

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE COMICS

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THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE COMICS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much has been said pro and con concerning the value of the use of the comics, not only in the schools but in the home and (or) elsewhere. While it is still a moot question, the value of the comics appears to be increasingly appreciated by the classroom teacher.

Statement of the Problem

This study is made to determine any educational values to be derived from the use of the comics. The problem shall be to show (1) what those values are, (2) how they shall be attained, and (3) which comics are best suited to aid in the attainment of those values, as shown by the data to be assembled.

Source of Data

The source of the data will be found in periodicals, texts, questionnaires; the latter as answered by teachers, syndicates, parents, cartoonists, and personal experiences with the comics in the classroom of the fourth grade in the Cement City School, Dallas.

Purpose of the Study

In recent years the comic has assumed an important place

in the lives of people, especially children. They have apparently completely captivated their imagination and interest. The purpose of this study is to find out why children are such comic enthusiasts, what value they place on the comics, what the parents' attitude is toward comics as reading material for children, if and how teachers in the United States are using them as a teaching tool, and to make available to parents and teachers the possibilities of the comics as educational material that could add to the "good life" of a child.

Major General Thomas J. Hanley, Jr., chief of military personnel procurement, and Rear Admiral Thomas L. Spragus, navy personnel chief, have said that Russia was using comics "in putting their story of propaganda over to their youngsters," and apparently has been successful in influencing the minds of young people. They further state of the comics, "If what they have gets results and if it will get us those same benefits or results for our ideas and ideals and build up a background for incentive, why not use them?"¹ The navy will utilize comics in a recruiting experiment. If the navy sees such value in comics, then educators should recognize their use as a learning tool in education and cooperate with syndicates in keeping the comics dignified and informative.

Limitations

Much research and study would be needed to find the many

¹The Daily Times Herald, June 17, 1948, p. 2.

educational values of the comics in effective teaching. This study is intended to include only those problems which deal with the experiences of normal boys and girls in the elementary school, and it is confined to Latin and Anglo-American children, with a special study being made of the uses of the comics in the fourth and seventh grades in the Cement City School of the Dallas Public Schools. Two classes of different grades were used in the experiment which could have affected the outcomes. The personalities of the teachers probably contributed to the amount of learning. Also, the number of the children was perhaps too small to establish definite conclusions.

Method

An investigation is made of the use of comics as an educational medium. Also, an analysis is made of the means used to correlate the comics with classroom instruction.

Chapter II is a discussion of the background of the comics and of the cartoonists related to this study.

Chapter III is an investigation of the comics through a limited number of questionnaires which were distributed to a few publishers, educators, parents, teachers, and pupils. These results are expected to show (a) the chief benefits pupils derive from comic books, (b) pre-comic book activities reported by the schools, (c) follow-up activities and the schools using each, (d) the ten most popular comic books with students.

Data from the attached questionnaire were from the teachers of the nine Dallas City schools questioned and from fifteen out-of-state schools.

Nine parents out of twenty-five answered the parents' questionnaire. Pupils' questionnaires were from Dallas City schools, Boys' Town, Nebraska, and Livingston, Texas. All comic syndicates replied to the questionnaire except Educational Comics.

Chapter IV includes a result of the findings.

Chapter V is the summary, conclusions, and recommendations in regard to the continued use of the comics. Only a small number of the teachers in this study made use of the comics in their classroom. Some recommendations are made for effective utilization of the comics in the classroom.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE COMICS RELATED TO THIS INVESTIGATION

Means Used to Correlate Comic Books with Regular Classroom Instruction

Kanten says that teachers have found that by introducing Moby Dick in cartoon strip form, children display more than unusual enthusiasm for reading the original book.¹ Many of the classic comics titles are of books already familiar to them in school English classes, so that they have direct application to schools.

The Gilbertson Company, with which Albert Kanten is associated, exerts great care in making each book as authentic as possible, and averages spending a year on each volume. Captions and text are carefully checked for faithfulness to the original.

During World War II the American Red Cross purchased Gilbertson's entire output of classic comics for distribution among its huts and recreation centers. Some interesting reactions have been reported from the service.

Among classic comics produced by this company are: Moby Dick, Ivanhoe, Last of the Mohicans, A Tale of Two Cities, Robin Hood, Arabian Nights, Les Miserables, Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote, Rip Van Winkle, The Headless

¹Albert L. Kanten, "Classic Comics Sell a Hundred Million," Publisher's Weekly, CXLIX (March 23, 1946), 1736.

Horseman, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Westward Ho, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Gulliver's Travels, The Deer Slayer, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Huckleberry Finn, The Corsican Brothers, Three Famous Mysteries, The Path Finder, Oliver Twist, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Two Years Before the Mast, The Adventures of Marco Polo, Michael Strogoff, and Frankenstein.

In discussing the comics, Vosan says that comics provide education, drama, and human interest.² When the comics contain a story of a child who is handicapped by a physical defect or extreme poverty, that book is sure to hold children spellbound while reading of the adventure. Through the comics one gets an idea of what interests the child. Teachers and parents must recognize the artistic, and the teacher must be prepared to present to children material that has been chosen for literary merit. Only that which is on the proper experience level of literary merit will arouse the desired response.

A Newsweek comment says:

The most significant fact of the 40's (to future historians), says Al Capp, will not be some tired landscape, not some abnormal or abortive attempts of abstractionists and surrealists, but the comic strip. It is the most fanatically followed, and the realization of this is beginning to take shape now. . . . Lil Abner certainly will afford future historians some kind of social document of our time.³

²Frank Vosan, "Comics Versus Good Literature," The Grade Teacher, LXV (October, 1947), 64.

³Al Capp: Lil Abner on a Crusade," The Newsweek, XXIX (November 18, 1947), 60-63.

Ruth Strang says the reason children read comics is because they meet their needs for overcoming in imagination some of the limitations of adventure denied them in real life.⁴ To normal children the comics offer the mental catharsis which Aristotle claimed for the drama.

The comics supply to children of limited reading ability a form of experience thoroughly enjoyable to them. They introduce a wide range of vocabulary, including many words repeatedly encountered in other reading.

They teach nature, science, geography, history, biography, respect for law, seriousness of life, and many moral values. The value of the comic differs for individual children.

Marston divides the evolution of the comics in the United States into three periods: (1) 1900-1920 consisted of comics intended to be comic, (2) this period witnessed the introduction of pathos and human interest into the continuities of the early twenties and ended about 1930, when leading comics stopped being funny and became adventure strips, (3) beginning in 1938 with the advent of Superman, this period made rapid departure from previously accepted standards of story-telling and drama.⁵ Superman satisfies the universal human longing to be stronger. The wish to be super-strong is a healthy wish, a vital, compelling, power producing desire. It stimulates the child's natural longing to

⁴Ruth Strang, "Why Children Read the Comics," Educational School Journal, XLIII (February, 1943), 336.

⁵William M. Marston, "Why One Hundred Million Americans Read the Comics," The American Scholar, XIII (January, 1944), 35-44.

battle and overcome obstacles, particularly evil ones, thus giving him a better chance for self-advancement in the world. The moral force of this new type of story teaching is stronger than the older appeal of self-interest.

Feeling big, smart, important, and winning the admiration of their fellow men are realistic rewards for which all children strive. Protecting the weak and helping humanity rather than killing and neglecting is the new definition of heroes by the comics.

Hoban says that "it is an illustration dramatizing or emphasizing a story by making use of human phantasy, grotesquerie, incongruity, or satire. The cartoon touches the imagination which works like a sixth sense."⁶

Cartoons which tell their story without the aid of explanatory caption, dialogue or balloons are best. They must have character and humor, even though the latter may often bring an uneasy as well as a good natural smile.

The Walt Disney and the Silly Symphony cartoons suggest appealing applications to the natural sciences, in music, in story telling, reading and other subjects.

The cartoon "Santa's Workshop" illustrates mass production, the assembly line, division of labor, processing stages and the like.

An imaginative teacher can turn to good account the

⁶Charles F. Hoban, "Visualizing the Curriculum," Journal of the National Education Association, XXIV (October, 1935), 66.

interest in the comic page of the newspaper. The "Highlights of American History" has been effectively used in history classes. The teacher may obtain animated cartoons from the picture industry.

Sones says of the comics:

The comic goes to the very heart of reading comprehension and interest. Reading with understanding is reading with images or precepts. Reading with interest is reading with personal identification. Pictures set off the imagery and conversation personatizes the subject matter and gives clues for the reader to project himself into it. Educational comics do this. . . . The number of words per page is practically equal to the wordage on the pages of regular textbooks for the corresponding grade level.⁷

Again Sones states:

The comic book is one of the many phases of the child's current environment, and life activity . . . The so-called slow-learner, or reader, who is usually older than the average age of his group, much of the comic book reading may fit his reading ability and provide just the practice material that is needed to increase his reading vocabulary. . . . For the interested child the comics present real life experiences which may and can be related to the aims and activities of the school. Often the stories are so vitalized that the pupil can be lead to further research on a subject.⁸

The unsocial child uses the comic thriller to let off steam. Sones suggests some comic activities:

1. Oral reproduction of the comic book story.

⁷W. D. Sones, "Comic Books Are Coming to School," Progressive Education, XXIV (April, 1947), 208-209.

⁸M. D. Sones, "Comic Books as Teaching Aids," The Instructor, LI (April, 1942), 14.

2. Identifying new words.
3. Developing meaning from pictures and content.
4. Pronouncing new words.
5. Finding meaning of parallel stories in literature.
6. Remedial reading practice.
7. Dramatization of story.
8. Group discussion of story value.
9. Develop social study activities; science, mathematics, geography, and art activities.⁹

Denecke divides the comics into three main headings:

- I. Informational--relatively wholesome
 - A. True comics
 - B. Classic comics
 - C. Real life comics
 - D. True aviation
 - E. Bible stories
 - F. Calling all girls

- II. Harmless--amusing stories of practical jokes, and the like

Walt Disney Looney Tunes Ace Comics Jolly Jingles Ha, Ha Comics Terry Toons Surprises	New Funnies Crazy Komics Pop Eye Bugs Bunny Magic Comics Andy Panda Coo Coo Comics
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

- III. Unwholesome--dealing with crime, murder, superman type of imagery, dealing with hatred, revenge, hideous illustrations. Definitely bad mental food for children. . .¹⁰

⁹Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰Lena Denecke, "Fifth Graders Study the Comic Books," The Elementary English Review, VI (January, 1943), 6-8.

Robinson points to the study made by Columbia University students last year entitled "The Children Talk About Comics."¹¹ The study was based upon detailed interviews with one hundred children from various family backgrounds. This study has not been examined.

Robinson also refers to Frank Cohen, the kind and understanding director of Youth House, New York, who says that some of the youths read as many as seventy-five comics a week. These were comics of every classification. For some it was the only contact they were able to have with the printed page, but for all of them it seemed to offer excitement and a more secure world than the sordid one they knew.

Robinson also refers to Al Capp who, she says, agrees with her that the comics create a feeling for good things without getting preachy about them. "If comics can sharpen the taste for cereal and spinach, they can certainly be used to stimulate an interest in music, literature, and good living," he told her. "If L'le Abner listens to a Mozart symphony instead of a cheap maudlin song, without intruding into the basic ideas of the comics as entertainment, one hundred thousand kids may want to hear what that symphony sounds like."¹²

School and Society comments on the common belief that the reading of comic strips and books by children is deleterious

¹¹Selma Robinson, "What Do They See in the Comics?" McCall's, XII (December, 1947), 98.

