



TEAM *of* ART

HOW TO USE COMIC BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM/WORKSHOP

General Objective

This practical sheet aims to discover the environment of comics. This form of art can be a way for people living with a disability to discover another way to express themselves, to learn, to enjoy themselves or simply to understand the world around them in a more playful way.

In this practical sheet, you will:

- ✓ Learn more about what comics are,
- ✓ Learn more about how to approach comics with people with learning disabilities,
- ✓ Learn more about how to adapt practical activities, in a comic book workshop, for people with disabilities.

What you'll need:

Comic book related items: comic book, blank comic book board (with drawings and bubbles)

Stationery: coloured pencils, markers, pens.

Computer: photocopier, computer with internet connection.



Challenges and issues

For our society to be more inclusive, differences must be highlighted, and they need to become a part of the societal norm. Furthermore, it is important to differentiate between the accessibility of buildings and the accessibility of textbooks, educational pathways and works of art. An inclusive society requires a rethinking of the way we work and think.

This is up to today's date a challenge in many educational fields. Out of the box thinking and a new way of thinking is required to make the society more inclusive.

Using comic books in a classroom and/or a workshop can stimulate creativity, imagination, and new ways of thinking, but it also can be a method for creating a safe space of participants to open up about their emotions and thoughts. There are many ways to stimulate participants to be creative. In this practical sheet we discuss the use of comic books in a disability friendly classroom / workshop.

Background:

The comic strip is a sequential narrative (comic or comic strip in short) considered as the "ninth art". The story (comic or realistic) is told through a succession of images and text in boxes. Comics are called "manga". in Japan and "comics". in the United States. In Europe, comics first became known in Belgium and France. Nowadays, comic strip authors can be found all over Europe.



Key dates

- 20th century

The Swiss Rodolphe Töpffer created the first texts associated with images. But it is in the United States of America that the first official publication in newspapers took place. Also the appearance of the 1st comics, in France, in newspapers for children happened. An example of a French comic strip: Bécassine (name of its heroine); Les pieds nickelés (Beginning of the 20th century)

Later, the comic strip was popularised around the world. It should be noted that the first comics were rather intended for a young public. Over the years, the comic book market also gained an older audience around the 1930's. There was a difference in the content between the countries. In the United States, the Comics tell adventures of superheroes. In Belgium, Hergé (designer of the Adventures of Tintin) invents a new style "the clear line". Represents a graphic style, it is characterized by a black ink line on the outline of the drawings.

In the 1960's we note the appearance of manga, Japanese comics and around 1974 we note the launch of the most important festival around comics in Europe - the International Comics Festival of Angoulême - France. The comic strip was finally recognized as 9th art.

Nowadays, the European comics market faces some barriers such as languages, diversity of media (hardback, small formats, short issues) and cultural specificities. Furthermore, nowadays this type of art is inclusive also to people with disabilities as currently companies are making, for example, comics for the visually impaired and blind.



The anatomy of the comic strip

The plate: Represents a page of the comic strip on which there are several boxes, often arranged on several strips. A comic strip is composed of several plates.

The strip: Represents one or several lines of images. These images are called vignettes or boxes.

The box or vignettes: Represents a box in which the images are located. There are different widths of boxes depending on the image and the text.

The speech bubble: Contains the thoughts or words of the characters.

The appendix: Allows you to identify the person who is speaking.

Cartouches: Represents a rectangle inside a vignette that provides additional information about the story or the characters.

Anomatopoeias: Represent words that imitate sounds. Example: Boom, poof, bing, etc.



Tips :

- Comics are read from left to right except for manga. The story is told with words but also through pictures. Note that there are also silent comics, the story is told through the drawings only.
- The size of the rectangle makes it possible to distinguish between a vignette and a cartouche. The rectangle of the cartouche is generally larger.
- To know if a character is speaking or thinking, it is useful to observe the shape of the speech bubble. When the character is talking, the bubble is pointed, when they is thinking, small circles appear.



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Adaptation

Learning disabilities are part of the so-called "invisible" disabilities, so people with learning disabilities are often sidelined and misunderstood. Art can be the cornerstone between these "two worlds" (the able-bodied and the disabled). Art-related activities have many virtues such as breaking isolation, social involvement, developing creativity, self-confidence and fine motor skills.

The arts as a vector of social cohesion, stimulator of critical sense, activator of creativity, therapy, transmitter of knowledge, tool of communication and discovery.

Comics as a pedagogical tool



In the field of art, there is no right or wrong answer. Art in general, can be a way to pass a message, to make live an emotion or to transmit a knowledge to make or a knowledge to be. The use of comics as a teaching aid can be the starting point for learning in

various disciplines. The transposition can be done, for example, when learning reading, visual arts or learning a foreign language. Furthermore, for learners with reading difficulties, it is a good alternative to practice reading in a more engaging way.

