Grappling Challenging Topics with Graphic Novels

Cristina Bueno - Deerfield Public Library
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Who We Are
Topics

Relationships
Coming of Age / Identity
Biographies / Memoirs
Myths / Culture
Immigrants / Language Barrier
Wordless
Relationships
The Golden Hour: Discussion

Topics: Gun Violence, PTSD, Anxiety, Support, Healing, Family

Manuel used a focus technique to get him through anxiety. What are some other techniques you think Manuel could benefit from?
Good boy!

ARK!

Huff huff huff

Don’t you know?

Yeah, really?

Good boy!!

Who spends that much on old bones?


I never met an old person who could use the internet.

So that’s what all this is...

I knew you weren’t a witch, huh?

It’s just a business.

A really weird business.

A really, really, really weird business.
Snapdragon: Discussion

Intersectionality, Queerness, Age Differences

Magic, Death, Belonging and Acceptance

Take a look at the different relationships in the book - Snap and Jacks, Snap and Lu, Snap and her mom, Jacks and Jessie, etc.

What do you think of Jack’s and Snap’s work with dead animals?
Relationships
All Summer Long Panels

I'm sorry for being late. Think I left my social sciences on the bus.

S'okay.

What's up for today?

Talking out the Steep Streets, maybe.

Is that who they kids are into now?

No. Most of my friends don't like music. Austin doesn't.

That's more of a high school thing. Music. You're ahead of the curve.

Hey. Did you and Austin have a fight?

Hopefully.

No. But he's acting weird, even if he has no reason.

Boys are dumb like that.
All Summer Long: Discussion

Topics:
Friendship Changes, Loneliness,
New Friendships, Growing Pains

→ How can you practice more independence in friendships to gain more confidence when making new friends?
Relationships: More Suggested Reads

ON A SUNBEAM
TILLIE WALDEN

Laura Dean
keeps breaking up
with me

MAX & the Midknights
LINCOLN PEIRCE

I loved it! -DAV PILKEY, author of DOG MAN
Creator of BIG NATE

“Too funny for one book!” -JEFF KINNEY, author of DIARY OF A WIMPY KID
Coming of Age/Identity
Big Apple Diaries Panels

**Things I Want To Do to Change the World:**
1. Make all boys cuter and nicer
2. Stop pollution
3. Help homeless off the street
4. Make everyone ride bikes
5. Stop wars
6. Make short people grow tall faster
7. Stop acne and period

*So important right now.

**Where I Live:**
- **New York City (NYC)**
- Queens
- But also in Manhattan with Dad.

**Dear Diary:**

**September 7th, 2000**

It's the first week of seventh grade.

**It definitely feels different than sixth grade.

In the last two months everyone has seemed to grow beards, mustaches, and popularity.

Have you seen Matt yet? OMG, he got so cute since last year.

**What did you guys do all summer?**

**WOW! Look how tan you are!**
Big Apple Diaries: Discussion

Topics:
Friendships, First Crushes, Divorce
Tragedy, Loss, Identity

➜ How can you show unity in a time of crisis?
Coming of Age / Identity

FIRST YEAR OUT
A TRANSITION STORY

SABRINA SYMINGTON
First Year Out Panels
First Year Out: Discussion

Topics: Family, Identity, Transitioning, Dating, Honesty

How does one be more approachable to people who are LGBTQIA+?
Coming of Age / Identity
Juliet Takes A Breath Panels

STOP!

There is a Lesbian at this table.

It's me, gay.

Gay, gay, gay.

And I've been eating alone for a year.

Mira: "Pensée, go find that book and then come to me!"

Mira: "No, this is the most radiant baby I've ever seen in my life. Just walk in!"

Girl: "You better get your hormones in check, you wanna add more girl problems to your life?"

Girl: "Do your work!"

Oli: "Lolita, let's end you.

WHICH

In 1994, Lolita Lebron blasted off shots into the air inside the U.S. House of Representatives shouting "Viva Puerto Rico Libre!"
Juliet Takes A Breath: Discussion

Coming out to your family

Being queer and hispanic

Meeting your heroes

What do you do when nothing seems to be going according to plan?

How does one’s race, culture, and upbringing affect their view of the world and themselves?
Coming of Age / Identity: More Suggested Reads

**NEW KID**
Jerry Craft

"Funny, sharp, and totally real! Jordan Banks is the kid everyone will be talking about!"
- Jeff Kinney, author of Diary of a Wimpy Kid

**GO WITH THE FLOW**
Lily Williams & Karen Schneemann

**GENDER QUEER**
Maia Kobabe

A memoir
Biographies / Memoirs

PRIMATES
The Fearless Science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas

JIM OTTAVIANI & MARIS WICKS
By the Author of the New York Times #1 Bestseller Feynman
MY WALK TO WORK COULDN'T BE MORE DIFFERENT THAN IN LOS ANGELES.

