this point, in my life, writing feels weighed down by ideas and conventions and a need to be perfect. These expectations come not only internally but externally. In this semester I thought that comic writing would free me from these expectations, and while it helped clear my mind from external expectations the ones that I held for myself still weighed heavily on my ability to work.

While researching for this thesis, I had some guiding questions that led my investigations towards what I think would support students in alternative ways of literacy learning. How can comic-making promote storytelling in the classroom? Can comic making bridge the visual and the verbal?

As an artist, the process of comic making is fairly new to me. I am thankful for its novelty because I can get lost in it in such a way that I do not immediately worry about my desire for perfection right out of the gate. I recognize in a way separate from illustrations that comics are truly about the process. While this thesis is focused on comic-making as a form of meaning-making, it is also important to note that this move away from perfection in the work of creators is something that I hope to instill in my future students. I want to understand that the work they produce should be about the process <sup>1</sup>and what the creator gains from creating. Furthermore, as this comic curriculum will be focused on literacy development, in addition to aspects of meaning-making, I think it would serve students to not have to think about this medium in an explicitly academic space<sup>2</sup>. Because a fault I recognize is that when we only view a tool [math, writing, etc.] in only one context as opposed to something we use in every area of our lives it can affect how we process information.

By providing alternate forms of writing to those traditionally <sup>3</sup>associated with school, such as short essays or timed writing, students will be able to explore the same meaning-making processes found in traditional writing. However, this form of meaning-making will give students the opportunity to think about how they can represent their ideas in different, primarily visual, ways. Comic-making can include processes of going back and forth between writing descriptive scenes and drawing these scenes to figure out if the pages and panels are being represented in the best way to convey their ideas. I propose that by having the opportunity to be able to think about

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<sup>1</sup> Delpit, L. (1986). Skills and Other Dilemmas of a Progressive Black Educator. *Harvard Educational Review*. 56(4), 379-85.

<sup>2</sup> Gee, J. (1990). Background to the 'New Literacy Studies.' In *Social Linguistics and Literacies in Discourse*. (pp. 49-70). London: Falmer Press.

<sup>3</sup> Backgrounds to the 'New Literacy Studies'

a comic as individual parts of a process it will help students think about the contexts in which each part of their narrative can make sense to an audience outside of themselves.

### **Arguments and Questions**

On a small scale, this thesis focuses on the inclusion of comic art into a curriculum that focuses on writing education. It is an attempt to elaborate on ways that focus on creativity and interdisciplinary subjects to tap into student's pre-existing funds of knowledge<sup>4</sup>. In the bigger picture, this is a conversation on the ways that we consider and can incorporate interdisciplinary practices into our classrooms. For this paper, I define interdisciplinary teaching as teaching that is not limited to one subject area. The focus of interdisciplinary teaching is to give students the space to overlap their interests in a way that promotes learning and self-motivation. This can include more than one discipline when applicable.

How do we as educators promote interdisciplinary learning on a larger scale? As I think about the ways that art can be integrated into other subjects, I know that the possibilities are endless. However, I know that my own knowledge—specifically knowledge in areas I do not consider myself an expert—is lacking in certain areas. I propose that with interdisciplinary teaching it is important to set up specific guidelines that promote everyone's strengths. This value of everyone's strengths must come from community building. Community building, I believe, is key to changing how the classroom environment can function. Without community building, it would be more difficult to ask each other to be comfortable in making mistakes or to be comfortable with not knowing<sup>5</sup>. Mainly because in society as a whole, we have not given each other the room to have this forgiveness towards ourselves. Letting ourselves rely on each other

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<sup>4</sup> Gonzales, N., Moll, L., (2005). Amanti, C. Funds of Knowledge : Theorizing Practices in Household, Communities, and Classrooms. Taylor & Francis.

<sup>5</sup> Kapur, M. (2016). Examining Productive Failure, Productive Success, Unproductive Failure, and Unproductive Success in Learning. Educational Psychologist. 51(2), 289-99.

when we do not know something gives learners room for growth and helps to move away from unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others. The interdisciplinary framework that I am focusing on uses community building and progress-based thinking as the fundamental supports to ensuring that students have the room to grow in a way that not only utilizes their strengths but also gives them the room to make mistakes.

In an art classroom, building community is key. While art can be a solo activity, the discipline relies on critiques to help each other continually improve one's art. In the past, art spaces have been viewed as a place of unhealthy competition and the assumption that some people are just born with the ability to draw. It is important, as an artist, that we move away from the idea that another artist is our competition. Also, it is important as a community that we move away from this idea that only certain people can draw. Instead, we must think of it like any other skill that requires community support, patience, and practice to improve. In my creativity-centered class, I hope to instill a focus on the use of creativity both inside and outside the art room to help students see what value art can have for them throughout their lives.

Often art classrooms are used to support a hidden curriculum aimed towards helping students to better follow instructions. Art classrooms, while more lenient, still have rules in order to function. But I think that many art classrooms are structured in ways that benefit the larger work-based society rather than supporting individual students in their creative journey. For example, I have seen in art classrooms that students are not supposed to travel between desk groups or that they are supposed to have "on-task" conversations (if they want to talk with their peers). What do we gain from proscribing what student's productivity should look like in an area that is built on exploring the creative process? Art classrooms should not have to be so structured that students are only able to travel as their teacher sees fit. In addition, dictating the

conversations that can occur in a classroom seems artificial. Teachers defining what is “on-topic” conversations, especially in an art classroom, limits the ways that student’s process and understand the topics discussed in that space.

While core subjects can be structured to rely on individual work to measure student’s individual growth, other subjects do not have to be structured so. Individuality in work is not always required in order to promote understanding. The space to talk out one’s ideas and share them can help students to focus on focusing on creative solutions. In non-traditional classes, it should be encouraged that students are willing to talk and share ideas in a way that promotes their understanding of a topic. There should be conversations between teachers and students to determine what types of topics appropriate for the classroom space. Therefore, off-topic conversations should be allowed without the worry that it will be unmanageable for the teacher to redirect if things get out of hand. Students should have the space to have off-topic conversations because often ideas that do not seem necessarily can spark discussions on the ways that one’s students are taking in and processing information.

### **Interlude 1: Identifying myself within the conversation**

I hold many identities. They shape how I experience and understand the world around me. They guide the ways I envision a better world for other people with marginalized identities. I desire for my classroom to be a place of radical thought. Radical in the sense that it teaches students that it is okay to question the ways that our world functions and strives for better. Not better in the sense that we can do and be better individuals for ways of producing, but better in that we are kinder and more understanding of ourselves. I hope that this classroom forms well-rounded human beings who love themselves and genuinely care for those around them.

The continued push towards a radical classroom came about while I was in office hours and my professor reminded me that the fact that I love myself is a radical act since society does not really



encourage that someone like me, Black and nonbinary, should love myself in a genuine way. realizing the small ways in which I just exist is being radical reminded me that I have to find ways to do better by those who I interact with. I do not think that creating a classroom that is radical will be easy. I have not been socialized by the larger society to work against the ideas of productivity that it values.

I am Black, and nonbinary, and I used to be a girl, and I am a Christian, and I am an artist, and I might be autistic, and so many other things that could be identities that I do not think about as frequently as the ones that I have listed. Think about the identities that make up who I am makes me question how I see myself and how the world sees me. Will the world ever value my art in the ways that I do? Will I actually have an impact on the world in the ways that I hope? Will I ever break out of this fear that I am not good enough to be a teacher, or an artist, or to exist in a space on my own? As I write this thesis, I very much feel that I am at a transition point and am trying to evaluate why my ideas about education are important with relation to placing myself within it. Giving context to why creativity and focusing on progress is vital to student's education is important to me. It is important because I did not give myself the space to value and treat my own creativity as a process and unlearning the way I learned art is important to my artistic journey. I value progress and creativity as an artist and someone who has been told to focus on my end product over the progress I have made as a student. I want to create a space that values progress because no one is static and the ways that we look at the work that we do should not be considered a static thing either.

### **Frameworks & Theories**

A comic-making course of study for the literacy classroom is informed by the importance of play, process, the importance of observation and research to creative activity, and community building.

#### *Play*

Play is essential to how people learn. It is how children begin to understand their world without directly being told about the bits of the world that they are interacting with. Typically play as a form of learning is primarily viewed from the perspective of young children since play is often thought about explicitly concerning children. However, these ideas about play can be extended through all areas of life whether explicitly noted or not. No matter the individual's age, something can be gained from taking the time to explore things that one is interested in from a perspective of play. Friedlander (2008) talks about how play is both something that requires our full selves but also is something that we can lose ourselves to while in the moment. Often when we think of education it is regarded as something that requires one's full attention for them to gain something from it. Often teachers ask for their students to be fully present as a way to gauge that they are paying attention and that they are taking in the information presented to them. However, could being able to lose oneself in the thing that they are learning about signify a sense of understanding that is being overlooked when we require one's full attention to determine what information they are taking in? Rather playing in the discipline at hand could indicate an interest in a topic that had not previously been considered. For example, playing can allow for students to be okay with failing as it gives the possibility of understanding what they did wrong or exploring what other ways one can do simply because it interested them as opposed to worrying that they will be negatively impacted because of a lack of understanding.

