

Comics and Cartoon: Beyond Laughing, An Aid for English Language Teaching**Nicy Chandini V S (M A, M Phil, NET)****Abstract**

English is the main language for international communication, education, research & commerce. There is no other language that can fit this role at the moment. The modern era has enforced students to have 21st century skills. So the need for teaching and learning English has assumed great importance. Various trends have emerged recently for the teaching of English. This paper attempts to assess one such trend. That is the importance & relevance of cartoons and comics in classrooms. The comic is a popular genre that combines art and literature. Comic's books are the best motivators to initiate children into the world of books. They motivate and provide confidence for the learners. They build vocabulary and improve comprehension. This paper explores the educational value of comics & cartoons and also how cartoons and comics helped students to gain 21st century skills. To teach and to learn through this technique will definitely a new experience.

Key Words- Comics, Cartoons, English Language, Graphic novels.

In the modern scenario English is the main language for international communication, education, research and commerce. There is no other language that can fit this role at the moment, so the need for teaching and learning English has assumed great importance. Various trends have emerged recently for the teaching of English, as a number of English learners are growing up. This paper attempts to assess one such trend. That is, the importance and relevance of cartoons and comics in teaching learning process.

Comics combine art and literature. It was a popular culture since 1930's. They simplify and speed up the process of understanding. It add humor to the topic and illustrate the idea in a

memorable way. It was being accepted today the intellectual value of comics and cartoons. This paper explores the educational value of comics and also how cartoons and comics helps students to gain 21st century skills. To teach and to learn through this technique will definitely a new experience.

Comics and cartoons makes learning an enjoyable experience. Comics are written printed format in black or white or color. It express ideas with images, trends and visuals. Now with the advancement of technology web comics are also available now. We can read it through internet. There are mobile comics and digital comics. A cartoon is a two dimensional illustrated visual art. In the 19th century it is simply a humorous illustration in magazines and newspapers. From the early 20th century it referred to comic strips and animated films.

Language is the means of communication. It assures progress and provide a meaningful life. So mastering a language that helps to connect with the world is something great English is the most widely used language in this context. Teachers and educators need to find innovative materials and techniques to enhance teaching learning process comics are one such technique that emerged in this circumstance, which impacts educational entertainment.

There are four different types of material come under the heading of comics, they are cartoons, comic's strips, comic books and graphic novels. A comic strip is a sequence of drawings arranged to display brief humor with text in balloons. These are usually published in magazines and news papers

A graphic novel is a fiction or nonfiction piece of literature published in comic book form. Words and pictures both play a vital role in narrating the story no educational show or much thicker than comics. There is no educational show or any other means that can replace a good book .Comic books are good motivators that helps children to enter the world of books. The more we read faster the vocabulary is expanded.

According to Francis Bacon "Reading makes a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man". As a stepping stone into the world of reading, comics achieve a great place it enriches child's imagination. Here the learners get the opportunity to select what they wanted to read. Here there is no deliberate learning of things, acquisition is taking place. While

we are doing something with pleasure and delight, unknowingly we can inculcate that value reading plays a vital role in the development of children.

Cartoons lets learners to observe and explore new things and surroundings cartoons makes children active and genius. He helps to maintain good health and overcome stress. While watching good loyal characters in the cartoons the learners also indicate that values. Apart from all these merits through cartoons a child can learn language and acts as a basis to speak in proper way. Parents and teachers have the responsibility to decide the cartoon for their children. Everything in the world exists in binaries, considering cartoons there are good and bad themes.

“Nothing is to be spoken before it has been heard

Nothing to be read before it has been spoken

Nothing is to be written before it has been read”

Mastering basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is very essential. It is quite easy through comic and cartoons. The language of comic and cartoons is very simple, it helps student to grasp items easily. It was applicable to all age groups, simply for the beginners of learning English. After showing cartoons and reading comics at classrooms, teachers are given different discourses which helps student to master various language skills. For example, to write an appreciation of the story, prepare another cartoon, dialogue between writing and presentation. Development of creativity is another benefit. Comics can be used in read aloud's to enhance basic reading skills.

There are parts of speech comics that allows students to learn about verbs, adjectives and prepositions. The Archie comics allow students to read and listen to the comic. Once the students listen to the comic, there is a language lesson that discusses the vocabulary of that comic. Using William Zimmerman's MakesBeliefcomix.com students can create their own comics.

Comics which combines visual and verbal meant to

- Add vocabulary

- Increase inference
- Improve visual literacy
- Development of four fold language skills
- Understand verbs and other parts of speech
- Practice basic rules of pronunciation
- Build confidence and motivation
- Familiarize idioms and expressions
- Simulate dialogue to inject humor into class sessions
- Develops an appreciation of art
- Develop a sense of sequence

Many people would not like to associate comic books with learning. And some educators and parents consider comic as silly. Comics are not about superheroes and graphic novels do not always include “graphic” storylines. Many English classic novels are made into graphic novels. For example pride and prejudice by Jane Austen. Many plays of Shakespeare are made into graphic novels. In India many novels turned into this genre, epic Ramayana have a graphic novel version. Comics and graphic novels are on their way to becoming mainstream. Some people regard reading as Herculean task and avoid such situation. Kids usually skim pages or speed reads. For them comics ensures a new reading experience. When reading comics, children slow down and look at the images and text to know what is happening in the plot.

Comic’s helps children with learning disability children with Autism can learn lot about identifying emotions through the images in a graphic novel. And also children with dyslexia have difficulties to complete a page in a traditional book. They feel relaxed when a complete a page in a comic book. There are also wordless comic books. These offer a great learning experience that is to develop imagination, critical thinking, creativity and sequencing.

Comics, including cartoons, graphic novels, comic books and comic strips can be effective learning media for the students in achieving their 21st century skills. Learning through fun and laughter makes their journey more fruitful and easy. Through this strategy learners can relate the material learnt and the phenomena in their surroundings. Comics are a stepping stone

to other kinds of reading. They motivate and gave confidence to reluctant readers. Definitely there are lot of misconception about comics and cartoons among parents and educators. But for the better development of English, we must promote comics and cartoons. It is far better than traditional methods. Educational institutions need to keep pace with the modern scenario and the need of our society. It is highly advisable to use cartoons and comics as one of the alternative media in English teaching to develop learners of 21st century.

Work cited

“Archie comics”. www.archiecomics.com/podcasts/web.

Bacon, Francis essays. Cosimo classics, March 1st 2007.

Basthomi, yazid. AfrilyasantiRida, “Adapting comics and cartoons to develop 21stcentuary learners”. Language in India. Volume II Nov 2011 : 552-556

“Comic book” Wikipedia, the encyclopedia. Mar 2016

“Cartoon” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Mar 2016

Jamuna BS. Lan CA. New strides in English language Teaching . Kochi Gowly books .2011

“Make Beliefs Comics”. www.makebeliefcomix.com/podcasts/web