EXCEPT FOR THE NOISE, THE JUNGLE IS AS LOUD AS A BUSY L.A. STREET CORNER.

AND THE ORANGUTANS—
—THAT'S ALSO THE SAME.

MEANING, JUST LIKE IN L.A., I DON'T SEE ANY.
Primates: Discussion

Women in science

Writing non-fiction as a graphic novel

What are some of the physical, societal, and cultural challenges these three scientists faced?

What do you think would have been different, if anything, if these three scientists were men?
Biographies/Memoirs

Jarrett J. Krosoczka

Hey, Kiddo
How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and DEALT with Family Addiction

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST
I just don’t understand. I want my mom.

I know, honey. But you’re going to be living here for a little while now.

Hey Kiddo Panels
Hey, Kiddo: Discussion

Topics:
Substance Abuse, Depression, Abandonment
Generational Trauma, Rehab, Addiction

How can learning more about your family help you understand yourself?

Resource:
SAMHSA - https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
OF COURSE I’LL GET YOU TO A DOCTOR.

BUT, IN CASE YOU DON’T KNOW IT, LET ME TEACH YOU SOMETHING.

DOCTORS COST MONEY AND MONEY IS SOMETHING THAT IS IN SHORT SUPPLY IN THIS HOUSE!

WHAT’S GOING OUR CHRISTMAS IN FEBRUARY?

NO, THERE’S NOTHING YOU CAN GET FOR ME.

I MEAN IT!

YOU MEAN IT.

WELL THEN, THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN GET. I FORGOT TO BRING ALONG THE BOOK I WAS READING.

BUT OF WALT, I FORGOT YOU STOLE THAT FROM MY ROOM AND YOU BURNED IT UP.
Stitches: Discussion

Topics: Family, communication, honesty, medical trauma, guilt, forgiveness

How important is forgiveness, especially when it’s someone close to you who did the hurting?
Biographies / Memoirs: More Suggested Reads
TRICKSTER
Native American Tales
A Graphic Collection
Trickster Panels

His home was set on the cliffs for which the area took its name: Aquinnah, place where the land ends.

Moshlip was looking for the fine wisps on the surface of the ocean water that meant only one thing—whales!

He would grab one of the huge animals by the tail and throw it against the clay of the cliffs.

Her voice swept across the land like the soft gentle breeze that flows down a river.

He found the bag where the wind was kept...

...and pulled it to the light of day.

There, a Prairie Chicken picked the stitches out...
Trickster: Discussion

TOPICS: Mythology, culture, history, morals, fables, communication, honesty, deception, rules, consequences

Why is mythology of another culture important to learn?
Myths / Culture

“Gene Luen Yang has created that rare article: a youthful tale with something new to say about American youth.”

—NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

AMERICAN BORN CHINESE
American Born Chinese Panels

ON THE MORNING AFTER WE ARRIVED, WITH THE SCENT OF OUR OLD HOME STILL LINGERING IN MY CLOTHES, I WAS SENT OFF TO MRS. GREEDER’S THIRD GRADE AT MAPLEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

CLASS, I’D LIKE US ALL TO GIVE A WARM MAPLEWOOD ELEMENTARY WELCOME TO YOUR NEW FRIEND AND CLASSMATE JING JANG!

JING JANG.

JING JANG!

HE AND HIS FAMILY RECENTLY MOVED TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ALL THE WAY FROM CHINA!

SAN FRANCISCO.

SAN FRANCISCO.
**American Born Chinese: Discussion**

Traditional Stories and Mythology

Popularity and “Fitting In”

Being a Person of Color in the US

Racist Stereotypes in novels and art

What does it mean to be true to yourself?

What stories have you grown up with that have shaped you?
Almost American Girl

Myths / Culture
The dreaded first day of school came.

The only kids I knew at school were Pakistani and his friends.

"Hey, I'm Ali. We're new here. How do you spell your name?"

"Um... S. Stor..." I said, looking down. I didn't want to make a fool of myself.

Whenever I tried to defend myself, they would only get more creative.

They would taunt me, calling me names I didn't understand. It was humiliating and I was afraid to speak up.

I had learned English for a year and a half in middle school, but I still sounded like gibberish to me.

Mom and I had been on a vacation outside Korea every year I was alive. So far, we had traveled to Guam, Saipan, Hawaii, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore.

The city was full of people speaking a language I didn't understand. It was surreal to be surrounded by so many non-Korean kids.

