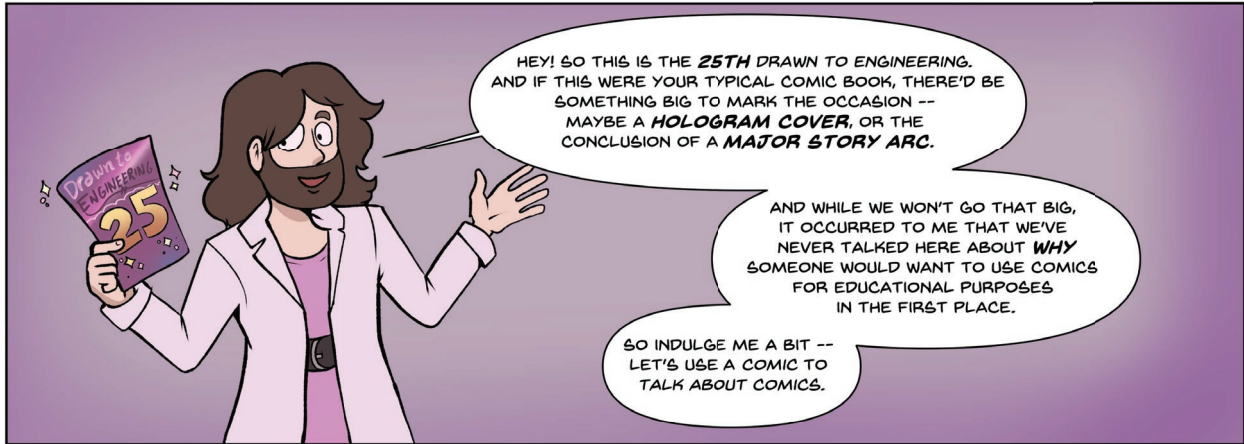


Why Comics Anyway?

Written by: Luke Landherr
Drawn by: Monica "Monix" Keszler

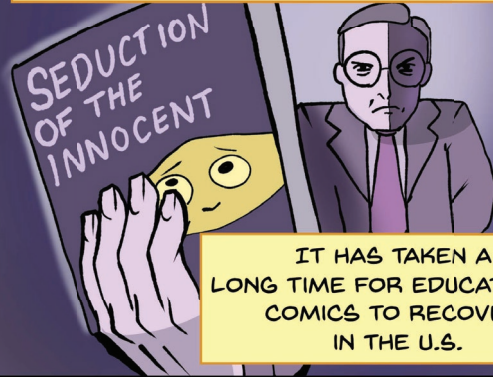


COMICS WERE SUCH A POPULAR MEDIUM FOR K-12 STUDENTS IN THE 1940'S THAT IT LED TO A GREAT DEAL OF RESEARCH INTO THEIR POTENTIAL WITHIN EDUCATION.



FOR THE MOST PART, THESE STUDIES LOOKED AT IMPACT ON VOCABULARY AND READING ABILITY, BUT THE MAJOR CONCLUSION WAS THAT COMICS COULD POTENTIALLY BENEFIT EDUCATION IN ALMOST ANY FIELD.

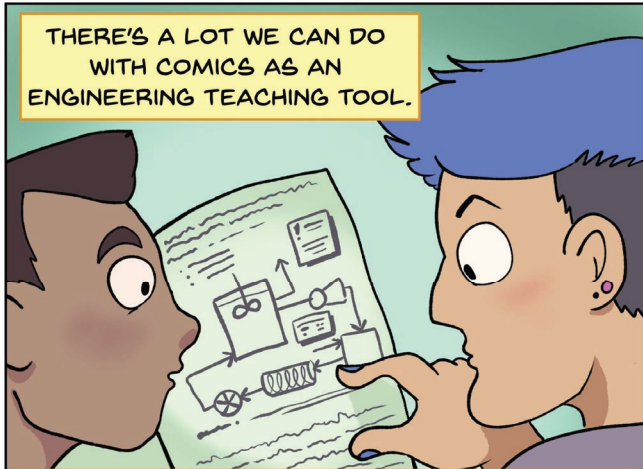
UNFORTUNATELY, THE MINDSET THAT COMICS ARE CHILDISH AND HAVE NO PLACE IN EDUCATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE 1950'S (AND SOMEWHAT PERSISTS TO TODAY) BECAUSE OF DR. FREDRIC WERTHAM AND HIS BOOK, **SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT**.



IT HAS TAKEN A LONG TIME FOR EDUCATIONAL COMICS TO RECOVER IN THE U.S.

WHILE COMICS HAVE BEEN AROUND IN THE MEANTIME, THEIR EDUCATIONAL RESURGENCE HAS PRIMARILY OCCURRED OVER THE LAST DECADE, WITH GRAPHIC NOVELS BEING A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF THE K-12 PUBLISHING MARKET AND ENTIRE SERIES LIKE "SCIENCE COMICS" PROVIDING A SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL FOCUS.





