



WHAT'S INSIDE

COMIC BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM. It's a phrase that has elicited secret thrills for generations of school kids, and—not inconsequentially—the dismay of those who have viewed the medium as suspect. This view reached its peak in the congressional comic book hearing of the mid-50s, where comic books were accused of encouraging “antisocial tendencies” and “seducing” children into juvenile delinquency.

Such a view of comics seems quaint and even, well, comical today, when a growing body of work combining word and image has established the medium as a literary form in its own right, welcomed by an increasing number of teachers, librarians, administrators, and even, perhaps, members of Congress. And kids *still* like 'em!

In this issue we explore how writing and reading comics can strengthen writing skills, spur the imagination, and boost literacy in classrooms from kindergarten to college and beyond. Included are a variety of classroom comics-making exercises, a graphic article on the form with a ready-to-use template for students, interviews with cartoonist Ben Katchor and with Toon Books editor Françoise Mouly, and articles by cartoonists, educators, cartoonist-educators, and others showing how the form can be a gift to teachers and students alike—not to mention a lot of fun. We urge you to find a comfy hammock in the shade, turn off your wrist communicator, and enjoy the issue.

— Susan Karwoska

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summer 2008 Issue

A Rare Bridge	3
<i>The Comic Book Project Connects Learning with Life</i>	
Michael Bitz	
<i>IN THE CLASSROOM</i>	
<i>Launching a Comic Book Club</i>	12
Comics Can Save the World!	15
<i>A Conversation with Françoise Mouly</i>	
Susan Karwoska	
<i>WORD AND IMAGE</i>	
Reading Images	21
<i>A Graphic Exploration</i>	
Youme Landowne	
Poetry Comics	27
<i>Taking Poems Out of Church</i>	
Dave Morice	
<i>IN THE CLASSROOM</i>	
<i>Three Poetry Comics Exercises</i>	31
Tightrope Walking and the Drawn Line	35
<i>An Interview with Ben Katchor</i>	
Laren McClung	
The Answer is Yes	41
<i>Teaching Cartooning</i>	
J. Kathleen White	
The Comics Revolution in the Language Arts Classroom	43
<i>An Editor's Perspective</i>	
Sari Wilson	
Comics Resources	47