The Story Behind the "How To Make A Comic Book MOOC"

Patrick Yurick Follow
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GUTTER TALK
The Story Behind The "How To Make A Com
patrickyurick
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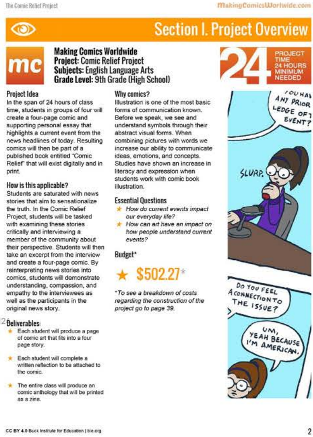
In November 2015 Coursera granted the High Tech High Graduate School of Education & Making Comics Worldwide $10,000 to create a project oriented massive open online course based on a proposal I submitted in October. This may sound like a lot of money, but it isn't. Last year I created a course that was half of the size and had roughly five times the budget called the "Learning Mindsets & Skills MOOC". To be fair, the LMS MOOC was one that had a more content specialist involvement and multimedia generated for it (videos, podcasts, etc.). For the comic MOOC I was able to draw on a multitude of great readings & podcasts from within MakingComics.com and from outside of it—as well as my own exptertise as a comic book educator.


YOU HA
ANY PRIOR
LEDGE OF T
EVENT?
SLURP.
DO YOU FEEL A CONNECTION TO THE ISSUE?
UM, YEAH BECAUSE I'M AMERICAN.

The Comic Relief Project
MakingComicsWorldwide.com

Section I. Project Overview

Making Comics Worldwide
Project: Comic Relief Project
Subjects: English Language Arts
Grade Level: 9th Grade (High School)

24 PROJECT TIME 24 HOURS MINIMUM NEEDED

Project Idea
In the span of 24 hours of class time, students in groups of four will create a four-page comic and supporting personal essay that highlights a current event from the news headlines of today. Resulting comics will then be part of a published book entitled "Comic Relief" that will exist digitally and in print.

How is this applicable?
Students are saturated with news stories that aim to sensationalize the truth. In the Comic Relief Project, students will be tasked with examining these stories critically and interviewing a member of the community about their perspective. Students will then take an excerpt from the interview and create a four-page comic. By reinterpreting news stories into comics, students will demonstrate understanding, compassion, and empathy to the interviewees as well as the participants in the original news story.

Deliverables:
- Each student will produce a page of comic art that fits into a four page story.
- Each student will complete a written reflection to be attached to the comic.
- The entire class will produce an comic anthology that will be printed as a zine.

Why comics?
Illustration is one of the most basic forms of communication known. Before we speak, we see and understand symbols through their abstract visual forms. When combining pictures with words we increase our ability to communicate ideas, emotions, and concepts. Studies have shown an increase in literacy and expression when students work with comic book illustration.

Essential Questions
- *How do current events impact our everyday life?*
- *How can art have an impact on how people understand current events?*

Budget*
★ $502.27*

**To see a breakdown of costs regarding the construction of the project go to page 39.*

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A page overview of the Comic Relief Project generated for the Buck Institute for Education.

This Comic MOOC was a choice I made because I felt that the course *needed* to exist. Last year I started worked on another labor of comic book education love called the "**Comic Relief Project**" for the Buck Institute for Education (bie.org). The Comic Relief Project was created as a reaction to my own distaste for most introductory comic educational tools. In the past k-12 teachers have come to me, knowing me as the "comic book teacher guy", and asked if they should invest the *little money they have* in their budgets into comic book automation programs like **Comic Life**. I would always say "NO!" Then a pause. And, then I wouldn't have anything for them as an alternative except for long explanations about why "real" comics are hard to make. I so wanted to provide them with a comic creation resource that accurately leads students through the processes a professional comic creator would *actually* go through to create a comic.

The Comic Relief Project was that alternative.

The “How To Make A Comic Book” course was built from the work of the Comic Relief Project.

Man, I was glad that I had the work put into those tutorials and models for the Comic Relief project because without it I would have never been able to pull off this Comic MOOC. The budget alone only went into covering guest appearance fees *(Thanks Mark, Eric, Caleb, & Christy)*, copywriting *(Chris you are amazing!)*, set design *(all shot at High Tech High Chula Vista)*, and videography *(Helium Films is a godsend)*. But, it wasn’t just the budget that was difficult - it was also the timeframe the course needed to be created within. We received the money from Coursera in early December and the course needed to be done by the end of January. My team slaved over winter break to create a series of scripts for the 31 videos needed for the six weeks of course material.

In the end I only was paid about $300 out of the $10k budget for the course. Like I said, this is a labor of love. I also want to say that I won’t get paid any more money for the course itself. The course certificate purchases are a part of the Coursera monetization—none of that money goes to me. In fact, each of the $49 paid for course certificates only goes into paying off the initial funding of the $10,000 granted by Coursera.

How To Make A Comic Book MOOC - Introduction to course
from Patrick Yurick
ake a
COMIC
BOOK
Massive Open Online Course
01:17
vimeo

Course introduction filmed by Thierry Denis & Shaan Couture of Helium Films USA

During the weekend of January 23rd, 2016, Mark & Chris flew in from out of town (Christy sadly didn’t make it). We spent the weekend constructing the set, rehearsing the material, eating, drinking, laughing and talking about the future of the comic book industry in my San Diego living room. It was amazing. On Sunday we all gathered and started the filming process. I sat across from comic industry giants as they explained to me, and the future students within the course, what was needed in creating their first comic. Once Mark, Eric, and Caleb left we got down to the real work and on Sunday & Monday we filmed 25 original films for the course.