Furthermore, play not only indicates a chance for students to absorb what they are learning but it also gives students the chance to take charge in what they are learning. Xu, Coats, and Davidson's study on how to promote student interests in science, through the lens of African American teachers, encourages students to be involved in their learning process. They focus on how to involve students as it relates to the science classroom, but this approach allows

students to make more decisions on the things that they wanted to learn more about. “Ms. Allen stated, ‘ I try to encourage them to pick an area—not something that they already know a lot about but one that they would want to know more about’” (Xu et. Al, 139). Including students in their own learning process is important in framing play as a part of learning. By giving students the space to be more involved in their learning process no matter the subject they will be more motivated to take learning from a genuine approach. Rather than students completing tasks because that is expected, students will complete what they work on because they are interested in knowing more. In a writing based curriculum this can look like research projects that are motivated by students or an option to write something that is relevant to the identities that they hold. The aim should be while giving students the space to write about the things that interest them that we also push them to want to learn more about areas that are unfamiliar to them.

In a comic based writing curriculum, play can look like a variety of things that move towards student’s ability to understand what they can gain from comic making. The process of making art, in any facet of art making, is about the dynamic process that makes it up, Art at its core should be a matter of play. Henricks argues that play “is a dynamic, ever-changing process that is filled with ambiguity and surprise” (Henricks 163). I have avoided describing explicitly what play is, as those who have written about play before me have. That is because while play is ever present in our lives it is only considered such when looking at play as something central to childhood and childhood education. Play is about freedom. While play is about freedom, it becomes harder for us express it in a genuine way. often outlying pressures that come with the social aspects of growing up push against the things that we want to enjoy causing the freedom that comes from play to either be hidden or dropped altogether. While play is hard to pin down exactly, Henricks summarizes the majority of theories as “freedom of human beings to express

themselves openly and render creatively the conditions of their lives” (Henricks, 159). Framing play in such a way supports the idea that art, at its core, should be about play. Art in any form should allow for human expression regardless of the outcomes of aesthetics. Which is why looking at comic making from several viewpoints is crucial to helping students move from an emphasis on what they produce into an emphasis on the process of making

### *Process*

Process in art education is crucial. It makes the difference in what a teacher emphasizes as important to their students to understand as they improve and grow as artists. I think that in terms of developing as an artist that a focus on process is important to work against getting lost in “liking vs not liking” one’s own art. Barry discusses this concept of “liking vs not liking” when referencing art work. She did not elaborate if it was central to one’s own art or the art that we consume. Either way this concept is important in terms of what we gain from the act of creating art. “Liking and not liking can make us blind to what’s there” (Barry, 23). When thinking of the idea of liking versus not liking when it comes to one’s art this becomes a matter of figuring out what is valuable in one’s work. It is the difference between being able to comment on what one did well when reflecting on a piece overall. Thinking that a piece is bad because we do not like the end result devalues everything that went into the art we make. While it is important to describe what this concept boils down to, it is also important to note that one can simply not like something they produce, especially if there are specific aspects that build off of where the artist wants to or can see themselves going In their art journey.

When talking about “liking versus not liking”, in reference to the works of others, it requires a different lens. As artist, we can use the work of others to inform the work that we do and want to do for ourselves. Interacting with the art of others is important as it can influence

how one improves their style or process of meaning making through art. For this concept of liking and not liking, as it refers to the work of other, it can detail how we set about improving our work. How we decide to either lean away from or lean into the ways that we see other creating also.

In order to improve in our process as individuals who create, we should look at the journey of those who have stopped creating. Looking at the work of those who have taken creating out of their life in some capacities gives us insight into the ways that these artistic desire start to break down., Where in the creative process do people stop believing that they can create simply because it does not look as what others make? Or that it does not match what they were envisioning? With her framework, Barry was very interested in the ways that people who stopped drawing at a young age interacted with art making in her class. She saw this as less about teaching people how to draw and more as a reintroduction to what they already knew. . “...about bringing drawing back into someone’s life which is different than teaching them to draw” (Barry, 38).

In a creativity-focused classroom it is important to remember that individuals have not come from nothing when it comes to art. Everyone comes with some understanding of how to create and what they want to create. As an art teacher there will need to be places for support to show student’s different techniques that they can use. We however cannot assume that students who come into an creativity-focused space comes in at the same level of creativity. Rather everyone has been pushed in different ways to explore their creativity in different ways before entering the classroom. While individuals may not have the association of academic language to support their ways of doing does not negate the idea that everyone can do art in some capacity. For example, in terms of language, . Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti did a study about the

knowledge that existed within home communities of bilingual students. They focused on how the Funds of Knowledge existed not just in the classroom environment, but also student's home environment. It is not fair to the individuals that we often teach by overlooking the ways that students already have ways of being in the world and knowledge that impacts the ways that they learn. Because of the identities that we hold, the knowledge that we bring into a classroom is imbedded in our ways of learning, and should not be overlooked.

For students in art, there will always a creative starting point that each student has to work with. Some students will have had more push at home to explore this creativity, while others foster the drive to create themselves. The approaches that teachers should take in highlighting student's base levels will differ depending on their ages. When working with younger kids this may look like reassuring them that everyone's art will look differently as they draw because no one is inherently better at art. Rather some kids may have had more time to draw and may be encouraged more at home. When working with older students this is a measure of getting them to draw without worrying, initially at least, of what it is going to look like. Drawing and art processes sometimes comes with a drafting approach while others can draw what they want straight out of the gate. Both forms are valid approaches and need to be encouraged to avoid discouragement that comes from seeing someone as outright naturally gifted compared to others.

Process and play go hand-in-hand. That means that as artists, we have to figure out our starting places. What does our art look like when we are creating freely without the instructions of others? How do we determine when it is best to give advice for the art that we see others create and how we know when to ask questions of others about the art we make? In her book *Syllabus*, Barry notes a hesitance in students outright a method of how to do a task after realizing that her students were focusing on what she expected of them in response to a suggestion she

made. “By telling them just how to do it, I took the playing around way. The gradual figuring out that brings something alive to the activity make it worthwhile, and is transferrable to other activities” (Barry, 89). Suggestions to the students are helpful, but as art instructors we have to find a line that does not propose that there is only one way to accomplish a task. Rather it is important when focusing on process to help students understand that we focus on what the students already know regarding the materials.

*importance of observation and research to creative activity*

In giving students the room to acknowledge that their creative processes are valuable and worth pursuing, it is also important to give the foundation to reach out for help when they need it. Reaching out for help in creative field can present themselves in multiple ways. One is community building, which I will discuss later and the other being observation and research.

Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics*, shares a history of comics and a focus on the tools that are needed to make comics. While these tools are not physical tools they still provide a background to understanding the make-up of comic making. In understanding how to make comic, I have noticed that comic-making about doing and pulling information when necessary. Which is why I propose that this framework by McCloud focuses on learning through research and observation.

Traditional thinking has long held that truly great works of art and literature are only possible when the two are kept at arm’s length...words and pictures are considered, at best, a diversion for the masses, at worst a product of crass commercialism (McCloud, 140).

In thinking about all the ways that images and text exists in the world, McCloud notices a lack of appreciation or consideration of how images and words can coexist in media. Rather there is a focus on keeping the two separate in order to create something “worth reading.” In working

towards creating comics as a way to learn about writing, it is important that students are able to create a harmony between words and images as they learn.

In using comic making as a medium of writing and drawing, artists and writers learn more about the ways that they interpret the world and how much they represent the things that they are making. “Cartooning isn’t just a way of drawing it’s a way of seeing.” (McCloud, 31). Cartooning teaches students the value in detailing the work that they are doing. One can work without references, but sometimes having references to pull from can make one’s work even stronger. References serve as another type of support for the artists when there is not the space to ask for help from community. It serves as a visual check in or point to question if the work that I am doing is as accurate as I want it to look. Every artists has to find the time in the process to figure out when they are going to need references in order to push their work further. Some valuable questions we ask as we work determine the types of tools that we need that we don’t often recognize as artistic tools. Does this work need to be super simplified, super detailed, or somewhere in the middle to illustrate your point? Where are you drawing from as cartoonist that allows you to make the decisions you do? For example, how many or how few lines are you going to need in a panel to represent an object like a table? Do you need a reference of the table before you draw it or are you confident in your abilities to draw furniture? These references that are used do not always have to be explicitly referenced in their work, but they can also exist as the influences that drive them to create. The work of artist and writers does not exist within an isolated context so it is important to hone and keep track of where one’s references and influences can lie.

### *Community Building*



The other necessary step to building a classroom for creativity is through community building. Community building is key in order to help students feel comfortable enough to share the work that they do and willing look for feedback to help them improve. In order to build a classroom on community building, it is important that it be a space where everyone's voices are valued and that ideas can be shared without the fear that they are wrong. Resnick, Michaels, and O'Connor ( ) focus on how we make our conversations within the classroom accountable, that the classroom is a space where everyone's potential growth is acknowledged and that everyone is given the room to share their ideas.

