

Since Ooligan Press is completely student-run, there is a lot of opportunity for students to explore areas of interest. As the future of publishing was my main area of interest from the time I started at the press, I quickly turned my attention to starting a digital content department for the press. It took us a few terms to figure out what our options were for converting our backlist to ebooks and how to go about doing that, but before too long we were producing well-formatted ebooks as true to the design of the original text as possible.

The pages that follow show some screenshots of the .epub version of *Classroom Publishing* as viewed through Adobe Digital Editions. When compared to the pages from that same section (as seen on pages 129-135), it's clear that the design of the print book had a strong influence on my design for the ebook, though many of the design elements I had used in the interior could not carry over to the digital. Sidebars, for example, had to be turned into inline text elements; sidebars on a screen as narrow as a standard ebook reader would be uncomfortably narrow, and on a phone's screen completely unreadable.

The menu to the left of the text shows the navigational menu. Especially for a reference book like *Classroom Publishing*, ease of navigation is very important, so I made the navigational menu as comprehensive as possible—all the main sections of the book are included, and the Stories from the Classroom section, which is by far the largest section of the book, is broken down further into sub-sections. On page 145, you can see an internal hyperlink, which leads to the referenced text; this is necessary to do in ebooks, as the idea of page numbers becomes essentially irrelevant when there is no fixed screen width.

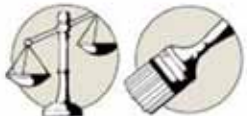
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Classroom Publishing: A Practical Guide...
Ooligan Press

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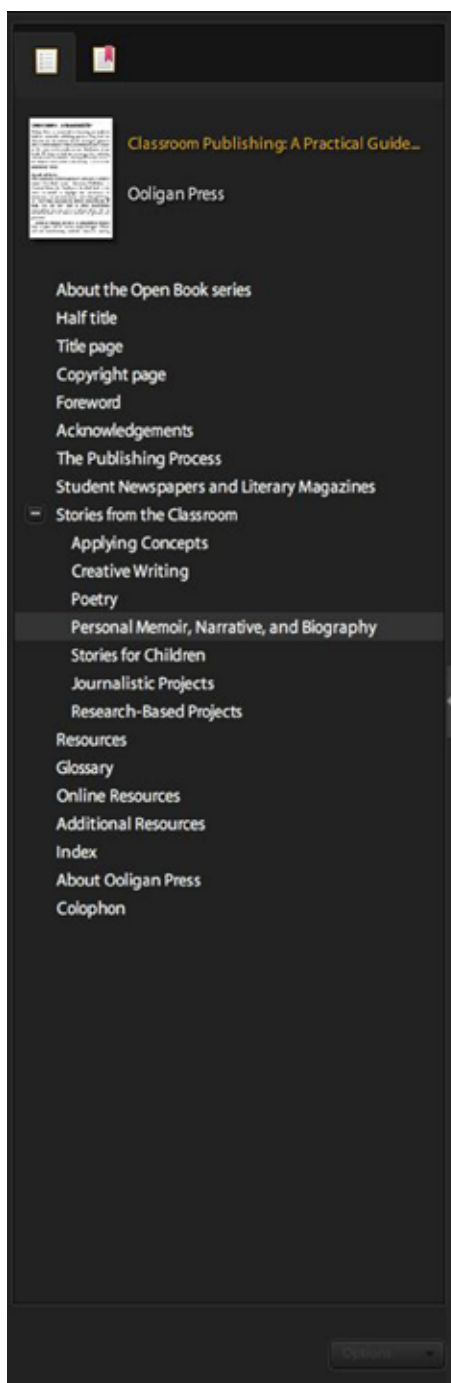


Memoir from Two Points-of-View

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.



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.

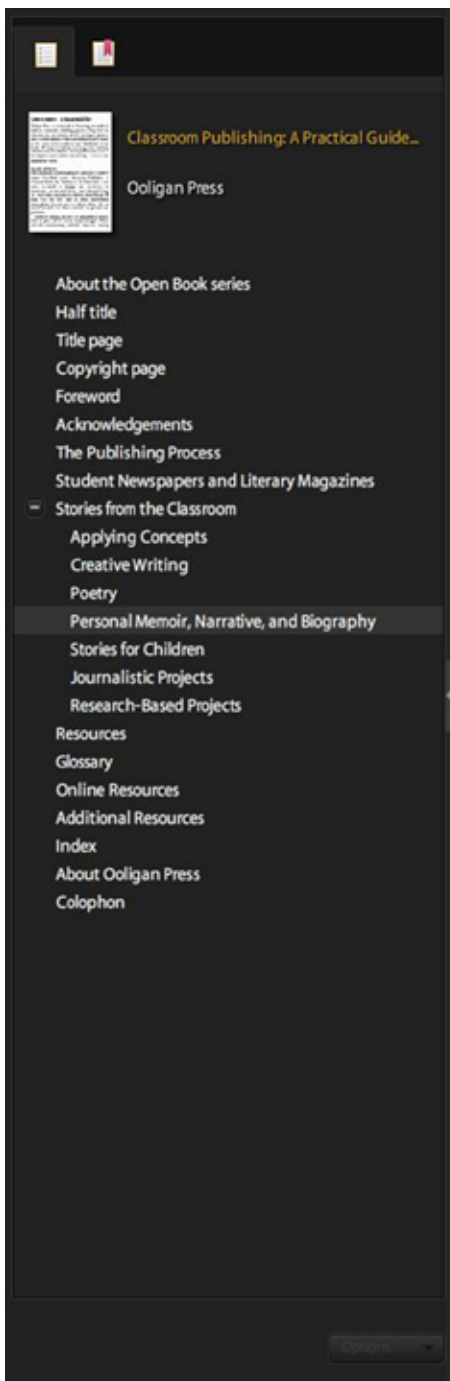
Throughout the project, Marianne and Alison found that the kids took the publication process seriously because they could see where it was leading. "It was going to end up on their coffee table at home or it was going to be wrapped as a gift to someone, or it's going to be saved," Alison said. Both the 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.

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.



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 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.*