Pictured (From left to right) Thierry Denis, Patrick Yurick, Rachel Beck, Caleb Cleveland, High Tech High Student Helper: Carolina, Eric Shanower, & Mark Waid.

I am really proud of this course. I love sharing comic book education with people. Comic creation is a literacy I believe we all have a right to. More than just being a fun craft, it is a communication tool. The industry that has sprung up around comic books has refined this communication process, of words and pictures, into a craft and I truly believe everyone should know, on some level, how to create a comic. This course is the culmination of everything I've learned about MOOCs working at High Tech High Graduate School of Education in combination with everything I know about teaching people how to make comic books. This is a solid course, and I hope that it will assist people in creating their first comic book as well as help teachers at a distance get a peek into the project based learning we do at High Tech High.

Patrick Yurick on the Role of Comic...
Watch later
Share

The role of comics & art in our society.

The coolest thing about this course, at least for me, is that it has the potential to be indefinitely available. In exactly three years time the videos used to create this course, along with all the course material, will be given back to us (High Tech & MakingComics.com) as the Coursera digitally exclusive ownership ends. At that time we will be able to release these videos as a series of courses on a multitude of free platforms like Youtube & Vimeo. This course can then educate new people in the comic education field for, theoretically, all time.

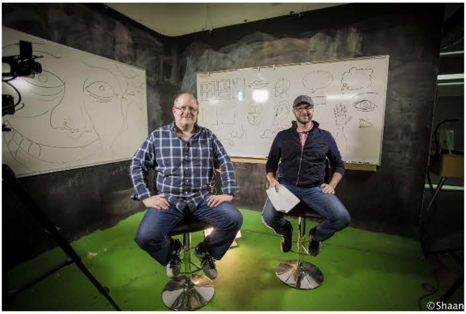
The course was created to feel like a television show that you would see on PBS we wanted to engage adults and kids at the same time in a way that was welcoming. When I was 15 I wanted something like this to exist, and there really wasn't anything. Existing courses on comic creation are very complex and oriented towards an adult only audience and there really isn't anything for people who have no idea how to make a comic (where to start, what kinds of materials, etc.). This course is for them. Furthermore, MOOC technology excites me because it allows us to create an educational entertainment medium that is truly interactive and can galvanize communities of action around concepts presented within the course—in real time.

The MOOC is going to be a part of a release of 14 other project centered courses by Coursera. Very exciting stuff. My hopes are that this course can be shared for generations to come. Our existing audience at MakingComics.com is one of semi to experienced comic-makers. This course isn't for them exactly, this course is for those who have no idea where to start. This is the place to start.

Check out the course for yourself:

https://www.coursera.org/learn/make-comic-books

Check out the course press release.



Mark & I on the set of the MOOC

Thierry & Carolina getting ready to shoot Caleb.

ITW
7
1
©Shaan

Carolina helping on her first movie set.

©Shaan

Me trying to look smart on set.

©Shaan

Eric and I in mid-interview.

Education Comic Books Project Based Learning

124 claps
Applause from Kay Flewelling and 26 others

5

Patrick Yurick

...is an instructional designer, MOOC creator, comic book educator, house elf, and sometimes does art.

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Responses

Write a response…

Applause from Patrick Yurick (author)

Marci B
Feb 19, 2016

Thank you for putting all this work into the course. I'm really enjoying it so far! I think it's very well put together and has some great information for someone like me, who has wanted to make comics, but wasn't sure exactly where to start.

2

Applause from Patrick Yurick (author)

Ekaterina Chekurova
Mar 18, 2017

Thank you, Patrick. I've been looking for something like this for a long time. Very excited to start this course.

1

Conversation between Brin and Patrick Yurick.

Brin
Feb 16, 2016 · 1 min read

Thank you for all the effort you've gone to, I'm so excited to start this course. I've wanted to make comics for awhile and have dabbled in it, but it's been really hard to keep going and have self-discipline or have any sort of faith in myself. I'm hoping this course will help me with those things, and just seeing the work you've poured into it…

Read more…

1

1 response

Patrick Yurick
Apr 8, 2016

Thank you! Very kind words. How did the experience end up for you?

Conversation between Advice From Your Big Sis and Patrick Yurick.

Advice From Your Big Sis
Feb 20, 2016

Thank you for putting this course together. I have been looking for a great introductory on "how to make a comic book" for years. I am finally glad to stumble into yours. I really appreciate the hard work and love you put into it. It definitely shows.

1

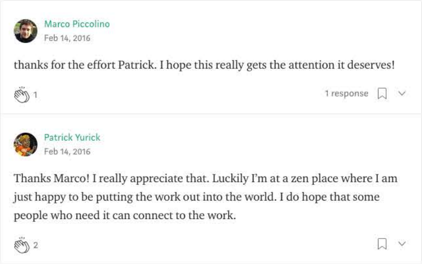
1 response

Patrick Yurick
Apr 8, 2016

How did it go?

1 response

Conversation between Marco Piccolino and Patrick Yurick.



Marco Piccolino
Feb 14, 2016

thanks for the effort Patrick. I hope this really gets the attention it deserves!

Patrick Yurick
Feb 14, 2016

Thanks Marco! I really appreciate that. Luckily I'm at a zen place where I am just happy to be putting the work out into the world. I do hope that some people who need it can connect to the work.