

USING COMICS TO IMPROVE LITERACY
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

Amy Baker

An Abstract

of a research paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development
University of Central Missouri

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ABSTRACT

by

Amy Baker

As English Language Learners enter the mainstream classroom, they face numerous challenges. Many English Language Learners struggle with literacy and often enter the classroom setting with literacy skills below their peers. One literary tool that may help bridge this gap is the comic. Students who may be intimidated by the amount of text found in traditional books or students who may be quite capable of reading each word but are unable to comprehend the themes, plots, or characterization in the story can turn to comics for aid.

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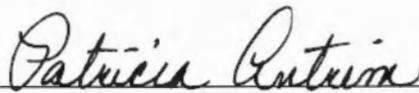
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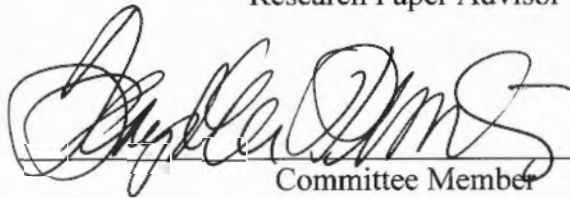
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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The population of school-age English Language Learners in the United States is growing at a rapid pace. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students conducts an annual survey of state educational agencies. This survey, the *Survey of States' Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services*, collects data in three areas: "(1) the enrollment levels of limited English proficient (LEP) students; (2) the educational condition of reported LEP students; and (3) the services received by LEP students" (Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students 4). The authors of this study reported that

LEP enrollment levels in the U.S. continued to increase in 2000-2001, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total student enrollment. An estimated 4,584,946 LEP students were enrolled in public schools, representing approximately 9.6% of the total school enrollment of students (47,665,483) in Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) through Grade 12. Over 67% of all LEP students were enrolled at the elementary level, where they accounted for more than 11% of the total school enrollment. (Office of

English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students 6)

This report also states that California, New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska, Texas, and Nevada were the states with the largest ELL enrollment (8).

As these millions of students enter the classroom they are faced with many challenges. These challenges can seriously affect language acquisition and learning. Issues with pronunciation are immense barriers to learning English. The English language has no concrete set of rules for what sound each letter represents. For example, the letter *a* can be pronounced as *a*, *ah*, or *uh*. Verb tense can also hinder learning. In Spanish, there is a past, present, and future tense, but Spanish verb tense also goes beyond that:

The present tense: the first form used when learning the word.

The future tense: not only used to indicate events that have not happened, but also for current events in which there is ambiguity.

The past tense: includes these forms, the imperfect and the preterite. The imperfect refers to a time period that is not exact or known, while the preterite refers to an exact point in time.

The conditional tense: also known in Spanish as *el futuro hipotético*, the future hypothetical, refers to future events that are conditional or hypothetical. (Erichsen 1)

Cultural differences also play a role in language acquisition. Someone learning English may have difficulties understanding certain actions, such as dress. body

language, and the teacher's role, that are played out in everyday life. For example, "the frequency and length of eye contact changes a lot from country to country, as does the times when eye contact is and isn't considered suitable. One frequently misunderstood example is that East Asian students often close their eyes when concentrating" (Case 2).

Many have debated the most effective methods of second language instruction, and numerous models are being utilized. One philosophy of instruction is dual immersion, which is partial-day English instruction and partial-day native language instruction. The faculty and staff of Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools in North Carolina suggest that,

Immersed in both languages, students will immediately embark on competency in both languages, ultimately developing bilingual and bi-literate skills at or above expected grade level proficiencies. Dual Language programs are favored for their unique success in enhancing academic performance while establishing a student's ability to be comfortable in two languages. (Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools 1)

Others argue for early-exit or late-exit bilingual programs. In early-exit bilingual programs, for the benefit of early reading instruction, students are immersed in their native language for two to three years before being mainstreamed into completely English-speaking classrooms (Hunemorder 1). Late-exit programs provide students with gradually increasing amounts of English instruction (Hunemorder 1).

