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## Empirical Drawings: Utilizing Comic Essays in the Social Studies Classroom to Teach Citizenship

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## Empirical Drawings: Utilizing Comic Essays in the Social Studies Classroom to Teach Citizenship

### Cover Page Footnote

I would like to acknowledge my students who allowed me to use their comics: Katie Tennant, Christina Schell, Zachary Williams, and Collen Gill. I obtained permission from these students and they are all acknowledged in the paper.

## *Empirical Drawings: Utilizing Comic Essays in the Social Studies Classroom to Teach Citizenship*

The purpose of this paper is to show how the comic's medium may be a powerful tool for secondary social studies teachers, as well as those who prepare social studies teachers, to utilize in their classrooms with regard to citizenship education. Specifically, this paper presents an assignment which has students draw a comic essay instead of writing a traditional essay paper. This article also presents some ideas in comic format. I have written this article mainly for secondary K-12 social studies educators and college educators. I am a college professor and I assign a number of comic's assignments in my classes and I have included some of those examples in this paper to guide practitioners.

### **Context**

It goes without saying that essay assignments are important aspects for instruction in social studies education. While all essay assignments vary, students generally must create a defensible historical claim, back this claim up with evidence and cite other thinkers in this process. The essay allows students a voice, puts them in conversation with those that came before, it allows them to weigh and analyze evidence and ultimately create an original thought. In the widest sense, I believe this process to be the bedrock of good thinking and the type of thinking required of citizens living in a republic.

Of course, the republic that American students inhabit, students who are "citizens-in-the-making" (Leahy, 2014, 52) is a volatile one, rife with 24/7 internet connectivity, social media, sound bite news and propaganda to name a few things which can hinder or complicate meaning making, understanding and common discourse (Kincheloe, 2001; Drew, Lyons & Svehla, 2010, Runciman, 2018). So, does the essay model described in the previous paragraph really hold up anymore? Is that model of truth telling and meaning making outdated in an era when politicians and pundits rely on fake news, memes, sensationalism and appeals to emotion? Americans and citizens across the globe in various political systems may now increasingly find themselves asking what is true and experiencing a type of anxiety regarding this question. In short- it is hard to know what to believe, and the obstacles involved in finding, verifying and believing a truth may turn some off to the process and in more sinister cases, may be a method to manipulate and fear monger (Duncombe, 2019; Illig, 2020; Roberts, 2019).

While I have referred to this state of affairs in a largely negative light, I think there is an opportunity for secondary social studies teachers to re-think their pedagogy and how they approach citizenship education. Social studies education has at its heart the fostering of citizenship. The definition of citizenship however varies from more conservative formulations which prize the transmission of facts and heritage to more progressive notions which inculcate a sense of questioning and criticism in students, and which encourage students to diagnose and remedy situations of social injustice (Ross, 2014; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). I am a proponent of the latter. Citizenship, at least for this paper, means attention to injustice and vulnerable populations and the creation of a better life and society for ourselves and posterity through nonviolent means and deliberation. And now citizenship must be considered in the volatile environment described above. Democracy and citizenship are dynamic entities, they evolve (Dewey, 1939; Parker, 1996; Vinson, 2012), and as a result, pedagogical methods for those that teach citizenship must evolve as well. That is the overall purpose of this paper, to showcase a new method to teach citizenship in high school social studies classrooms.

Drawing off the sentiments above, one way in which democracy continually changes is with regard to the notion of truth. Duncombe (2019) argues that progressives need to tell a better truth. Progressives must utilize signs, symbols and stories to tell the truth. To be sure, Duncombe (2019) does not posit that there is one verifiable truth “out there” which we must find. There is a reality and a true state of affairs, but this reality must be “refracted through the imagination” (20). In order to truly create powerful political messages that resonate, we must appeal to people’s hopes and dreams (Duncombe, 2019). Of course, this form of truth telling is not meant to be fantasy or propaganda. The Nazi’s provide the most ominous example of this practice. They propagated their version of the “truth” with symbols and propaganda. And today, as noted earlier, we see a number of questionable entities peddling all sorts of “truths.” Rather, what we need is a better form of truth which can inspire people. Those who engage in this form of truth telling must base their ideas on reality, but they must go past the real and create a dream which inspires people to act (Duncombe, 2019).

### **Utilizing the Comic’s Medium**

The comic’s medium gives students a number of tools at their disposal to create and convey new types of messages and write new types of essays in the volatile political environment we find ourselves in. For one thing, the creation of nonlinguistic representations of material has been demonstrated to be an effective pedagogical practice (Kolk, 2020). Similarly, the creation of comic’s can aid students in understanding how to structure nuanced messages that incorporate linguistic and imagistic elements. Kolk (2020) goes one to note: “When creating comics, students learn to guide their readers’ thoughts and feelings with pictures and dialogue, building more sophisticated communication skills that will help them as they work on debate and persuasive writing projects.” Moreover, Kolk (2020) calls attention to need for inference between panels, which forces students to think about context to guide the readers. This notion of inference between panels aligns with McCloud’s (1994) well known ideas of closure. Students must think about what they do not draw and what they leave to the reader’s imagination and how this affects their messaging.

The use of the comic’s medium is especially adept for the purposes of studying history. Santos (2019) argues that the use of graphic novels in historical study calls attention to “history as an editorial and curative process.” Similarly, Getz and Clark (2016) note that history is a process of interpretation, and further, that the graphic novel form allows for historians to attempt to visually represent past times. In short, the creation of a comic essay allows students to get their hands dirty with the historical process. Chilcoat (1993, 2), who had his students create a comic to grapple with the events of the civil rights movement argues that: “The comic book allows students to take verbal-linear-analytical information from various primary and secondary sources and, through a visual-aesthetic-creative means, construct this information into personal interpretations and conclusions.” Cromer and Clark (2007, 583) note that “graphic novels that are rich and multilayered are one means to appreciate the complexity of history.” History is not linear, it is a complex entity (Kincheloe, 2001) and having students create a comic essay can allow students to see complexity first hand. And it is for these reasons that I believe that the comic’s medium can help students- citizens- tell a new type of truth, a more powerful truth that resonates. Students can use the comic’s medium to create new historical narratives and question and disturb the status quo- which aligns with the progressive vision of citizenship laid out earlier. The comic’s medium may also be attuned to Duncombe’s (2019) notion of truth. Throughout this article I will examine how specific features of the comic’s medium, such as paneling and character placement, to name a few items, can be utilized for the purposes of citizenship and

historical thinking.