Even if there is universal human *potential* for rational discourse, however, special care is needed to create educative environments in which that potential is *nurtured* and emerges as a characteristic of whole social communities (Resnick et. Al, 172).

Community is reliant on people's comfort with those around them. In order to build community, individuals have to feel that their opinions are valued in a space, people have to feel that they are able to make mistakes when they are in a space. It is harder to build community if people are constantly worried about being wrong. Even in this acceptance that people can be wrong, however, people must also be willing to openly apologize when they are wrong or accidentally hurt those in community with them. For the art classroom, I see this emerging as a more open space for critique as it is valuable to growing as an artist.

Creating the space necessary to allow for individuals to have the space to be wrong means setting guidelines as a community. These guidelines would have to take into account words beyond their intentions because impact of one's words carry more weight than the intention behind them. In an art space critique guidelines should extend beyond the formal elements of a piece. Being open to talk about the types of references that were used for inspiration or the things that the artist hoped to gain from creating certain pieces. Even being

able to accept that questions about one's artwork might help to craft spaces where people are openly able to be "wrong" about their interpretation of other's artwork. I do not think that there is one best way to create a space that allows for this. Rather, it comes with each individual community and the people that make up said community.

Community building is not limited to the internal community of a classroom. It also extends outward to the communities of other classes, parents, and those within the school's neighborhood. These voices are valuable and can provide another perspective on what impacts our art has for others who do not identify as artist. In Xu et. al's article, they found that science students benefited when outside community members were brought in to talk about the things that they were learning in class.

They found that students often looked forward to listening to community members (e.g., people knowledgeable about science and industry) talking about their experiences, and who sometimes became "more exciting teachers." They found that students tended to understand science content better when they had opportunities to listen to community members to talk about the same topic from a different perspective (Xu et. Al, 145).

Outside community members in a creativity-based classroom are important to act as a sounding board. Without the outside community and thought we can get bogged down with the ideas that exist only in classroom spaces. Often outside opinions can help us to gain other perspectives and find ways to apply them to the work that we do. For an art-based classroom this can look as simple as having "gallery shows" for students to share the work that they do to a larger audience. It could also be enough to have students ask someone at home if they are able to interpret the artistic work that they are doing. Overall the work that we do to build internal and external community helps to improve the work that students do.

### **Interlude 2 : experiencing art**

I do not have a specific memory tied to my art. I do not have many memories tied to art being the only thing that I wanted to do above all other things. I just remember that at one point, it seemed like I was always drawing something. Then as I got older it seemed like there were more barriers to the art that I wanted to do versus the art that I was expected to do in the classroom. This eventually meant that I felt disconnected and that caused me to drift away from wanting to be an artist during high school.

My freshman year of high school was the nail in a coffin that caused my rift between academic and personal art. I wish things had been different. I wish that art in high school had been a place of rest rather than another stressor among classes. I know that at times it was a fun place to be, but the need and the panic to keep up a GPA outweighed the well-meaning parts of the class. Even when I rediscovered my love for art and desire to be in animation I found trouble navigating the landscape that was animation. Feeling a subconscious but constant disconnect from the world of academic art and the art that I wanted to produce.

In high school, this disconnect existed in my teacher's demands that things look a certain way. Our art could not dip too far out of the realm of realism and forms that already existed. I was told that my art was not correct and as a result of many times being told that I needed to do it over I broke down in tears and my mom was contacted with a "Liya just started crying in class, is (she) okay?" I don't remember what grade I ended up getting on that project. It did not matter.

In addition to the foundations and education that influence my ideas about art, the type of art that I create is important to my identity as an artist. When creating art, I think primarily about the types of media that I would like to see out in the world. I focus on how I can create more characters that create a diverse look of what Blackness or being nonbinary

looks like. Often I wish that the things that I watch had more focus on the joys of existing as a person a part of marginalized identities. I think that what is on television, in video games, books still focuses predominantly on white narratives even when heralding a diverse cast of characters. However, it does not matter how diverse the cast is if the characters are not highlighted for more than just the identities that they hold. I want the characters that I make through my art to have that type of focus. That is to say that these characters represent aspects of the identities that I hold in ways that are often forgotten about in the creation of mainstream media.

While I do not know if I will ever personally put the characters that I create into traditional forms of storytelling, I think that they are still important to create and to share. Creating and sharing and talking about the things that one creates has more implications beyond ourselves as individuals. I think creating and recreating can create meaningful conversations about mainstream media. I think that if we all focus more on creating for ourselves and our communities and less (explicitly) about the work aspect of art we can move away from the expectations that we place on large media corporations to create pieces that feel of their time or to not make movies that feel like cash grabs. By focusing on art and creativity-centered frames in my teaching I hope that it highlights to my future students the importance of creation outside of the appearances of what is a large social media artist might look like.

### **Conceptual structure of Comics Curriculum**

In my curriculum I have laid out five themes that carry out what I think would be a way to support students in their writing process as done specifically through the medium of comic making. The themes are : Introduction to Comic-Making and Moving towards process-building, structuring a comic, Focus on Materials, Comic making in community,

and Multiplicities of meaning. The first three themes will focus on the exploring aspect of a process-based curriculum and the latter two will give students the room to put this exploration into practice through group and individual work.

### *Theme breakdown*

Introduction to comic-making and move towards process-building is the beginning step. The course of weeks spent in this theme is meant to help students begin on their move away from a focus on the end product over the steps they made to get to the end goal. While the focus on this theme is focused in the beginning weeks, I think that it is easily worked through the entire semester through the types of warm-up activities and at home activities that students will be asked to do during the class. Furthermore, this theme will introduce students to comic making, not only in the steps that make up a comic, but also in the varying types of comics that exist out in the world.

The next theme, structuring comics will take a guided approach to how we format comics. Students will have these weeks to work through reading the comics of others for inspiration. They will work through guided videos in order to see the ways that others structure comics of varying lengths. In addition, this section will build off of the process-based approach of theme one as students will note the changes they might make.

Theme three will be a section where students will take a break for learning explicitly about structuring a comic. This will be so that they may focus on the types of tools that they can use to create their comic. This will primarily focus on the use of inking tools [pens, art markers, ink-based tools] to illustrate their works. This theme is aligned with play because it would focus on giving students the room to explore which mediums they most enjoy creating art in.

Theme four is putting community into action as students have to work together to make a comic. This is a means to ease students into putting the pieces of comic making together before they have to work individually. Each student, during this time, will have to work on each part of the comic process [planning, thumbnailing, sketching, drawing, inking, etc.] at least once during the creation of the group comic. Doing this popcorn method of comic making will give students a chance to work in skills that they are both already good at and skills that they need more work in.

Finally theme five works towards students taking everything from the previous themes to make their own comic. Students will have a lot of free choice at this final project as it should be a measure of how they have grown, as artists and writers, over the semester. Students will have to have a comic idea and final product to share, along with a write up on the ways that they think they have changed as a writer or artist over the time of the class.

#### *Possibility of Assessment*

For the assessment of this curriculum I imagine it to exist in three parts. The first being through the check-ins with students through their warm up and journaling processes. A self-evaluative check in on how they think they have grown through the course of the semester. Lastly, an evaluation of their group comic and their individual comics. The assessment should exist in three parts to show in multiple ways the kind of effort that the student has made over the semester. By assessing the student in multiple ways it would allow for me to see the ways that my students grow that do not rely only on the final projects that they turn in for a class. And unlike turning in a final portfolio this method might allow for students to have more input on the things that they

appreciated and wanted more of while in the class. I will have to continue to research the best ways to assess my students without relying too heavily on final markers over the work that they have done over a full semester.

### **Lesson Plan**

#### **I. Unit Breakdown by weeks**

##### **a. Theme 1 — Introduction to Comic-Making & Moving towards process-building**

###### **i. Unit Purpose + Guideline**

1. The first week of the semester should serve as a time for early exploration. This will be the time when students will have a chance to understand 1) what a comic 2) what their process might look like 3) how to begin to move away from liking vs not liking when it comes to one's own artwork. We will work from the student's preexisting knowledge as it relates to meaning making and expand from this. Here Students will be asked to sketch, keep notes, and learn a brief history about comics. These notes, doodles, sketches should help students to allow their brains to wander and not worry about things such as perfections as they start the process of meaning making through comic writing

##### **b. Theme 2 — Structuring a Comic**

###### **i. Unit Purpose + Guideline**

1. During the next week and a half students will give several examples of types of comics that can be made. We will be using different videos from [The Believer](#) each day to see examples of the ways in which we can use and structure comics. In this we will also take time to discuss what story structure (beginning, middle, and conclusion) looks like depending on what you are trying to create. The main activity during this week will be majority sketch / planning based. Many of the activities will be short ones to get us thinking — these activities will be majority spontaneity based