When I got home, my mom went into the kitchen and said, "Mom, I'm going to go home." I didn't understand what she meant.

Mom was struggling with her English and the culture shock of being in a foreign country. It was tough for her.

And this summer, we were going to Alabama. In America. Why Mom picked this destination was a mystery to me. But I trusted her.
Almost American Girl: Discussion

Topics:
Racism, Moving, Language Barriers
Pop Culture, Cultural Differences, Mother/Daughter Relationship

What are some ways you can make someone feel welcome? How can you make someone who struggles with English comfortable in a group setting?
Myths / Culture: More Suggested Reads

- Gamayun Tales I
- Pashmina
- This Place
Immigrants / Language Barrier
Illegal: Discussion

Topics:
Immigration, Undocumented Immigrants, Family
Hardship, Global Issues, Hope

Why do you think the author only wanted this story told in graphic novel format? What risks would you take to be with your sibling or closest friend?
Immigrants / Language Barrier
Since you fear low-IQ voters, consider an extreme case: the whole world moves here, dragging U.S. IQ down to the current world average:

CURRENT U.S. IQ: 98
CURRENT WORLD IQ: 87

GROSS WORLD PRODUCT PER CAPITA IS NOW ROUGHLY $16,000. WHAT HAPPENS TO THAT?

NEW GDP = OLD GDP + OPEN BORDERS GDP
= 29,400 + 6,600
= 36,000

IT’S ROUGHLY DOUBLED

WHAT?! DO YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THAT DESPITE YOUR DISGUSTING, YOU REACH ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME PREDICTIONS FOR IMMIGRATION NUMBERS AS MIDWEG CLEANSING?

OPEN BORDERS DOUBLES GLOBAL PRODUCTIONS

GREAT GUESS!

It’s only the basic model, and I’m inventing an array of subtleties!
Open Borders: Discussion

TOPICS: Immigration, Policies, Home, Job security, Families, Money

How does immigration affect a person as they enter a new community and the community itself?
Immigrants / Language Barrier
The Magic Fish Panels

Panel 1:

Yes. All bad things.

No GREAT things. I bet!

Panel 2:

I’m here!

Are you and Zilan and Claire?

They’re cool, Zilan got the jersey number he wanted this year. Number ten, just like his favorite player, Diego Maradona.

Panel 3:

What kind of ice cream am I yelling at you, Fido?

I don’t know yet. I have to see what they’ve got.

Panel 4:

Good for him! He got so tall all of a sudden. Must be on his mom’s side. Karen’s pretty tall.

Panel 5:

What are you working on?

Not much! Just a special assignment. I’ve been working with a very important client.

Panel 6:

If you can’t make up your mind before we get to the counter, I’m gonna pick one for you. Just a warning!

Panel 7:

Hey, what’s your jacket size?

Anything but most!

Panel 8:

Can you pick up where we left off in the princess story?

Sure!
The Magic Fish: Discussion

Discovering yourself and the words to express yourself with those you love most

Living in a new country

Ways to communicate

What aspects of your life might be harder to talk about in another language or with someone from a different culture?
Immigrants / Language Barrier: More Suggested Reads

1. **When Stars Are Scattered** by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed
2. **The Arrival** by Shaun Tan
3. **Escape toゴールドマウンテン** by David H.T. Wong

*From the Newbery Honor-Winning Creator of Roller Girl*
Questions / Concerns / Favorite Dessert
Wordless

The Only Child
by Guojing
The Only Child Panels
The Only Child: Discussion

“The story in this book is fantasy, but it reflects the very real feelings of isolation and loneliness I experienced growing up in the 1980s under the one-child policy in China”

Loneliness and longing
Love and Joy
Imagination

What would it feel like to be lost and alone? (Maybe it's not what you think)
What would you do if you fell asleep on the bus and missed your stop?
The Longest Day of the Future Panels
The Longest Day of the Future: Discussion

Topics:
Greed, Depression, Social Commentary
Power, War, Violence

→ What are some challenges you see occurring with reading wordless graphic novels? What are some ways you pull yourself out of a funk?
A dog and a robot become friends. But their days of friendship are numbered.

**ROBOT dreams**

by Sara Varon

Wordless
Robot Dreams Panels
Robot Dreams Panels
Robot Dreams: Discussion

The word ‘Dreams’ in the title could be a noun or a verb. Explain the similarities and differences and are there other characters that dream too?

How does robot change physically and emotionally from the beginning to the end?

Friendships change and sometimes don’t last forever. What are your thoughts on that?

What defines a good friendship?
Wordless: More Suggested Reads

Jim Woodring
Congress of the Animals

Armin GREDER
the mediterranean

LUPANO
PANACCIONE
A SEA OF LOVE