One of the most important components to this assignment, and really any student created comic, is that a comic allows for many different interpretations- even interpretations that the creators did not intend. This is because readers bring their own ideas and experiences to the comic page and these things interact with what is on the page (Duncan, 2012; Duncan et al., 2015). With that said, I brought my own ideas and interpretations when I analyzed my student's creations. Of course I spoke with them about their pages, and we discussed as a class and on online discussion boards, but ultimately, the interpretations put forth here are my own. And this is important in a wider sense. As citizens, we come together to discuss history and current events, and our own experiences influence how we perceive and what we believe and how we remember. And from these varied viewpoints, we have try to arrive at some compromise. So, analyzing comics may help students (and instructors!) become comfortable with varying interpretations which is crucial to functioning in a republic.

Up to now, I have set forth my arguments in a traditional format- even as I argue for non-traditional methods. So, to practice what I preach, the next portion of this essay utilizes the comic's form to convey some of the ideas above. As Kelley (2010, 6) has argued, art is not simply an "adjunct" to text, art is powerful and has its own meanings. As such art can be yoked to text (Duncan et al, 2015; McCloud, 1994; 2006) to create powerful statements which could not be said with art or text alone. Further, this potential can be put toward a progressive type of citizenship which appeals to people's hopes and dreams. The following comic pages I think leave the reader with more to ponder, more than my words might. As a scholar-artist I have created a graphic novel titled *Toward the Real*. This is a fictional graphic novel but in it I grapple with a number of issues present in this article such as communication beyond written and spoken language and move toward a vision of communication that embodies symbols and images as well. It is some of those pages that are supplied below.

Figure 1. Toward the Real, page 7. On this page, the protagonist, named Rita, receives training in how to communicate in images. She is reluctant at first but then masters this skill. Here, I tried to show an onslaught of images to overwhelm the reader. I started the page with a traditional format, three standard panels across, and then moved to a much more non-traditional sequence to jar the reader.



Figure 2. Toward the Real Page 13. On this page, Rita uses her new found power to overwhelm her captor. Again I follow a similar pattern by starting with a traditional panel sequence. On this page, I also tried to show Rita as small and seemingly intimidated by her captor- until she unleashes the image speak on him. Since he cannot understand this mode of communication, he breaks.



Figure 3. Toward the Real Page 14. Rita further subdues her captor. Here I use a well-known symbol of justice, as well as a symbol of Bentham's panopticon and a mannequin. In the bottom portion of the page Rita is also outside and beyond the panels. This is an example of how an artist can blend content and form to convey new messages.





## Drawing the Essay

First and foremost, the writing of a credible and defensible claim is paramount. Booth and colleagues (2008) offer an excellent examination on the facets of research in their work *The Craft of Research*. Booth and colleagues note that researchers must produce a claim, reasons for the claim and evidence to support all of this. Further, good researchers must also anticipate possible criticisms of their claim and how they will respond. So, the first step in creating a comic essay may be for students to create a claim, state reasons and evidence for it, as well as anticipate arguments to that claim. The creation of a claim and its defense also aligns with good citizenship. Citizens must be able to argue and debate their claims with evidence (Cohen, Pickeral & Levine, 2010; College, Career and Civic C3 Framework, n.d). The specifics of this process may vary and depend on the instructor and the course. I assign a large comic assignment, similar to the comic essay put forth in this paper, toward the end of my History of American Education course taught to undergraduates, so students must draw on the ideas we have been discussing for a semester. I also set aside time to work with them and allow them to develop their own ideas based on this material. Teachers will presumably need to provide some time for discovery and brainstorming and really just allow students a familiarity with the material they wish students to utilize in the essay.

So now students have a claim they can reasonably defend. The next step in a traditional essay might be to have students create an outline where they detail how exactly they will defend this claim. In a comic essay, students can start to think of this claim as a story and how it might look visually. Once the student has a thesis, there are a few ways students can begin to turn this into a comic. Of course, these methods are not exhaustive and I encourage teachers to think of other methods. One method is more episodic and abstract. So, let's say a student has created this claim: *The common school movement, despite many advocates belief in its use to "Americanize" the increasing numbers of Irish immigrants, ultimately allowed immigrants and the poor, at least over time, a method of emancipation, this is because the schools, however imperfect and classist, laid the foundation for universal education in the United States.* Students could first begin to break this claim down into episodes and think of what they would draw/show to back it up. This can be a fecund opportunity for students to truly get their hands dirty with the events and analyze their situation to decide what they should illustrate. So, for our above example, students may want to draw Horace Mann and some of the well-known common school movement reformers and they may want to draw something related to Irish immigration as well as what they see as the more emancipatory elements of the common school. In addition, students should also be encouraged to show something related to any anticipated counterarguments to their claim. The length of the final assignment is also a pertinent variable here.

History can read like a story however (Chapin, 2015). As such, students can turn their claim in to a story. Here, the student can create a story which follows closely to recorded history, or, students can be more imaginative and incorporate elements of historical fictions. I personally opt for the latter formulation because I want students using imaginative elements and bringing their own ideas to the assignment. Potts (2013) and Abel and Madden (2008) talk about the notion of a story or narrative arc, where something disrupts the normal situation of the protagonist and the protagonist must then go on some type of quest and rectify the situation. Again, a one-on-one conversation between teacher and student is probably a necessity at this point as some students may be lost. I always try to build in some one-on-one time for this purpose, and during this time I love to prod students and hear their ideas as they brainstorm. So,

could Horace Mann or some type of character like him be the protagonist who must face obstacles and to put the common school on the map? Or maybe the student could create a truly fictional protagonist who is a child who wants to attend a common school and must face a number of obstacles such as others who seek to deny him or her. These ideas can all be fodder for a story or narrative arc.