Many different models and tools are available to aid English Language Learners. This paper addresses the use of comics and graphic novels as a literary tool to aid second language acquisition.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the benefits of using comics with English Language Learners (ELLs). Many experts in the field of literacy have acknowledged the comic to be a wonderful tool to engage the reluctant reader and to have important literary benefits, such as attracting reluctant readers and teaching literary themes. In *Graphic Novels as Educational Heavyweights*, Jonathan Seyfried describes the current trend of losing readers to electronic gadgets. He then states, "Yet, almost as if responding to a distress call, a new type of book has come onto the scene: the graphic novel. This revitalized genre has not only saved the day for recreational reading, it has also turned out to be a heavyweight in the teaching of advanced themes in literature and visual literacy" (45). With their bright colors and familiar characters, comics are more appealing than traditional text. The comic represents something different and exciting without sacrificing plot, vocabulary, and other important components of reading comprehension. For these reason and many more, comics might also play an important role in ELLs acquisition of literacy.

Research Questions

The topics related to this research are multifaceted. English Language Learners, language acquisition, literacy, and literary preferences are just a few of the topics explored. Within these topics, the following questions emerged:

1. What challenges do English Language Learners face?
2. How do comics help students develop literacy skills?
3. How may comics benefit English Language Learners?

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study was the lack of research about the use of graphic novels with English Language Learners. Thousands of resources are available about ELLs and graphic novels (comics) respectively. The limitation occurs when attempting to obtain information merging the two subjects. Stephen Cary states, "There are relatively few studies and articles ... that look specifically at the intersection of the two areas: using comics as a vehicle for second language acquisition"(25). Therefore, this review of literature is a synthesis of the research related to teaching strategies used with English Language Learners and the use of comics in the classroom.

Definitions of Terms

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS): Refers to day-to-day social language skills.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP): Refers to language proficiency facilitating academic dialogue, also known as academic language.

Comic: Literature that is a thin booklet composed of paper, bound with staples.

Comics usually are published with multiple stories or in a series.

English Language Learners (ELL): Active learners of the English language who may benefit from various support programs. This term is mainly used in the U.S. to describe K-12 students. (National Council of Teachers of English 1)

Graphic Novel: Literature that is published in comic book form, using panels and dialogue bubbles. Graphic novels usually contain one story. Graphic novels may be hardcover or paperback. Graphic novels are a subset of the comic genre.

Multiliteracy: The ability to interpret texts that combine words, images, sound, and movement.

Nonstandard English: Found mostly in dialogue and reveals a cultural or regional dialect.

Research Design

To begin my research, I visited the James C. Kirkpatrick Library (JCKL) online and used the databases through remote access. I accessed *Academic Search Complete*; *Information Science and Library Issues Collections*; *Library Information Science and Technology Abstract*; and *Library Literature and Information Technology Full Text*. I then searched the JCKL catalog for books concerning ELLs, as well as graphic novels. I also visited the Mid-Continent Public Library Website. In all searches I used the following search terms: ELL, ELL graphic novel, ESL graphic novel, ELL literacy acquisition, graphic novel, and comic.

Graphic novels are a subset of the comic genre. Both terms will be used in this research. Comics and graphic novels both use graphics and text to tell a story. Both often feature popular characters that students identify with and are attracted to.

Summary

The population of school-age ELLs is growing at a rapid pace. In 2000-2001, over 4.5 million ELLs were enrolled in public schools. These students face many challenges to learning and language acquisition, such as pronunciation, verb tense, and cultural differences.

Dual immersion, early-exit, and late-exit are a few of the educational models used with these students. In dual immersion programs, students receive partial-day English instruction and partial day native language instruction. In

early-exit programs, students are immersed in their native language before being mainstreamed into completely English-speaking classrooms. Late-exit programs provide students with gradually-increasing amounts of English instruction.

