



Comics: An Innovative Tool in Teaching History

Nerissa R. Marquez

Master of Arts in Teaching Social Studies Student

Faculty Member San Pedro National High School, University of Rizal System, Moncada, Tarlac, Philippines

Abstract:

Students of the 21st Century view History as one of most underappreciated and boring subjects in the K-12 curriculum because of the fact that one needs to memorize names, places and dates and they also need to read long texts and articles before grasping the whole picture of a certain event. To cope up with the changes in the learning styles of students, Social Studies or History teachers should be gallant enough to meet this big challenge, must find ways and keep on innovating in order to keep the students passionate with this indispensable subject in our basic education curriculum lest their interest on it will continue to deteriorate or fade away. This paper attempts to provide an enlightening literature review which hinged on the premise that comics or graphic illustrations can be an invaluable tool in teaching different subjects most especially History. Thus, this review may help educators in having clearer understanding and may broaden our horizons on how to utilize comics in the teaching-learning process and it's positive impact on students' academic achievements.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Education plays a vital role in achieving one's success. Through education a person can develop the 21st century skills on learning such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication, literacy skills on information, media and technology, while flexibility, leadership, social skills and productivity are included in the life skills. These skills are the abilities of students that must be enhanced by the school for them to cope up with the demands of this changing world and are very essential for a successful and secure future. The school, most especially the teachers must think of alternative approaches and strategies to ensure that these skills are properly nurtured and developed within those years that the learners are under the care of the learning institutions. Change is inevitable, even the attitudes and interests of the students nowadays are very different compared to the students decades ago. Students at present times are more engrossed on computers and social media, anything that is not visually attractive do not catch their attention, 21st century is a visual world with a visual culture (Mindrand 2009). According to the study of Saga Briggs (2014) some psychologist claim that a typical attention span of a student is 10-15 minutes, and it depends on the motivation, mood and importance of the material to them, thus to increase the interest of the students and make the teaching learning process pleasant, teachers must consider changing the old style strategies and approaches, they must engage themselves in innovations to make the lessons more appealing to the modern day learners. But aside from using modernized and wonderful technological innovations, traditional comics, though almost forgotten parcel of our culture, could also be utilized as another astonishing and brilliant tool for learning. Comics provide masterfully drawn caricatures of the characters in their stories, it offers simplified words and sentences or construction of thoughts are perfectly attuned to the tastes and styles of the readers. Comics or Graphic Illustrations is one of innovations that are now taken seriously in academic institutions, (Gardner 2012) that can be used as a learning tool in different subject areas, especially in teaching history. By

having activities using cartoons and comics, students could enjoy their learning and can explore their creative and analytical thinking. Students could be more active, responsive, critical and analytical (Rida and Yazid, 2011).

II. COMICS: AN INNOVATIVE TOOL IN TEACHING HISTORY

It's heartening to find out that there have been a lot of studies that have been made all over the world with regards to the effectiveness of comics in the teaching and learning process, researches proved that graphic illustrations can be a supplementary material in teaching different field in the academe. A study conducted by Kim and Chung(2016) on the use of educational comics in learning Anatomy. It was revealed that comics can be a perfect review material for some groups, while for beginners it serves as an entertaining introduction of human parts, while in 2017 they conducted similar study wherein Korean videos, humorous comics strips and multimedia contents were also included so that general population in Korea can learn systematic Anatomy. Lin, Lin, Lee and Yore (2014) in their research recognized the effect of comic book in promoting people's knowledge and outlook towards Nanotechnology. The result of the mixed method quasi experimental design showed that the comic book increased the participants enjoyment of learning while the text booklet decreased their interest. Science comics have the potential to develop enjoyment in learning Science. In a research done by Aisyah, Zakiyah, Farida, and Ramdhani (2011) learning crude oil can be made by using Scientific Literacy Comics. Even in academic achievement of students and attitude toward earthquake, educational comics strip created significant difference in favors of the experimental groups based on the study of Topkaya and Simsek (2016). Even in the field of medicine graphic narratives on topics including dying and illness can be used, thus an innovative course was included into the medical school curriculum for 4th year medical students (Green 2013). Comics has a great impact on peoples' belief and interests in science, thus they proposed several ways

on how learning could be enhanced through comics and discussed issues such as individual differences and informal learning (Jee and Anggoro2012). Using comics make learning easier not only in Science but it is also a big help in developing reading literacy, like in the study of Cimermanova (2015) wherein authentic comics were used with novice EFL learners and the results implied positive effects in the vocabulary development and motivation to reading and overcoming linguistic barriers. Teachers can use comics for reading instruction by focusing on it's colorful representation, it also offers a concise way to teach and apply reading skills for practice or remediation(McVicker2011). In a study conducted by Nadia (2017) on the impact of graphic novels on Malaysian Secondary School ESL learners reading comprehension showed that reading graphic novels helped their students develop the following skills: retain the story in their memory better, imagine the situation, have a clearer picture of characters and boost their reading motivations. Even on the study performed in a French Comics language class, graphic novel had a tremendous impact on student's learning capacity and made their imagination allowed for a more creative reading, and a deeper comprehension, resulting in a meaningful communication (Gabaron 2017). The performance of Nigerian Students had been notably low due to poor reading culture and other reasons, to address this situation Eneh(2008) conducted a study on the use of comics and cartoons in enhancing pupils' reading achievement among Primary II pupils in Enugu State. Cartoon sheets, comics strips, achievement tests and observations were used. The result revealed that teaching with cartoons and comics enhances pupils' achievement in reading. The same study was done by Tarabuzan and Popa (2015) to investigate the effects of using comics strips as authentic learning materials in supporting Romanian students' motivation for learning French as foreign language. The outcome showed significant effects on intervention students' anxiety, but no significant effect on self-efficacy and intrinsic value, thus it suggest the potential role of comics strips among other authentic documents. Even in the field of Mathematics, cartoons and comics can also be used though only few studies were done, one of which was the study of Toh (2009) in Singapore, feedback from teachers showed that their students became more motivated to learn algebra lessons through the use of cartoons and comics. The teachers were able to engage their students in the process of learning algebra. In the field of Social Sciences, comics was also utilized to enhance and disseminate nationhood and patriotism in Malaysia (Ahamed and Azziz, 2016). Their study focused on enhancing reading comprehension among the secondary school students in the notion of enabling them to read and understand nationhood reading materials regardless of types of text and language used. Instructional Comics have positive impacts on attitudes towards Citizenship and Democracy (Topkaya and Simsek, 2015) using the two essential feature of comics which are: 1) Picture and writing are presented together so that can learn more effectively and 2)they constitute amusing classroom atmosphere by using humour. According to Tuncela and Facultesi (2010) comics is also very useful in imparting human rights concept in Social Studies lesson. An article by Boatright (2011) explores how immigrant experiences are represented in the narrative graphic novels, it also invites teachers to engage in dialogues with their students about immigrant experiences as inroads to understanding the vastly complex issues surrounding

immigration. While in the study conducted by Matthews (2012) found out that preservice teachers support using graphic novels in order to provide an alternative perspective to traditional texts and increase engagement amongst struggling readers.

III.CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of different studies done, comics can be very helpful in the teaching learning process in the different subjects such as Science, Math, Reading and Language, Social Sciences including History. It can be a supplementary tool material in teaching History, but materials should be checked and validated first by the experts before using it in the classroom because history are stories based on facts and real people, we can not sacrifice the historical contents just because it is visually appealing. Comics about Asian and World History written in vernacular or national language will be a breakthrough that will really increase the interest of students in acquiring the essence of past events and apply its lessons in real life situation at present days.

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