

ENHANCING LSRW SKILLS WITH GRAPHIC NOVELS IN ELT CLASSROOM

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Abstract : It's an enduring challenge for a teacher to engage, encourage and endeavor the learners to learn in the classroom. Teachers' can surmount this ongoing challenge by using non-traditional methods like the use of graphic novels in the class. Graphic novels are becoming more prominent in ELT classroom. As these novels consist with simple language with long versions and pictures where learners will show interest and can enhance their LSRW skills through fun and visual learning. They can develop their creativity and imagination. Through many digital comic builders learners can create their own integrate technology. These novels can also build critical reading skills. Every graphic novel is a message oriented and many literary classics have been retold within the pages of graphic novels. Teachers can make the learners to create their own graphic novels in order to illustrate their understanding of subject matter. Through this learners can learn many literary elements like symbolism, plot, characterization, themes and so on.

Keywords: non-traditional methods, graphic novels, digital comic builders, literary elements.

INTRODUCTION

In the present scenario, it's an enduring challenge for a teacher to engage and encourage students and endeavor them to learn in the classroom. At the same time, learners also face many challenges in developing their literacy skills. Apart from that, the learners have to be somehow adept in using vocabulary, grammar, understanding context, expression and figurative speech in English. Fortunately, graphic novels became a learning tool for learners to enhance their skills. Teachers' can surmount this ongoing challenge by using non-traditional methods like the use of graphic novels in the class.

EXPOUNDS CREATIVITY

As graphic novels are a single narrative told through pictures and words, it creates enthusiasm heavily and captivates students' attention, which in turn compels students to engage more actively in the language learning process. Graphic novels are becoming more prominent in the ELT classroom as these novels consist of simple language with long versions and pictures where learners will show interest and can enhance their LSRW skills through fun and visual learning. They can develop their creativity and imagination. When compare to other visual learning aids like videos, graphic novels allow students to read at their own pace and it also minimizes the frustration of fast-paced dialogues. It can captivate the learners' attention as it serves as a valuable means of developing reading comprehension skills.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The imagery of a graphic novel also gives an opportunity for a group discussion and a role play to express the learners' views; this will help the learners to develop their own vocabulary of visual imagination. Through these kinds of novels, a learner can learn in two forms at a time i.e., textual and visual. A learner can learn a variety of cultural topics. The pedagogy approach of graphic novels constructs their narratives not only with the combination of image and text but also through a spectrum of image and text relationships. A teacher can harness the ways in which graphic novels encode into their narrative processes of interpretation and analysis. This encoding and analytical process encourages learners to make their own sense of analysis and interpretation. For instance, India's first graphic novel "*Corridor*" tells the story of a tea vendor in Delhi and his chronicles of daily life and his interactions with people who visit his tea stall. His life and incidents make the learners analyze and make their own interpretations. The novel is a beautiful portrayal of the tragic isolated existence of modern civilization.

ENHANCES VOCABULARY AND VISUAL IMAGINATION

This is the 21st Century digital world where many digital comic builders/learners can create their own integrate technology. These novels build critical reading skills. They are multimodal (expresses in multiple modes) which facilitates and supports students' ability to visualize and understand complicated ideas. The other blessed thing for a learner is that it is not an overloaded text like other texts, so, it decreases the anxieties of the learners. They are relevant, engaging, positive and easily understandable as it is related to the text and picture which creates interest to the learners. It captures their interest and increases their visual world which in turn increases their motivation and desire to keep reading. Graphic novels are cross-curricular. There are many

connections that can be made across the curriculum in a variety of different subject matters like science, genetics, chemistry, photosynthesis, war and so on. For instance, David Axe's "War is boring" gives a brief history of modern conflict. In this, Axe relays some of his experiences gathering information in various war zones across the globe. In the novel, the author throws himself into conflict zones. Another instance is Malik Sajad's novel "*Munnu: A Boy From Kashmir*", where Malik describes the conflicted land of Kashmir through a story of 7-year-old boy's childhood. This novel is also an experience of conflicts and possibilities.

Graphic novels have added a layer to the lessons. The visual elements can support the struggling students to engage them in reading and understanding the content easily with their imagination power. Teaching through graphic novels helped many of my students to become strong readers. They pay more attention to what the author's state explicitly and where they need to infer or read between the lines to come up with details or bigger ideas. They think about the choices which the author has made. For instance, Jack Ohman's "*Life Begins at Incorporation*", mixes with the best political cartoons from his prolific body of work with 15 essays to answer the most perplexing questions of the time.