¹²Ibid.

to their characters and moral habits.¹³ The editor feels that this is correct, according to three surveys which he has examined. The surveys were conducted under the auspices of the California Congress of Parent-Teachers and published in October, 1947. The general conclusion of the surveys pointed out that comic book reading does not occupy the major portion of children's recreational time; and that most of the materials read by children dealt with animals and pure fun, and not with horror and violence or sex.

Newsweek took notice that for the first time, in 1946, the Encyclopedia Americana took cognizance of the fact that there are comics. This was the first time they had been so recognized by an encyclopedia. A thirteen column treatise was written in the encyclopedia by an educator, Harvey Zorbaugh, chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of New York, who is editor of Educational Comics Texts.¹⁴

Teachers who use these texts agree that the slower students retain material longer when they get it in a picture form, that they have been exposed to the comic books first, and that their struggle with language and reading difficulties is made easier.

Logasa stresses the humor which is found in the comics

¹³"Comic Books and Character," School and Society, LXVI (December 6, 1947), 437.

¹⁴"Comic-Coated History," Newsweek, XXVIII (August 5, 1946), 89.

as necessary release for wholesome laughter; she concludes, "We have the word of distinguished psychiatrists that they are valuable for mental health. We have the word of Army officials that comics were a morale builder during the war."¹⁵

Jersild estimated that for nine months of the year the urban child devotes about one-third as much time to the comics, radio, and movies, as he spends at school.¹⁶

Arbuthnot feels that the children do not take the comics as seriously as we adults feel that they do. Even if they do, she thinks they can be led from what they see and read in the comics to better class art and cartooning.¹⁷

For uses in school, she suggests stories of Wanda Gag or Virginia Burton or Marjorie Flack with the youngest children and such books as The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins or Lentil or Andy and the Lion with the oldest.

Arbuthnot says that children should be encouraged to develop their own comic strip characters and plots. For older children it would be an admirable way of developing a more critical attitude toward this material, as well as of introducing them to a clever technique full of creative possibilities.

¹⁵Hannah Logasa, "The Comic Spirit and the Comics," Wilson Library Bulletin, XXI (November, 1946), 238-239.

¹⁶Arthur T. Jersild, Child Development and The Curriculum, p. 122.

¹⁷May Hill Arbuthnot, "Service for School Executives," School Management, XII (March-April, 1946), 2.

She continues:

As in the fairy tales, these triumphant heroes, these persecuted but always rescued maidens, and these children and youths who overcome every obstacle and surmount every difficulty provide a healthy catharsis for the emotions.

Fantasy, psychiatrists tell us, is a normal part of childhood. The child trying to function in a world of adults is always in a position of inferiority; so these youthful heroes with whom the child identifies himself becomes a symbol of power. Through these symbols, he begins to feel adequate, secure, even triumphant. Such feelings of adequacy are a needful part of growing up and help the child when life and the omnipotent adults frustrate him.¹⁸

Further, Arbutnot feels that there is no need to worry about the child as long as he is enjoying good books as well as comic strips. Cheerful, wholesome children, she thinks, are of first importance. Devotion to a few lurid comics may be merely a passing phase and probably won't turn the scale for better or worse in a child's development, if we have armed him with strength in other ways.

In the Town Hall Program, Bulletin of America's Town Meeting of the Air, Hecht, of True Comics, said in part:

The comics are really a new medium of communication, just as radio and television are new mediums of communication. I don't think that most people realize this. . . . Josette Frank, the children's book consultant of the Child Study Association of America, who has for years been studying the comics and wrote a book about them, recently wrote, "Children read comic magazines because they find in them the satisfaction of some real innermost need of their own. . . ."

The United States Armed Forces used the comics as a

¹⁸Ibid., p. 3.

means of teaching soldiers and sailors how to operate various weapons and how to conduct themselves in battle. They found that soldiers and sailors learned more rapidly by means of the comics.

In The True Comics, which is one of the magazines that our company publishes, we teach children history and science and current events via the comics.

Through special comic folders industrial workers are taught lessons in safety and health via the comics . . .

Some educational authorities declare that all comic magazines are bad. On the other hand, there are certain eminent child psychiatrists who state that all comic magazines are good for children in as much as they teach them about life.

I'm not in either camp. I believe that there are good comics and bad comics just as there are good books and bad books.¹⁹

Objectives

Most educators and parents consider comics impracticable as a learning tool. With this in mind it is desirable to formulate some objectives toward which educators may find a use for the comics.

To supplement textbooks.--Most textbooks are adopted for five years or more. Their content is usually out of date before they reach the classroom. Comic books come every month with new tone and recent material which can be made useful in various ways. Also, comics bring to the classroom supplementary information about science, history, and other school subjects, as well as wholesome reading for leisure time. Much unusual material can be presented by a skillful teacher

¹⁹Hecht, Bulletin of America's Town Meeting of the Air, Town Hall Program (March 2, 1948), p. 7.

in the correlation of the comics with school subjects.

To create, hold and utilize interest.²⁰--It has been noted by many that few, if any, books attract and hold the interest and attention of a child, like a comic book. The well chosen words, that fill the balloons, spoken by the characters, remain in the child's consciousness longer than the same fact read in a page of reading. The characters give the story a personal touch which lends emphasis to the fact or point of view and definitely impresses the information upon the mind of the child.

To stimulate voluntary self-activity along desirable lines.²¹--By means of the comics latent abilities may be discovered and utilized. A timid child has been known to forget his timidity and participate in an activity that previously had no appeal. One child a teacher had failed to get a response from in oral expression, suddenly became very eager to give a comic book report. This new interest gave the child a footing in the art of story telling and timidity was forgotten.

To broaden the outlook of the pupils.²²--The comics have a great effect on a child's attitude toward others. They help him see the needs of a person who is less fortunate than himself and, too, acquaint him with the qualities that

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 8.

make for a good life.

To develop intellectual culture.²³--Comics are useful in developing an interest in art, literature, social studies, and current events. Master teachers are making use of the comics to introduce a school subject that would otherwise have no interest appeal.

To develop citizenship.²⁴--One teacher noticed during a comic book reading period that a respectful attitude was especially noticeable. Exchanges were made quietly, no one bothered anyone else, and as far as the rest of the world was concerned, it did not exist for the children.

To advance the cause of education.²⁵--A new point of view may be introduced by the comics, that will stimulate teacher-pupil interest. The comics have become such a rival to teacher technique that educators are aghast at their effects on child interest. Every effort is being made to devise a technique that is as enticing to the child as are the comics.

Background of Some of the Cartoonists for the Comics

After examining the following table of cartoonists, their education, qualifications, and place as citizens in the United States, one may well ask the question, "Shall our children read comics by creators like these?"

²³Ibid.

²⁴E. Z. Sperzel, "The Effect of Comic Books on the Vocabulary Growth and Reading Comprehension," The Elementary English Review, XXV (June, 1948), 109-113.

²⁵Ibid., p. 113.

TABLE 1
SOME OUTSTANDING CARTOONISTS AND THEIR PUBLICATIONS

Name	Education	Citizenship	Comic Book
Frank V. Martinek	<p>Graduate of Chicago Public Schools. Chicago Academy of Fine Arts.</p> <p>Identification Inspector of Chicago. Tutored in several systems of scientific criminal identification by Mary Holland, a celebrated woman detective of Scotland Yards.</p>	<p>Rank of Lt. Comd. U.S. Naval Reserve. Decorated order of M. R. Stefanik with star by Czechoslovakia, their highest honor medal, World War I. Russia's highest honor medal Order of St. Staneslaus.</p>	<p>Don Winslow of the Navy.</p> <p>Don Winslow of Ceylon. Know Your Man. Code book on Naval and Military Codes.</p>
Walter E. Disney	<p>Hon. graduate of University of Southern Cal. Hon. graduate of Harvard and Yale. Motion picture producer of animated cartoons.</p>	<p>Served A.E.F. in France 1918-19 as Red Cross ambulance driver.</p> <p>Honorary member of Art Worker's Guild of London.</p>	<p>Walt Disney. Donald Duck. Mickey Mouse. Bambi.</p>
Al Capp (Alfred G. Caplin)	<p>Graduate of Fine Arts; University of Boston, and Harvard.</p>	<p>Cited by Sec. of Treasury for work for the Treasury Department. Appointed Civilian Adviser to Headquarters Army War College of U. S.</p>	<p>Li'l Abner, in books, strip, and motion picture form.</p>

TABLE 1--Continued

Name	Education	Citizenship	Comic Book
Harold Lincoln Gray	Graduate Purdue Univ.	Served U. S. Army World War I. Member Purdue Alumni Assn. American Legion. Sigma Delta, Mason.	Orphan Annie
Sidney Smith	Pres. Univ. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Graduate Harvard Law School.	Pres. Univ. of Toronto. Pres. Nat'l Film Society of Canada. Pres. Canadian Assn. for Adult Education Asst. Editor <u>Can- adian Bar Review</u> .	The Gumps
Robert Ripley	Visited and ex- plored more than 150 countries in his perennial search for odd facts.	Fellow of Royal Geographical Soc. of London, Eng. First artist ever to send a drawing over the air or by tele- phone.	Believe It Or Not
Jim Williams			Out Our Way. Most widely pub- lished comic in the world. His human comedy is recognized as a real contribu- tion to Ameri- can life.

As in any other vocation, not all cartoonists are fortunate enough to have experiences like the ones mentioned in this study. The standards of most syndicates bar the production of undesirable comics, so the cartoonist must keep his subjects on a high plane if he expects to sell his work.

Remarks of Some Cartoonists

The following cartoonists state some of the ideals they try to give in their comics.

Phil Hustis in his comic "Army Antics" during the war says that his main effort was to portray the authentic human interest and humor he experienced, that went on around him, and to convey the correct equipment, uniforms and men as they really were in the army. Knowing that the army business was coming up, he hit on the idea of doing a strip direct from camp. He kept a pad with him all the time and sketched every chance, using the sketches for reference so the stuff in the strip would be authentic.

Lank Leonard is the originator of "Mickey Finn." Mickey is an honest cop; Leonard says, "I always try to have him triumph over evil without too much gun play or weird stuff in the strip. I've tried to keep the strip human. Mickey's mother is patterned after my own mother and Kitty is my own wife."

Chic Young, creator of "Blondie" which has become a national favorite, has been placed among the top ranking cartoonists of the world.

Al Capp, creator of "Little Abner," tries to depict fair play, love of family and folks, humor based upon everyday living, as well as the fantastic.

Harold Gray writes the comic strip and comic book "Orphan Annie." He is well educated and sets forth many excellent good citizenship ideas in his cartoons.

Eugene L. Ahern, creator of "Room and Board," said:

I have a rigid code for my characters. They are never allowed to cash in on a laugh at the cost of human suffering. They never jest about things which some persons may revere. In short, my cartoons must always be so written and drawn that I can discuss them freely and frankly with my young daughter.

Cluyas Williams says that a comic strip should be amusing and give the reader a laugh. The purpose of comics is to take people out of their everyday lives and lighten the seriousness of daily life. In other words, they are published on the Peter Pan theory that people never grow up, but always have a spark of childhood in them. That is why (in considering a comic) we keep in mind the viewpoint of people from eight to eighty.

Many other cartoonists have just as interesting backgrounds as the ones mentioned in this study, as well as high standard objectives for creating their comics.

Chief Benefits Pupils Derive from Comic Books

Under the wise discrimination and guidance of teachers and parents, the comics may help the child form his moral concepts, stabilize his judgment as well as increase his intelligent thinking. Most children are not inclined to dwell too long on one task. The comics do not overtax the mind, since it takes only a few minutes to read them, nor do they overstrain the eyes with too much reading during adolescence when the eyes are growing in vision strength. The funnies are a time-saving value for vision. The thoughts are short, so the eye span is short, thus saving the strain of re-reading for understanding thought.

