

## Learning Activity: Graphic Text Composition

Learning Activity Goal: Compose a comic for a specific instructional purpose of your choice.

### Instructions:

Graphic novels and comics can help students expand their visual literacy skills through a combination of reading, interpreting, applying theory, decoding, and encoding as well as re-appropriating themes. For example, a difficult short story such as Gabriel García Márquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" requires quite a bit of organized thinking on the student's part. Multiple themes in the story interlace and challenge the reader on many levels. In order to understand the story better, a student might select one theme, literary element, or a major symbol pattern in the story and then portray it through a simple comic. Emphasizing one part of the story helps distill a meaningful idea or concept for deeper analysis. When working with drama, graphic texts can be quite useful for students to focus on language and meaning. For example, Shakespearian plays are often retold in modern English and urban settings to help students relate to stories. Students might even "translate" a part of a play into a graphic text in order to work closely with the language. Of course, the fandom associated with popular graphic series promotes writing and visual art development.

Language and visual arts, however, do not have to dominate our use of graphic texts. These versatile visuals can also be used as a refreshing way to give instructions, explain a scientific or social concept, or as shown in the Comic Book Project, they can be used to raise social awareness, invite tolerance, and build community. Graphic texts can also be used as advertising, as you might have noticed when you saw the flyer for this course.

Now you will have an opportunity to create a Pixton comic for any instructional purpose you choose. You will be sent an invitation to our class Pixton account, so please sign up once you receive the invitation. If you do not receive an invitation, please let your instructor know. Instructional videos are available on the Pixton workspace.

1. Select an instructional purpose that you might actually use. (Classroom rules, advertisement, simple procedure, concept illustration, process explanation)
2. Rough out the story in an outline or storyboard.
3. Follow the **NEW** Pixton Sign-Up and Technical Instructions attached separately.
4. Use an appropriate mixture of characters, props, backgrounds, speech bubbles and so on.

5. Referring to the Shulevitz chapters and other class readings, make careful use of sequence, readability, pace, clear progression, the “unexpected,” objective, action, and other important elements.
6. Additionally, try some “cartooning” techniques such as zooming in on a character, using different fonts, and different panel sizes.
7. Write a 300 to 500 word reflection on the process and how you might adapt it for your own learning environment.
8. Upload the link and post your reflection to the assignment link in Blackboard.

**Learning Activity Grading Criteria:** Most Learning Activities have the same grading criteria with levels at proficient, competent, and novice. The rubrics are embedded in the Blackboard grading system, so make sure to click on “rubric” when reviewing your grades.

### Proficient

- The project is a stellar example of the related course concepts, clearly demonstrating the concepts through thoughtful arrangement and planning. The project could serve as an exemplar for the learning objective.
- The reflection is at least 300 words, elegantly styled, and adds insight to the issues provided in the activity description and related topics.
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### Competent

- The project demonstrates critical thinking, thoughtful display of related course concepts, and achieves the learning objective.
- The reflection is at least 300 words, well-written, and explores the issues provided in the activity description.
- The project is free of punctuation, grammar, spelling, and usage errors. The project is correctly uploaded/submitted.

### Novice

- The project demonstrates some understanding of the related course concepts, although one or more ideas might not be clearly demonstrated. The project achieves the learning objective.
- The reflection is at least 300 words, written in a style appropriate for a graduate-level course, and begins exploring the issues provided in the activity description.
- Although a few errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, usage, or submission appear, they do not detract from clarity of the project or the reflection.