-Visual art

Visual art includes the traditional plastic arts, applied art, decorative art, photography, comics, drawing, cinema, digital art and video, etc. These are arts that produce objects perceived essentially by the eye. Classical learning often relies on our auditory sense to the detriment of the other senses. Including the use of drawing, images, diagrams in the learning process allows us to appeal to visual stimuli. Drawing can be a good way to popularize complex subjects or simply to help people with a learning disability to better understand.

-Therapeutic approach to spontaneous drawing

Drawing: "Representation of objects on a surface using graphic tools (pencil, brush...)."

The drawing can tell a story, symbolize a feeling, translate a perception or emotions. Drawing brings a sense of calm, helps concentration, develops creativity and sharpens the imagination. The act of creation is liberating and contributes to self-acceptance.



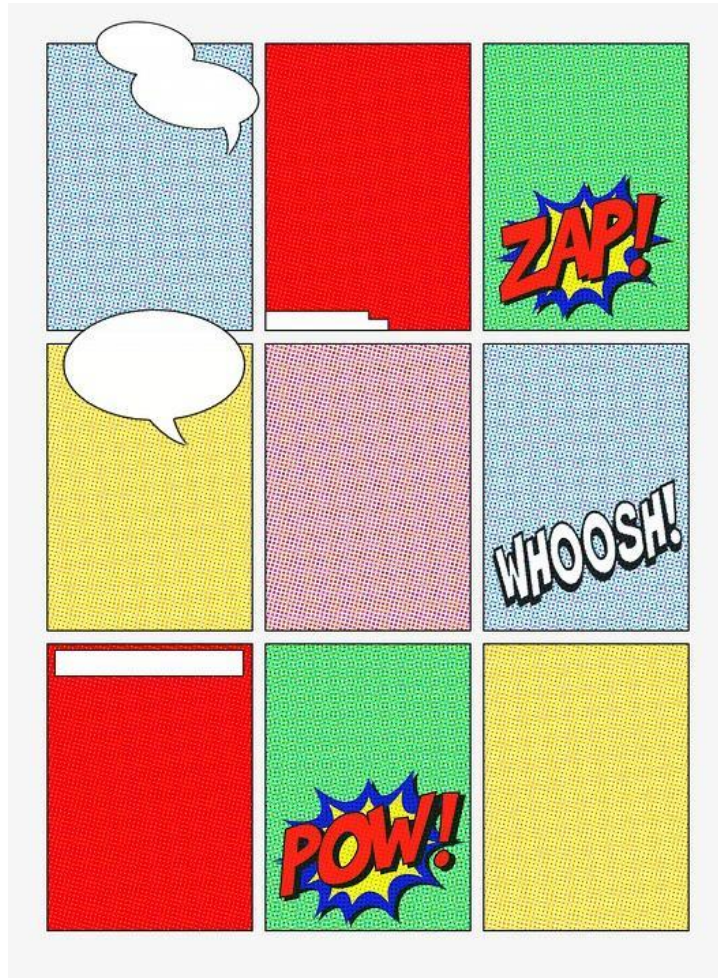
Practical examples and inspiration

Below are examples of simple activities that you can implement in a classroom or during a workshop with learners with learning disabilities. It is advisable to do all these activities in small groups of 3 to 5 people.

Activity 1 - Reconstruction of a comic book

This activity allows to develop skills on team spirit and mutual aid. It can also help people, who are socially withdrawn, to participate in exchanges with others in a playful way.

Provide the learners with the texts and pictures. This activity consists of associating the right text with the right image and thus reconstructing a comic strip. For people with learning disabilities, it is important to write down the instructions and to remind them orally. This activity can be done collectively in small groups of 3.



Activity 2 - Themed reading activity around the comic strip.

Inserting media within the learning process can allow learners to identify with the characters and thus better interact with their environment.

Set up a reading workshop around a theme. During this activity, the comic book is read aloud by the facilitator. The learners are in active listening mode,