Some writers claim that a few minutes a day with the comics are excellent aids in preserving mental and physical health. A child who takes time to sit down and read, takes time to rest and relax. He not only rests his body but also rests his mind. Hence rest might well be listed as a first value which the comics offer in health education. Many leading thoughts which cartoonists depict in the comics are related to health education. Often the strips "Donald Duck," "Don Winslow," and "Napoleon" explore the field of weights, measuring, and gardening; "Popeye," "Wahoo," "Mickey Mouse," foods; "Ned Brandt," exercise, proper diet and rest; "Dick Tracy," law enforcement and good citizenship. Many health insuring habits such as care of the teeth, safety, first aid, and other lessons, are set forth in the comics.

Health lesson stories are often found in the following comics:

Ace Comics
Andy Panda
Bugs Bunny
Calling All Girls
Classic Comics

Coo Coo Comics
Jolly Jingles
Krazy Comics
Magic Comics

New Funnies
Popeye
Real Life
True Comics
Walt Disney

Suggested ways of using comics for health are:

1. Find health stories.
2. Draw original health cartoons.
3. Make a list of health words.
4. Make cartoons during National Health Week on proper foods, good posture, care of the teeth, outdoor exercise, etc.
5. Mount comic characters and use them in an originally written health play. Personal experience in this activity caused quite a sensation in a fourth grade class. The experience seemed very meaningful to the children.

Cartoonists are helpful agencies to the conservation of our

natural resources. Often they emphasize the harmful uses made of some of our natural resources. Knott, cartoonist for the Dallas Morning News, illustrated soil conservation in his cartoon "Dust Storm," May 4, 1937. That was about the time our grasslands were plowed up and the soils began blowing away.

Social relations of many kinds are depicted in the comic stories. Life situations are presented in cameo form, and desirable and undesirable behavior stands out for ready appraisal and understanding. The eternal conflicts and problems--child-adult as in the Katzenjammers and Little Iodine, between the sexes as in Jiggs and Maggie, home life as in Blondie, adolescence as in Tillie the Toiler--give insights that may be capitalized by teachers in promoting social growth.

In the appendix is a pupils' questionnaire, which was submitted to 275 children. All children especially liked Archie, Superman, and Captain Marvel. Indian children preferred comics about people; Negro children liked the supernatural type; boys of Boys' Town listed True and Crime Does Not Pay as their preferences. The questionnaire showed that children prefer the harmless, humorous, and informational type comics.

Table 2 shows the comics read by the children in the order of their preference in reply to question one of the questionnaire, which asks the children to list five of their favorite comics.

In reply to question two, "Do the comics help you be a better

TABLE 2

COMPARATIVE SCORE OF BOYS AND GIRLS OF ELEVEN SCHOOLS
ON THEIR CHOICE OF FAVORITE
COMIC BOOKS

	Sidney Lanier	Trinity Heights	William Lipscomb	Benito Juarez	Obadiah Knight	Fannin	Cement City	North Dallas High	B. F. Darrell (negro)	Big Sandy, Texas	Boy's Town, Nebraska	Total
Grades	5	6-7	6-7	6-7	6-7-8	5	4-6	9	5-6	4	Hi. Sch.	
Questionnaires Answered	19	25	25	25	22	26	50	22	22	22	17	275
<u>Archie</u>	3	8	10	10	11	4	18	8	1	3	3	79
<u>Superman</u> . . .	8	4	3	3	3	10	13	10	12	7	4	77
<u>Donald Duck</u> .	14	13	7	.	3	9	14	3	1	1	3	68
<u>True</u>	2	5	10	.	11	3	1	2	3	.	14	51
<u>Crime Does Not Pay</u>	1	1	2	22	1	3	.	2	4	1	8	45
<u>Capt. Marvel</u> .	4	2	3	3	3	4	5	4	2	12	1	43
<u>Bugs Bunny</u> . .	4	4	11	1	7	3	4	4	2	.	.	40
<u>Mutt and Jeff</u>	3	2	4	10	3	3	7	1	3	.	5	41
<u>Roy Rogers</u> . .	1	1	2	1	1	4	8	.	1	15	.	34
<u>Tom Mix</u> . . . .	.	.	.	.	1	7	11	.	1	12	.	32
<u>Walt Disney</u> .	3	4	4	3	3	1	9	1	.	.	2	30
<u>Gene Autry</u> . .	1	.	2	1	1	6	6	.	.	15	.	32
<u>Batman</u>	3	1	.	3	2	2	4	3	10	2	.	30
<u>Blondie</u>	2	3	1	4	2	1	5	3	1	2	.	24
<u>Merry Melodies</u>	.	5	5	.	3	2	2	.	9	.	2	28

citizen?" most children did not feel that the comics affected them either way.

To question three, "Do the comics help you understand your school subjects better?" 113 answered yes, while 102 answered no. Table 3 shows the comic, subject, and the per cent of children who thought the comics helped them in their studies.

TABLE 3

RESULTS OF QUESTION THREE SHOWING THE COMIC BOOK,
SUBJECT, AND PER CENT OF CHILDREN THE
COMICS HELPED

Comic Books	Subject	Per Cent of Children
<u>All Star; Batman; Calling All Kids;</u> <u>Don Winslow; Donald Duck; Gene Autrey;</u> <u>Jack Armstrong; Lone Ranger; Miss</u> <u>America; Mutt and Jeff; Patsy Walker;</u> <u>Porky Pig; Superman</u>	Reading	27
<u>Bambi; Blondie; Bunny Rabbit; Capt.</u> <u>Marvel; Jumbo; Jungle Nyoke; Our</u> <u>Gang; Superman; The Shadow</u>	Geography	18
<u>Blondie; Classic; Famous People;</u> <u>Mickey Mouse; Nancy; Nellie the</u> <u>Nurse; Walt Disney</u>	Language	9

Other subjects listed were spelling, history, story telling, extra curricula, athletics, nature, art, and arithmetic. Due to the fact that comics are banned in most schools this percentage is small.

In reply to question four, "Have the comics helped you make or invent anything of value?" Table 4 shows the inventions comic books have helped children make.

TABLE 4

THE INFLUENCE OF COMIC BOOKS ON INVENTIONS

To Invent	Read About Invention	Comic Book
Boat	Machine	<u>Wow</u>
Airplane model . .	Atom bomb	<u>It Really Happened</u>
A game	A tree house	<u>Blue Bolt</u>
Fishing trap	New tank for Army . .	<u>Captain Marvel</u>
How to carry groceries on a line	A target	<u>Captain Marvel</u>
Shadow picture . . .	Jail cell that would disappear . .	<u>Captain Marvel</u>
Small wagon	Atomic serum	<u>Captain Marvel</u>
Windmill	Combine	<u>Mutt and Jeff</u>
Sled	Geober meter	<u>Hap</u>
Toy racer	Nature under water	<u>Jumbo: Jungle</u>
Soap box car	Telescope	<u>Wonder Woman</u>
Bugs Bunny garden	Rat trap	<u>Mickey Mouse</u>
Ambition (a high school boy)	Thermometer	<u>Hero</u>
Trinkets	Airplane wheel	<u>Felix</u>
Scooter	Cotton gin	<u>True Comics</u>
	Electricity	<u>True Comics</u>
	Hydrophobia	<u>True Comics</u>
	Penicillin	<u>True Comics</u>
	Radium	<u>True Comics</u>
	Reaper	<u>True Comics</u>
	Morse code	<u>True Comics</u>

Others were mentioned, but these appeared to be likely and probable.

In reply to question five, "Write two sentences telling why you like to read the comics," fifty-two replies were received and may be grouped under the following answers: I like 'em; I couldn't do much without them; I always find a laugh; the stories tell you something; the pictures help you understand better; they are a change from school books; they help me make better grades on my report cards; they are better than other books; if I don't have a library book, a funny book will do; they have pictures of clothes I would like; they tell stories that really happen; they pep you up; they help me to obey law; they help me not to kill time; they help me to forget about being unhappy; you don't know what is on the next page; they help me to know famous people; they help me to keep my mind off of cigarettes (Boys' Town); they teach me about the true facts of life; it is fun to compare your life with other great men.

These answers tell many things to parents and teachers. They do prove Marston's statement that the comics furnish the child an escape from his environment as well as how teachers fail in their job.

In reply to question six, "Do comics help you read better? If so, how have they helped you?" all of the children listed some helps. Table 5 names some of the helps.

TABLE 5

SOME READING HELPS DERIVED FROM READING COMICS

Words	Reading
To learn the meaning of words	Gives reading practice
How to pronounce words	Increases reading speed
To know more words	To understand what he reads
How to use words	To put action in reading
To expand the vocabulary	To like reading
To say new words correctly	To develop a habit and liking for reading
How to mark vowels	To read with expression
To use the dictionary	To want to learn to read
	For summer reading practice
Language	To get better reading grades at school
To use better English	To get a better picture of what is said
Enrich liking for better literature	To learn interesting things
To know famous people	
Social Studies	
To learn geography	
To learn better ways of living	

No data were given to questions seven, eight, nine, ten, and eleven. In regard to question twelve, "Which comics do your parents like for you to read?" the following types of books are listed in the order of preference according to the statements of the children:

Animal
Adventure
Classic
Cowboy
Educational
Fact
Funny

Heroic
Mystery
People
Religion
Sport
True
Western

The children listed the following comic books as the ones their parents liked for them to read:

Achie

Patsy Walker

Blondie

Nancy

Mutt and Jeff

Superman

True Comics

Sports

Donald Duck

Miss America

Bugs Bunny

Mickey Mouse

Walt Disney

Calling All Girls

Our Gang

Folly Pigtales

True Comics

Science

Topix

Gene Autry

No replies were made to the last two questions of the pupils' questionnaire.

Comic Book Reports

In an effort to find educational values for the comics, the teacher of the fourth grade of the Cement City School in Dallas alternated Friday afternoon library period with comic book reading. During these periods the children learned to make comic book reports, both oral and written. Listed below are some of the written reports made by the children:

I read the comic book Abbot and Costello. It is an adventure story. I like the story "Space." It tells about brontosaurus. The most interesting character is Costello. A word I like is dispersed.

I read the comic book Roy Rogers. It is a western comic. I like the story "Chuck Wagon Charley's Trail" best. It is about Brownie Bear. I think Brownie Bear is the most interesting character because he is brave. A word I like is errand.

I read the comic Young King Cole. This is a detective story. I especially like the story "Homer K. Beagle." It tells about the invention of a fire suit. In this suit the fireman can wade through fire. A word I read that I like is account.

I read the comic book Patsy Walker. It is about people. I like the story "Margie had Mumps." Margie is the most interesting person. A word I read that I like is kidnapping.

Through this activity the children gained good oral and written expression and also added words to their vocabulary.

With the permission of the principal of the Cement City School, a reading experiment was made using the fourth grade as the experimental group with the fifth grade using the regular adopted readers. The fourth grade group was taught reading in the ordinary way plus the reading of comic books. This experiment covered a period of ten weeks. The comic books were read at any time during the school day when other work was completed. Every second Friday a regular period was devoted to comic book reading, and reports were made either oral or written. The two groups were selected with approximate intelligence quotients, and the teachers were considered equal in ability to teach reading, according to

the principal. At the beginning of the period the Detroit Reading Test, Form IIIA, was given both groups. At the end of the ten weeks period the Detroit Reading Test, Form IIIB, was given both groups. In comparing the scores of each group, the fourth grade showed all but two of the fourteen, included in the experiment, made some improvement in comprehension, while in the fifth grade only three showed improvement. Five fourth graders made unusual improvement, but the teacher felt there must have been a lack of understanding on the part of the children about instructions on the first test.