At this stage, it is important to stress to students that their comic essays must be empirical, their essays must be created from the facts, ideas and theories they have read about (Barone & Eisner, 2011). Again, I think this aligns with the premise of this paper and the notions of citizenship sketched out earlier. These facts, ideas and theories however are creatively re-imagined into a new visual creation, the comic book. There should be an emphasis throughout the assignment on weaving historical information into the comic and making sure to highlight this information but at the same time encouraging student's imaginations. In keeping with the idea of an empirical comic essay, it might be good practice to assign an annotated bibliography. Students must cite the works that inspired them and help them create the comic. While I would not have students cite the actual works in the comic, the annotated bibliography can allow them to explain how the source inspired them. Further, when creating comics, influences may be more indirect (Sousanis, 2015b). Students can use the annotated bibliography to trace their more direct influences as well. I would also encourage the use of some non-scholarly sources, such as movies, because students are utilizing more fictional elements. Of course, scholarly sources should make up the bulk of the bibliography.

Again, if we follow Duncombe (2019) and posit that we need stories to help tell the truth, teachers can help their students think of history as a story and turn these empirical facts into elements of their plot which addresses citizenship concerns. This prospect is at the heart of this assignment. Below are some examples from my work *Toward the Real*. These pages serve as examples of empirical drawings. I took facts and ideas and wove them into my own creations. However, I did not use the comic's form to simply present these facts in visual form. Rather, I went a step further and used these facts and ideas to create my own ideas and interpretations. This might not be something teachers encourage their students to do- teachers might want students to follow closely to the facts which is fine. I provide these examples to simply show the potential of the comic's medium.

Figure 4. In these two pages, I took a well-known idea from Buddhism, the notion that all life is connected (Moore, 2016), and used it to build on my own ideas of interconnectedness. The first page looks at our connections with the mundane things of our lives, while the second page examines our connections with other humans. Rita, the protagonist, sits meditating in the centers of both pages. I tried to use non-standard layouts, such as odd shaped frames and concentric circles for effect. The odd shaped panels help call attention to these mundane things while the concentric circles foster a sense of connection.



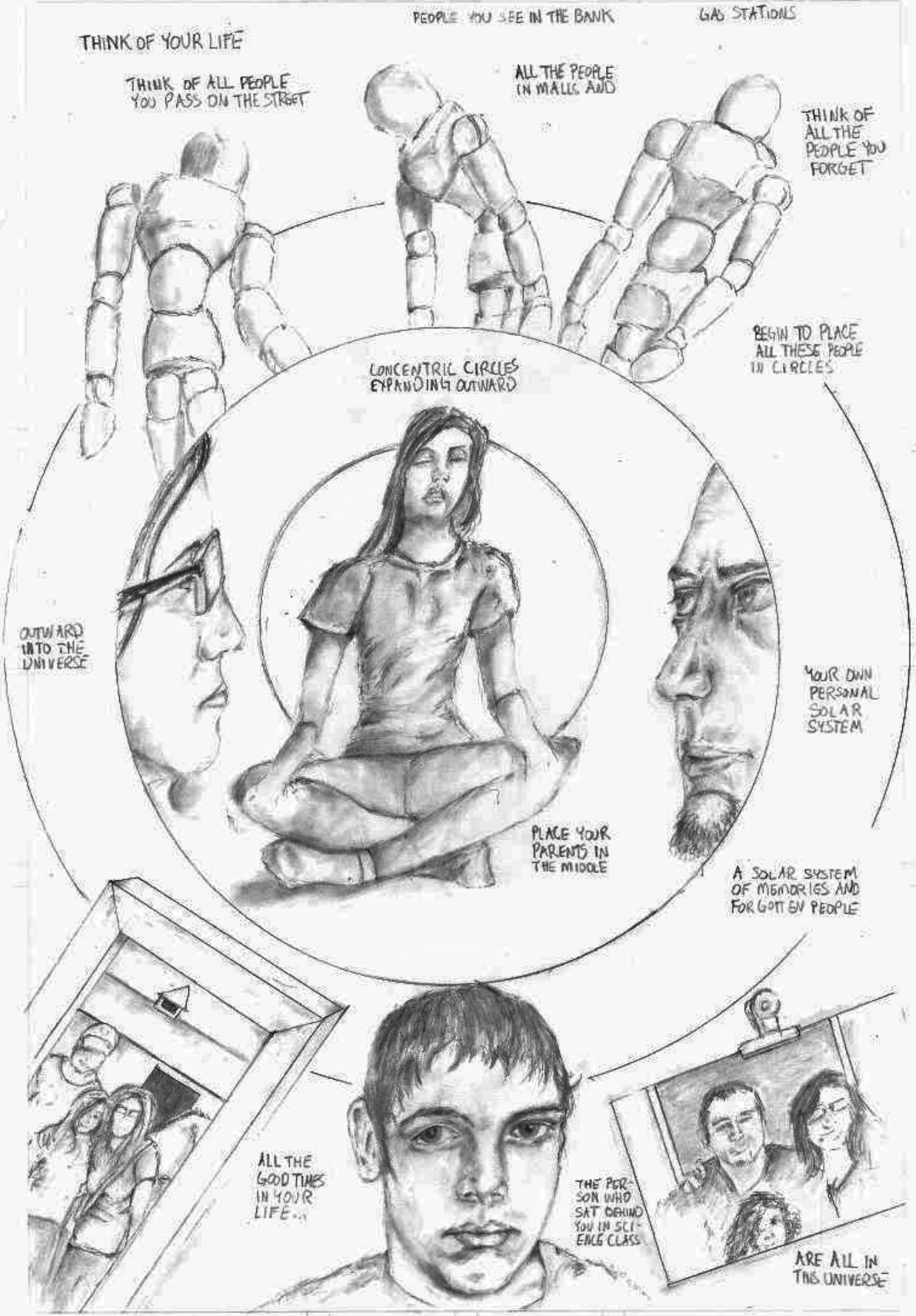


Figure 5. *Toward the Real*. This page touches on a number of thinkers from Rousseau, Baudrillard and the poet William Blake. Rousseau's well known opening in *The Social Contract* is paraphrased and his notion of chains is evoked. While not mentioned by name or quoted, the page centers on the French postmodernist thinker Jean Baudrillard and his ideas about representation. Finally, I invoke the ideas of 18<sup>th</sup> century poet William Blake and graft them to Baudrillard's ideas- calling for representation to embody infinite connections. These ideas are not fully explained but they are not supposed to be. We see literal chains from name to thing being snapped. Rather, I wanted to leave the reader with something to ponder.

