Using Graphic Novels in Programming

Graphic novels are a dynamic medium when used in programming for Young Adults. One of the most helpful things graphic novels can accomplish is putting all teens, whether they are good readers or not, on the same footing. This gives the weaker reader a better sense of belonging--an important factor for teens especially concerning the world of literature. Here are a few suggestions of what type of ideas can be incorporated into a YA program using that dynamic format called graphic novels:

Literature circles   Discussion groups
Comic drawing workshops   Comic binding workshops
Creative writing workshops   Graphic novel theme based activities

The following is an example of an excellent graphic novel discussion program for teens sponsored by the California Center for the Book, which is affiliated with the Library of Congress. It was retrieved from the Internet on March 22, 2005 at http://www.calbook.org/Programs/Comix/:

comix.@$#!; A Graphic Novel Discussion Program for Teens

- introduces teens to the wonderful world of comics and graphic novels
- explores graphic novels as literary and artistic works of art
- brings together teens with other teens to discuss and read 10 unique selections

comix.@$#! is a theme based reading-and-discussion program developed by a dynamic group of Young Adult librarians from throughout California, a renowned Young Adult literature specialist, and several teenagers themselves. Each week program participants tackle 3-4 titles within a specific theme with the help of a discussion facilitator.

The titles in the program include:

Week 1 **Beyond the Screen**
Astro Boy by Osamu Tezuka
Simpsorama by Matt Groening
Road to Perdition by Max Allan Collins with art by Richard Piers Raynar
Week 2 **Heroes and Journeys**
Pedro and Me by Judd Winnick
Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi
Ultimate X-Men: The Tomorrow People by Mark Millar

Week 3 **Everyday Life**

Death: The High Cost of Living written by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Chris Bachalo, Mark Buckingham, and Dave McKean

One Hundred Demons by Lynda Barry

Ultimate Spiderman: Power and Responsibility by Brian Michael Bendis

Mars, Volume 1 by Fuyumi Soryo

comix.@$#! program organizers will receive:

- 10 copies of each of the titles in the program (100 books total)
- a scholarly essays on the history and value of graphic novels
- an insightful essay on the history and value of graphic novels
- a list of recommended discussion questions
- a list of recommended supplementary activities
- a list of recommended additional titles
- evaluation tools
- 5 promotional posters
- 200 bookmarks
- 200 flyers
- Two suggested formats to structure the program:

Format One:
Week 1 Beyond the Screen discussion
Week 2 Heroes and Journeys discussion
Week 3 Everyday Life discussion
Week 4 Graphic novel related activity

Format Two:
Week 1 Beyond the Screen discussion
Week 2 Graphic novel related activity
Week 3 Heroes and Journeys discussion
Week 4 Graphic novel related activity
Week 5 Everyday Life discussion
Week 6 Graphic novel related activity

To participate in the comix.@$#! program, please contact the California Center for the Book at cfb@ucla.edu .