The average scores of both groups were the same in age and intelligence quotients. In comprehension there was a loss of two points between the first and second test scores of the fifth grade group, or an average difference of three points lost. In the fourth grade group there was a gain of four points between the first and second tests, or an average difference of five points gained. These facts infer that the reading of comic books did influence the reading comprehension of the children in the fourth grade.

As a result of the evidence presented here and from the questionnaire submitted to a number of children, it is indicated that the reading of comics does have much educational value. The results of these tests are given in Table 6.

TABLE 6
COMPARATIVE SCORES OF THE EQUATED GROUPS ON
THE DETROIT READING TESTS

Fourth Grade						
Children's Names	Age		Test Scores		Differ- ences	I. Q.
	Yr.	Mo.	1st	2nd		
Franklin, Francis	8	11	7	11	4	110
Parsley, Virginia	9	3	4	16	12	108
Terry, Shirley	8	11	6	16	10	106
Lueck, Patsy	8	11	10	10	0	105
Smith, Marie	9	5	6	10	4	101
Pickert, Barbara	9	6	3	11	8	100
Hall, Mary Nell	8	8	5	14	9	99
Cullins, Madelyn	9	3	5	12	7	99
Washburn, Alpha	9	4	12	8	4	96
Monk, Bobby	8	9	9	11	2	95
McCormic, Martha	9	0	4	8	4	93
Moon, Sylvester	9	4	6	9	3	92
Stubbs, Harold	9	8	8	10	2	90
Westbrook, Betty	9	6	7	9	2	86
Average	9	6	7	11	5	98

The fourth grade children are a year younger in age than the fifth grade children. There are nine children in the fourth grade who are nine years old. There are eight children in the fifth grade group who are ten years old. The

TABLE 6--Continued

Fifth Grade						
Children's Names	Age		Test Scores		Differences	I. Q.
	Yr.	Mo.	1st	2nd		
Rankin, David	10	2	9	10	1	108
Box, Bob Leon	9	7	15	14	1	108
Huff, Gracie	9	7	13	9	4	106
McDonald, Gloria	10	6	10	5	5	106
Phillips, Robt.	9	8	18	14	4	101
Theuate, Donnie	9	8	15	9	6	100
Shetlin, Opal	10	6	6	4	2	97
Lenamon, Weldon	10	4	16	15	1	95
Tyler, Vivian	10	2	11	8	3	96
Beaty, Saralyn	10	3	15	12	3	94
Vogel, Chas.	10	7	11	8	3	93
Garvin, Arthur	10	3	9	10	1	92
Terry, Troy	9	9	7	5	2	91
McCorkle, David	9	9	15	19	4	87
Average	9	6	12	10	3	93

younger the child, the faster is his mental development. This may explain why there was a greater growth in reading comprehension in the fourth grade.

CHAPTER III

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COMICS THROUGH A LIMITED NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED TO PUBLISHERS, EDUCATORS, PARENTS, AND PUPILS

Purposes of Publishers and Syndicates as Revealed in Questionnaires

Many of the comic strips make good reading for children and are not harmful because they are censored by the distributing syndicates with national circulations who wish to guard against comments that might offend any group of people. The syndicates set up social and moral standards that must be maintained.

Frank V. Martinek of Chicago writes in regard to his comic the following:

Don Winslow was created not alone to entertain and amuse, but likewise to foster high ideals, motives and purposes of patriotism. He is against war and for peace, but also recognizes the necessity for preparedness to achieve the latter.¹

At the beginning of World War I Martinek lectured before candidates for Naval Intelligence on intelligence activities. He made speeches in recruiting matters and together with Don Winslow did many things to help promote good will.

¹Letter from Frank V. Martinek, replying to the questionnaire, June 21, 1948.

Martinek writes his popular adventure strip, which appears in 186 newspapers, because of his deep-rooted interest for the intelligence work he carried on during World War I, and because it provides an avenue to promote a strong and sound nation. In addition to this, Martinek has published the Don Winslow series of books for boys, Know Your Man, and many articles on crime, sabotage, espionage, and personnel. His adventurous career has been the foundation for most of the thrilling material woven into his famous cartoon series.

Martinek's adventure cartoon, "Don Winslow of the Navy," was born in the China Seas in 1918-1919 between Uladivestock, Siberia, and Singapore. Syndicates are most fortunate to be privileged to edit the books of this man of such wide and varied experiences and diversified talents. Their connection with men of similar experiences enables them to maintain high moral and social standards.

Robert Wheeler, general manager of The Premium Service Company, which publishes the Premium Group of comics, says:

Our editorial standards have received favorable comment from writers, educators, and psychologists. Our publications are issued primarily for entertainment. We endeavor to exclude any material which might be harmful to children. We include educational material when possible to do so without detracting from the entertainment value of the magazine.

It is quite probable that many people young and old have enjoyed relaxation and benefit from reading Comic magazines, and it is possible that those with an inventive turn of mind may have had their imagination stimulated by reading comics. My own view, however, is that it would be a mistake to try to claim for comic magazines unusual and extraordinary values.

Of course, it must be true that art, script, and story content affect the sales of comic magazines. Most cartoonists work on a free lance basis rather than on salary, and the better ones, selling to numerous outlets, are well paid indeed.

Comic books were useful in the war effort. As entertainment, they relieved monotony. They were thoroughly patriotic in their treatment of stories dealing with America's war effort. Covers were given over to bond drives, and many inside pages and advertisements were devoted to urging the strong support of all Americans for war activities.

It is our belief that an interest in reading is stimulated by comic books, that vocabularies are enlarged, and that much factual material contained in stories is retained in the minds of readers. Accordingly when anything is presented in our magazines as factual, we take pains to verify the date.²

The editorial policy of Premium Group publications is not set down in hard and fast regulations, as it is practically impossible to draw up precise, specified regulations to fit all circumstances. Their publications must not make the heroes law violators, must contain no incentives toward child delinquency, no suggestive incidents or drawings, no ridicule made of institutions or officials. No hero inflicts the death of a villain; torture or gruesome scenes generally are avoided, and there is no smut. The Premium publishers cater to a family audience. They keep their publications clean because it's good business and takes them out of competition with other magazines.

Quoted below is a reply from Joseph Greene, comic editor of Standard Magazines.

²Letter from R. D. Wheeler, reply to questionnaire, June 17, 1948.

In general the purpose of comics is not educational. They are meant to be entertaining, which in itself has educational benefits. There have been, however, many comic books published whose purpose was educational and they have been successful. One of our comics, Real Life, has as its primary purpose the dissemination of information of an educational nature.

There have been many instances where comics have been a beneficial influence on children as well as adults. They have a high entertainment value. The pictorial narrative has been used very successfully for purely educational purposes.

Comic books were extremely useful in the war effort. They were used by the army, navy and air force for educational and training purposes, and, as such, were found to be the most effective medium. They were used also for morale purposes and for entertainment. In England, during the blitz, comics were found to have excellent therapeutic value for children suffering shell shock and for other mental disorders as a result of the incessant bombings.³

Standard Magazines publishes the following comic books:

America's Best	Goofy
Fighting Yank	Freckles
Real Life	Alley Cop
Captain Easy	Boots and Her Buddies
Coo Coo	Brick Bradford
Barnyard	Bronco Bill
Happy	Buz Sawyer

The Fawcett Publishers do not follow any code or seek the approval of any particular group; however, their books all follow the code set up by an advisory board headed by Sidonie M. Gruenberg, H. W. Zorbaugh, Ernest G. Osborne, and Al Williams.

Fawcett finds the present trend toward teen age and western comics. The organization knows of many specific instances where children were induced to learn because of the

³Letter from Joseph Greene, Better Publications, Inc., April 13, 1948.

comic magazines. It also understands that the readers' invention page, which is a regular feature in the comic Captain Midnight, has inspired many practical inventions.

The best art and script available are used. While it is not necessary that a cartoonist be a college graduate, it is a great help as the artist is paid on his merit.

During the war comic books were used directly to help salvage fat, paper, sell bonds, and build a feeling of loyalty. They were specifically used by the War Writer's Board as one of its most effective means of propoganda.

The good comic magazines are always fostering, through their stories a belief in the democratic way of life, and many schools use the comics to help teach the illiterates to read.

Harold A. Moore, of Famous Funnies, said in his letter of reply:

We publish monthly Famous Funnies, and bi-monthly New Heroic Comics, Jingle Jangle Comics, Juke Box, Steve Roper, Sugar Bowl, and Club 16. Famous Funnies is mostly a reproduction of comic titles appearing in newspapers throughout the country. Heroic Comics is all original material gathered by us of the heroic deeds of people living throughout the country. Jingle Jangle Comics is what we call an animated comic book designed more or less for youngsters, containing fantasy and children's stories. Juke Box, which is all original material, tells of the life and interesting incidents in connection with screen, radio and recording artists. Steve Roper is a magazine devoted entirely to the thrilling stories of this ace photographer. Sugar Bowl is designed for teen agers with the usual stories of school and outside activities in the current mode and trend. Club 16 is a companion book for Sugar Bowl.

Children are given very definite educational benefits from magazines edited by Famous Funnies, Inc. Comic books have definitely had an influence on business and inventions. Various government departments can give glowing statements of the usefulness of comic books in the war effort. Recently, they have continued to promote such things as War Bonds, Red Cross, Back-To-School Movement, increased salaries for teachers, advantages of Army and Navy enlistments, and several other activities.⁴

One can see that comics have not only had an educational value, but will continue to provide wholesome, clean amusement and entertainment. The fact that approximately fifty million copies are sold a month should indicate that there is a need for such material properly published. Educational Comics declined to answer the questionnaire because it would take too much time.

The David McKay Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, publishes comics as Blondie and others, just to entertain. It might be said that Chic Young's purpose in creating Blondie is to make \$250,000 a year. This company also emphasized the fact that our U. S. Navy and service men enjoyed reading the comics during the war.

Royal C. Anderson in the Production Department of a large printing concern says:

We print 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 comics a month, and during the war plenty of my mates spent 80% of their leisure time reading comics; also the Catholics are encouraging sales of comics through the parochial schools, and I definitely know of instances where comic books influenced a person who needed a lift.⁵

⁴Letter from Harold A. Moore, Famous Funnies Publication, April 9, 1948.

⁵Letter from Royal C. Anderson, replying to the author questionnaire, April, 1948.

Cartoonist DeBeck once told interviewers that there was no thrill like watching his brain children make people laugh, and to introduce words and phrases that actually caught on in the speech of the hour.

To sum up the syndicates' replies to the questionnaire, the cartoonists are about the most important people in the world. Really they are worth writing about. There seems to be profound wisdom beneath their slightest pencil strokes, and they hold the well deserved rank of America's court jesters. Their purposes are to stimulate youth interest in the best kind of living and give to all comic readers a fine type of entertainment. Most of these men are well educated, have seen the world, and hold important jobs. For some, cartooning is only a hobby. Their clever work amuses and unconsciously influences hundreds of thousands of thinking American men and women. The humor they depict is good medicine because it gives human beings a sense of proportion, tolerance, and understanding. Neal O'Hara said: "The purpose of comics is to take people out of their everyday lives and lighten the seriousness of daily life."⁶

Pre-comic Activities Reported by Twenty-four Schools

The teachers' questionnaire was submitted to the following public schools of Dallas: Trinity Heights, Obadiah

⁶Neal O'Hara, Comics and Their Creators, Ralph Hale and Company, 1944.

Knight, William Lipscomb, James W. Fannin, B. E. Darrell (Negro), Cement City, Benito Juarez, Alamo, and Greiner Junior High.