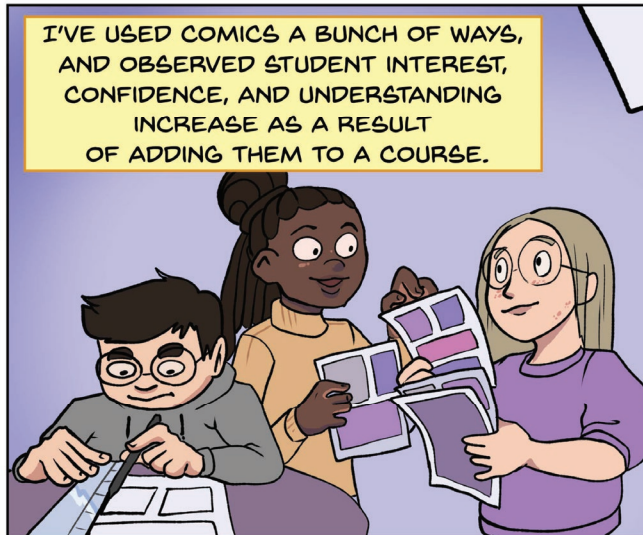
THERE'S A LOT WE CAN DO WITH COMICS AS AN ENGINEERING TEACHING TOOL.

AFTER ALL, RICH FELDER HAD SHOWED THAT ENGINEERING STUDENTS HAVE A GENERAL PREFERENCE FOR VISUAL LEARNING TOOLS. AND COMICS EFFECTIVELY PROVIDE A MEANS OF INTEGRATING TEXT INTO A VISUAL MEDIUM -- SOMEWHAT LIKE DIAGRAMS OR PICTURES IN A TEXTBOOK, BUT A SIGNIFICANT STEP FURTHER.

COMICS PROVIDE A GOOD INFORMAL LEARNING TOOL, SOMETHING TO SUPPLEMENT THE INSTRUCTION THEY RECEIVE IN CLASS. WHETHER THE NARRATIVE IS A TEACHER DIRECTLY LECTURING TO THE READER, OR A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO CHARACTERS WITH ONE BEING A STAND-IN FOR COMMON STUDENT QUESTIONS, STUDENTS CAN REVIEW THE COMICS OUTSIDE OF CLASS FOR REINFORCEMENT OF WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED.



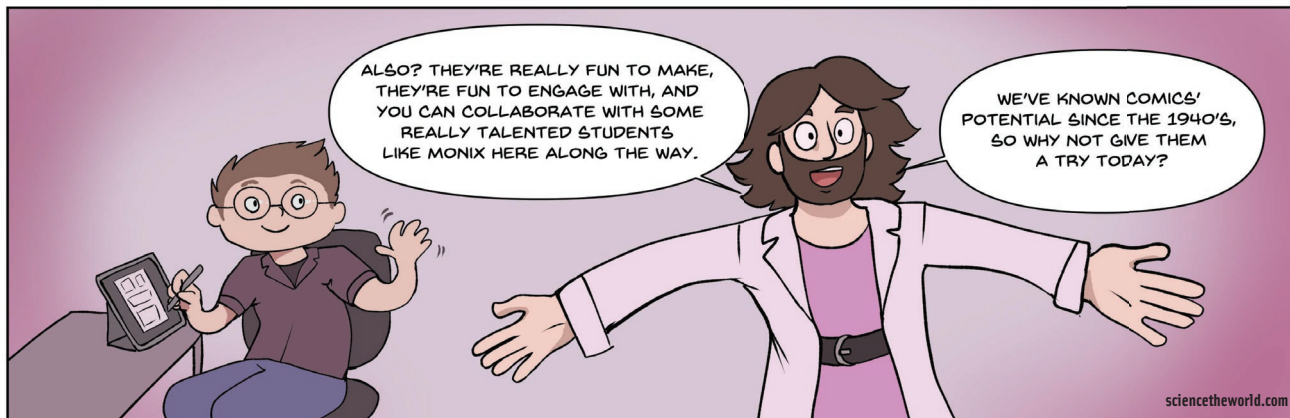
AND THEY CAN BE INSERTED RIGHT INTO STUDENTS' NOTES TO DIRECTLY ILLUSTRATE THE LECTURE THEY RECEIVED, ADDING ANOTHER LAYER TO WHAT THEY WERE ABLE TO WRITE DOWN AT THE MOMENT.



I'VE USED COMICS A BUNCH OF WAYS, AND OBSERVED STUDENT INTEREST, CONFIDENCE, AND UNDERSTANDING INCREASE AS A RESULT OF ADDING THEM TO A COURSE.

ONE OF THE MORE PRODUCTIVE USES WAS ACTUALLY TASKING STUDENTS WITH MAKING ONE THEMSELVES TO COMMUNICATE THEIR COMPREHENSION OF SOME CONCEPT FROM THE COURSE -- AND THEN PROVIDED THESE COMICS TO FUTURE ITERATIONS OF STUDENTS AS ADDITIONAL LEARNING TOOLS, ENCOURAGING THEM TO ENGAGE WITH THE COMICS UNDER THE GUISE OF CRITIQUING THEM.

IN ONE CASE, THE AVERAGE STUDENT EXAM SCORE INCREASED BY **18 POINTS**, JUST BECAUSE THE COMICS WERE INTRODUCED!



ALSO? THEY'RE REALLY FUN TO MAKE, THEY'RE FUN TO ENGAGE WITH, AND YOU CAN COLLABORATE WITH SOME REALLY TALENTED STUDENTS LIKE MONIX HERE ALONG THE WAY.

WE'VE KNOWN COMICS' POTENTIAL SINCE THE 1940'S, SO WHY NOT GIVE THEM A TRY TODAY?

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