This chapter introduces the research questions, vocabulary, and search process used to shape this study. The next chapter provides a review of the relevant literature. In the concluding chapter I will answer the research questions presented here using the materials reviewed in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

English Language Learners

Due to the ever-increasing number of English Language Learners (ELLs), it is vital to understand who ELLs are and the obstacles they face. In 2007, The National Center for Educational Statistics reported that there were over 11 million ELLs in the United States, with 7.3 million of these students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Over 7 million of these students are Hispanic; 1.7 million are White; 1.3 million are Asian; 450,000 are Black; and just under 100,000 are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or American Indian/Alaska Native. “Despite the diversity of this population, ELLs as a whole remain economically and educationally disadvantaged compared to their English-speaking counterparts. ELL students are more likely to live in a low-income household: in 2007, 66% of ELLs had a family income below 200% of the federal poverty level, compared to 37% of non-ELL youths” (American Youth Policy Forum 1). These students must acquire both social and academic language. Closing the gap in achievement between ELLs and native-speaking students is imperative. Time and support are necessities to shrink the gap. One tool that may bridge this gap is the comic. This chapter reviews the research literature related to these topics.

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” This adage is especially true when the words being read are printed in a language not understood or that is not a native language. Imagine being surrounded by sounds and text that do not match

the sounds and words heard and read internally. Imagine being confused and frustrated on a daily basis when attempting to perform basic tasks at school. This is what many English Language Learners face on a daily basis.

English Language Learners (ELLs) are considered to have limited English proficiency. These individuals have a native language other than English

Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments, the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or the opportunity to participate fully in society.

(Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education 1)

The number of ELLs has grown dramatically in the last 20 years. According to Anneka Kindler,

Between 1979 and 2008, the number of school-age children (children ages 5-17) who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 to 10.9 million, or from 9 to 21 percent of the population in this age range. An increase (from 18 to 21 percent) was also evident during the more recent period of 2000 through 2008. (1)

An aspect of teaching ELL students is to understand the differences in social and academic language acquisition. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are usually attained in about 2 years. These skills include the English required for verbal communication in social settings, such as on the

playground, in the hallway, or in other peer-group settings. Alternatively, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in English takes much longer to acquire. CALP is also known as academic language. "CALP refers to formal academic learning. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject area content material" (Haynes 1). CALP is related to the student's age of arrival in an English-speaking environment and previous educational background (literacy in first language and math skills, for example). Officials in the Springfield Public Schools, in Springfield, Massachusetts, state that a solid grasp of CALP is absolutely key to students' long-term success (1).

Students need time and support to become proficient in academic areas. CALP does not refer to the acquisition of vocabulary only. It also includes reasoning skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. It should not be assumed that non-native speakers who have attained a high degree of fluency and accuracy in everyday spoken English have the corresponding academic language proficiency. Mislabeling children who exhibit this disparity as having special educational needs can result in unneeded interventions when all they need is more time. The non-native speakers who have exited from the ELL program are still, in most cases, in the process of catching up with their native speaking peers (Shoebottom).

Comics and Graphic Novels

Comic books have been a part of popular culture since 1938 when Action Comics premiered and introduced the world to *Superman* (Ross). In his book,

Going Graphic: Comics at Work in the Multilingual Classroom, Stephen Cary lists four different types of materials under the heading of comics: cartoons, comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels (10-11). This paper will focus on comics and graphic novels. Comics usually are thin paper booklets, bound with staples. A graphic novel is a fiction or non-fiction piece of literature published in comic book form, in which words and pictures both play a vital role in narrating the story (although some graphic novels are wordless). Graphic novels are much thicker than comics and usually contain an entire story within their covers. These books have received a great deal of attention in the last few years. In 2006 alone, the sales of graphic novels amounted to \$350 million (MacDonald 1).

Many experts agree that graphic novels are resources that attract reluctant readers. "There is growing evidence that plenty of readers of graphic narratives become better readers in general, so comics and graphic novels can serve as a 'conduit to harder reading'" (Templer 1). Amy Schultz, a former fourth grade teacher, facilitator for the Buddy Teaching and Learning Center, freelance writer, and parent, describes how her son reads comics:

I see my younger son as he reads--first he carefully looks at each picture on the page, and then he goes back and deliberately works to sound out words, relying heavily on visual clues. When he gets stuck, sometimes he turns back a few pages to reference a prior event; at other times he asks his big brother for help. I observe a struggling reader, highly engaged by pictures and not threatened by too much text on a page, carry on a

confident conversation with an extremely fluent reader. As an educator, I am fascinated by what I see, and no longer am I a comic book snob (1).