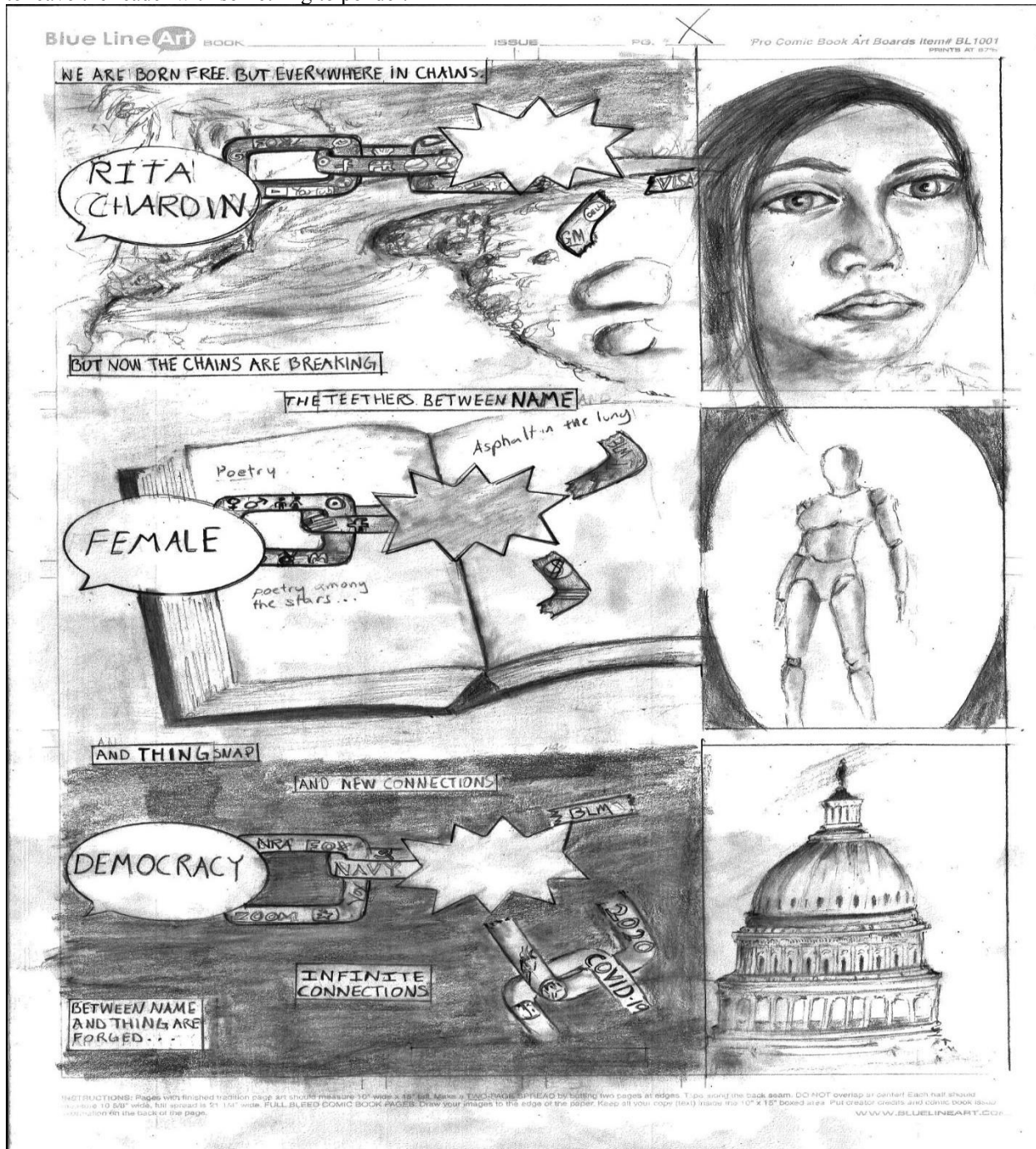
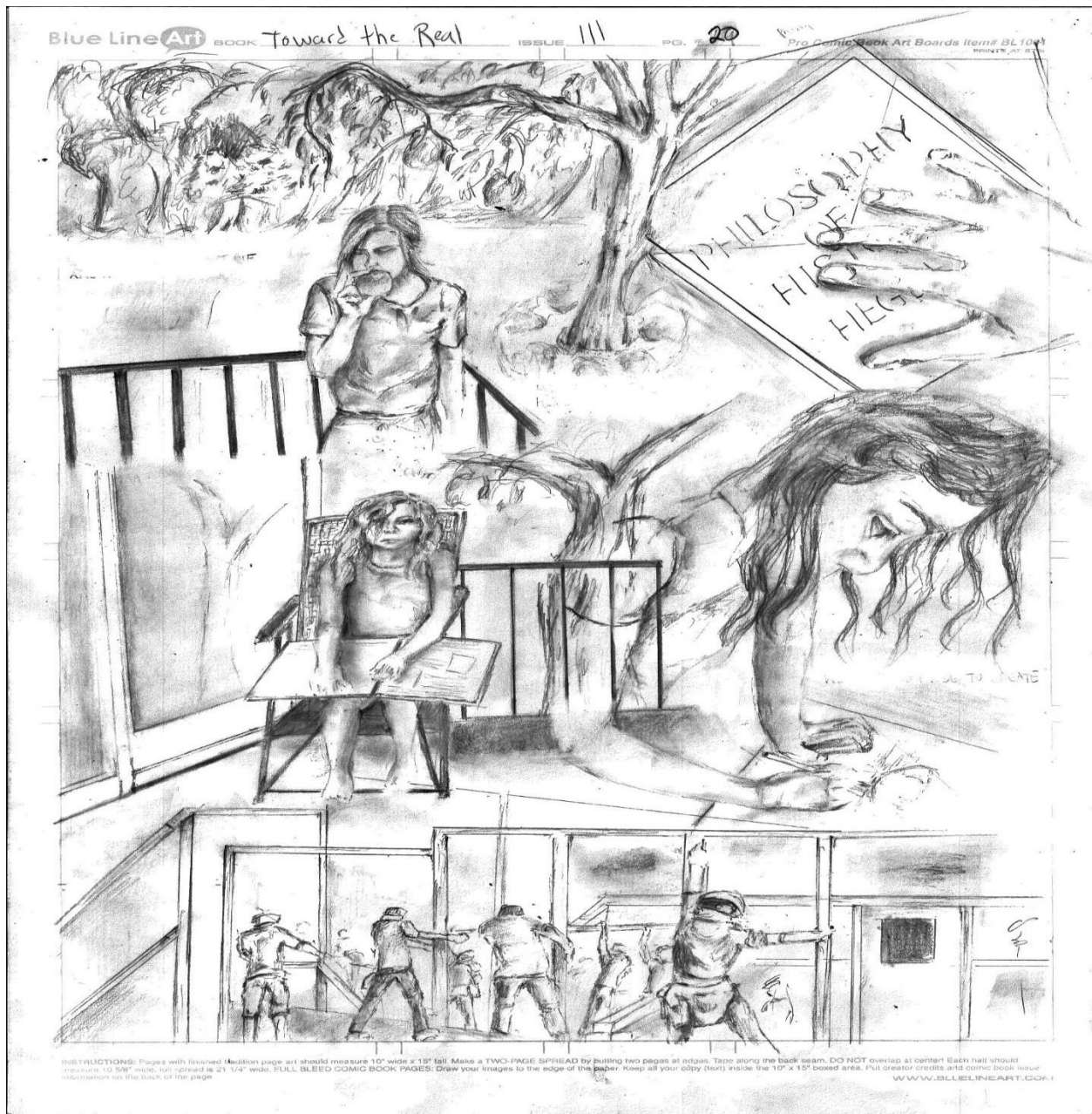


