



Contrasting and Reinforcing Narrative Elements Using Autobiographical Graphic Narratives

WHAT GRAPHIC NOVELS DO REALLY WELL:

(A) LITERACY AND LEARNING

- **Acquisition** of literary, biographical, and historical content in multimodal ways
- **Readability** and **accessibility** of complex historical narratives, classic works of literature, and biographies
- **Multiple literacies / multimodal reading**—engages various learning styles, reinforces meaning, develops critical media literacy, all while encouraging active reading
- **Vocabulary development**—improved retention through dual coding, varied sentence structure and colloquialisms, and visual context clues
- **Bridge gaps** for ELLs / MLLs—reduced text density; comprehension through visual support; boosts confidence; engages sequential and inductive thinking; encourages independent reading

(B) THINKING AND COGNITION

- **Provide** rigorous practice and acquisition of literacy skills when coupled with focused discussion of graphic design and layout, narrative choices, and approaches to the “interdependency” and “intersectionality” of words and pictures
- **Support** critical thinking—reading between the panels, “in the gutter”; multiple perspectives at once; synthesis of information; identification of bias and representation

(C) MOTIVATION AND PERSPECTIVISM

- **Increase motivation** to read
- **Increase curiosity** about reading, deepen critical investigation about storytelling
- **Diverse representation** in topic and author—highlight marginalized voices and range of identities; promote empathy and understanding; challenge stereotypes
- **Help** students see themselves
- **Apply** knowledge about ideas to real-world settings, as well as their own stories

GRAPHIC NOVELS NOT “JUST FOR KIDS”!

New status as valuable artistic medium over the last two decades

THEMATIC VARIABILITY!

Cover a wide range of events, histories, perspectives, and biographies

GRAPHIC ELEMENT!

Pictures = universal language
/ comprehension can enhance reading comprehension

MUSINGS & TAKEAWAYS:

- Which works of literature or history would work well in your classroom?
- When might it make sense to introduce both the graphic novel and the original?
- In what order would you present a graphic novel and the original work?
- What kinds of discussions could students have about them as a pair?

BIBLIOGRAPHY!