According to Traci Gardner, contributing editor of the National Council of Teachers of English's *Inbox Blog*,

Graphic novels and comic books provide rich opportunities to explore multimodal literacy. They're anything but simple. The sophisticated relationships among images and words and layout encourage deep thinking and critical analysis. (1)

Graphic novels are visually appealing. Many are high interest with a low reading level, deal with current events and social issues, and cover diverse genres such as biography, historical fiction, fantasy, and science-fiction. Jacquelyn McTaggart, author of "Graphic Novels: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," states that because graphic novels contain story lines that are action packed and because they are so visual, they maintain students' interests (29). These attributes that appeal to reluctant readers also draw in ELL students, to whom reading plays a vital role in language acquisition. Justine Derrick states that teachers of ELL students can increase the amount of time students spend reading by introducing graphic novels:

Not only can they provide language learners with contextualized comprehensible input, they can also engage the learner and lead him or her to explore more graphic novels or books, magazines, newspapers, and other reading materials. (Derrick 1)

Graphic novels deal with the English language in a different way than traditional novels. While novels script the dialogue, graphic novels show how the actual dialogue can play out. Traditional novels and classroom texts have a dense amount of material containing few, if any, visual cues. Graphic novels, in contrast, use far fewer words and embed them in a visual context of pictures and symbols. They attract struggling readers instead of repel them. Stephen Cary feels that comics benefit many readers, including beginning readers, because of their reduced texts. Many students embrace comics because they are viewed as being more manageable than text-only literature (15-16).

Two resources that would benefit students in either program are the Websites Brian Boyd's *Grammarman* and William Zimmerman's *MakeBeliefsComix.com*. *Grammarman* contains many different comics, such as *Archie*, *Captain Spectre*, and even *Twilight*, which students can read online or download. There are parts-of-speech comics that allow students to learn about verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. The *Archie* comics allow students to read and listen to the comic. Once the students listen to the comic, there is a language lesson that discusses the vocabulary of that comic. Using William Zimmerman's *MakeBeliefsComix.com*, students can create their own comics in English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Latin, or Portuguese. Comics can be two to four panels using 20 characters, 16 thought or word bubbles, 25 objects, and 5 panel prompts. Tamara Kirson, the 2009 English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher of the Year, has seen much success through the use of *MakeBeliefsComix.com*. In a YouTube video posted by

MakeBeliefsComix.com, creator Bill Zimmerman, Kirson, and her students discuss these successes. Kirson has witnessed the writing skills of her students develop greatly. Through their newly acquired writing skills, students have been able to share personal experiences and express individual personalities.

Bringing Comics and Literacy Together

Students may benefit from the addition of comics and graphic novels to the curriculum. Murat Hismanoglu states, “The use of literature for both teaching basic language skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and language areas (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) is very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays” (53). He argues that teachers should consider using literature because literature is valuable authentic material for cultural and language enrichment and for personal involvement (54-55). Comics and graphic novels, with their limited vocabulary and appeal through popular culture, fit this recommendation. Comics can be used in read alouds to enhance and develop basic reading skills. Many graphic novels have cultural or political themes that can be used for classroom discussion. As seen through the use of *Makebeliefscomix.com*, teachers can also use comics to develop basic writing skills and enhance communication.

Gretchen Schwartz, teacher at Oklahoma State University, believes that “literacy educators can profit from the use of graphic novels in the classroom, especially for young adults” (“Graphic Novels for Multiple Literacies” 1). Schwarz gives many examples of how graphic novels can be used across the

curriculum. She suggests graphic novels can be used instead of textbooks to teach literary terms and techniques such as dialogue, to teach history and civics lessons, and as a simplified but effective introduction to subject matter (1).