###### **ii. Framework – Scott McCloud's ideas around comic structure and research**

c. **Theme 3** — Focus on Materials

i. **Unit Purpose + Guideline**

1. This week and a half will be less heavy on the types of things that we are writing and more focused on the types of materials that we are using. Students will be given different prompts to work with and different mediums to work with to find what they are comfortable with and will push them as they begin to think about the types of comics that they want to make meaning from. During these class periods there will be lecture-type instruction where students have the freedom to drift in and out while they explore their specific medium for the day

ii. **Framework** — play as a form on instruction

d. **Theme 4** — Comic Making in Community

i. **Unit Purpose + Guideline**

1. This unit will utilize team work aspects of making comics. Before giving students the room to create comics on their own it is important to give them the space to work together in small groups ranging from 2-4 members. Over these two weeks students should have enough time to try each part of the comic making process in one capacity or another. Students will be expected to craft a short comic 1-5 pages that's ending is open ended as to allow students to continue to explore alternate endings in their solo comic if they want to continue the story that they have crafted

ii. **Framework**— community building

e. **Theme 5** — Multiplicities of Meaning

i. **Unit Purpose + Guideline**

1. The culmination of students work with comic making and a progress based approach to meaning making. Students will be given 2.5 weeks to workshop and bring a comic to some form of completion. At the end of each week students will be asked to share progress individually with the instructor or to the larger



classroom group for feedback. In addition, students will share possible future plans based on what feedback they may receive

- ii. **Framework**— Scott McCloud ideas around comics not being one specific thing [ comics not having to have panels and borders to inherently be a comic ]

## II. Theme Breakdown by weeks

### a. **Theme 1**

#### i. Week 1 [ Introduction to Comic Making]

##### 1. Goal:

- a. Students should go away from this week with an understanding of the types of comics that they like to read and those that they think that they would like to make

##### 2. Day 1

- a. General overview into comics – background into comic making
- b. Understanding how wide of a field comics are

##### 3. Day 2

- a. Slice of Life

##### 4. Day 3

- a. Comedy

##### 5. Day 4

- a. Action

##### 6. Day 5

- a. Drama

#### ii. Week 2 [Meaning Making + Research]

##### 1. Day 1

- a. Sci-fi/fantasy

##### 2. Day 2

- a. Non-fiction

##### 3. Day 3

- a. Journal-based comics

- 4. Day 4
  - a. Single panel comics
- 5. Day 5
  - a. Webcomics
- b. **Theme 2**
  - i. Week 1 [Introduction to Comic Structure]
  - ii. Week 2 [Comic Structure]
- c. **Theme 3**
  - i. Week 1 [Introduction to Materials]
  - ii. Week 2 [Medium Exploration]
- d. **Theme 4**
  - i. Week 1 [Group Comic Making]
  - ii. Week 2 [Group Comic Making + Comic Sharing]
- e. **Theme 5**
  - i. Week 1 [Independent Comic Making]
  - Week 2 [Independent Comic Making]

Lesson Plan 1 [Theme 1 Lesson Plan]

Content Area: Writing through Comic Making

Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration:      Subject / Lesson Topic: Introduction / Brief History to Comic Making

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will be given a brief overview of comic making through its presentation and discussion of comics as a medium over a genre. We will talk about why it is a medium and not a genre along with what things we associate with comics and why

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. Are comics a genre or a medium
- b. What makes something a comic
  - i. There's not a correct answer, but it is important to survey what students associate with comics
  - ii. Possible answers
- c. Define comic

- i. “Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (McCloud 20).
- d. What are the parts of a comic?
  - i. Panels
  - ii. Dialogue

### **III. Key Terms**

- a. Comic
- b. Panel
  - i. A panel is an individual frame, or single drawing, in the multiple-panel sequence of a comic strip or comic book
- c. Dialogue
  - i. conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or movie.
  - ii. Should capture a character’s personality
  - iii. Assists in furthering the narrative of the story
  - iv. Does not necessarily have to be verbal

### **IV. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Provide an introductory look into comics and what makes up a comic
- b. Students should leave the classroom with more possibilities on what a comic may and can look like
- c. The class should expand the ideas of what comics are for the students outside of the mainstream options seen in book store and comic shops

### **V. Materials / Resources**

- a. ADHD Alien
  - i. **Link / How to Access**
    - 1. [https://twitter.com/ADHD\\_Alien/status/1182670794633207813](https://twitter.com/ADHD_Alien/status/1182670794633207813)
  - ii. **Description**
    - 1. Journal-based comic detailing Pina Varnel’s (artists of the comic) experiences with ADHD
    - 2. A thread of short one-page comics that date back to October 2019

### **iii. What does this tell us about comic making**

1. Comics can be anything. While writing with a specific audience in mind can be very meaningful, we can also get our own meaning out of getting our own thoughts out visually

### **b. Legend of Zelda Fan Comic by Mochiwei on Twitter**

#### **i. Link / How to Access**

1. [https://twitter.com/\\_mochiwei/status/1365119518599770120](https://twitter.com/_mochiwei/status/1365119518599770120)

#### **ii. Description**

1. Short fan comic of characters from the game Legend of Zelda. It shows the character Link getting ready for the day.

### **iii. What does it tell us about comic making**

1. Shows a comic that focuses on illustrating action over using dialogue and action in tandem. Good to focus on when thinking about pacing and the use of images

### **c. Yotsuba&!**

#### **i. Link / How to access**

#### **ii. Description**

1. A manga series that focuses on the stories of a young child named Yotsuba. There is no consistent plot but follows the daily lives of its characters and centers around a central theme of “Enjoy Everything”

### **iii. What does this tell us about comic making**

1. Example of comics that are not centered around a central plot or progression. Shows us how to think about comics when we focus around a theme over a plot.

## **VI. Classroom Arrangement**

- a. Students will be given the opportunity to choose where to sit among tables that are organized for four students. Seats will not be assigned and will allow students to move freely so that they can have different voices to discuss the types of comics that they are engaging with

## **VII. Instructional Process**

**a. Introduction / Anticipatory Set**

- i. Students will be given a short activity to do at the start of class. The activity will be a maximum of 5 mins to allow students the time to warm up
- ii. Students will be given a one-word prompt and asked to spend time doing four panels related to the word.
  1. Students are expected to keep the panels loose and not focus too much on what the comic is about
  2. Students will take a single piece of paper in their sketch books and split it into four sections in order to create the outline for the comic

**b. Developmental Activities**

- i. Students will be given the class time to look over the comics that I have arranged out for the class
  1. There will be a range of webcomics, manga comics, western comics, fan comics for students to browse through [some examples of the comics will be linked in resources / materials]
    - a. there will be a large range of comics present and students will also be allowed to share any comics that they read in their free time with the class at the end
  2. Students will be expected to spend time with at least 2-3 comics over the class period and keep notes
    - a. These notes can look like:
      - i. Things that they notice
      - ii. Sketches of the characters that they see in the comic
      - iii. Sketches of things that they see in the comic
      - iv. Differences between the comics that they read
      - v. Any inspirations or ideas
      - vi. Thoughts and feelings
      - vii. Questions about comic making
  3. This activity will take 30-40 minutes

- ii. Once the students have been given time to look through the students will have 5 minutes to talk with their table partners about the notes that they took

**c. Closure**

- i. Students will be given the option of a cool down activity while we talk as a class about the types of things that they notice
  - 1. The activity will be to draw a continuous line circle as they listen to the conversation that we have about the things that they noticed and drew while doing the browsing
- ii. We will use these notes to start do draft guidelines of things that we think make up a comic

**VIII. Formative / Summative Assessment**

- a. During this class period, students will be asked to share their sketchbooks / journals briefly at the end of class to see what (if anything) they wrote about their exploration of the comics. This will be a check in to see how the students are responding to the comics that they are reading.
  - i. This will allow me to see at what pace students may need to be introduced to comics in relation to their writing processes

## Lesson Plan 2 [Theme 1 Lesson Plan]

Content Area: Writing through Comic Making

Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic: Meaning Making

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Now that we have as a class talked about what comic making looks like we will spend some time focusing on meaning making, intentions that come when we create, what we hope to gain by taking the time to write
- b. In taking the time to talk about the reasons why we write or create we gain a greater understanding of the ways in which we can talk to others about the work we do and gain advice for the things that we work on.
- c. This will also be a time where I will introduce students to journal-based comics and recommend that they take a few weeks (as an out-of-class assignment) to do some journal based comics in order to inspire them for their individual comic assignment

