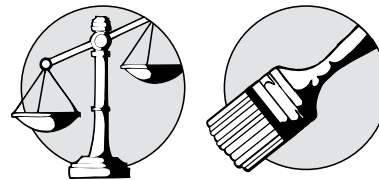


One of the biggest reasons I was interested in PSU's publishing program is Ooligan Press. Ooligan is PSU's student-run publishing company. They put out about six books a year, all acquired, edited, designed, and marketed by the students. This real-world education is the centerpiece of the PSU program, and lets students get a great deal of experience

I was fortunate enough to be chosen to do the interior design for *Classroom Publishing: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. It was probably the most challenging design I've worked on yet, as the text had block quotes, sidebars, text boxes, and multiple levels of headers, as well as photos and captions. I worked with Ellery Harvey in creating the aesthetic for the book, which we decided should be very clean and professional-looking. While Ellery created the icons that you'll see in the selection that followed, I worked with the manuscript to further develop the styles and then to apply them to the manuscript. I'm very pleased with the result; it's clean, easy to read, and comprehensible.

Personal Narrative, Memoir, & Biography



Memoir from Two Points-of-View

Students research and write first- and third-person memoirs that are turned into books printed and bound at a local print shop.

MARIANNE DOE AND ALISON Dayton, twelfth-grade teachers at Middlebury Union High School in Middlebury, Vermont, knew that publishing would give their students greater confidence in their writing. According to Alison, when the students are writing for an audience besides their teachers, “they’re writing for a purpose, so I think they take more pride in it, they take more care, they take it more seriously.” So, when it came time to teach a semester-long memoir-writing class, Marianne and Alison knew that publishing could be a natural part of the course. They decided to have the students publish two memoir projects, one written in first person and the other in third person.

At the beginning of each memoir project, Marianne and Alison assigned the students memoirs to read, including *The Color of Water* by James McBride, *Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors* by Marian Wright Edelman, and *Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* by Maxine Hong Kingston. The first four to five weeks of the project the students completed small writing assignments and shared stories focused on their own life experiences. These assignments involved an inventory of their lives, focusing on the people, places, objects, and photographs that helped define them. Other assignments included such topics as childhood games, the passing of seasons, and a discussion of collectables. The students were required to examine these subjects in both a literal and metaphorical manner.

These smaller assignments were used to build the basis for the larger memoir projects. For example, if a student decided to base his memoir on the assignment about games, for the larger project he might use “The Game of Life” as a theme, with each chapter of the memoir describing a different game as it applied to the student’s life, literally and metaphorically.

For the third-person memoir project, the students picked someone that they knew a lot about, that they wanted to know more about, and that they could easily access and develop a relationship with. Finding the right subject was sometimes a challenge, as some people were reluctant to share their stories. This project was based on interviews, so it was important for the students to find someone willing to talk with them.

Some students were unable to find one person who could give them enough information and stories to fill five chapters, so they had to be creative with the way they structured the memoirs. One student interviewed both his grandfathers, juxtaposing their stories by shifting back and forth in alternating chapters. Inspired by the memoir *Lanterns*, another student interviewed five different people, each of them one of her mentors. Another student was determined to write about his grandfather who had passed away before he was born, so he interviewed his mother and grandmother and used their words to convey stories about his grandfather.

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Narrative Cookbook

As a part of their memoir class, Marianne Doe and Alison Dayton's students created a narrative cookbook that included stories, recipes, and reflective writing pieces.

After reading such books as *Tender at the Bone* by Ruth Reichl, students wrote their own stories about recipes, whether it was literally about the recipe—such as a time when they had sweet and sour meatballs—or a figurative piece in which “The Secret Sauce” is really about secrets and not a recipe for secret sauce. The stories did not need to give detailed recipes but had to mention food in some way. One student wrote about having a sledding accident on a cold winter morning and brought the story to a happy ending as his mother took him inside, bandaged him up, and made him special hot cocoa. Most of the students told their stories in first person, though they also had the option of interviewing someone and telling his or her food-related story instead.

The students worked together to edit and organize the cookbook, titling it *Recipe for a Perfect Memoir*. They collected photographs and other graphics to include, designed a cover, and wrote the table of contents and author bios. The book was printed on the school copiers and stapled together. Whether it was a recipe for disaster, recipe on how to fix a motor, or a recipe for something you eat, this publishing project used the lens of food to help students find new ways to connect to themselves, their families, and their writing.