Other schools that returned the questionnaire were located in Gainesville, Texas; St. Louis, Missouri; Shenandoah, Iowa; Seattle, Washington; New Rochelle, New York; New York City; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Highland Park, Illinois; Greeley, Colorado; Del Rio, Texas; Danville, Kentucky; Boys' Town, Nebraska; Big Sandy, Texas; Austin, Minnesota; and Ada, Oklahoma.

The teachers who replied are of the opinion that comic books are not so bad and agree that comics are of interest to children and can be a motivating factor in learning school subjects. Quotations from a few of the statements made by the teachers who replied to the questionnaire prove this fact.

Remarks from Dallas Teachers

Eugenia Thomas, librarian, Alamo School, says, "They seem to restore faith in reading among some of our poor readers. They can be read by children who read nothing else that attracts them."

Audrey Baker, Benito Juarez School, states: "The Dallas News is running a comic section on Sundays called "Dick's Adventures," which is excellent in teaching "The Story of Our Country."

Brasher, in charge of the Negro Elementary Schools in

Dallas, has a fourth grade teacher who says:

Comic books are a valuable source of information and entertainment to boys and girls; moreover, they connect their plots with actual political and current events. They simplify and illustrate this information so that it is easily understood by the average child. Comic books also teach the latest scientific methods of crime prevention and crime solving. In many cases comic book characters stimulate artistic talent.

Brasher also quotes a fifth grade teacher in the B. E. Darrell school as saying:

Comic books possess esthetic values, for they are colorful and gay; this being a good eye-catcher or motivator, they stimulate reading interest. As long as information in comic books is true, they can stimulate good reading habits.

The librarian of the Obadiah Knight school states that "the only time comics are permitted in the school is on a rainy day schedule, to be used in the lunchroom and auditorium where some two hundred children spend their play and lunch periods. The comics keep down much disturbance during these periods."

A Trinity Height teacher remarked, "I use comics to orient localities in relation to comic characters." She felt that a few children, perhaps one out of forty, would develop an experiment read of in a comic. She, too, encouraged poor and weak readers to read the comics.

Remarks from Teachers out of Dallas

H. Schneider, Austin, Minnesota, says, "As visual aids, the comics could be of value."

Father Flanigan, of Boys' Town, said:

Comics could be an effective teaching tool if selected carefully. They stimulate slow readers. Topex is the best comic I have found to date and is consistently satisfactory for students.

The Danville, Kentucky, teacher stated:

We use the comic to get a very slow reader to read more. There are a few comic books on history, literature, science, and the classics which are good. These are written from true facts. If comic books are used in classroom work, they should be selected very carefully by the teacher.

Del Rio, Texas, schools reported using the classic comics.

The teacher replying from Greeley, Colorado, said that she found True Comics helpful in teaching social studies and for creating an interest in a new story.

Lauretta Bender, psychiatrist of Bellevue Hospital, finds in her work that the comics give courage, ambition, and a desire for good citizenship to her patients. She says that it is not uncommon for characters from the comics to be used as imaginary companions by children. As psychiatrists, we are quick to assume that comics seem to fill the psychological needs of the child.

The other teachers who returned the questionnaire made no extra comments, but did indicate that they found the comics valuable to children, especially children with limited means and experiences.

The table on the next pages presents the findings of the opinions of the teachers answering the questionnaire. The table includes the replies made by both the Dallas teachers and the teachers of other cities over the United States.

In comparing the answers of the ten Dallas schools and the fourteen schools of the other cities to the questions, the ratio of opinions are very similar.

TABLE 7

COMPARATIVE SCORES OF THE DALLAS TEACHERS WITH THE
TEACHERS OF OTHER CITIES ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions	Dallas		Other Cities		Totals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
2. Do you use comic books as a part of your school program?	5	6	4	12	9	18
(a) to enrich the curriculum	3	..	5	..	8	..
(b) to introduce novelty	2	..	3	..	5	..
(c) to deepen culture . . . . .	..	..	1	..	1	..
(d) to supplement teaching, keep abreast current events . . . . .	..	..	2	..	2	..
3. Which comic books have the most educational value?						
(a) mystery . . . . .	..	..	3	..	3	..
(b) humor	3	..	10	..	13	..
(c) history	7	..	10	..	17	..
(d) science	7	..	9	..	16	..
(e) folklore and sectional customs	5	..	7	..	12	..
(f) literature	2	..	8	..	10	..
(g) religious						
(1) Catholic . . . . .	..	..	1	..	1	..
(2) Protestant	3	..	1	..	4	..
4. Do you make preparation for a comic book reading period?	4	7	0	15	4	22
5. What is the nature of your follow-up activities?						
(a) enrich the course	0	..	2	..	2	..

TABLE 7--Continued

Questions	Dallas		Other Cities		Totals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
(b) increase knowledge of pupil	1	. .	2	. .	3	. .
(c) remedial reading practice	1	. .	3	. .	4	. .
(d) group discussion of stories . . . . .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
(e) Naming parallel stories in literature	2	. .	2	. .	4	. .
(f) dramatization of stories . . . . .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
(g) identifying and pronouncing new words	3	. .	1	. .	4	. .
(h) phonetic analysis	2	. .	1	. .	3	. .
(i) supplement lessons in the course	0	. .	3	. .	3	. .
6. Do you think comic book reading develops habits of concentration?	7	4	4	10	11	14
7. Do you think the comics improve comprehension and interest in reading?	8	3	8	5	16	8
8. Do the comics help the child express a complete thought in fewer words?	4	6	2	14	6	20
9. Do they stimulate a desire in the student to read other literature?	5	6	4	12	9	18
10. Do you correlate the comics with textbook instruction?	5	6	2	13	7	19
(a) history	1	. .	2	. .	3	. .
(b) English	1	. .	2	. .	3	. .
(c) reading	1	. .	2	. .	3	. .
(d) spelling	1	. .	1	. .	2	. .

TABLE 7--Continued

Questions	Dallas		Other Cities		Totals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
(e) health	1	..	0	..	1	..
(f) art	1	..	1	..	2	..
(g) social studies	4	..	1	..	5	..
11. Do you find the comics are an effective teaching tool?	2	6	2	13	5	19
12. Have you ever allowed children to classify comics as to good and bad? . . .	5	5	5	12	10	17
If so, did their judgment prove constructive? . . .	4	2	5	1	9	3
13. Have you made a survey of children's comics offered in local stores . .	6	5	7	7	13	12
14. Have you tried to create a demand in the community for the better comics? . .	5	5	5	7	10	12
15. Can motivation and incentives be furthered by use of the comics? . .	8	1	5	8	13	9
16. Do children choose informational and harmless type comics?	6	5	3	10	9	15
17. Which students read the comics?						
(a) poorest group	2	..	6	..	8	..
(b) middle group	4	..	6	..	10	..
(c) best group	1	..	1	..	2	..

TABLE 7--Continued

Questions	Dallas		Other Cities		Totals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
18. Do comics tend to increase the child's ability to read other material? . . .	2	6	0	4	2	10
19. Do comic books tend to influence children's behavior?	10	2	8	5	18	7
(a) honesty	4	..	2	..	6	..
(b) general integrity	2	..	1	..	3	..
(c) finer esthetic sense	2	..	0	..	2	..
(d) love of adventure	5	..	3	..	8	..
(e) bad dreams of hairbreadth escapes	0	..	1	..	1	..
Parts f, g, and h received no replies.						
20. What creative interest do the comics arouse in your pupils?						
(a) artistic	3	..	7	..	10	..
(b) inventive	3	..	2	..	5	..
(c) creative writing	2	..	3	..	5	..
(d) dramatization	5	..	3	..	8	..
(e) good citizenship project	0	..	1	..	1	..
21. Are the comics accepted by the Art Department in your school?						
(a) tolerantly	1	6	2	10	3	16
(b) eagerly	1	..	3	..	4	..
(c) under compulsion from the supervisor . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..
22. Name some of your art activities.						
(a) comic paper	2	..	4	..	6	..
(b) reproduction of characters comic book style	2	..	4	..	6	..

TABLE 7--Continued

Questions	Dallas		Other Cities		Totals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
23. Do you know of an instance in which comic books have influenced a child's attitude toward school subjects?						
Helpfully? (Not answered)						
Harmfully?						
(a) morals	6	..	5	..	11	..
(b) artistic development . .	4	..	7	..	11	..
(c) ambition	3	..	2	..	5	..
(d) esthetic sensibility . .	1	..	0	..	1	..
(e) civic sensibility . . .	2	..	2	..	4	..
24. What are your objections to using comic books in the classroom?						
(a) too bizarre	4	..	4	..	8	..
(b) overdrawn situations . .	5	..	4	..	9	..
(c) distorted view of normal situations	3	..	12	..	15	..
(d) profane	1	..	2	..	3	..
(e) bad taste in use of words and expressions . . .	1	..	10	..	11	..
(f) teach lack of faith in the Supreme Being (Not answered)						
25. In your opinion, what are the chief benefits children derive from reading the comics?						
(a) develops a sense of humor	4	..	6	..	10	..
(b) enlarges the vocabulary	4	..	3	..	7	..
(c) enhances his sense of reverence . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..
(d) realization of better characteristics of an individual						
(1) courage . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..
(2) aspiration . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE 7--Continued

Questions	Dallas		Other Cities		Totals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
(3) prowess						
a. physical	3	..	4	..	7	..
b. mental	1	..	1	..	2	..
c. spiritual . . . . .	..	..	1	..	1	..
26. Do you find that reading the comics leads a child to do further research in						
(a) English	2	..	4	..	6	..
(b) history . . . . .	..	..	4	..	4	..
(c) science	2	..	5	..	7	..
(d) health	4	..	5	..	9	..
(e) fine arts	2	..	..	..	2	..
27. Do you find the comics useful for remedial reading practice?	3	5	4	8	7	13
28. What other information of value can you give about the educational value of the comics? (No answers were made to this question.)						
Total	239	91	291	186	530	277
Per cent	72	..	62	..	67	..

Table 7 reveals that 72 per cent of the Dallas teachers and 62 per cent of the teachers in other schools find that comic books have educational value. The total results indicate that 67 per cent of the teachers who replied to the questionnaire used the comics to supplement textbook materials. The majority used

them to enrich the curriculum, to introduce novelty, to deepen culture, while only two used the comics to keep up with current events. The subjects in which the comics were most valuable, according to the teachers, are history (which leads), science, literature, and religion.

Seven Dallas teachers and four teachers in other cities believe comics can develop habits of concentration. Eight teachers in each group think they improve comprehension and interest in reading. Four Dallas teachers and two teachers in the other cities feel that comics help the child express a complete thought in fewer words. Five Dallas and four teachers in other cities believe comics stimulate a desire in students to read other literature. A small per cent of all the teachers correlated the comics with textbook instruction. Two Dallas teachers and three teachers in other cities reported finding the comics an effective teaching tool.

Five teachers from each group have allowed children to classify comics as "good" and "bad." These groups found that the pupils used constructive judgment in the classification. These same teachers have tried to create in the community a demand for better comics.

Eight of the Dallas group and five of the other group believe that motivation can be furthered by the use of the comics; six to three said that children choose harmless and informational type comics.

Most of the teachers find that the best group of students read the fewest comics, the middle group read the most, and the poorest group comes second. About sixty per cent of these teachers believe that comics tend to increase the child's ability to read other materials, influence his honesty, develop a finer esthetic sense, encourage a love of adventure, influence his general integrity, while one teacher claims that they cause the child to have bad dreams.

Among the creative interests which, it is claimed, are aroused among the pupils, Dallas finds the artistic, inventive, creative writing, and dramatization. The other cities group adds good citizenship to this list.

In reply to question twenty-one, it appears that the comics are still only tolerantly accepted in the schools. Only one reported accepting them under compulsion from the supervisor, and four accepted them eagerly. Six schools report preparing comic papers and reproducing characters comic book style.