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

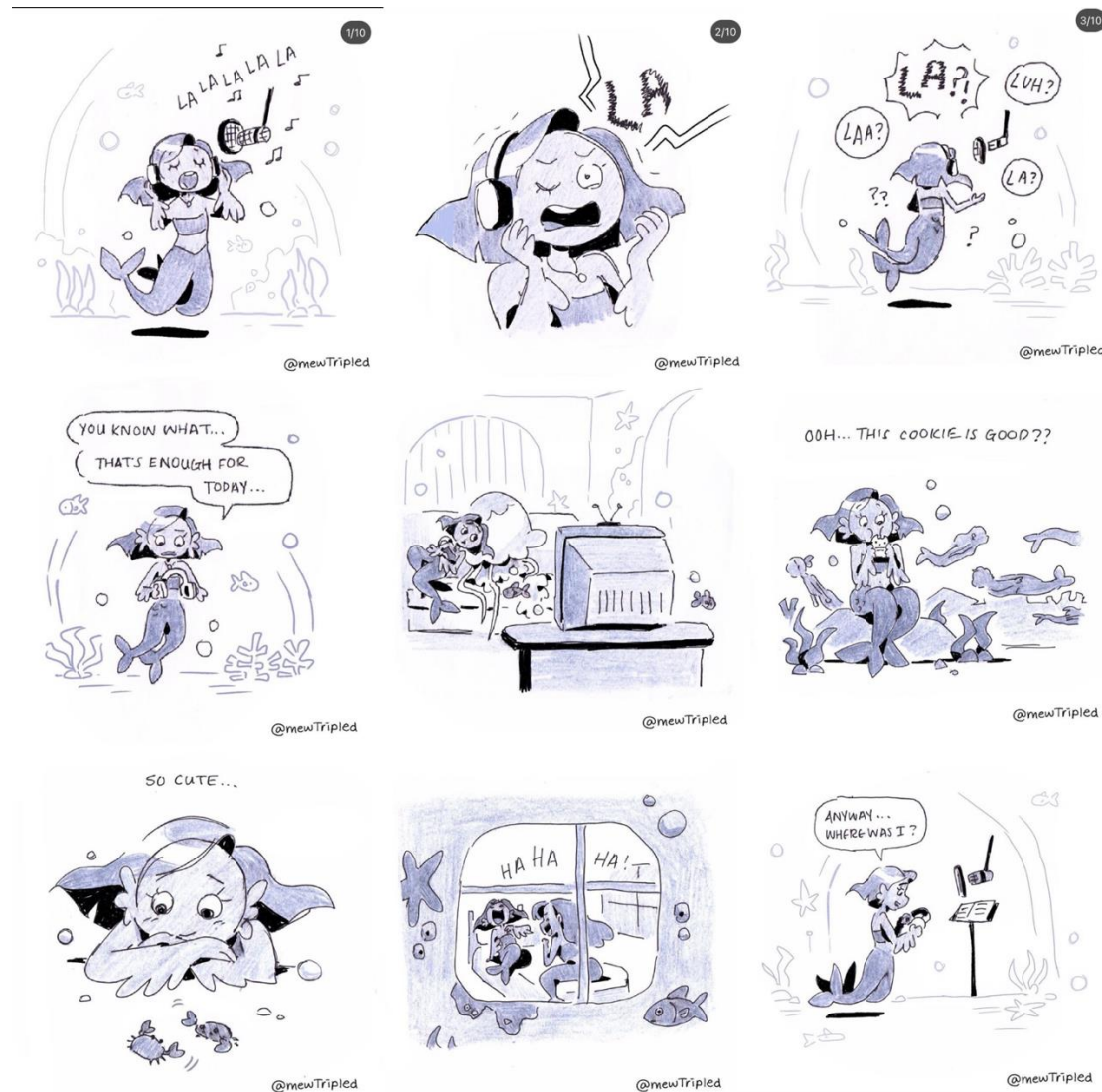
- a. What is meaning making?
- b. What does it mean to write for me?
- c. What do I gain from writing?
- d. Are there any goals that I wish to gain from writing?
  - i. These goals should be self-motivated rather than attached to goals set solely by the teacher

**III. Key Terms**

- a. Journal Comic
  - i. An autobiographical comic that is done to gain retrospection on a specific event(s) in a person's life
  - ii. These comics can take any scale of time.
  - iii. Just because the comic is autobiographical does not necessarily indicate that the characters have to be the person making the comic, rather it could also be a sona inspired by the individual
- b. Meaning Making

- i. How people construct, understand, or make sense of life events, relationships and the self.
  - c. -Sona
    - i. A species to form a character of the given species to represent oneself in a different form
  - d. Pacing
    - i. A measure of the time it takes to move through the story that is being told
- IV. Instructional Objectives / Goals
  - a. Students should leave the class with some ideas on why they create
  - b. Students should leave the class with a beginning idea of what it means to use comics as a form of journaling
  - c. Students should take away one more type of comic that they might find helpful in their understanding of the meaning making process
- V. Materials / Resources
  - a. ADHD Alien
    - i. Link / How to Access**
      - 1. [https://twitter.com/ADHD\\_Alien/status/1182670794633207813](https://twitter.com/ADHD_Alien/status/1182670794633207813)
    - ii. Description**
      - 1. Journal-based comic detailing Pina Varnel's (artists of the comic) experiences with ADHD
      - 2. A thread of short one-page comics that date back to October 2019
  - b. Mewtripledd
    - i. Link / How to Access**
      - 1. <https://www.instagram.com/mewtripledd/?igshid=xine9zjdiyp9>
    - ii. Description**
      - 1. Instagram account of Michelle Lam. She has a wide array of journal comics ranging in style and topic
      - 2. Example Below : Break – Mewtripledd Comic (3/26/21)





### c. Precious Rascals

#### i. Link / How to Access

1. [https://www.instagram.com/anthony\\_holden/?igshid=q5x0rhly3uk](https://www.instagram.com/anthony_holden/?igshid=q5x0rhly3uk)

v

#### ii. Description

1. A more relaxed version of the journal comic as it focuses on specific events that happen in the family's life over focusing in on a introspective look to the author's own thoughts and feelings

### d. Chuckdrawsthings

#### i. Link / How to Access

1. <https://twitter.com/charlubbyDescription>

**ii. Description**

1. Journal comic by Chuckdrawsthings where they portray their reflections as a pigeon

**iii. Examples Below :**

6

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<sup>6</sup> Journal comic by Chuckdrawsthings where they portray their reflections as a pigeon ; posted (26 March 2021)



7

e. Man Time!

i. **Link / How to Access**

1. <https://tapas.io/series/mantime/info>

ii. **Description**

1. Autobiographical comic around the life events of three trans men

f. My Giant Nerd Boyfriend

i. **Link / How to Access**

1. [https://www.webtoons.com/en/slice-of-life/my-giant-nerd-boyfriend/list?title\\_no=958&page=1](https://www.webtoons.com/en/slice-of-life/my-giant-nerd-boyfriend/list?title_no=958&page=1)

ii. **Description**

1. Small Events that happen to artist Fishball as she navigates her life with her boyfriend who is a foot taller than her

g. Congrats on getting into Art School

i. **Link / How to Access**

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<sup>7</sup> Journal comic by Chuckdrawsthings where they portray their reflections as a pigeon ; posted (9 March 2021)

1. <https://twitter.com/abellhayford/status/1340376803639054338>

ii. Description

1. One-shot comic around some of the events Abelle Hayford (author) experience as a college student at a school geared towards art
2. Examples Below



8





9



10

h. Thinking through Doodles

i. Link / How to Access

1. <https://believermag.com/logger/thinking-through-doodles-with-js-wu/>

ii. Description

**VI. Classroom Arrangement**

- a. Students will choose their own seats in tables of four. They will be seated like this for the first 15-20 mins of class
- b. Students will, after introductory information be given the time to shift and move around the classroom as they read, talk, and take notes about the journal comics

**VII. Instructional Process**

**a. Introduction / Anticipatory Set**

- i. Students will be given coloring sheets to choose from in order to loosen up and focus in an environment that does not center around production for an end result
  1. Students are expected to get the most amount of pigment onto the coloring page with no white space showing
- ii. Students do not need to finish color the whole page, but focus where they can on filling some portion to the point where no white space exists
- iii. While students do this I will give a brief overview on meaning making before we delve further into the topic
  1. I will ask students to think of some reasons for why they write and whether they enjoy writing
    - a. Are there certain situations in which they enjoy writing?  
Are there ones where they avoid writing for as long as possible

**b. Developmental Activity**

- i. This portion will be split into two

- ii. The first half we will talk more in depth about meaning making for comics specifically and when creating things (in general)
- iii. The second half we will transition into continuing to talk about different types of comics and getting specific by touching on journal comics
  - 1. I will give a brief introduction onto some of the key terms that I think go along with journal comics and give students the opportunity to share any comics (or pieces of media) that they think fit within the category
  - 2. Students will then be given the rest of this time to go through ten to fifteen journal comics that range in terms of content, identities of people writing these comics, and skill sets of the artist

**c. Closure**

- i. Since students will be given the rest of the class time to look through and talk about the journal comics, I would expect for them take some time to think of longer journal comic ideas outside of recording small notes of things that they notice through the day

**d. Formative / Summative Assessment**

- i. Over the follow two weeks students will be asked to keep notes in their sketch books about things that they overhear throughout the day to get students to think about the types of things they interact on a daily basis.
  - 1. Keeping these notes will
    - a. Give students prompts to work on during bell work
    - b. Allow students to tune in and out of the world by listening to the conversations and actions that occur around them
  - 2. These quotes will be shared throughout the rest of the semester to generate prompts for smaller comics

## Lesson Plan 3 [Theme 2 Lesson Plan]

Content Area: Structuring a Comic

Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic: Parts of a comic

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will do a round robin style comic, where they will have to thumbnail a section of a comic. Each student will be given a portion of the comic to start with (beginning, middle, or end) and will trade with a person at their table until the comic is finished. These comics will be kept loose and students will have to talk with their table between transitions to give them an idea of where the story is at that point.