Both the first- and third-person memoir projects that the students published were about fifteen pages long and were divided into five chapters. The students worked in a workshop-like environment, where they had access to computers, discussed their work with each other, and asked the teachers questions. The entire process was spread out over a period of three weeks, and the students were given chapter deadlines to keep them on track. This allowed Marianne and Alison to give their students feedback so they could periodically revise their work.

When the students turned in their five chapters, Marianne and Alison did a hard edit of the entire piece. The memoirs were then handed back, and the students were given two more weeks to revise. With final versions complete, the students created covers on cardstock and came up with titles. The titles were required to be in two parts, one part metaphorical and the other an explanation. In their cover designs, the students were asked to incorporate their metaphorical title if possible. The covers could be in color or black-and-white, and the students had access to cameras, computers, and Adobe Photoshop throughout the design process. A student named Amber titled her memoir *Forever Amber*, and, using Photoshop, she took her own photograph and overlaid it with a photo of a piece of amber with an insect trapped inside.

The students finished the project by including two pages of photographs—of themselves for the first-person memoir and of their interview subject for the third-person piece—for the interior of the book. Since the memoir genre tends to use black-and-white photographs inside the book, the teachers encouraged their students to find photos that would show up well in black-and-white. Color photographs were allowed as well, but the students usually paid the printing costs for them.

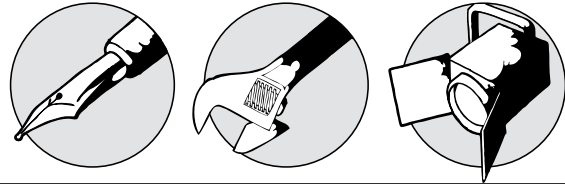
The completed memoirs were sent to a print shop to be printed and spiral bound at a rate of two dollars per book, which was covered by the school's budget.

The day the memoirs came back from the printer, the students read one memoir by another student and wrote a “critical acclaim” book review for that memoir. The students could take their memoirs home, and many gave them as gifts to family members. Alison and Marianne also kept copies of each memoir for their classrooms.

Throughout the project, Marianne and Alison found that the kids took the publication process seriously because they could see where it was leading. “It was going to end up on their coffee table at home or it was going to be wrapped as a gift to someone, or it's going to be saved,” Alison said. Both the first- and third-person memoirs were meaningful to the students and their families. One student wrote her third-person memoir about her grandfather who passed away right before it was published; the memoir became a source of storytelling and remembrance for her family after his death.

Personal Narrative, Memoir, and Biography

Graphic Novels from Personal Narratives



Students transform their own personal narrative essays into graphic novels.

ROB SENG OF TRINITY High School in Louisville, Kentucky, wanted to find a project that would appeal to all his ninth- and tenth-grade English students—whether they enjoyed writing or not. So he created a graphic novel/personal narrative project that allowed students to use their visual creativity to tell a story through pictures and text.

Rob started the project by lecturing on graphic novels, teaching his students about the difference between graphic novels and comic books (see page 78), how the genre became popular, and the ways that graphic novelists use illustrations and text equally to tell a story. Rob gave them a solid understanding of the technical terminology used in designing a graphic novel and of design concepts such as space and composition. His students used this knowledge to read and analyze the graphic novel *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale*, by Art Spiegelman. They studied *Maus* carefully, examining how Spiegelman used visual clues, dialogue, and text.

Once he felt that his students had a firm grasp on the genre, Rob asked them to create their own graphic novels. For this project, he said he had them review personal narratives they had written earlier in the year and “go back and break [them] down to [their] most basic components.” Rob wanted them to take their narratives and “look at [them] with a new lens,” determining how they could express the same feelings, events, and actions with pictures (while at the same time trimming away excess text). Rob asked his students to look carefully at ways to introduce dialogue, a key feature in graphic novels that was previously missing from their original narrative essays. Rob wanted his students to find ways to use it in interesting and effective ways that would contribute to the experience of the reader.

During the process of trimming down their personal narratives, Rob's students created storyboards to plan out each frame of their graphic novels. They needed to have fifteen pages with four frames per page. Using a template that Rob created in Microsoft Word, the students sketched out each frame with pictures and text.