No harmful effects are reported in the questionnaire replies. Under the helpful effects listed by Dallas teachers, six believe comics helpful to morals, four see artistic development, three see ambition stirred, one notes esthetic sensibility increased, two the development of civic sensibility; while in the other cities group five note moral improvement, seven artistic development, two ambition stirred, none an increase of esthetic sensibility, and two civic sensibility.

Question twenty-four regarding the objections of teachers to comic books draws the following replies. In Dallas four believe them too bizarre, five overdrawn, three distorted view of normal situations, one increased profanity, one bad taste in the use of words and expressions, with none not a lack of faith in a Supreme Being. Teachers in the other group wrote replies which give the following results: four find the comics too bizarre, four overdrawn situations, twelve list distorted view of life situations, two object to profanity, ten to the bad taste in the use of words and expressions, while none mention a lack of faith in a Supreme Being.

More teachers in other cities find that the comics lead the child to do further research in English, history, science, health, and fine arts, than did the Dallas teachers. Few teachers in either group find the comics useful for remedial reading practice, and none of them volunteered any other information as to the educational value of the comics.

To sum up the teachers' questionnaire, the use of the comics as an educational aid in the classroom appears to be limited only by the ability of teachers to utilize them. The teachers who have used the comics have found them helpful in establishing meaningful concepts that are necessary to comprehensive reading, as well as developing creative art, good citizenship ideals, and expanding the child's field of information.

Follow-up Activities and the Schools Using Them

The follow-up activities as revealed in the resulting score of the questionnaire indicate that the comics are used to supplement lessons in the course, to increase the knowledge of the pupils, to parallel stories in literature, to identify new words, and for phonetic analysis, for health, and for language in the lower grades.

The Teacher's Newsletter, prepared by Katherine H. Hutchinson of the Falk School, University of Pittsburg, is a letter which prepared instructional materials from Fuck, The Comic Weekly, to correlate with Longfellow's poem "The Courtship of Miles Standish." The experiment extended over a period of ten weeks. This is mentioned to illustrate a pre-comic activity. The reason for choosing this particular date is the mention of Dick's Adventures by a teacher who said her pupils derived much historical benefit and pleasure from the comic.

Lauretta Bender says:

In the course of these studies, we encountered, time and again, the projection of the child's fantasy upon the characters and stories of the comic books, or the child's incorporation of the characters and solutions of reality problems into his inner fantasy life. It soon became evident to us that comics were almost universally read by children. As psychiatrists, we were quick to assume that they served to fulfill the psychological needs of the child. After study, we concluded that the comics dealing with universal problems of relationship of the self to physical and social reality; replete with rapid action and repetition; given continuity by a central character who, like Casper, invites identification; free to experiment with fantastic solutions (but with good ultimately

triumphing over evil), like the folk-lore of other times, serve as a means to stimulate the child's fantasy life and to help him solve the individual, and sociological problems inherent in his living.⁷

In regard to the comic as an art form, Laretta Bender says:

Children's spontaneous art work always appears to be incomplete. They seem to produce only in fragments when left to themselves and not urged by some adult to make a complete picture. . . . The language of the comic which is often so offensive to the adult, has the same meanings and problems for the child as the pictorial content. It represents experimentation. It should not be expected to represent a model that the child will imitate, but an enormously fluid, fleeting, voluble substrata of play in language. . . . Now let us consider some of the comic characters and what they mean. . . . Superman is not always Superman. He is Clark Kent, a rather ordinary person, even ridiculed at times by Lois Lane. But when he puts on his cape, his ego expands into the super-ego; his body image has many superlative qualities. He is strong, brave, good. He can overcome gravity, time, space, all inhibitions, and badness. He always uses his powers for good. He deals with all kinds of physical and social problems. There are numerous characters like him in one or another respect: all the members of the Justice Society, The Flash, The Phantom, The Green Lantern. . . .⁸

Laretta Bender concludes that great adaptability and

⁷Laretta Bender, M. D. (Senior psychiatrist of the New York Department of Hospitals Psychiatric Division, Bellevue Hospital; Assistant Professor of the New York University College of Medicine; and an authority on projective techniques in the study of children), The Journal of Educational Sociology, XIII (December, 1944), 35.

⁸Ibid.

fluidity with social and cultural problems, continuity through characters who deal with the individual's essential psychological involvement with these problems, an experimental attitude and technique are the positive qualities of the comics.

Sidonie Gruenberg says:

The comics deserve the serious consideration of statesmen and educators, politicians and publicists, and psychologists, for they reflect what millions are thinking about, what they want, what they fear, and how they feel about matters of social significance.⁹

"Looking at the Comics" is a survey by the children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association made by Josette Frank and Hugh Grant Straus in analyzing the content of the comics. The committee says that adventure permeates most of the comics, in one form or another; a large number of stories are fantastic; crime and crime detection are played up in some stories; stories from history or current events appear in magazines of varied content which have great potentialities for presenting educational material; stories about war and fighting; classic stories used as an introduction to the reading of the originals; romantic love; and fun and humor. At present most of these stories reflect the status quo in social and political ideology and are a basis for many absorbing and enjoyable childhood activities. The

⁹Sidonie Gruenberg, "The Comics as a Social Force," The Journal of Educational Sociology, XVI (December, 1944), 204-213.

survey indicates that the comics are today a part of the common reading mores, not only of children but adults as well. Children for whom home and school are busy, active places, whose work and play are alive and rich with real and meaningful activity, will take the comics in their stride, if adults don't ruthlessly attack what they value.

Fall.--Figure 1 on the following page illustrates a lesson in health, made during National Health Week, to impress on the child the importance of a healthy body. It is quite graphic, particularly for a high third grade student. The original cartoons made during this period created vivid and lasting impressions of what it takes to have a healthy body.

Other cartoons made during this activity illustrated proper clothing, outdoor exercise, and shelter. Opportunities were given for discussing the importance of each of these to the health of the child. The physical aspects of the home, the kinds of exercise, and the difference in the kinds of clothing worn in fall and in summer. Stories were found in the readers about the necessities of life. Pictures were studied illustrating them. This study culminated with a health parade showing the different animals that give us food and clothing. Paper dolls were dressed in clothes to represent the seasons of the year; pictures of vegetables and other nutritious foods were mounted on cardboard, and



Fig. 1.--An illustrated health activity

pictures of homes made from different building materials were made to illustrate these necessities. All this served as a background for the health cartoons. In these the children had to keep in mind what necessity for good health they would want to illustrate, what characters they would use, and what they would say in the balloons. The balloons were very valuable in helping the children express complete thoughts, in spelling, and in the writing of contractions.

The cartoons were also useful for promoting thinking power. They provided opportunities for noting details, recognizing main ideas, and in writing conversation.

Kill the Umpire.--Figure 2, by David Ortez, a high seventh student, also shows talent. What could be more realistic? Who shall say this boy does not already have the making of a more than average cartoonist in him? Note the many different stories he manages to crowd into the limited space. David evidently likes the expression "Kill the Umpire." The comic demonstrates vividly what has happened. A batter has hit the ball and gone to first base. The umpire has made a decision in his favor; the opposite team disagrees. In the last section the climax is shown. The picture illustrates the art of telling a story in sequence without words and what a child can do when left to his own initiative.

This product certainly emphasizes the fact that comics can be used to enrich the curriculum, to develop the spirit of fair play, to create a desire for outdoor sports, to

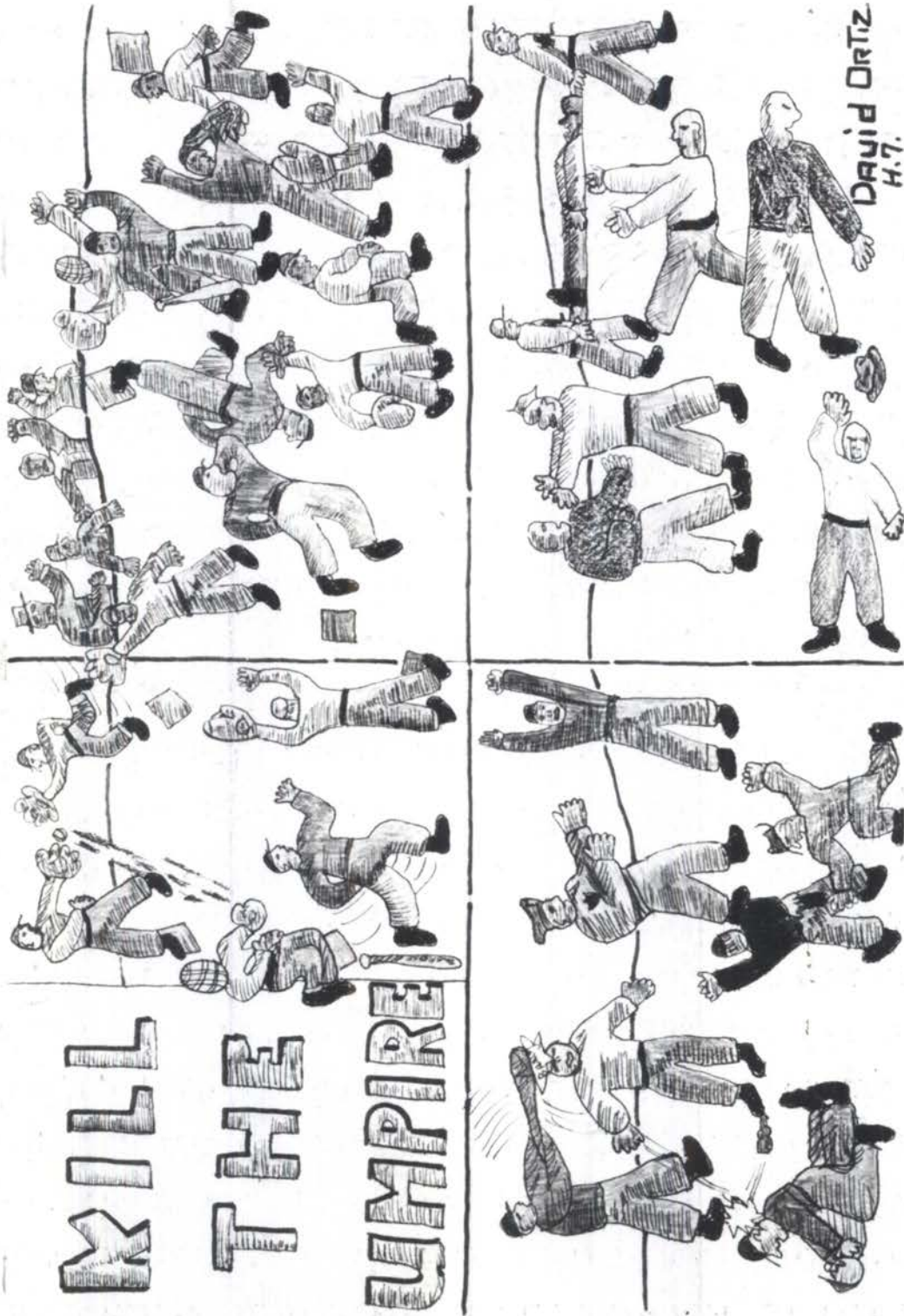


Fig. 2.--Fair play in sports

develop thinking power, and to advance the cause of education in general. Too, it shows constructive experimentation with reality and a projection of the child's inner life. Perhaps this activity served to fulfill the psychological need of this boy.

