

Graphic Novels for Life-Skills Education

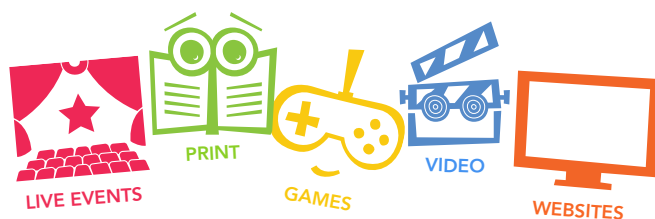
by Frank Maciel

NTC
Ed Talks





Frank Maciel, Manager of Product Development, is responsible for creating innovative programs using our five communications platforms: live events, print materials, video production, websites and gamification.



Of all the programs I create for NTC, graphic novels are the most fun. I work with illustrators and writers to create something really wonderful. We know

educators love graphic novels as a flexible education tool for several reasons. They motivate reluctant readers by pairing visual learning with reading comprehension and are especially effective at translating complex concepts into easy-to-understand lessons. They establish the left to right sequence in reading and research has shown that students learn more new vocabulary words from a graphic novel than they do from most conversations they have with adults.

Comic Books vs Graphic Novels

Comic books have been around since the 1800s. Back then, many people were illiterate, so drawings and cartoons were an effective way to communicate. Comics slowly transitioned from basic

communications into the entertaining comic books that people have come to know; Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman and Tintin (if you're Belgian). As the stories became longer and more complex, and the artwork richer and more intricate, they grew into graphic novels.



Writing for Graphic Novels

When creating a graphic novel, I start with defining the most important educational concepts the reader must learn. For example, *The Knights of Stenalot* is designed to teach students about the six simple machines. Therefore, I broke the story down into six parts and created reasons why my protagonist must master the concept behind each simple machine. It's a quest. Knowledge must be obtained to solve a problem and meet certain goals.



As with any piece of literature, it's important to figure out the most exciting way to engage the reader and get your ideas – or in this case, educational concepts – across. What is going to make a kid want to sit down and read this novel? Is it about a superhero? Is it set in outer space? Is there magic? Is it a fantasy story or an adventure story? Even though the options seem unlimited, choose wisely. Remember that your story must have the right idiom, characters and setting to make it an engrossing page turner and to make the learning effective.

Art for Graphic Novels

Once the story is written, it is divided into panels, like a movie script might be divided into storyboards. Only then do we select the artist.

We ask ourselves: What style is best for the story and characters? Do we want someone who is old school or modern and slick? How about minimalistic?

After the artist has been chosen, we work together to decide upon the color palette; black and white, brightly colored, saturated or muted. The color is a major influence on the mood of the piece. We look at thick lines versus thin lines and discuss the best shading options. It is important to fit the right artist and their style to the story so that you get the best final product.

Graphic novels are effective learning tools because they can take complex issues and present them in a way that's fun and therefore, easy to comprehend. They combine visual learning with reading comprehension, and if you stick to a few concepts in each novel and present them through an exciting story and eye-popping artwork, you'll have a hit.

“Remember, when you pick up a graphic novel, the first thing you see is the artwork.”



Graphic Novel Catalogue

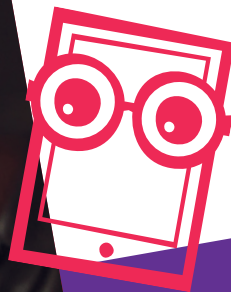
Each of the NTC graphic novels are available on their own as a stand-alone piece with complete story and full-color artwork.



MAD ABOUT MONEY features a young teen who doesn't appreciate budgeting, saving, or what her mom goes through in making money and paying the bills. A magical bike named Ike helps her learn all about financial literacy.



THE AQUA LEAGUE teaches water conservation, pollution prevention and environmental stewardship. A team of superheroes band together to defeat Polly Lution, the dastardly queen of waste.



THE KNIGHTS OF STEMALOT

is an adventure saga that uses the six simple machines to teach concepts in technology and engineering.