Rob asked the students to use photographs as illustrations. This helped all the students feel like they were on even ground with each other artistically and avoided putting pressure on those who didn't feel artistically gifted or weren't willing to share their artwork. They used their own digital cameras or checked out cameras from the school library. Students who had access only to film cameras were allowed to take pictures and scan them.

Once all of the photographs were uploaded to the school computers, the class spent two days in the computer lab. Rob showed them how to place their photographs into the template and use the tools to create text boxes and balloons for the dialogue they wanted to insert over the photographs. On the second day, Rob had the students look at their neighbors' work and offer feedback.

The majority of the remaining work on the project was done outside of class. Students could work on their graphic novels at school, using computers in the lab on their own

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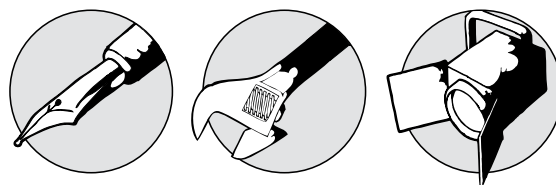
time, or they could easily take them home, as the templates for the project were done in Microsoft Word.

After the final product had been turned in, Rob set aside one class period for the students to share their work, allowing them to give each other feedback (though Rob allowed students to abstain from sharing if they felt their graphic novels were too personal). The students then had the opportunity to reflect on their project, telling Rob what they liked and disliked. Overall, they were eager through the entire creative process and were proud of what they had accomplished. “The students that really struggled with writing—who [didn’t] know where to put a comma or wrote run-on sentences—they didn’t have that problem with this project. The kid that was usually really reticent to show his work... in this project, was really gung-ho and excited about it because that stumbling block to the creative process had been removed for him,” Rob said.



Illustrations for comics may take many forms: photographs, hand-drawn images, or even collage. Here, captions are written on strips of white paper which are layered over collaged images to create a multi-textured look. *Image courtesy of Cindy Callahan.*

Personal Narrative, Memoir, and Biography



Personal Digital Movies

Students become moviemakers by creating and sharing digital stories about their lives.

ON MOVIE DAY IN Sara Kajder's classrooms, students were the stars. Kids who had insisted they didn't read or write proudly displayed their one to two minute movies that interlaced images, narration, music, and text into a slide show style digital story. One ten-year-old student told a saga of his efforts to avoid piano practice by taking staged pictures to fit a script he had written, narrated, and set to a soundtrack of piano music. The movies, or digital stories, captured the compelling narratives that filled student's lives, and they also provided Sara with a powerful tool for hooking students into the world of reading and writing while teaching them digital literacy skills. Formerly a middle school and high school teacher, Sara is currently an author and teacher educator at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

"Some kids tell me that I have tricked them into this kind of work because they see themselves as readers and writers invariably through the process [of making the digital stories]," Sara said.

Sara has used her digital storytelling project with students of all age groups, and, like any personal narrative assignment, the project started with a story. Sara led students in prewriting activities to identify a personal story that could be told succinctly, that was a window into a moment. Students did exercises and wrote journal entries in response to prompts about their stories, and the class discussed the differences between personal narrative and memoir. During the writing process, Sara showed the students examples of digital movies and explained key elements to help students write scripts that could be accompanied by still images. The scripts had to be short enough to fit on one side of a three by five index card.

Students searched online for copyright-free images or brought in their own digital photographs. Sara applied for small grants to purchase disposable cameras and pay for film developing, including a compact disc with digital images. The cameras added an extra element to the project because students could take pictures intentionally for their narratives. If time permitted, Sara also scanned in photos the students brought from home. While the image search could be a struggle, the short digital stories only needed to have about fifteen to twenty images.

With images and text selected, students created storyboards mapping out the final movie. Sara used a storyboard template developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling that had empty boxes with lines underneath to write down the images, effects, voiceover, soundtrack, and transitions that they planned to use in their digital story. Students drew stick figures on yellow sticky notes to represent their images and moved the notes around the storyboard to decide how they would be arranged and how the words would match up with the pictures. The process usually caused students to do significant revisions, which Sara facilitated by creating revision prompts and having "script sharing circles" where students read their scripts

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out loud, and other students offered comments. Students revised the scripts and storyboards with a focus on changing the meaning, content, and style rather than revising based on the conventions of editing and proofreading.