Figure 6. In this wordless page I tackle one of my favorite philosophical works; GWF Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. This work of philosophy postulates the idea of progress. The images do something of the same. We see images of nature (and a biblical reference to an apple), images of children reading and studying and workers building something new.



### Panels and pages

Perhaps one of the greatest tools of the comic essay are panels. Panel size, shape and frequency all help to convey information (Duncan, Smith & Levitz, 2015; Gavaler, 2019; Miodrag, 2013; Sousanis, 2015a). If students grasp this fact, they can tell different types of stories that they might not be able to tell with words alone. Panels can call attention to the length of time that has elapsed, and story tempo and timing (McCloud, 1994; Duncan et al., 2015, Miodrag, 2013). The classic example given is that of *Watchmen*, by Alan Moore and Dave

Gibbons (Duncan et al., 2015; Groensteen, 2007; Potts, 2013). Moore and Gibbons utilized a standard nine panel configuration on most pages which created a very rhythmic and even story pace for most of the book, but when they deviated from this structure, the effect was all the more apparent. Of course, the absence of panels can also be utilized. The page as a whole unit is another important tool for creators (Cohn, 2009; Groensteen, 2007). Cohn (2009, 50) details a great example of how comics journalist Joe Sacco utilizes a series of constricting panels on one to give a sense of confinement (the character depicted was in prison), while on the next page, there are no panels, and the openness conveys a sense of release (when the character is realized from prison). I use this example in class. As noted earlier, McCloud's well known use of closure can also help students think about what to include and not to include in their essays (Kolk, 2020). Teachers can go over these types of examples in class to show how panels can be used to tell a story.

The use of (or absence of) panels can also call attention to new ways of reading the printed page (Cabero, 2019). Cabero argues for multidirectional readings, where the traditional reading order in English is altered (such as reading right to left, top to bottom or in circular patterns) and multilinear readings, where two or more simultaneous stories take place on a page. Multidirectional and multilinear capabilities may offer a new tool for thinking of citizenship, especially the type of symbols and stories that Duncombe (2019) argues for. We are bombarded with stories and we do not know what is true. Perhaps presenting multiple stories on a page is a way to represent and make some sense of this cacophony.

Perhaps the most important aspect of paneling for the purpose of this assignment is the notion of encapsulation. Encapsulation simply calls attention to what creators decide to depict in each frame, as well as what images creators decide to omit when telling the story (Duncan et al., 2015). This process can be an excellent method to think about historical events and the creation of a history. History is not simply a recreation, rather it is always a process of interpretation (Banks, Banks & Ambrose 1999; Getz & Clarke, 2016). This process can be especially fruitful when students create historical fiction or at least add imaginative elements. In one-on-one discussions, I have found a discussion of encapsulation to be very fruitful- I work with students and try to get them to think about what exactly to show and why they show should show it.

Simply put, when considering the claim they created, students must decide what to show. In my own experience, I have had student's utilize these tools of the comic medium with great success. One of my students, who grappled with a similar question posed in the common school movement claim made above (but for education as a whole), argued that education was both a means of liberation and social control. For scenes of social control, she utilized constructing panels to depict sad looking characters. For scenes of liberation, she did not use any panels in an effort to show freedom from constriction. Another student wanted to look at the experiences, and challenges, of both more affluent and poorer students. She utilized a multilinear design and created two simultaneous and parallel stories on each page of her comic. I thought these were excellent examples and my students were able to convey important ideas with the comic medium. In a wider sense, these conceptual tools outlined above align with the notions of citizenship education put forth earlier. Students need different tools at their disposal to create new truths.