As these novels consist of the visual nature, a teacher can ask the learner to make a poster of all the visuals to connect more them to the novel. Through this, the learner can enhance his/her sense of creativity and thinking power. Good graphics build up female characters too. They show them as strong, dynamic, interesting and realistic. The best example is Ari Folman's novel *Anne Frank's Diary*.

Graphic novels are not just illustrated in comic books. If a learner takes a close look and reads through them, they would realize how intricate and important this genre of literature is and this genre addresses some of the most perceptible and imperative social issues of the country. For instance, "*Kashmir Pending*" which was written by Naseer Ahmed and Saurabh Singh which focuses on the pains and predicaments faced by the Kashmiris on a daily basis. This graphic novel features multiple perspectives and a majority of it seen through the eyes of one reformed militant locked up in jail.

PARAMOUNT TOOL FOR ELLs

Graphic novels are not as long reads as traditional books. They became a perfect tool for English language learners because they are high interest, and the images can fill in, giving clues when they don't know a word. Rather than stopping to look up the meanings of unidentified words, they can intuit the meaning. It is commonly said that it takes about seven years to learn a new language. If that is true, then the learners who go with the graphic novels are certainly quick learners. We can see that in a short span of time or just a weeks' time, the learners become fluent.

Learners face a variety of challenges as they develop literacy skills in a new language. In addition to learning clear-cut vocabulary and grammar rules, they must also become proficient in understanding the cultural context, expression, and figurative speech in English. With all of these considerations, it can be difficult for ELLs to find materials that help and develop crucial reading skills. Luckily, graphic novels have found their way into the classroom as an effective learning tool for ELLs. These novels explain figurative language with its visual support, and this encourages the learners' to learn the subject in an interesting and can also decode the things by themselves. Literacy skills often focus on silent or oral reading and writing skills. The dialogue and writing style used in comics can be useful as many comic strips which in turn can be used for frequent punctuation and the bolding of keywords to demonstrate how a phrase would be said aloud. The accompanying illustration gives additional visual clues to how the dialogue should be read.

It's a challenge for English Language learners to rise not only in learning a new language but also learning a new culture. As per the research of National Council of Teachers of English "ELL students may be facing a variety of socio-cultural factors that affect English language learning". Unlike text-only passages, the visuals that accompany comic panels show how speakers use facial expressions, gestures, position when they speak. This helps the learners to know how they can handle a wide range of social issues. The visuals of graphic novels help students make inferences and connections to their own daily lives in a way that text-only resources cannot. These novels offer a wide range of opportunities for English language learners to learn literacy concepts like inflection, emphasis, and punctuation or more abstract ideas like complex, social and cultural issues. It helps ELLs to decode new information, make inferences, and learn more about an unfamiliar culture.

RECOGNING A STORY

Graphic novels are a great way to motivate and encourage reading. Most of the learners who have never read a graphic novel seem to love the fact that images are being used with text, as well as the learners who claim to be more as visual learners. They exclaim how easily they can understand the story and furthermore they feel a sense of empowerment to be able to comprehend and interpret a story in their own terms. These novels can also challenge students to think deeply about the elements of storytelling. In a traditional text, students uncover meaning embedded in sentences and paragraphs. In graphic texts, students must analyze the images, looking for signs of character development or clues that help build a plot. Teachers can help the learners by giving vocabulary which is applied to visual analysis which could help them to make them attend to the images during their writing process which improves their analytical eye, depth, and complexity in the reading and writing process. It also helps the students to develop

textual and visual reading skills, critical skills, in-depth thinking, and analytical skills and also understand the text and images all around them which in turn helps them in crafting their own stories.

CONCLUSION

Graphic novels definitely are a powerful tool to get students to discover pleasure in the act of reading, and teachers can help by keeping in mind that not all of their students are graphic novel readers. Time will need to be spent to teach students how to read a graphic novel and for teachers to emphasize why the graphic novel should be read a certain way, especially if we want students to fully be immersed in the graphic novel experience of reading image and text together, rather than only “reading” the images and ignoring the text or vice versa. Every graphic novel is a message-oriented and many literary classics have been retold within the pages of graphic novels. Teachers can make learners to create their own graphic novels in order to illustrate their understanding of subject matter. Through this, learners can learn many literary elements like symbolism, plot, characterization, themes and so on. Thus, we have to thanks to the graphic novels where image and text work together.

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