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. What information am I giving to the viewer?
  - i. What is the most important information so that they can tell what is going on in the story

**III. Key Terms**

- a. Pacing
  - i. The speed at which a story takes place. Determined by the author on how they would like to guide their audience through. Can assist with the ways that elements are introduced to the story
- b. Beginning
  - i. The start of the story. Where introductory information is given about character or setting
- c. Middle
  - i. Where the bulk of the action of the story occurs
- d. End
  - i. Concluding pieces of a story. How the events told in the middle are wrapped up or left hanging in order to lead into another arc of a story
- e. Dialogue
  - i. conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or movie.
  - ii. Should capture a character's personality



- iii. Assists in furthering the narrative of the story
- iv. Does not necessarily have to be verbal
- f. Thumbnailing
  - i. An introductory step in the writing process that allows writers to see visually what events might take place. A step that can come before or after outlining
- g. Outline
  - i. A summary of events or plot points to occur in one's writing

#### **IV. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Give students the opportunity to explore their process of crafting a story
- b. Students will go away with a better understanding of which part of the writing process they feel confident in

#### **V. Materials / Resources**

- a. Sketch book
- b. Prompt list to choose a theme to work off of
- c. Telephone art prompt – use as an example for how the comic should build

#### **VI. Classroom Arrangement**

- a. Students will work at tables of four

#### **VII. Instructional Process**

##### **a. Introduction / Anticipatory Set**

- i. The teacher will spend the beginning of class introducing the telephone style comic making process.
- ii. Once this has been done. Students will pick a section of the story telling (beginning, middle, or end) process to thumbnail and outline.
  - 1. Two students will have the middle portion of the story
- iii. Students will also randomly pick a prompt from the dialogue that students have been collecting so far through the semester

##### **b. Developmental Activities**

- i. Students will be given 20 minutes to do early sketches of their section of the comic. Students will have to keep outline notes as they work to help explain their idea to the student who is next in the story.

ii. Students will take 5 minutes to explain and rotate comics. The telephone should move clockwise

1. The student who receives the comic next will decide what part of the comic that they want to work on

a. If they work on the middle they can choose between beginning or end of the comic

b. If they work on the end they can choose the beginning or middle

c. If they work on the beginning they can choose the end or middle

2. Each student should have a chance to do at least two steps of planning for the telephone comic

c. Closure

i. We will take the time to verbally discuss or write down the things that they noticed while working on the thumbnails / plans for the comics

ii. Possible questions

1. Discuss how they felt about working with others ideas

2. did they want to continue writing for the thing they already started

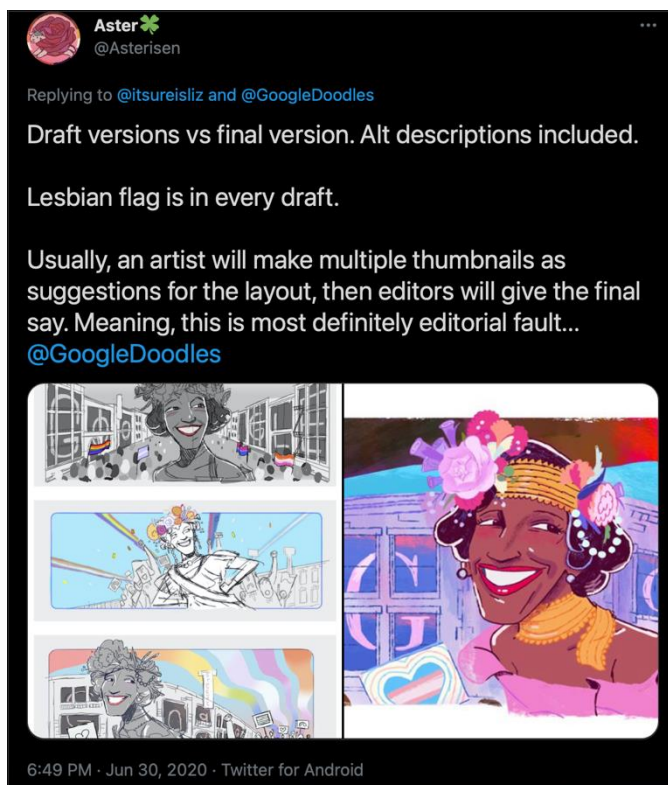
3. were they more or less motivated to work on these other ideas

4. were they inspired fir their own comic process from how their table partners worked on their beginning processes

VIII. Formative / Summative Assessment

a. Students will be asked for homework to take home the section of the comic that they did not get a chance to do (if any) and think of ideas of where they would take the story going forward (or begin the story)

IX. Examples of thumbnails





## Lesson Plan 4 [theme 2 lesson plan]

Content Area: Structuring a Comic Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic: Pacing

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will work through making four panel comics to practice creating the structure of comics as they would need them for longer stories. By working on a shorter story and creating outlines this allows students to plan for how to pace things that take longer amounts of time to write.

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. What elements of a story are essential to getting the plot across to the audience
- b. How do we boil down / summarize the stories that we work on

**III. Key Terms**

- a. Pacing
- b. Key scenes
  - i. Scenes that are vital to the plot and structure of a story

**IV. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Students will improve on their visual storytelling muscles
  - i. Students should be able to figure out what are the most important parts of the story that they are trying to tell
- b. Students will learn how to prioritize information to tell their audience
- c. Working with plots that they already know well will give them an idea of the types of stories that they like, why they feel this way, and if they would want to work with this genre

**V. Materials / Resources**

- a. Drawing Comics About Movies
  - i. Link / How to Access
    - 1. <https://believermag.com/logger/drawing-comics-about-movies-with-teresa-wong/>
      - a. A zoom activity done by author Teresa Wong. The activity asks viewers to draw a four panel comic based on movies that they have seen

**VI. Instructional Process****a. Introduction**

- i. We will spend 10 minutes watching parts of the video by Teresa Wong so that students get an idea of what making comic about a movie looks like
- ii. While we watch the video to get an idea of what comics about movies look like students will take time to warm up their hand so that they can do loose comic drawings

**b. Developmental Activities**

- i. Draft ideas of movies
  1. Movies you love
  2. Movies you don't like
  3. Movies you've never seen before
- ii. Steps
  1. Panel one – scene in the movie that introduces the action of the movie
  2. Panel two – rising action of the movie – something iconic about the movie
  3. Panel three – complicating scene, happens in second half of the movie and helps the movie move towards the end
  4. Panel four – sums up the comic. Choose between the final scene or a climactic scene before the very end
- iii. Students will work for about 30 minutes

**c. Closure**

- i. Students will share and debrief about how they felt about the process of boiling down a plot of something written by someone else
- ii. Students will do a cool down activity of doodling while they listen to their table partners share

**VII. Formative / Summative Assessment**

- a. Students will be asked to ask someone they are close to describe a movie. Students should keep notes about the key parts of the movie that the person describes and then draw the key points of the story.

- i. Students should do two attempts
  - 1. One immediately after
  - 2. One about an hour or more later
- ii. Attempting two can help them figure out what type of information people hold onto after

## Lesson Plan 5 [theme 3 lesson plan 1]

Content Area: Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic:

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will recreate a comic that they have done at some point in the semester up until this point and recreate it without using words

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. How do we illustrate a story without using words
- b. What is essential in a story in order to narrate to the viewer without the use of words
- c. Is it more difficult to tell a story without words?
- d. How do we illustrate a story when focusing on the emotions, feelings, and other senses that people experience

**III. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Students will learn what is important about illustrating a story without relying on words
  - i. By not relying on words students will be able to focus on other elements such as posing and emotions that make indicate visual ways of telling stories

**IV. Grade Level Common Core and / or PA State Standards****V. Materials / Resources**

- a. Creating Comics Without Words
  - i. Link / How to access
    - 1. <https://believermag.com/logger/creating-comics-without-words/>
- b. Sutterhug
  - i. Link / How to access
    - 1. <https://www.sutterhug.com>
  - ii. Description
    - 1. Collection of short silent comics centered around fantasy characters





- a. “How can a single image represent the senses and emotions and how does this idea apply to comics” – *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud

## **VII. Instructional Process**

### **a. Introduction**

- i. Students will be asked to use one of the dialogue prompts that they gathered from listening to their surroundings and spend ten minutes making a 4-6 panel comic around the dialogue.
  1. Students may use dialogue in this short exercise but only in one panel

### **b. Developmental Activities**

- i. Students should take this time to pick two to three comics that they have worked on so far during the semester. Preferably their shorter works over their longer works. Students will then pick one of their own comics and one of the comics of their table partners to turn into a silent comic. Students should take this time to see what information is transferable without dialogue and what is not transferable. What information do they need to exaggerate or dial back in order to get the same point and intentions across of the original comic

### **c. Closure**

- i. Students will take the end of class to record in their sketchbooks / journals on the process of
  1. What did you like about the process of making a silent comic?
  2. What did you not like about the process?
  3. Was there anything that you did not expect while working on the comic?