### **Symbolism, Imagery, Color and Shading**



A simple distinction between symbolism and imagery that I like to use is the one posed by Schmidt (2018): symbols are things that most people are familiar with (such as flags, corporate symbols or political symbols like a Swastika), while imagery is something specific to a story (McCloud, 1994). To be sure there is much more to symbolism and imagery, but I think this is an easy way to frame this distinction. Students can think through how they can utilize well known symbols, and create imagery for their comics which help to back up their claim. My students utilized a number of well-known symbols in their comics, such as pencils, priests, flags, shamrocks (for Irish immigration) and crucifixes to name a few. At the same time, students also created specific images for their comics which helped to convey ideas. Again, linking to Duncombe (2019), symbols are important in our political climate, we need to symbols to convey political ideas and have those ideas resonate.

Another impactful tool is the use of color and shading. I do not require my students to use color, although many do. In the aforementioned example, my student rendered all the scenes detailing social control in drab pencil, while all the scenes detailing liberation in vibrant colors. My other student showed all the scenes with the affluent student in vibrant color, while the student from the poorer background was rendered in more muted colors (See Figure 8). Since she used a multilinear configuration, these contrasting colors really stood out on the page. I think my student's essay really shows how a student can create new types of messages which grapple with citizenship and history.

### **Style and other elements**

Another consideration is that of drawing style (Eisner, 2008; Duncan et al., 2015) as well as other elements of comics, such as lettering and font, and speech bubbles (Hutchinson, 2009). Students may predictably lament that they cannot draw, but I have found that even students who cannot draw, can still utilize some type of stylistic considerations to their story. Sometimes students may use more cartoony characters and add an element of lightheartedness to their comics. Other times, a simplified style can add great weight and seriousness to a comic. One student of mine in a social studies methods class depicted scenes from the founding of the state of Maryland (See Figure 7). One of her scenes show a slave toiling in a hot sun. This scene was interspaced among other more positive scenes such as priest saying mass. I thought the simple scene, which was also wordless, was powerful and called attention to the more sinister elements of the founding of the US. Another student, who was a good artist, expertly utilized style. For the same assignment, he depicted the volatile history of the city of Baltimore. His art style was frantic and hectic, and what better way to show various scenes that Baltimore has experienced over the last two centuries, from riots at the beginning of the Civil War, though labor unrest right through the Freddie Gray protests? Other factors such as lettering and fonts, as well as different types of speech bubbles can also be used to convey information in new ways (Hutchinson, 2009). Again, all of these options may allow students to create new types of essays and messages, and ultimately, new statements in regard to citizenship.

### **Assessment**

How can teachers accurately assess the work of their students? I find assessment when utilizing comics a tricky venture, but also one rife with opportunity. I do not want to prescribe specific and constructing standards, but at the same time, students need some direction and I need benchmarks to guide my assessment (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

Below is a short framework. I have listed the elements of a comic essay on the left side

and then listed some more technical questions regarding how the elements of the comic relate back to the claim. This is only meant to be rough guide. Not all elements need to be present. This all depends on the discretion of the teacher. I view the assessment tool as a conversation starter. I like to talk to students, both as class discussions and in one-on-one discussions, and simply ask them about their projects and gauge their level of understanding. These questions can help direct teacher's conversations, as well as let students know beforehand what is expected of them.

Figure 1. Comic Essay Assessment Tool

Criteria	Criteria
<b>Claims/Reason/Evidence/Acknowledgments</b>	Is there a claim present? Is it defensible?  How does the claim address more progressive citizenship concerns, such as vulnerable populations, empowerment and equality to name a few?
<b>Story</b>	Is there a narrative or story arc? Does the story arc help to defend or shed light on the thesis?
<b>Paneling/Encapsulation</b>	Do the encapsulated scenes relate back to the claim in a reasonable way?  Do the encapsulated scenes tell a logical or credible story related to the claim?  How are students utilizing both visual and textual elements to back up their claim?
<b>Symbolism/Imagery</b>	How does the symbolism and imagery used in the story relate back to the claim?
<b>Color, shading and style</b>	Does the shading, color and/or style help advance the story?  Does the shading, color and/or style align with the claim in anyway?
<b>Other Considerations</b>	What might students be able to accomplish with the tools of the comic medium that they could not accomplish with text alone? How does this question apply to the specific work in question?  How did the students utilize any other features (e.g. font, speech bubbles) to back up the claim?
<b>Works Cited/Annotated Bibliography</b>	Are these textual and visual elements empirical, in the sense that they are real life facts, ideas, theories or interpretations the student is taking from scholarly sources?  Does the bibliography show how the student utilized sources to create the essay?
<b>Citizenship</b>	How did students utilize the elements of the comics medium to call attention to hopes and dreams and inspire people? Can this comic serve a "dream" to

	inspire people to think differently about history and/or the current state of affairs? How so?
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## Examples

Creating a comic along with students is good practice, and it shows students that you are willing to grapple with the complexities of creating a graphic novel. Carter (2013) and Thompson (2018) both call attention to the benefits of teachers creating along with their students, and I have followed their advice (see my drawing throughout the article). As noted earlier, I assign a number of comics activities in my own college courses. As students are creating their comics, I show them examples of my own creations. I show students how I have utilized ideas such as multilinearity, shading considerations and symbolism to name a few. My art work is serviceable, but Marvel or DC will not be calling me anytime soon. Rather, my artwork is a means to an end. The end is a new and powerful formulation of citizenship for our age. What follows are some of my own examples, as well as examples from my students, which are all used with permission.

Figure 7. This assignment called for students to consider different aspects in the founding of the state of Maryland. The fourth frame stood out to me. The fourth frame depicts a slave toiling in a hot sun, and is juxtaposed with more positive scenes of the founding of Maryland. I think this assignment expertly shows how style considerations and paneling can be utilized. My student had to decide what to encapsulate. She was able to encapsulate contrasting events to convey a positive and negative picture of the founding of Maryland. Her style, while simple, I think adds to the gravity of the comic, especially in the fourth frame. Comic created by Katie Tennant.

