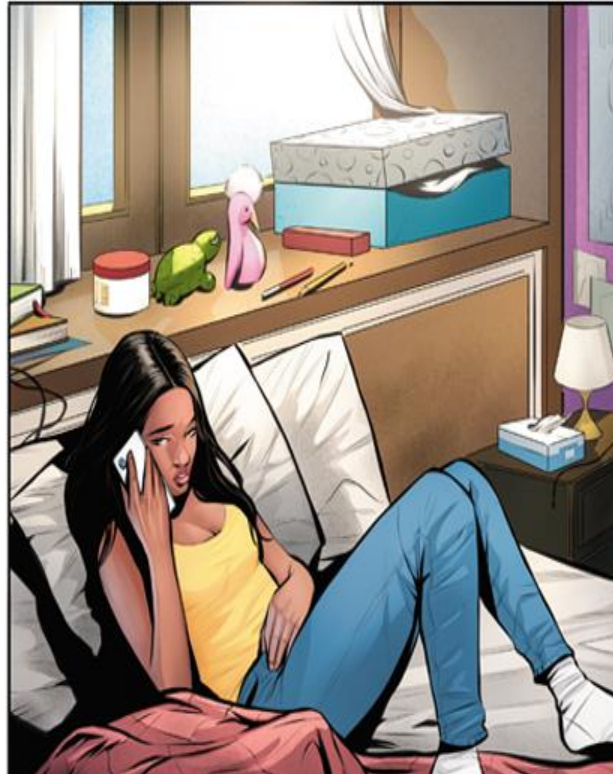# RESEARCH:
The Value of Graphic Novels in the Classroom Across Grade Levels

MOTIVATION

A.   Graphic Novels and Reading Motivation is supported by the POSITIVE link between Reading Motivation and Reading Success.

B.   Research findings support a reciprocal relationship between student Reading Motivation and attainment of Reading Skills:

"The interaction between poor reading and low motivation may 'snowball,' or increasingly influence each other in such a way as to lead to long-term reading failure," (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007, p. 178).

C.   To curb the decline in Reading Motivation as children move forward in their schooling, research supports a place for graphic novels in prevention:

"Graphic novels also make compelling reading for some students and may prove an effective way to hold interest in reading during the crucial late elementary and middle school years," (Boerman-Cornell, 2013, p. 76).

D.   Teachers must look to mediums that research has shown to impact motivation (McCarthey, 2001, p. 122).

E.   Graphic Novels FORMAT creates more equitable reading experiences and potentially increases motivation for Reluctant Readers.

"Participants described as Reluctant Readers identified this work as FUN". Feelings that working with graphic novels is a fun and an engaging activity is crucial when considering students identified as Reluctant Readers," (Sloboda et al., 2014, p. 19).

MULTIMODAL LITERACY:

A. Graphic Novels act as a form of Multimodal Literacy, which is CRUCIAL to preparing students for a world that increasingly requires the ability to function with multimodal literacy.

"Multimodality simply means communicating using more than one mode-music, spoken word, dance, or in the case of Graphic Novels, words and images," (Boerman-Cornell, 2016, p. 327).

B. If educators are not willing to adapt to today's landscape, then children will not be prepared to evaluate and interpret the multimodal literacy that exists in the world in which they must function.

"Ultimately, if we are trying to evaluate literacy using old rules, old functions and old meaning, we are really not evaluating literacy as it exists now," (Reynard, 2017, p. 11).

C. Graphic novels act as a bridge between the new multimodal skills children will need and the more traditional literacy skills.

"Because graphic novels use images and text closely integrated together, reading them builds within students the same skills they need for reading websites and magazines. At the same time, they may also help students learn traditional reading skills," (Boerman-Cornell, 2013, p. 73).

LITERACY SKILLS:

A. Across age groups and grade levels, graphic novels have been shown to be an effective means to build literacy skills.

"Summarizing previous plot and character details during the graphic novels' studies, stopping to predict coming events in the respective stories and making inferences based on given information in the illustrations as well as in the text were other comprehension strategies supported in, or added to, these young readers' reading comprehension repertoires," (Brenna, 2013, p. 90).

B. Through graphic novels, teachers have the opportunity to engage students in higher order critical thinking skills.

Boerman-Cornell (2016) found that graphic novels could be used in several specific ways, "including summarizing the story multimodally, connecting story elements over several pages, critical thinking analyzing and supporting themes, responding emotionally to the text, connecting their reading with other texts and experiences, and drawing conclusions about the Graphic Novel format," (p. 333).

C. Research has found that graphic novels are an effective way to introduce and build concepts of characterization.

In research conducted with middle school students Sun (2017) found that "the format of the graphic novels combined with their narrative forms contributed to effectively contextualizing the character and the causes and consequences of their actions in a detailed and meaningful manner," (p. 27).

CONTENT AREAS

A. Graphic novels provide students with a means of engagement with current events in a structure that supports their understanding.

Graphic novels' visual representations aid student comprehension as they make connections across texts and events. SOCIAL STUDIES classrooms are an ideal place to interact with current events. Jennings et al. (2014) found that "using graphic novels allows teachers to incorporate different types of text to address current topics and helps readers make connections to text through visual representation," (pp. 261-262).

B. In MATH, graphic novels can also be used to foster student comprehension of concepts through visual representation, highlight math thinking and tell math related stories.

C. Graphic novels support students as they seek to learn and understand a variety of complex topics in the SCIENCES providing a multimodal representation of concepts.

Bucher and Manning (2004) continue to elaborate on the role of graphic novels in this content area stating, "in the Sciences, they can help adolescents explore complex and sometimes confusing topics," (p. 71). Graphic novels support students as they seek to learn and understand a variety of complex topics in the sciences providing a multimodal representation of concepts.
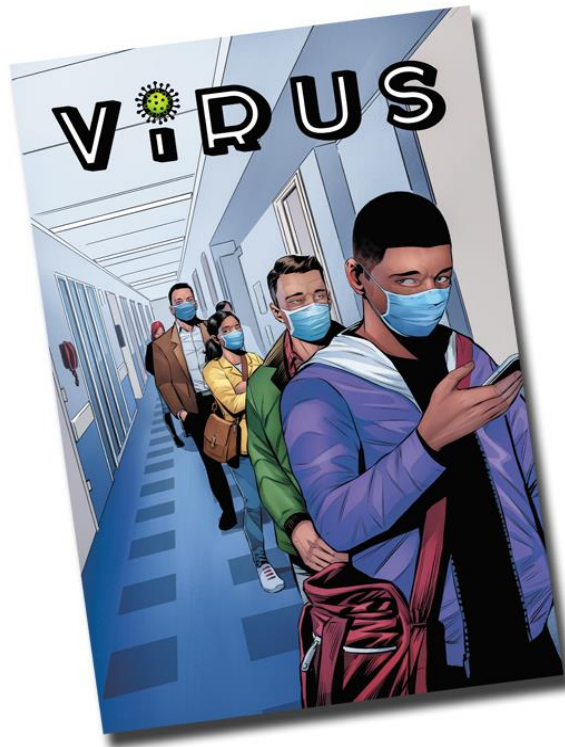
"It's time to move the conversation about comics in the classroom from the intangible to the tangible and to provide handholds for future work that can be done with greater deliberation, design, and intelligence."

(2019 Comics in Education Survey)

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