Jack and His Troubles.---The vividness of detail and quick action pictured in Figure 3, a cartoon by Patsy Brewer, explains the illustration in one sweeping glance. Usually a child's spontaneous art work appears to be incomplete when not urged by some adult, but this is a relatively complete story which seemed to inspire the child to exercise her capacities. Pride in the home is especially an interesting point in this picture. It could also be a phase of a lesson on fire prevention. In the drawing, sections one and two show the tools needed to get the leaves off the lawn. Section three pictures an insect home, and the last section explains the title of the picture. The scene probably represents an experience in yard cleaning.

The art teacher included this art activity in her program to give the children an escape from real classroom environment. Also, for this study she wished to prove her philosophy that cartoons which tell their story without the aid of explanatory caption, dialogue, or "balloons" are best. The drawings made during this activity were the original ideas of the children. All of the children tried very eagerly to create a comic page that could be included in this study. The results of the comic page activity were beyond the

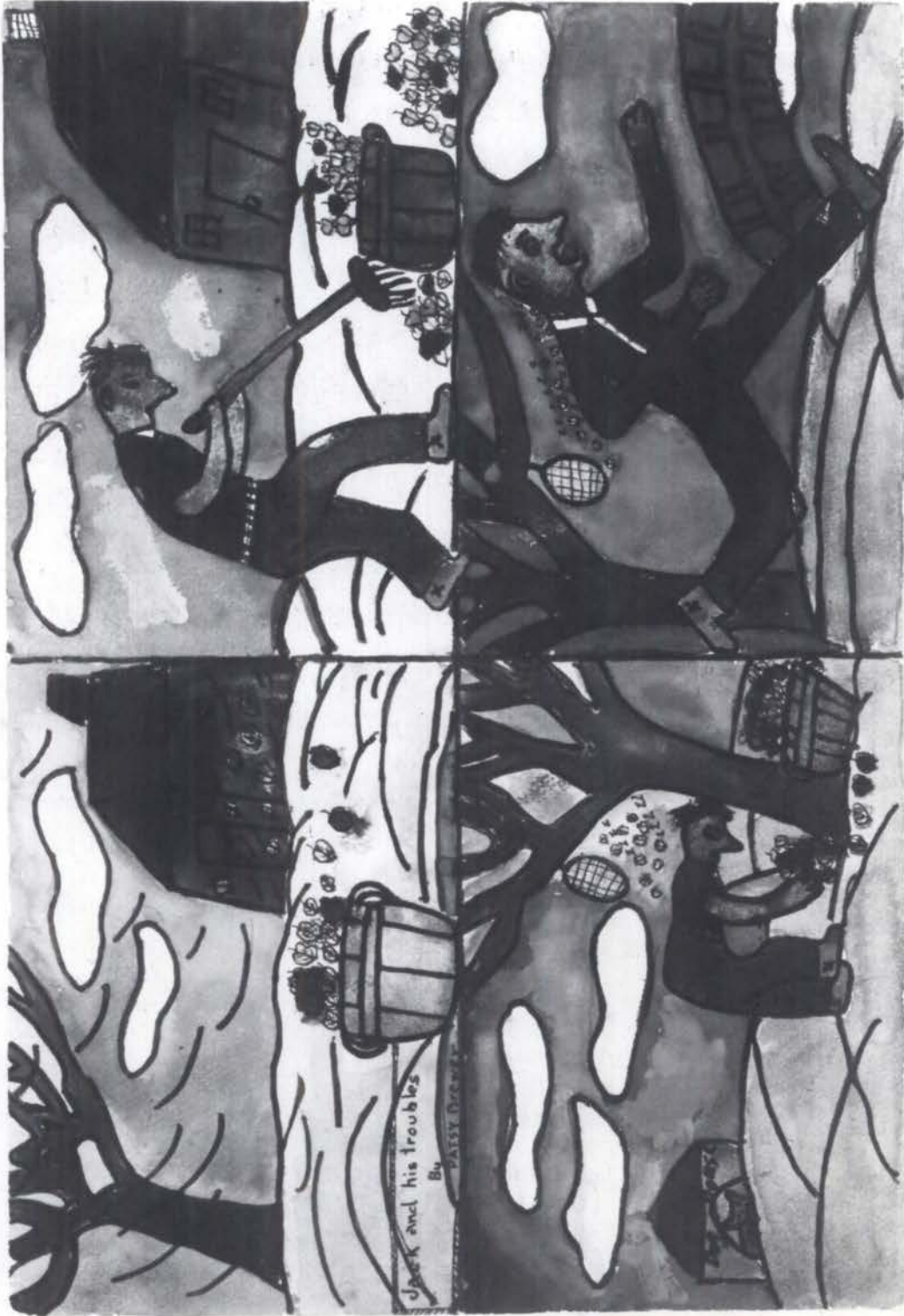


Fig. 3.—How a child can help at home

expectations of the teachers. Many of the cartoons were excellent and showed fine talent. The ones included in this study were selected because they are so self-explanatory and were about things of interest to the individual child.

Aids published by corporations are of value for supplementary teaching material. Such an aid in visual education is published by the Ford Motor Company, for the use of pupils in the public schools of Detroit, edited by Harvey Zorbaugh, Department of Educational Sociology, New York State University, and written by Frank Kola of Hunter College. The material is of exceptional merit. It is a story in pictures of the manufacturing of iron. The pictures begin with the iron ore in the ground and follows through to the finished product of iron and steel. The material also includes a lesson of ten pertinent over-all questions of what the students have seen in their tours through the River Rouge Plant of the Ford Motor Company. Similar lessons are put out in The Teacher's Newsletter. They are lessons supplementing comics with classroom instructions.

Dick's Adventure in Dreamland.--Figure 4, by Neil O'Keefe and Max Trell, runs in the Sunday comic supplement of the Dallas Morning News. It is included here to illustrate how the comics, which are a commercial aid, can be of value in introducing a school subject. The comic is very valuable because it illustrates true historical data in every detail. Two teachers found it very useful as an aid in the teaching



THEN SUDDENLY A VOICE IN THE HALF-DARKNESS IS URGING: "UP, MY LAD! WE HAVE MUCH TO DO TODAY! AYE—PERHAPS TOO MUCH! BUT IT MUST BE DONE!"



IT IS NEAR DAWN. DICK FINDS HIMSELF INSIDE A RAISED TENT. THE RAIN IS PELTING DOWN. HE IS WONDERING HOW HE GOT HERE!



DICK IS MICHURING DOUBTLY: "JOHN SMITH... DOESN'T SOUND LIKE AN IMPORTANT NAME, BUT HE HAS CERTAINLY IMPORTANT TO AMERICA!" DICK SHUTS HIS EYES, AND THE YEARS GO ROLLING BACK... TO 1407, TO JAMESTOWN IN VIRGINIA.



A FEW MINUTES LATER DICK IS LOOKING FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE VIRGINIA COLONY — THE WRETCHED TENTS AND THE SKELETONS OF UNFINISHED HUTS. SLOWLY THE MEN GATHER AND STAND IN SILENCE. JOHN SMITH'S EYES ARE ON DICK. "WOMEN— WE HAVE FOOD TO LAST BUT TEN DAYS. ENGLAND HAS FORGOTTEN US!"



DICK HURTLY DRESSES. STRANGE CLOTHES, AND YET SOMEHOW THE CLOTHES HE WINGS ARE HIS! THE MAN BESIDE HIM IS YOUNG IN FACE BUT HEAVILY BEARDED. IN AMAZEMENT DICK IS TELLING HIMSELF: "IT'S CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH! I'M IN JAMESTOWN!"



NEXT WEEK— FOOD QUEST

THE SHOT GOES WILD! MUTINY HAS BROKEN OUT IN JAMESTOWN! 5-2



THEN SUDDENLY HE IS SHOUTING IN ANGER. "BUT THE GREATER FAULT IS WITH THOSE AMONG US — THE LAZY, THE SLOTHFUL! I LAY THIS DOWN TO YOU! NOT BUT NOT!" DICK SEES A RAISED PISTOL. —!—

Fig. 4.—U. S. history in the comics

of history and in creating an interest in classical literature. The strip represents an episode based on the Jamestown Colony, the first permanent settlement in America. It could be used as a starting point in instructions or to supplement the text. Through it the children could gain insights in history that would promote growth in learning.

Parents' Attitude Toward Comics

Nine parents out of twenty-five answered the parents' questionnaire. The majority of these parents decidedly didn't like for their children to read the comics. The most noticeable reaction given was waste of time. They do not agree that the child finds it easier to read and enjoy school subjects, especially history and literature. This is certainly contrary to the child's point of view.

In reply to the question, "Do they gain a broader understanding of and an interest in current events?" one parent did not find this to be true. In development of character, only a minority answered in the affirmative. In answer to question four, one parent conceded that there is more constructive thinking and action after reading the comics.

Question five is a thought question of seven parts and brought a few constructive answers. The question is, "What changes would you like to see made in the comic books?" Thirteen wished less mystery and less emphasis on social and religious prejudices, twelve desired less fantastic tales, while eleven wished fantastic tales to be emphasized.

In reference to part "f" of question five, the parents would like for the comics to include good entertaining funnies, historical material, biography, any sort of real character building literature, stories ending with a moral, and fairy stories written by late authors.

To part "g" of question five, one parent said:

I've tried to keep my ten year old in his age limit, but he is rather advanced in school. Thank goodness, he still likes Walt Disney, Donald Duck, and Porky Pig, but he does buy some of the others I don't approve of and wish they would quit printing them. I don't like comic books for any age. I think they ruin the reading habits of most every one who reads them. I think daily funnies in the papers are enough. We try to encourage reading of such magazines as Time and Reader's Digest and have been quite successful; however, we do not forbid the comic books. We have much too much of the detective type here. . . . and altho he is always of impeccable character, he does make the children much too conscious of the many dodges and evasions of justice, glamorizes gangs of thugs and brings unwholesome types to their attention when they are still too young to even read of the sordidness of humanity. We do not feel it necessary that the comic book "do" anything but entertain, but they should offer wholesome and clean entertainment. Were it not for the fact that the kids in the neighborhood swap, we'd have no beef with comic books, as we simply insist on their choice of good ones, and avoid those we think might be harmful. We find many that are very clever and really delightful.¹⁰

Apropos to this comment, it is interesting to read the following editorial from the Wichita Times:

The comic books, according to scholarly authority, aren't so bad; not nearly bad enough to justify their being banned from the home by parents.

¹⁰Letter from Ellen Johnston, replying to the questionnaire, May 21, 1948.

Furthermore, if junior has difficulty in learning to read, the comic book would facilitate the instruction.

A parent-teacher group in Palo Alto, California, financed an inquiry into the comic book problem, employing psychologists and educators to study the matter. The above findings were the results. The educators seemed to believe that there was not enough, for either good or evil, in the books, to justify any worrying about them. Also they found that nearly all the youngsters prefer the wholesome type of books rather than those dealing in crime and violence. Those who belong to the generation which was forbidden in its youth to read about Frank Merriwell, Diamond Dick, and other nickel library figures can't recall that any scholarly counsel was hired. Fathers and mothers simply said no, believing the stories to be unwholesome. Probably if the professors had been called in they would have found that the stuff wasn't so bad. Today's juvenile readers, with the professors on their side, are better off; especially as there no longer are any barns in which to do the reading on the sly.¹¹

¹¹"Scholars and Comic Books," Wichita Daily Times, October 6, 1947, p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS

A previous explanation of the method of procedure used in this study indicated that four groups of people were participants, publishers, educators, children, and parents. It was also stated that an experiment was made, using two groups of children to determine the effects of comics on a child's reading comprehension. The two groups, a fourth grade and a fifth grade, were equated on the basis of mental maturity and reading ability as scored by the Metropolitan Intelligence Test and the Detroit Reading Test, Form III A. The intelligence quotient and reading ability were scored for each child at the beginning of the reading experiment. Ten weeks were spent in the initial reading program. During this period traditional methods and reading texts were used in each group. In addition, the fourth grade group was provided with comic books.