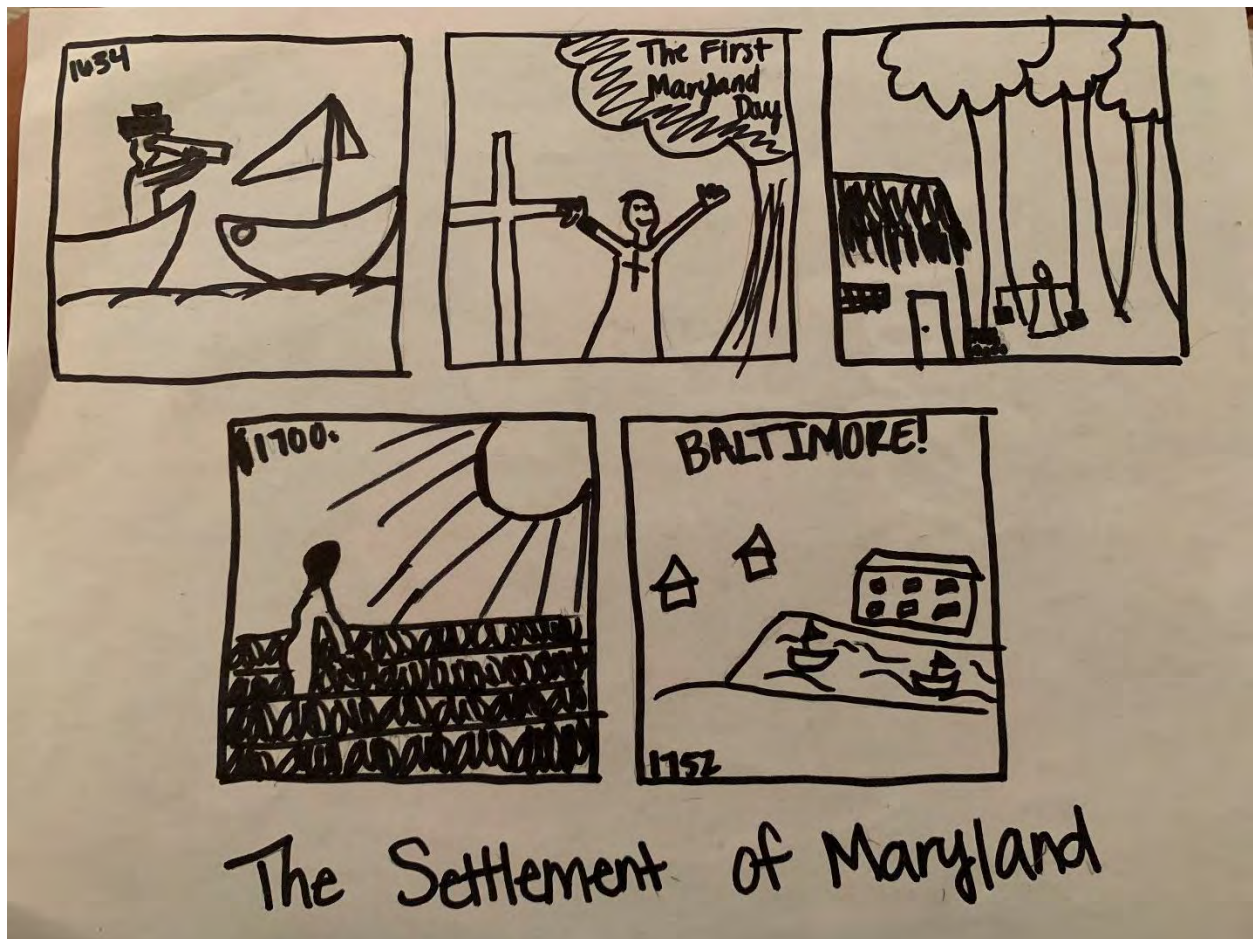


Figure 8; This student utilized multilinearity. She told two simultaneous stories on the same page. Moreover, each story is told with different colors and the contrasting colors are important to her ideas as a whole. Image by Christina Schell.