Once the storyboards were finalized, students took their scripts and images—on compact disc, jump drive, or camera—to the school computer lab. To create the stories, students used programs such as iMovie or Windows Movie Maker, both free with most computer operating systems. Students dropped the images into a timeline and recorded their scripts using headsets with microphones, purchased for about ten dollars at an electronics store, connected to the computers. The software recorded the voice directly into the computer, allowing students to adjust the amount of time each image would be on the screen as they listened to the voice recording. The students then put in transitions. Sara said that with proper preparation, the technology part of the assignment only took about twenty minutes with any age group.

“If you have the script and the storyboard, three-quarters of the work is already done,” Sara said. “I want them to do the work beforehand because if they compose in front of the computer, it’s death to the project. That’s where you lose weeks of instructional time—kids will fiddle around with it forever if you let them.” Sara was careful to avoid letting technology take over. Even when working with kindergarten students, Sara said that she spent “about ten seconds” teaching the technology by going over some basic software navigation items.

“There’s not a really smart point to [teaching specific software]. I think we need to teach kids how to learn with whatever the tool is. They learn by clicking around and figuring out what works. I don’t want to do any more than that because I don’t want them to turn to me for that kind of content knowledge. I want them to turn to me for the reading and writing of what they are going to do ... The focus is on writing this layered composition using technology tools. They are writing in images, and they are writing through the narrative of the scripts,” she said.

The project’s use of images, sounds, and technology provided multiple approaches to traditional classroom writing tasks. Students who were reluctant readers and writers were engaged by the technology and visual or audio aspects of the process. In the case of the student with the digital story about piano lessons, for example, the student chose the soundtrack first, and that’s where he got the inspiration for the plot.

“They might resist me—come into it kicking and screaming and insisting they don’t write and they don’t read. But you have to do some reading in your selection of images. You are reading images to develop the filmmaker’s eye of knowing where to pan and where to zoom, where you are putting in your effects, and where and how you do a transition. There is reading happening there, but it is a different kind of reading. It’s really a huge literacy activity,” Sara said. Because students were interested in the process, they often started doing more traditional reading on their own. The assignments motivated students to read memoirs or books about photography and videography because they wanted to be more independent or make their digital stories better.

To showcase the work, Sara had a movie day and invited other students and administrators at the school to attend. Sara explained that inviting administrators and “anyone who can help you get technology tools” into the classroom was key to gaining support for future projects. When she worked at schools with enough server space and good web access, the stories were distributed through the internet.

Personal Narrative, Memoir, and Biography

“I can think of even the best of times when I was teaching without using technology and I had an authentic audience of maybe a parent or a few family members. Now, I can say ‘when you are finished with your work, I want you to publish it and post it on the internet.’ The notion of audience is completely different,” she said. “Audience is no longer just the teacher.”

Historical Fiction Digital Stories



Dawn Hawkins at Tigerville Elementary School in Taylors, South Carolina, put another twist on digital stories by integrating the project into her social studies curriculum. Dawn’s third, fourth, and fifth graders studied and read about standard history topics, then assumed the first-person voice of a character from their readings and wrote pieces of historical fiction, which they illustrated with images, background music, and voiceovers in MovieMaker.

Although the stories were fiction, they had to include a certain amount of factual content. “I tell them I don’t want a list of facts, I want a story told from the perspective of your character ... and within that story, they tell me facts,” Dawn said. For example, in a story about a message that was being delivered from camp to camp during the Revolutionary War, certain information would be factual, but the details could be improvised. “They

might make up that it’s a rainy day or that an accident happened,” she said, “but anything like the date and the content of the message needs to be accurate.”

Dawn’s students wrote their stories first, then searched for images and audio content to accompany the text. The diverse tasks the students had to complete to finish the project catered to the needs of all learning styles. “For the visual learners, working with the pictures really helps them, and the auditory learners are usually the ones who love the voiceover the most, and my kinesthetic learners get the hands on work of constructing the digital story,” she said.

When the stories were complete, parents and other members of the school community were invited to the classroom for a movie showing, and copies of the stories were kept in the classrooms for future use.