## **VIII. Formative / Summative Assessment**

- a. Students will follow along with the Creating Comics Without words video for homework and create a one-shot comic that focuses on creating story without dialogue

## Lesson Plan 6 [theme 3 lesson plan 2]

Content Area: Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic: materials through comic making

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will bring panels to class from previous times that they are interested in to redraw during class. Students will be expected to use this as an opportunity to become more familiar with the types of materials that they will be using in class in a more exact manner now that they have spent a couple weeks using them during warm ups

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. What do I need to do to use another's work as reference
- b. What did I learn from using another's work as reference
- c. Is there a specific thing that you notice as you transfer this comic into your own style

**III. Key Terms**

- a. Line weight
- b. Lines
- c. shading

**IV. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Students should use this as an opportunity to learn more about the physical parts of comic making
- b. What steps do they take to understand the structure of the comic page that they are imitating
- c. Students should take note of the things that they change while they use the original image as reference
- d. Students should take this as an opportunity to apply the things that they notice about the materials that they have been using through the semester
  - i. These materials should be the same ones that they have used for their warm ups and have been given more freedom to explore how they work and how they use them outside of making finished pieces of art

**V. Grade Level Common Core and / or PA State Standards**

**VI. Materials / Resources****a. Redrawing my Childhood Fave! | Mamotte Lollipop SPEEDPAINT****i. Link / How to access**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAqExm3LxuA>
2. [finished art piece]  
<https://twitter.com/AlexBDent/status/1233545049897607168>

**b. Fruits Basket Page Redraw by SnuffyMcSnuff****i. Link / How to Access**

1. <https://twitter.com/SnuffyMcSnuff/status/1370402514143617028>



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<sup>11</sup> Manga Page from Fruits Basket by Natsuki Takaya



c. HunterxHunter Page Redraw

i. Link / How to Access

- a. [https://twitter.com/sweetwiness/status/13530534135970119](https://twitter.com/sweetwiness/status/1353053413597011976)

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d. Fruits Basket Page Redraw by Ellymantle

i. Link / How to Access

1. <https://twitter.com/ellymantle/status/1307829944450297857>

e. Clamp's Legal Drug Page Redraw

i. Link / How to Access

<sup>12</sup> Redraw of Page from Fruits Basket done by @SnuffyMcSnuff on twitter

1. <https://twitter.com/tinyufoboss/status/1307858019741364224>

- f. Ink pens
- g. Markers
- h. sketchbooks

## **VII. Instructional Process**

- a. Introduction
- b. Developmental Activities
- c. Closure

## **VIII. Formative / Summative Assessment**

- a. Students will take time at home to draw a specific panel and see what it is like to emphasize certain details and push the panel to an extreme. They should also take a second panel and see what it looks like to simplify it down to its base shapes while still retaining its important qualities

## Lesson Plan 7 [theme 4 lesson plan 1]

Content Area: Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic: group comic making

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. This lesson will be used to introduce students to the first big project of the term. They will have to work together to create a 1-5 page comic that has an open-ended meaning. Students will have the time to work individually for the first half of class and the second half of class will be dedicated towards brainstorming and dividing up roles for the comic process

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. How will students need to divide up the work in order to create a short comic
- b. what have you learned about each process individually

**III. Key Terms**

- a. Thumbnails
- b. Scripts
- c. Inking
- d. Dialogue
- e. Shading / coloring

**IV. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Students should leave this assignment with a better idea of what the comic process looks like for them
- b. Students should be able to work in a team environment to problem solve what creating a comic might look like together
- c. Working on a collective open ended comic will give students the chance to get through an entire comic project without worrying that they have to do all the steps at once on their own

**V. Grade Level Common Core and / or PA State Standards****VI. Materials / Resources**

- a. Making a Dream Log
  - i. Link / How to Access
    - 1. <https://believermag.com/logger/dream-log/>

**VII. Instructional Process****a. Introduction**

- i. Students will be introduced to a group comic making project. This project will give students the opportunity to work together and get acquainted to making a longer comic than we have been used to making during the class time.

**b. Developmental Activities**

- i. For the first half of class students will talk with their table partners and decide how they want to divide tasks and plan out the larger story.
- ii. For the second half of class, students will use the time to sketch individually to process the ideas that they talked about with their table partners. Students should use this time to picture the different ideas that their group was thinking about so that they can bring back ways to implement these ideas together

**c. Closure**

- i. Students will share a few possible ideas with the teacher on what type of comic they may want to make and/or who is going to do what role for each page
  1. Students will be asked to attempt all the steps of the comic process at least once during this project

**VIII. Formative / Summative Assessment**

- a. Students will be given an optional activity to do while they begin their group comic. This will be to keep a dream log. This process will hopefully help to stimulate some ideas for the groups to center their comic around



## Lesson Plan 8 [theme 4 lesson plan 2]

Content Area: Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic:

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will continue to work on their joint comics for half of the class. The other half of the class we will take a break and play comic bingo as a class.

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. How to breaks from big projects benefit our creative process
- b. What are some forms that breaks can take
- c. Is there such a thing as a 'productive' break

**III. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Students will take this time to understand the importance of taking breaks as a way to be kind to ourselves when taking on big projects.

**IV. Grade Level Common Core and / or PA State Standards****V. Materials / Resources**

- a. Comics Bingo
  1. Link / How to Access
    1. <https://believermag.com/logger/comics-bingo/>

**VI. Instructional Process****a. Introduction**

1. Students will take the beginning of class to set up their bingo boards for comic bingo
2. **Step 1:** Generate a list of sixteen places.
3. **Step 2:** Generate a list of sixteen concrete nouns.
4. **Step 3:** Generate a list of sixteen active verbs ending in -ing.
5. **Step 4:** On a new piece of paper, draw a 4×4 grid, with each square being just large enough to write three lines of text inside it.
6. **Step 5:** Choose one place, one noun, and one verb from the lists at random. These are your drawing prompts. Everyone playing must write these three things inside one random square on their grid.

7. Step 6: Continue this process until all your squares are filled and you've used everything from your lists.

**b. Developmental Activities**

1. Students will take the first half of class to continue working on their group comic with their table partners.
2. For the second half of class we will play one or two rounds of comics bingo
  1. **Step 1:** Have someone choose a prompt at random (e.g. someone could number their grid 1-16 and then use a random number generator to choose).
  2. **Step 2:** Set a timer for three minutes. Everyone has that long to draw a comic based on the prompt.
  3. **Step 3:** Draw an x through the square with the prompt written in it once you're done drawing.
  4. **Step 4:** Continue this process until someone calls bingo.
  5. **Note:** you cannot call bingo until you have finished drawing.

**c. Closure**

1. Students will journal about how taking a break from working on their group comics affected them.
  1. Did it inhibit your progress?
  2. Do you have more ideas after taking a break?
  3. Did you enjoy the break that we did take?
  4. Would you prefer a different activity as a break?

## Lesson Plan 9 [theme 5 lesson plan 1]

Content Area: Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic: individual comic

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will be introduced to the overall assignment for their individual comic making process. We will also take time to talk over simplification in comics again so students know while they have the option to make a detail comic it is not the only option for this final project

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. How is working on a comic by ourselves different from working with a team
- b. Is there a difference when working on a shorter comic compared to a longer comic

**III. Key Terms****IV. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Students will be able to use everything that they have been building up over the term to make their own comic
- b. These comics will be a culmination of the smaller bits that they have worked on and students will be able to successfully develop and execute a plan

**V. Grade Level Common Core and / or PA State Standards****VI. Materials / Resources**

- a. Amplification through simplification – *Understanding Comics* page 30

**VII. Instructional Process****a. Introduction**

- i. Students will get a 15 minute introduction to their individual comic making assignment.

**b. Developmental Activities**

- i. Students will take this time in class to do initial sketches, brainstorm, ask questions whatever they need to jumpstart at least two possible ideas for a comic to make. Students will have to check in a tell their possible ideas by the end of class

**c. Closure**

- i. Students will share possible idea for the comic that they want to create for their final project

#### **VIII. Formative / Summative Assessment**

- a. Students should journal after class some possible ideas for their final comic to have during the next class. Students will have to create and pitch their comic idea in the form of a presentation
  - i. Students will have the option to present individually for the teacher or in front of the entire class.

## Lesson Plan 10 [theme 5 lesson plan 2]

Content Area: Grade Level: 9-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 50 minutes Subject / Lesson Topic: individual comic

**I. Lesson Overview**

- a. Students will present their comic pitch to the class in order to gain feedback on their ideas. Feedback should focus on things that students find interesting about peers assignments. Questions about big ideas. Suggestion around the sketches that the students has in their presentations

**II. Big Ideas & Essential Questions**

- a. Does pitching one's ideas help to develop their initial ideas for a project?
- b. How do we organize our ideas in a way that we can explain the (written or verbally) to others

**III. Instructional Objectives / Learning Targets**

- a. Students will be able to explain the idea that they have and accompany it with initial images and references to illustrate the overall themes and plot line of their comic

**IV. Grade Level Common Core and / or PA State Standards****V. Materials / Resources**

- a. "The comics creator asks us to join in a silent dance of the seen and the unseen. The visible and the invisible. This dance is unique to comics. No other artform gives so much to its audience while asking so much from them as well. This is why I think it's an mistake to see comics as a mere hybrid of the graphic arts and prose fiction. What happens between these panels is a kind of magic only comics can create" (McCloud, 92).