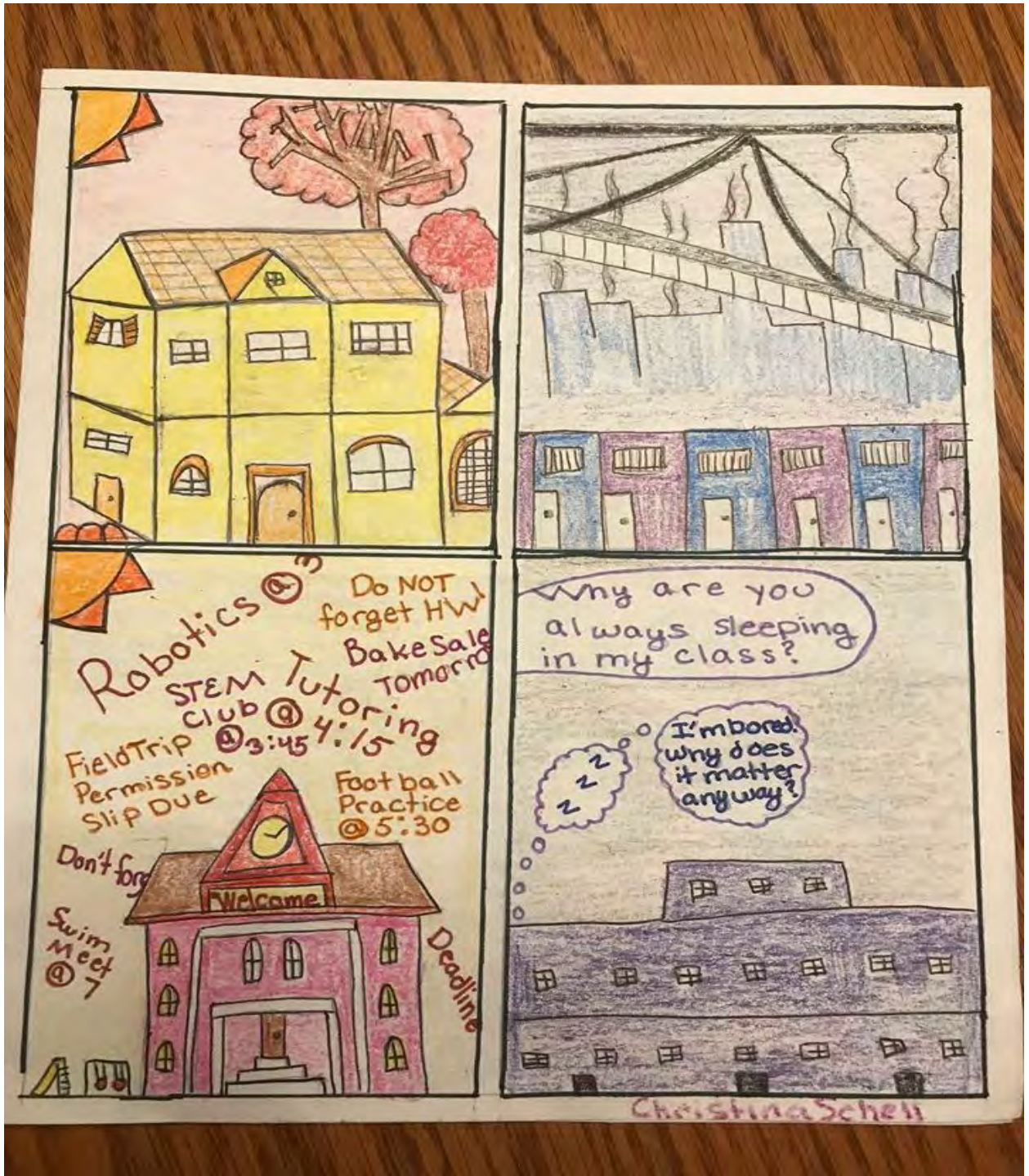
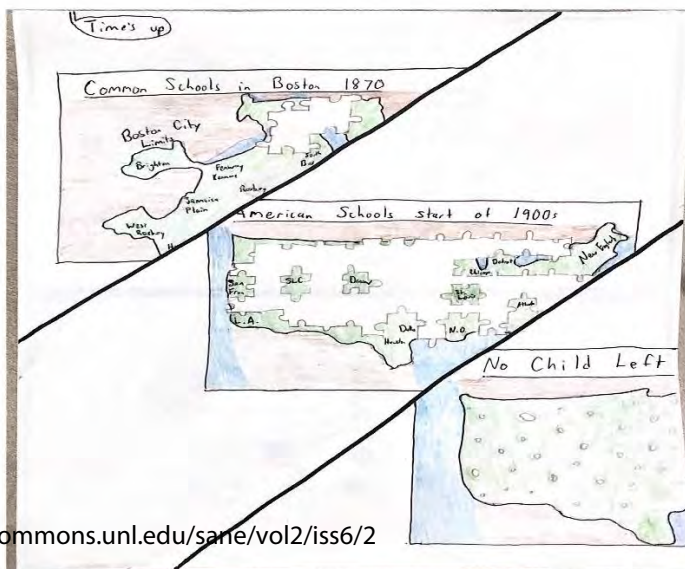
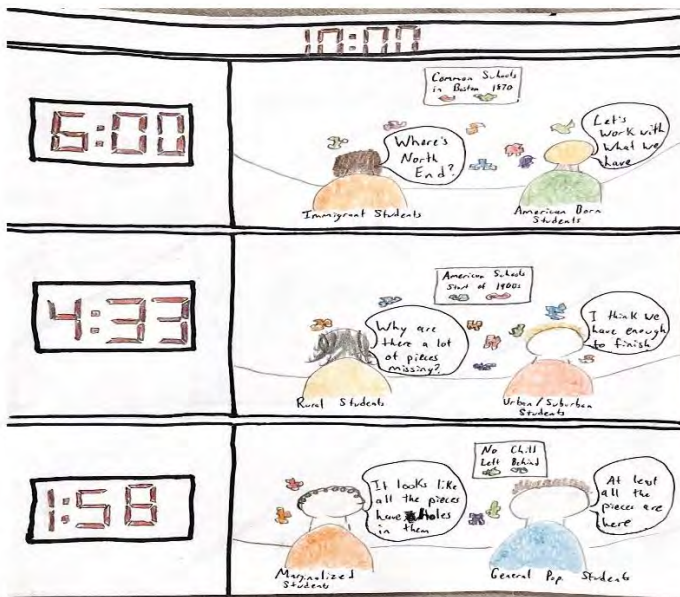
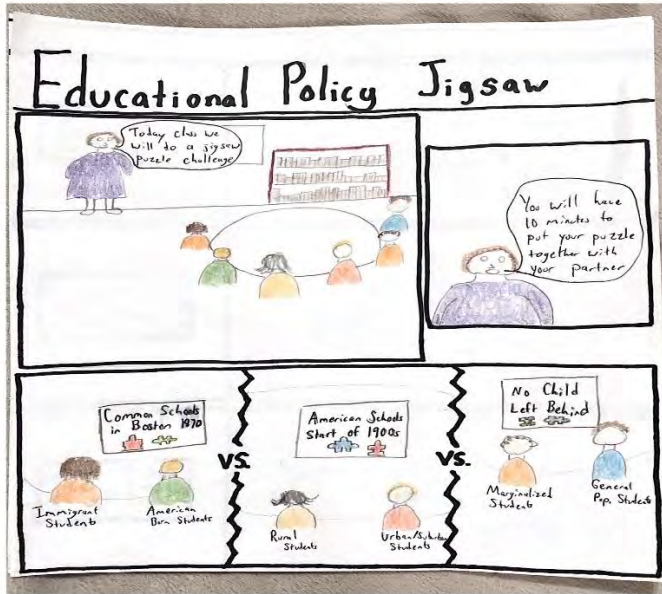


Figure 9. This is a student example of a multidirectional comic. Teacher certification, English only laws and old field schools in the south were some events depicted. These events are not in a traditional linear path. This student also drew a grid to depict zoom education during the pandemic.



Figure 10. This student's thesis read: "Educational policy throughout United States' history has opened access for education to more and more students, however there are always students for who the policy does not adequately address and truly include." In the comic, the students who benefit from the status quo- predominantly white students, finish their puzzles quicker than other students such as immigrants. The entire comic plays on the familiar symbol of a jigsaw puzzle and the struggle for equal opportunity.





## Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge my students who allowed me to use their comics, Colleen Gill Christina Schell, Katie Tennant and Zachary Williams. Thank you.

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