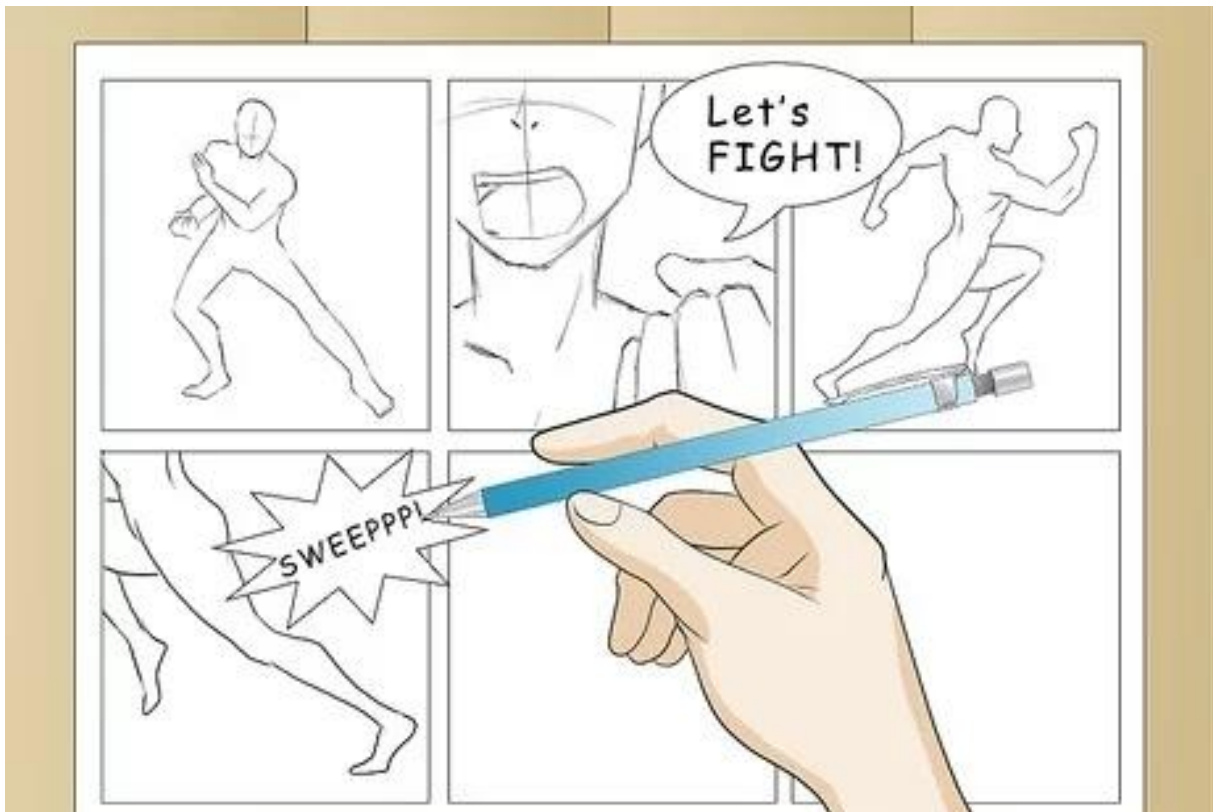
interaction is possible. Note that it is important that the images of the comic book are seen by the learners.

Activity 3 - Making up a story from comic book pictures.



This activity will encourage creativity and imagination.

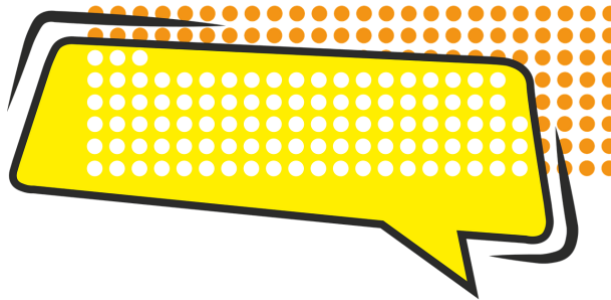
Give the learners a comic strip containing only drawings. The purpose of this activity is to invent a story in comic book form from pictures. In this activity, the learners will let their imagination run wild. It would be interesting to show the work of the learners in order to discover the creative universe of each one.



Activity 4 - Creating a comic book

This activity can be a good exercise to work on the self-esteem, the self-image, the acceptance of the difference and also on the perception that we have of the other. Ending this activity with a short oral presentation to the group can help to improve public speaking (for people with social anxiety for example).

Provide learners with blank comic strips and pens, coloured pencils and markers. The purpose of this activity is to create their own comic book. Ask learners to draw themselves as they see themselves with or without text by filling in the different boxes in the comic. It would also be interesting to do an oral presentation to the group in turn.



Activity 5 - Creation of vignettes

The comic book as a tool for awareness, prevention, transmission of information, learning and "reading pleasure".

This exercise can help to develop drawing skills, to associate a word or a sentence with a picture and to improve active listening skills (for people with attention deficit disorders for example).

Provide learners with blank comic strips, pens, markers and coloured pencils.

Before starting this activity, explain the vocabulary (by offering illustrations for example) specific to comics. For this activity, the word to be explained is the term: *Vignette* which means an area of drawing delimited by a frame.

The goal of this exercise is to retranscribe a story (read aloud by the facilitator) in the form of a vignette. Note that the reading should be done slowly and repeatedly as needed.

Additional resources

- What Comics Can Do for Your Child's Education.

This resource will help you learn more about the importance of comics in children's education.

[https://medium.com/publiclibrarysg/what-comics-can-do-for-your-
childs-education-3aea597bd93](https://medium.com/publiclibrarysg/what-comics-can-do-for-your-childs-education-3aea597bd93)

- Teachers Guide to The Use Comic Strips in class: Some Helpful Tools and Resources.

This resource will help you learn more about using comics in the classroom with students at different levels.

<https://www.educatorstechnology.com/2018/01/teachers-guide-to-use-of-comic-strips.html>

