

## **Building on the Familiar: Linking Students' Reading Interests with Curricula**

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Series books, graphic novels and comics are not usually selected for prestigious awards by librarians or teachers, such as the Caldecott or the Newberry, nor are they typically considered multicultural or offering diverse ethnic or linguistic perspectives. Yet children and adolescents themselves choose to read these books over virtually every other category of trade publication, and the most popular often transcend ethnicity, class, and more often than not, gender, in their broad appeal. In this chapter the authors summarize several research studies on the efficacy of using series books, graphic novels and comics to develop print knowledge, fluency, comprehension, and stamina, and most important, to sustain interest and engagement outside of school. At the secondary level, adolescents tend to navigate more toward authors and genres than series, with the seeming exception of graphic novels and *manga*, whose sales market has doubled since 2002. The combination of words and images contribute to motivation and fluency in many students, and they also have been used to scaffold vocabulary learning in struggling and ELL students. By building on the familiar—familiar media, familiar structures, familiar settings – series books, graphic novels and comics may support literate identities that are not only inextricably tied to particular child and youth cultures, but may also scaffold students' participation in a more global discourse.

### **Academic supports for struggling readers, second language learners**

- Academic supports from
  - Familiarity
  - Common plot structures
  - Recurring characters
  - Schema, background knowledge
- Therapeutic qualities of genre fiction
- Vocabulary support
- Multicultural awareness
- Graphic Novels
  - Inferences through visual cues
  - Contextual knowledge
  - Learning grammar
  - Multimodal connections

### **Websites Cataloging Series Books for Multiple Age Learners**

<http://www.kidsreads.com/series/index.asp>

<http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/series/juv/>

<http://www.bettendorflibrary.com/bpl-bin/series.pl>

## Graphic Novels of Interest

Kyle Baker

*The Bakers series*

*Nat Turner*

*Birth of a Nation: A Comic Novel*

Larry Gonick

*Cartoon History of the Universe, 1-3*

*Cartoon History of the United States*

*Cartoon Guide to Physics*

Alan Moore

*The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*

Andy Runton

*Owly series*

Joe Sacco

*Palestine*

*Safe Area Goradze: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-1995*

Marjane Satrapi

*Persepolis, 1-2*

Art Spiegelman

*Maus*

*Little Lit, 1-2*

Jeff Smith

*Bone*

Natsuki Takaya

*Fruits Basket manga*

Craig Thompson

*Blankets*

*Goodbye Chunky Rice*

Gene Yang

*American Born Chinese*

**\*\*For more titles, please look for\*\***  
**Stephen Weiner's *The 101 Best Graphic Novels***