Many ELL students come into a program with a much lower reading level than that of their grade or age peers (Thompson 3). This can be a large stressor for students who do not want to be criticized or ostracized by their peers. Two teachers collaborated on a unit for deaf students, who are considered ELLs, struggling with this issue. Darah Odelson and Linda Smetana teamed up in 2007 to teach a summer school course at a residential state school for deaf students. The school promotes American Sign Language (ASL) and the reading and writing of English. The summer school class was to be an English class for students in grades 9 through 12 who had not passed English during the regular school year. The women decided to focus on graphic novels, because

Like other English Language Learners (ELLs) they (Deaf students) must learn the language as they read and write; however, they must do so without receiving the support of oral interactions with family members and friends or hearing the sounds of spoken language. Because of the visual nature of Deaf students' learning, the idea of teaching literacy with graphic novels appealed to us. (Smetana et al. 228)

The teachers chose graphic novels such as *X-Men*, *American Born Chinese*, and *Invincible* to name a few. The class activities involved a short-lesson and discussions of the literature followed by an activity. Odelson and

Burns discovered that, while students were initially shy about sharing in class, they devoured the graphic novels that were available. They recommended books to one another. Students wrote responses to passages and discussions each day. At the end of the course they put together a proposal for a comic or graphic novel of their own. Many graphic novels were added to the library collection and English curriculum due to the success of this course.

One of the graphic novels added to the curriculum was *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. *Maus* was the winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. *Maus* introduces readers to Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, and his son, a cartoonist trying to come to terms with both his father and history.

In his article, "Critical Literacies and Graphic Novels for English-Language Learners: Teaching *Maus*," Chun makes a case for advocating the use of graphic novels to aid language pedagogy and learning as one way of implementing a multiliteracies approach that deepens reading engagement (Chun 144). "Multiliteracies, or multimedia literacy, includes *nontext writing*, such as new approaches to learning that place production technology in the hands of the learner" (Joy 1). Graphic novels highlight multiliteracy with the use of graphics and text to tell a story. Chun worked with another colleague, only referred to as Martha, to introduce *Maus* into a grade 9-12 ELL classroom. They found that students were much more engaged with *Maus* than with traditional textbooks. Martha read aloud to the students, and she found the students discussing some of the nonstandard English used in the text. Broken English was familiar to most and

represented a real way of talking. Chun touches on a positive outcome stemming from the introduction of graphic novels. Many of the ELL students found themselves branching out socially as they discovered other students who were interested in graphic novels.

Studying graphic novels and focusing on literacy skills is not just for the high school set. Jason Ranker, a professor at Portland State University in Oregon, conducted a study in a first-grade ELL classroom, documented in the article, "Using Comic Books as Read-Alouds: Insights on Reading Instruction from an English as a Second Language Classroom." The students in the first grade classroom were bilingual, most with Spanish as their primary language. The teacher used comics in read-alouds in order to teach basic story elements. In one instance she used a *Spiderman* comic to teach conflict resolution. Storm, a regular in the *X-Men* series of comics, was making a guest appearance. She saw a helicopter having trouble, and she used the wind (one of her mutant powers is controlling the weather) to steady and save the helicopter. The teacher created the following dialogue with students to help them discover the problem and identify the solution:

Ms. Stephens: So we figured out the problem. What was the problem?

Carlos?

Carlos: That plane was going down.

Ms. Stephens: OK, so the helicopter was going to fall down and crash.

How did that problem get fixed?

Carlos: Storm helped them.

Ms. Stephens: OK, so Storm saved them. How?

Carlos: She told the person to come down because she already had them.

Ms. Stephens: That's right. She held them up with the wind so they could go down to the helipad. (Ranker 298)

At the end of the lesson, Ms. Stephens invited students to use the story element in their own writing. One student wrote about a time when her brother threatened to throw her into a pool. A friend told her brother to stop, and their father came and caught the girl. Through this simple exchange, students were able to identify a problem, solution, and apply the newfound knowledge. These studies support the assertion that graphic novels and comics can increase literacy in ELLs.

