

**Title of Session:** Math Transformers - Comic Books

**Moderator:** Patricia Chen

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Room: Math Transformers Group

**BjB:** Let's start with introductions, Pat. Bryan, please tell us where you are located and what you teach or hope to teach (when Pat is ready to start)

**PatriciaCh:** I'm a middle school math teacher in Florida

**BjB:** I'm a retired communications and arts teacher in Pennsylvania.

**BryanGst2:** I teach English to corporate students and graduate students in Kobe, Japan.

**BjB:** oh, cool, Bryan!

**BryanGst2:** I am finishing up my master's degree in Applied Linguistics, and one of the course instructors recommended this site as something to check out for internet based learning.

**BjB:** Corinne Wilhelm does the same thing in Germany

**PatriciaCh:** did you get a chance to look at the links?

**BryanGst2:** browsing now

**PatriciaCh:** ok ...

**PatriciaCh:** let us know when you are ready

**BryanGst2:** don't wait for me! please go ahead whenever you are ready

**BryanGst2:** I pretty much just stumbled in here

**PatriciaCh:** do you have any questions

**BjB:** Bryan, with a Tapped In membership you could create a group room like this and put in whatever resources you wanted to

**PatriciaCh:** I am glad you dropped in

**BjB:** as a language teacher, it looks like Pat has listed some fun ways to vary instruction using comic strips

**BryanGst2:** Actually I have used comics in the classroom, and they were surprisingly effective. The students really enjoyed the break from the standard conversation stuff.

**PatriciaCh:** you can use this medium to assess or enhance comprehension .... easier in language than math

**PatriciaCh:** especially when the comic strip is 6 frames

**BjB:** in the first link they mention using drama...

**BjB:** students develop affect through drama. Drama creates motivation for students to participate and facilitates students' responses in reading instruction.

**PatriciaCh:** I have a colleague who teaches history ...she uses drama in her class

**BjB:** comics could work as a storyboard that could be acted out six frames at a time

**PatriciaCh:** as an enhancement to the lesson

**PatriciaCh:** this whole idea came about .... my students love to doodle or draw ...

**PatriciaCh:** so instead of solving a word problem... the main character can tell you the steps or methods to solve ... then come up with the answer

**BjB:** drawings are less threatening

**BjB:** . o O ( to the learner )

**BjB:** are you getting any ideas, Bryan?

**BjB:** . o O ( you can also share this information with colleagues )

**PatriciaCh:** yes it is .... kids always think that there is only one way to solve a word problem ....which is not true .... word problems scare everyone

**BryanGst2:** I am just kind of listening in, really. One question...

**PatriciaCh:** ok

**PatriciaCh:** we would like you to participate ....

**BryanGst2:** In the USA is there any kind of stigma with comics being too "childlike" that might interfere with the learning process.. i.e. "I'm too cool to do this kid stuff..."

**BjB:** Tapped In's strength is that it allows collaboration.

**BjB** understands the concerns about comics being too "kid stuff"...

**PatriciaCh:** it all depends on how you present the idea to the students ...

**BjB:** but take a look at some of the graphic novels out there

**BjB** . o O ( comics aren't just for kids any more! )

**PatriciaCh:** from what I see my students reading .... there are sophisticated comic books out there ...no longer ... the marvel comics from yester years

**BjB:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic\\_novel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_novel)

**BryanGst2:** How do you feel about the frequency of using comics in class? I can see that the first time there will be a great deal of excitement... what are the limitations of comics-based lessons?

**BjB:** this is a good resource...<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/graphicnovels.asp>

**BjB** waits for Pat to answer Bryan's question

**PatriciaCh:** we don't have math books in a comic format .... I would use it to assess comprehension

**BjB:** in language images can be used to define ideas...sort of like painting a story using fine art.

**PatriciaCh:** but if I was to teach a different content area ... I would look at my learners ... if it is easier for my lower learners ...I would use it more often ...it is one way to differentiate instructions ...

**PatriciaCh:** it is really a supplement ...not intended to take the place of the main text

**BryanGst2:** That's a very good point

**BjB:** as for differentiating...have your students work in pairs or teams to come up with a story, Bryan. Use each student's strengths-art, language, organization

**PatriciaCh:** what level of learners do you have

**BryanGst2:** It varies from adult learners with a great deal of motivation to college students who have to take the class to graduate. Mostly adults. In Japan comics are not considered childlike at all - everyone reads them.

**BryanGst2:** So, no resistance there.

**PatriciaCh:** quite true ...they have revolutionize the concept

**PatriciaCh:** so all your instruction is online based?

**BryanGst2:** As a teacher, all my instruction (for now) is face to face. As a learner, 70% of my learning is online based.