At the end of the ten weeks the Detroit Reading Test, Form III B, was administered to both groups. Table 6 contains information on points in reading efficiency gained or lost by each child, according to the results of the test. An analysis of the data found in Table 6 shows some positive findings.

1. The fourth grade group gained more points in reading ability than did the fifth grade group.

2. The fifth-grade group gained fewer points in reading efficiency and lost more points than did the fourth-grade group.

3. All but two children in the fourth-grade group gained points in reading scores.

4. Only three children in the fifth-grade group gained points in reading scores.

Findings indicated that the fourth-grade group made greater gains in reading comprehension according to the test scores than did the children in the fifth-grade group. It might be concluded that the use of comic books was conducive to progress in reading efficiency in this study and that they are a valuable teaching aid.

The results of the pupils' questionnaire showed that most children read the harmless type comics, that the comics help the students in their school subjects, in their citizenship, and in the ability to make or invent different kinds of toys and gadgets. The questionnaire also revealed that most children spend very little for comics each week. The most any child claimed to have spent for comic books was one dollar. This amount seems questionable.

The findings in the teachers' questionnaire indicated that some teachers were making valuable use of the comics as supplementary material. All of the teachers thought that the comics helped the child's comprehension, introduced novelty, enriched the curriculum, and furthered motivation

and incentives. They found that comic books about history, science, and folklore had the most educational value.

From the syndicates' questionnaire the inferences are (1) that most syndicates have high-standard rules for the edition of their publications; (2) that professors who have made a study of the comics found little that was bad in them; (3) that most of the cartoonists are educated; and (4) that their purposes in creating comics are to stimulate youth interest in the best kind of living and to give to all comic readers a high grade of comic literature that may be both educational and entertaining.

Most of the parents found very little value in the comics, but did not ban them in the home.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem of this study was to find the educational values of the comics as a teaching and learning tool. A discussion of the background of the comics and some of the cartoonist related to the study were included in the investigation. Data collected on the problem were organized into the following form: introduction; objectives of the comics as an educational medium and the means used to correlate comic books with regular classroom instruction; an investigation of the comics through a limited number of questionnaires distributed to a few publishers, educators, children, and parents; a result of the findings, showing the publishers' objectives, comic book activities reported by twenty-four schools, the chief benefits children derive from comic books, and the parents' attitude toward comics; and the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Conclusions

Findings indicated that the comics do have a place in childhood education. They have possibilities as a teaching tool, and their purpose is to supplement rather than to supplant.

The fact that only a small percentage of teachers make use of the comics in teaching is evidence of the need in teacher education for a planned program to develop competence in the use of this teaching aid.

This study shows that experience with comics in the criteria does have potential value as a teaching and learning tool. The teachers represented did not make abundant use of the comics in the classroom, but there was considerable range of utilization in the activities presented.

Comics are not functioning as efficiently as they could in the public schools. This is probably due to the fact that both the educators and the parents like the time to investigate this field of knowledge and are not familiar with the citizenship of the comic creators.

The success or failure of comics in education depends upon the attitude of administrators, teachers, and parents toward comics, as well as upon the cartoonists themselves.

Recommendations

From an evaluation of obtainable data on the extent to which the comics reportedly are used in the public schools in various parts of the United States and the outcomes which are attributed to their use, the following recommendations are made:

1. Some comics should be brought into school as a teaching tool to supplement the textbook.

2. The comics should be used when appropriate, for the teaching of both general and specific knowledge.

3. Teachers of social studies should acquaint themselves with comics for classroom use when such books broaden or supplement these subjects.

4. Develop an appreciation on the part of boys and girls, a liking for good comics.

5. Let children enjoy the comics for leisure reading.

6. Through the Parent-Teacher Association, give parents help in the choice of comics read at home.

7. An understanding attitude should be developed on the part of the public, and the syndicates, as to educational trends carried in the comics.

8. Develop a tolerant attitude by both the school and the home toward the use of comics in the classroom and leisure time reading.

APPENDIX

Teachers' Questionnaire

Please fill in the following information blanks concerning the educational use you make of the comic books in your school.

1. Name of school _____ Grade _____
2. Do you use comic books as a part of your school program?
Yes ___ No ___
If so, what are your objectives in using comic books?
 - a. to enrich the curriculum _____
 - b. to introduce novelty _____
 - c. to deepen the culture _____
 - d. to supplement teaching and keep children informed on current events _____
 - e. to save time _____
3. Which comic books do you think have the most educational value?
 - a. mystery _____
 - b. humor _____
 - c. history _____
 - d. science _____
 - e. folklore and sectional customs _____
 - f. literature _____
 - g. religious: Catholic _____ Protestant _____
4. Do you make preparation for a comic book reading period?
Yes ___ No ___
5. What is the nature of your follow-up activities?
 - a. to supplement lessons in the course _____
 - b. to enrich the course _____
 - c. to increase the knowledge of the pupil _____
 - d. for remedial reading practice _____
 - e. group discussion of stories _____
 - f. naming parallel stories in literature _____
 - g. dramatization of stories _____
 - h. identifying and pronouncing new words _____
 - i. phonetic analysis _____

6. Do you think comic book reading develops habits of concentration? Yes ___ No ___
7. Do you think the comics improve comprehension and interest in reading? Yes ___ No ___
8. Do the comics help the child express a complete thought in fewer words? Yes ___ No ___
9. Do they stimulate a desire in the student to read other literature? Yes ___ No ___
Do you think comics destroy the desire to read children's classics? Yes ___ No ___
10. Do you correlate the comics with textbook instruction? Yes ___ No ___ If so, with what subject? history ___
English ___ reading ___ spelling ___ social studies ___
health ___ the arts ___
11. Do you find the comics an effective teaching tool? Yes ___ No ___
12. Have you ever allowed children to classify comics as to good and bad? Yes ___ No ___ If so, did their judgments prove to be constructive? Yes ___ No ___
13. Have you made a survey of children's comics offered in local stores? Yes ___ No ___
14. Have you tried to create a demand in the community for the better comics? Yes ___ No ___
15. Can motivation and incentives be furthered by the use of comics? Yes ___ No ___
16. Do the children choose the informational and harmless type of comics? Yes ___ No ___
17. Which students read the comics? the poorest group ___ the middle group ___ the best group ___
18. Do comics tend to increase the child's ability to read other materials? Yes ___ No ___
19. Do comic books tend to influence the student's behavior? Yes ___ No ___
If so, in what manner?
a. honesty ___
b. general integrity ___
c. finer esthetic sense ___
d. love of adventure ___
e. bad dreams of hairbreadth escapes

20. What creative interests do the comics arouse in your pupils?
- artistic_____
 - inventive_____
 - creative writing_____
 - dramatization_____
 - good citizenship projects_____
21. Are the comics accepted by the Art Department in your school? Yes_____ No_____
- tolerantly_____
 - eagerly_____
 - under compulsion from supervisor_____
22. Name some of your art activities
- comic paper_____
 - reproduction of characters comic book style_____
23. Do you know of an instance in which comic books have influenced a child's attitude toward school studies? Helpfully_____ Harmfully_____
- as to morals_____
 - artistic development_____
 - ambition_____
 - esthetic sensibilities_____
 - civic sensibility_____
24. What are your objections to using comic books in the school room?
- too bizarre_____
 - overdrawn situations too continuous_____
 - distorted view of normal living situations_____
 - profane_____
 - bad taste in use of words or expressions_____
 - teach a lack of faith in a Supreme Being_____
25. In your opinion what are the chief benefits children derive from reading the comics?
- develops a sense of humor_____
 - enlarges vocabulary, both in speaking and reading_____
 - enhances his sense of reverence_____
 - his realization of the better characteristics of an individual
 - courage_____
 - aspiration_____
 - proress: physical_____ mental_____ spiritual_____
26. Do you find that reading the comics leads a child to do further research on the subjects read? Yes_____ No_____ Which subjects? English_____ history_____ science_____ health_____ the fine arts_____

27. Do you find the comics useful for remedial reading practice? Yes ___ No ___
28. What other information of value can you give about the educational value of the comics?

Pupils' Questionnaire

Please check or write the answers to the following questions:

1. List five of your favorite comic books
 - First choice _____
 - Second choice _____
 - Third choice _____
 - Fourth choice _____
 - Fifth choice _____
2. Do the comics help you to be a better citizen? Yes ___ No ___
 - a. patriotic _____
 - b. loyal _____
 - c. brave _____
 - d. helpful to those in need _____
3. Do the comics help you to understand your school subjects better? Yes ___ No ___ If so, which studies? _____
Which comics? _____
4. Have the comics helped you to make or invent anything of interest or of value? Yes _____ No _____
Have you read in the comics about the invention of something? _____
What was the invention? _____
Which comic carries this story? _____
5. Please write two sentences telling why you like to read the comics.
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
6. Do the comics help you read better? Yes ___ No ___ If so, how have they helped you? _____
7. How many comics do you read a week? one ___ two ___ three ___ or how many more? _____
8. Do you neglect recreation and library work because of the time you spent reading the comics? Yes ___ No ___

9. If you have an allowance, do you spend it all for comic books? Yes ___ No ___ If not, how much do you spend each week for comics?
10. How do you get your comics? buy ___ trade ___ swap ___
11. Do your parents approve of your reading the comics? Yes ___ No ___
12. Which comics do they like for you to read?
13. Name the three they like most.
14. Do your parents read comic books? Yes ___ No ___ Comics in the daily papers? Yes ___ No ___
15. How much time a day do you spend reading these comics?

Parents' Questionnaire

Please fill in the following information concerning the educational use you make of the comic books in your home, if any.

1. Name of child _____ Grade _____
2. Do you like the effects of reading the comics, as shown by your child? Yes ___ No ___
3. What are the most noticeable reactions you find?
 - a. easier to read and enjoy school subjects, especially literature and history? Yes ___ No ___
 - b. reading comics to exclusion of all other activities except attending movies? Yes ___ No ___
 - c. broader understanding of and interest in:
 - (1) current events. Yes ___ No ___
 - (2) character development. Yes ___ No ___
 - (3) any good reading at his age level. Yes ___ No ___
 - (4) racial problems. Yes ___ No ___
 - (5) general social consciousness. Yes ___ No ___
 - (6) social studies. Yes ___ No ___
4. Is your child more alert or more introspective since reading the comics? Yes ___ No ___ If the former, is it along lines of constructive thinking and action? Yes ___ No ___

5. What changes would you like to see made in comic books?

- a. mystery. More or less
- b. character building. More or less
- c. social prejudices emphasized. More or less
- d. religious prejudices emphasized. More or less
- e. fantastic tales emphasized. More or less
- f. what do you wish to include?
- g. what to exclude?

Syndicates' Questionnaire

Please fill in the following questionnaire concerning the educational value you place on comic books.

1. What comic books do you publish?
2. Which ones are approved by the American Library Association?
3. Are these comic books trended? If so list some of the trends used by the cartoonist.
4. Do you think the cartoonist would be willing to be trended by educational authorities? Yes No
5. Do you expect children to gain educational benefits from the comic books you edit? Yes No
6. Do you know of an instance where comic books have influenced a person who needed a lift? Yes No
7. Have the comics had any influence on inventions? Yes No If so, mention a few.
8. Does the art, script, and story content affect the sales of comic books? What are your standards for same?
9. Should a cartoonist be a college or university graduate? Yes No Why?
10. What is the maximum salary for such an artist?
11. Were the comic books useful in the War effort? Yes No If so, how were they used?
12. What other information can you give showing that the comics do have high educational value?

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