Summary

English Language Learners are considered to have limited English proficiency, and their population has grown dramatically in the last 20 years. Formal academic language, as well as social language, must be obtained by these students. Time and support must be given in order for ELLs to become proficient in these areas. Due to the extra time needed, many ELLs are sometimes years behind their native speaking peers. One literary tool that may help bridge this gap is the comic.

Comics are thin paper books, bound with staples. They contain multiple stories and are often part of a series. Graphic novels, which are a subset of the comic genre, are thicker than comics and contain an entire story within their

covers. In both comics and graphic novels, words and pictures play a vital role in telling the story. Comic books have been a part of popular culture since the 1930s, but it has only been within the last few years that comics and graphic novels have gained attention for academic use.

Many experts agree that comics attract reluctant readers and can lead to reading at a higher level. Many graphic novels are high interest with low reading levels, cover diverse genres such as biographies, and cover current events and social issues. While these attributes attract avid and reluctant readers alike, they are especially important for ELLs to whom reading plays a vital role in language acquisition. Comics can be used to teach parts of speech, social situations, historical events, and more.

CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As millions of English Language Learners enter classrooms, they are faced with many challenges. These challenges can seriously affect learning and language acquisition. Pronunciation, gender roles, and culture can all discourage language development and acquisition.

Many in the field of literacy have acknowledged the comic to have important literary benefits. Comics not only attract reluctant readers, but they are being used to teach advanced themes in literature and visual literacy. With their bright colors and popular characters, comics are more appealing than traditional texts without sacrificing plot or vocabulary. For these reasons, the comic might play a vital role in language acquisition.

What Challenges do ELLs Face?

English Language Learners have many challenges each day in the mainstream classroom, pronunciation being one of the greatest. The English language has no set rules for what sound each letter represents. The letter *a* has three different pronunciations alone. Verb tense can also hinder language acquisition. Spanish has four complex verb tenses compared with three tenses—past, present, and future—in English.

ELLs must learn social language, also known as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). This is the everyday language used and includes regional dialect and slang. Academic language, also known as Cognitive

Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), must also be learned. CALP includes vocabulary and reasoning skills such as comparing, evaluating, and inferring. This must be done while making up for lost time in language acquisition.

How Do Comics Help Literacy?

Comics have been around for decades, but teachers and school librarians are now seeing an influx in their use in educational settings. Many experts see comics and graphic novels as a gateway for reluctant or struggling readers. Many readers begin with comics and move on to harder reading. Incorporating text and visuals causes readers to examine the relationship between the two and encourages deep thinking and critical thinking.

Comics and graphic novels have many attributes that cause them to be appealing. Comics have reduced text, which attracts reluctant readers. They also have bright colors and popular characters that interest readers and keep their attention.

How Can Comics Benefit English Language Learners?

Justine Derrick, author of *Using Comics with ESL/EFL Students*, states that graphic novels can lead students into exploring books, magazines, and other reading materials. Teachers using graphic novels in class are finding students eager to read, recommending books to one another, and creating comics of their own. They have also seen students branching out socially as a result of discussion groups centered on comics and graphic novels.

Many ELLs are reluctant readers because traditional texts seem overwhelming. Through the aforementioned literature, a strong case can be made for including comics in the ELL classroom. Comics have visual appeal, less text, and some familiar characters that will draw students in. Looking beyond the initial appeal, comics can increase literacy and language acquisition.

Recommendations

In 2000-2001, almost 10% of students in the United States were English Language Learners (ELLs). As the number of school-aged ELLs grows, it is imperative that these students are supported in their goal of second language acquisition. Educators must be sensitive to cultural differences as these students enter classrooms. Time and support are necessities in this process. Comics and graphic novels have been shown, through research, to be an effective tool in increasing literacy and language acquisition. Graphic novels are high interest with a low reading level, deal with current events and social issues, and cover diverse genres such as biography, historical fiction, fantasy, and science fiction. With limited dialogue and bold, attractive visuals, graphic novels are much less threatening than traditional novels. For these reasons, graphic novels and comics would be an excellent addition to any classroom or library collection.

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