**BryanGst2:** Although I have introduced blogging as a supplementary activity for high level classes.

**BjB:** cool, Bryan. Are you familiar with the Webheads?

**BjB:** . o O ( [www.webheads.info](http://www.webheads.info) )

**BryanGst2:** no, can't say that I am. I'll take a look at the site.

**BjB:** webheads are an international group of ESL/ELL/EFL teachers

**BjB:** they meet in Tapped In every Sunday at 12 noon GMT which is a stinky hour for you

**PatriciaCh:** quite true

**BryanGst2:** thanks for the info - I'll check it out.

**PatriciaCh:** what kind of resistance are you getting from the not so motivated students

**BryanGst2:** The students at the college level are really just interested in passing the class. A very small percentage are hoping to improve their English.

**BryanGst2:** Japanese students spend six years in junior and high school learning English, so by the time they get to college they are pretty burned out.

**PatriciaCh:** That sounds like ... learning a foreign language here in the states

**PatriciaCh:** students start taking a second language in middle school and continues in high school

**BryanGst2:** Junior high and high school English learning is strictly grammar, so they end up knowing more about English grammar than I do but not being able to actually hold a conversation.

**BryanGst2:** Not everyone, but a majority.

**BryanGst2:** I don't want to sound bitter or anything :)

**PatriciaCh:** so you really want to improve their conversational skills

**BjB** smiles...not at all!

**BryanGst2:** When they start in junior high school they think that they can master English after a few years, and by the time they reach high school it is becoming apparent that they won't. They are really fed up in college, so it is almost like starting over.

**BryanGst2:** Comics might be just the thing to bring a little more life and energy to the learning environment.

**PatriciaCh:** if you are interested in improving their conversational skills ...let the students work together to create a play

**BjB :** have one partner in a team ask another partner out on a date or to go see a ball game...and have them diagram/illustrate the dialogue

**PatriciaCh:** start with the comic strips ... not as threatening ... then move on to writing a short script

**BjB .** o O ( kind of a mini play )

**PatriciaCh:** they used to have that concept in text books (of course ..yester years)

**BryanGst2:** sounds good...

**PatriciaCh:** I can sympathize with you ... teaching fractions is no fun ....even to my honors student (algebra 1)

**BjB :** you could even use the math concepts, Bryan...to introduce some different vocabulary

**BryanGst2:** How many students do you typically have in a classroom?

**PatriciaCh:** I always start small ....

**PatriciaCh:** my smallest class is 22 and largest is 28 ... in Florida ...we are phasing in class size amendment .... I have had 38 kids in the past

**BryanGst2:** Wow. I imagine the drama can sometimes get out of control...

**PatriciaCh:** how many students do you have

**BryanGst2:** The largest class size is 10 for adults, 20 for college students.

**PatriciaCh:** the middle schoolers will try ...but most will back off ...

**PatriciaCh:** I use humor to handle problems ....it works for me

**BryanGst2:** Smallest size can be just one or two students

**PatriciaCh:** I would love that

**BryanGst2:** I'm sorry, but I need to prepare for my next class. I want to thank you for your advice. I had a very positive experience here today.

**PatriciaCh:** please check in and let us know how you are doing

**BryanGst2:** I'm sure I'll be back in the future!

**BjB:** get a Tapped In membership, Bryan...then you'll get a transcript of your chats emailed to you when you log out

**PatriciaCh:** another thought ...take the comic strip and turn it into a mini play

**BryanGst2:** I'll sign up this evening!

**BjB** waves bye to Bryan. Nice meeting you.

**PatriciaCh:** let the students do it on their own ...just model for them

**PatriciaCh:** good luck

**BjB:** Thanks, Pat, for leading the discussion and providing the resources.

**BjB** . o O ( glad you didn't have to dodge a hurricane )

**PatriciaCh:** it was good to brainstorm

**BryanGst2** left the room (signed off).

**BjB:** yep...even when you're talking about different disciplines it helps to 'see' other solutions

**PatriciaCh:** these are the times ..I wish I was teaching a different content area ... more fun stuff to do

**BjB:** well, I taught art and was able to bring in all the other disciplines...you probably do that in your teaching too

**PatriciaCh:** I do ...but thanks to state testing ....it gets harder

**BjB** shakes her head. That's too bad.

**PatriciaCh:** my Algebra 1 kids ...will test 7th grade math ... and they are learning 9th grade material ... they are not prepared...

**PatriciaCh:** so it takes more time to prep them ..less time for the fun stuff

**BjB** nods sadly. That means no fun for them too.

**PatriciaCh:** next month's topic is up in the air ....

**BjB** : hot air balloons?

**BjB** winks

**PatriciaCh:** funny

**BjB** : paper airplanes?

**PatriciaCh:** one good thing ... I have convince the kids to ask questions ....they clue me in ..what basics that they do not know ...

**BjB** : that helps

**BjB** . o O ( shapes and tangrams and origami would work with airplanes )

**PatriciaCh:** paper airplanes .... I have to write a lesson for that one ... aside from tessellations ....I have to include other strands .... that is a thought

**BjB** : email me when you get the thought together, ok?

**PatriciaCh:** apparently ..their last year teacher did not like questions and did welcome it at all ....

**PatriciaCh:** Yes I will ...

**BjB** : probably true of a lot of teachers...questions interrupt the lessons

**PatriciaCh:** I don't mind real questions ...