**VI. Instructional Process****a. Introduction**

- i. Students will have received their presentation times prior to class.  
Students will be given this beginning time to practice or destress before their presentations. It will be a free warm up to sketch, doodle, journal as they please.

**b. Developmental Activities**

- i. Students will create an assessment guide of things that they notice while their peers present
- ii. These should guide what they think is feedback that they would like to receive about their own comics
- iii. Students will also receive a mini-evaluation guide from the teacher noting some things to think about while their peers pitch their own comics
- iv. Students will be asked to make a small sketch that they think would fit into the comic that their peer is creating.
  1. They will only be required to do two to four sketches out of how many presentations that we get through in a single class

**c. Closure**

- i. Students who present will write a journal reflection on how they felt about their presentation
  1. Were there things that you wanted to change once you started to hear how other's received your ideas
  2. Was their feedback that was helpful in getting you to think about your ideas
  3. Is there any advice you would give to other students pitching their comics to their peers
- ii. Students who might have not gotten the chance to present can reflect on the process from an outsider perspective

**VII. Formative / Summative Assessment**

Students will be evaluated on their completion of their presentations. Students will have set tasks that they will have to do in preparation of the presentation and

### **Interlude 3 : concerning thoughts on art**

As I look back on my four years of taking art at Swarthmore College, I feel that I was not ready to take in the capacities that I am being expected. I think that college-level art is great, but not for me. There is a disconnect where I do not know how to talk about my art. Also, my choice of medium is so different from that of the professors here; that creates just another barrier which at times causes my art to feel more like a chore than it ever should. How as a future art educator do I prepare my students who want to pursue art in a formal capacity without bogging them down in the jargon that dictates what a formal art space looks like?

One of the issues that I have as someone who is learning art is that I do not know how to ask questions that will help produce the changes in my art that I want to see. I often struggle to figure out what these questions should look like and what I desire to help me grow as an artist. It is also difficult talking about my art because of the conversations that I have need to vary so widely between each of the faculty advisors. In the time it takes me to figure out how to explain the work I do, our meetings are often at the end of time and I have made very little progress on getting an outside perspective to the things that I am working on. Honestly, it makes me worry about my ability to even be an artist as often I can get obsessed with starting an idea and within weeks get disinterested because I do not know how to keep that same enthusiasm throughout an entire project. This disconnect between my expectations for what art is for me and the expectations that the department holds for senior artists conflicts. I wish that they were not in conflict. Even if I did not do digital art I do not think that I have the brain to be able to spend 10+ hours a week on my art. Thinking about having to plan and structure time around making art makes me want to avoid creating altogether.

The time I spend working on art feels very fluid. I take breaks when I want to over when I need to. sometimes I can work for hours straight and finish a piece, but then I'll avoid my art for

days afterward. Sometimes I cannot even do the art that I am expected to do because my brain files it under the guise of procrastination, even though it knows that this is something that must be done before a specific date.

I don't not want to create but it's like all the rules and expectations and deadlines associated with academic art cause me to repeat patterns of stress and avoidance that I wish did not have to accompany my creative process. I think this is why community building in art is important to me. I do not feel comfortable sharing and asking for advice within the art department for a variety of reasons. I wish I did though. I think if there had been room to build a community of artists this would be a different situation, at least to some extent. I think that if art studios did not feel so distant I would be more comfortable talking about the type of art I do and why, without it feeling like I am arguing for my right to exist in a space that does not seem like it wants me. I hope that as I learn and teach that I will eventually feel that I am no longer arguing for a space in the art field. I hope that through the frameworks that I have laid out and my own ideas about teaching that I do better by those who I will encounter as a teacher.

### **Conclusion**

Since originally working on this thesis, I have been kinder to myself as an artist. I am trying to give myself more space to mess up in my art. To draw looser, to experiment more. To practice more. Overall, this curriculum should give students to be more forgiving with the things that they do and the things that they create whether it is made for themselves, creative spaces, or traditional classroom spaces. I have included below some of the pieces that I was making in relation to my art thesis and the pieces that I have made before my revision of this thesis work. I think that the work I am doing now represents the type of play that I talk about in the frameworks section. There is a type of freedom to it that required me to move away from the expectations others had for the work that I made.



I mention the changes in my own work because while I understood my hopes for creating a curriculum, I did not always see these practices present in my own practices as an artist. Now that I start to see the ways that a focus on progress looks in my own art, I think I have a better understanding of how the curriculum may work outside of the abstract world of a paper. In addition, I think reflection on how the ideas that we think up effect our on work can be one indications of how effective it could be in a classroom.

**My work***Work towards Senior Art thesis*

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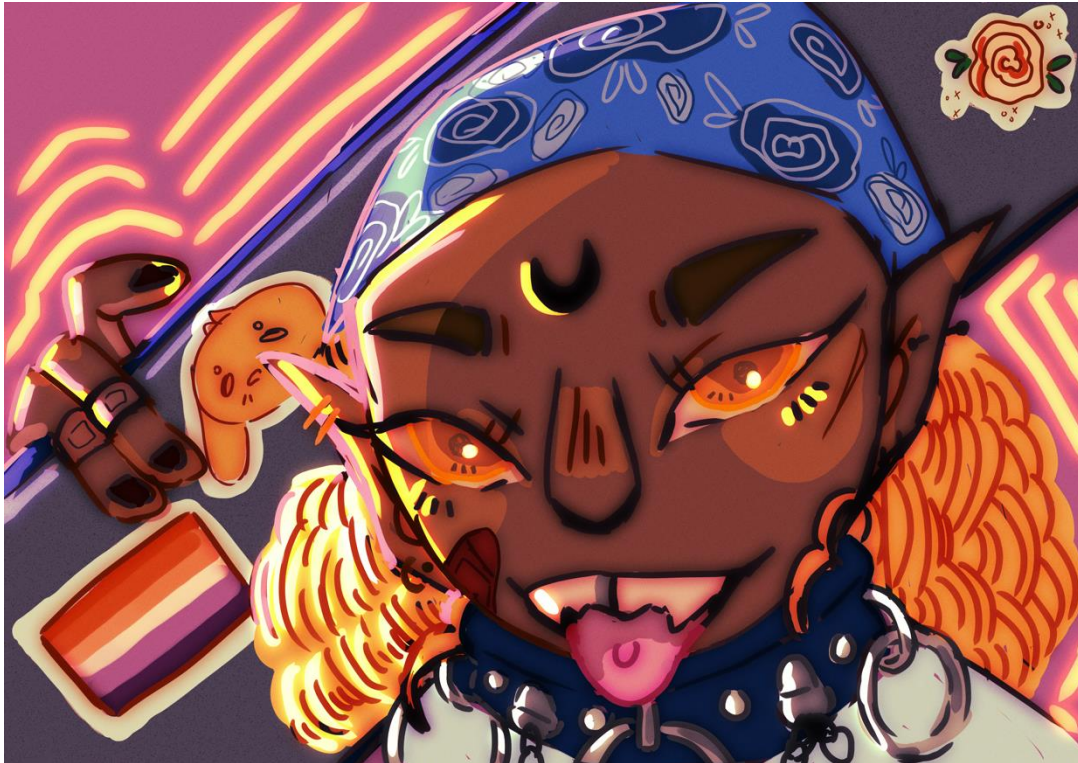
14

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<sup>13</sup> Completed april 2021

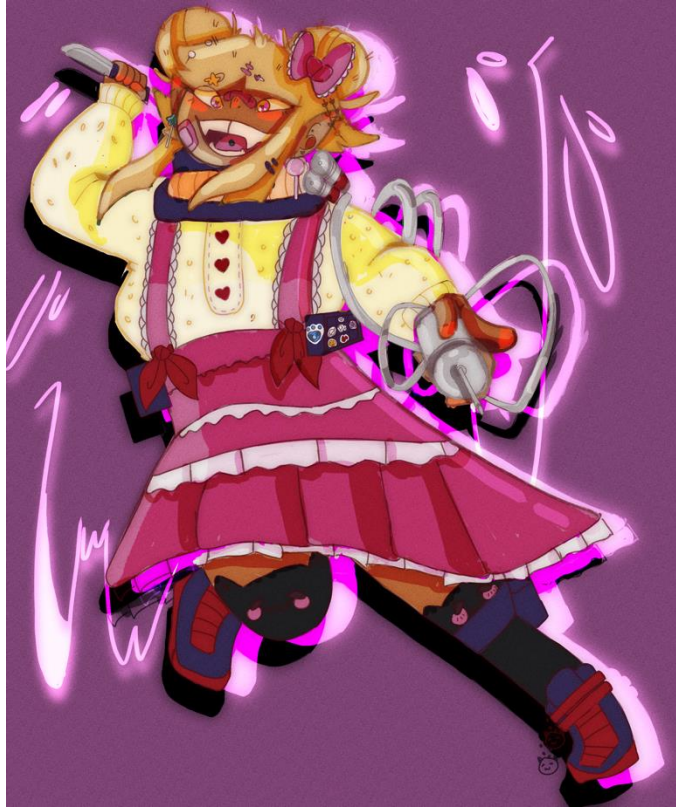
<sup>14</sup> Completed march 2021

*Personal Work*



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<sup>15</sup> Completed 25 april 2021



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