ELECTRANA is about a female superhero dedicated to the science of energy. She has a mild mannered alter-ego and becomes Electrana to fight for energy efficiency and combat energy waste in her community.



Graphic Novel Catalogue (cont.)

ALL'S WELL THAT EATS WELL

is a *Beauty and the Beast* satire that teaches nutrition and fitness. A young lady named Judy stumbles upon a magical kingdom in peril. A witch's spell has transformed the kingdom's prince into The Greast – a beast that forces the entire kingdom to eat nothing but sugary junk foods. Judy, aided by a local baker, a dragon and a crew of anthropomorphic fruits and vegetables, must reverse the spell and save the day.



AGENTS OF SAFETY is an electrical safety whodunit. It features a squad of utility linemen doubling as elite agents who have access to incredible technology that they use to teach electrical safety to kids.



THE BLUE FLAME is a natural gas safety space saga. A natural gas-powered spaceship crash lands on a forbidden planet and the crew races against time to develop natural gas technology to save the planet from certain destruction.

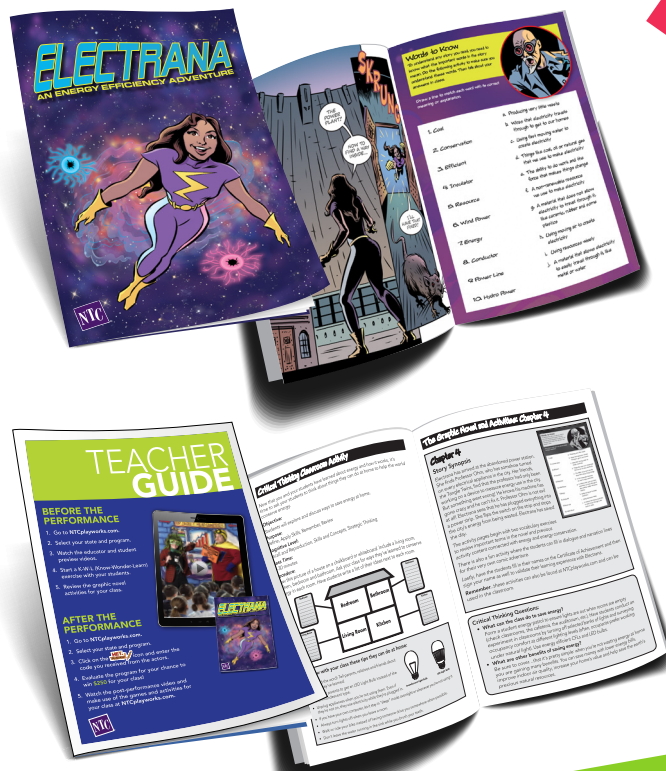


NTC Classroom Package

The NTC graphic novel classroom package includes a deluxe graphic novel and accompanying teacher guide. Inside the graphic novel, chapter by chapter, we have inserted hands-on projects and assignments for students.

The teacher guide provides educators with as many as 12 lesson plans and explains best practices for use of the classroom projects and family take-home activities.

For more information or pricing details, contact NTC at info@ntccorporate.com.





NTC is a premium provider of educational programming with operations in the U.S., Australia and New Zealand. We work directly between schools and clients to promote beneficial behaviors and life skills to students in grades K-12 on a local, regional and national level.

Since 1978, we have formed connections and helped develop relationships between thousands of schools and corporations, nonprofits and governmental organizations. Our value is not just in the impact we create; our turnkey services also change the lives and trajectories of students, mobilize parents and entire families with beneficial messages, and cultivate community-wide goodwill for clients.

Our award-winning educational programs are provided free for schools and are customizable to accommodate specific messages and goals for clients. Through formats including live performance, in-class discussion, graphic novels, print curriculum, and digital games and activities, we present topics such as energy conservation, safety, financial literacy, STEM, water and environmental stewardship, and health and social responsibility in ways that engage and empower students. In doing so, we are helping our clients to be forces of change for students, parents and communities.