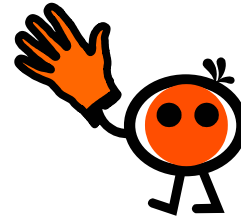


Title

Using Cartoons for Type Education



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Abstract

Using a variety of teaching styles and training media, is more likely to aid learning than reliance on one style or a limited range of media. It has long been recognised that keeping it light, simple and using humour are powerful tools to be included in any learning methodology. Research supports the introduction and inclusion of cartoons when they are relevant. Cartoons stimulate and encourage thinking processes, encourage discussion and the development of communication skills. They have been found to appeal to students of all ages. Type education has benefited from such visuals for over 20 years.

Introduction

It has long been accepted that using a variety of teaching styles and training media is more likely to aid learning than using a single and/or narrow teaching style and some more traditional training media.

The use of humour in learning has also been studied and it appears that the majority of research supports its inclusion when relevant – it can create interest, aid learning, reduce stress and improve the relationship between teacher and students. One form of introducing humour into learning has been the inclusion of cartoons and cartoon strips.

Although not called cartoons at the time, this form of drawing has been around for centuries with the first cartoon being dated at 1233. Political cartoons have been the most common form of cartoon and became commonplace from the 16th century. They have also been used for religious comment. Originally used for what was a mostly illiterate society, they have developed in their level of sophistication and utility. Due to the nature of their commentary (usually critical), cartoonists were subject to prison sentences in the 1800s.

Today, types of cartoons include: Classic single panel, cartoon strip, caricature, comic book and children's art. Comic books are one of the most widely read media throughout the world. In Japan (in 1994) they accounted for 22.9% of the country's entire publications (Kin cited in Davis, 1997). Cartoons are a daily feature of journalism, advertising, and multimedia uses and any of the cartoon forms might find themselves in educational settings.

Learning

Humour can be used in learning to great effect by simplifying difficult concepts and making them entertaining. In this way, the subject matter at hand can be de-mystified and it can bring concepts closer to the everyday person.

The delivery of humour in the class room is however, not without risk, particularly if delivered verbally as delivery is a real skill (Doring, 2000). Cartoons are a way of delivering learning with some humour, without the issue of comedic timing being a factor, and can also avoid issues that might be related to cultural background of the student.

Children have a short attention span and the writer is challenged to produce material which is easily digested. The use of cartoons encourages less able readers to be involved in learning.

Cartoons can appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds and can be more readily appreciated by people who might lack native language skills. Although often thought of as being mostly in the domain of children's learning, as they are particularly appealing to children, it has been found that adults also relate well to cartoons. According to Doring (2002), appropriate cartoons in adult

education can help learners relax and encourage flexible thinking although they must be carefully selected and should not be overused.

Use of cartoons

While cartoons are usually seen as fun, they can also be used as powerful tools – particularly for teaching and counselling. Cartoons are readily processed by children and adults – they are “easy on the eye and easy on the brain”. They can be formal or informal, serious or frivolous.

It is generally accepted that most people take in approximately 75-80% of information visually. It seems logical that the visual nature of cartoons would therefore make information processing easier. Learning can be enhanced by the use of cartoons over other visual media as it is usual in this media for visual distractions around the focal point of the image to be reduced, allowing people to concentrate on the issue at hand.

Cartoons have been found to be so attractive to children and younger people that in America, legislation has been progressively passed, outlawing the use of cartoons in advertising, promotion, packaging and labelling of products such as tobacco, drugs and alcohol in an attempt to make the products less attractive to children.

Cartoons have been used for counselling and education around difficult topics such as getting children to discuss bullying. One such process uses what is referred to as a “scripted-cartoon narrative” as part of the counselling process. They have also been found to encourage literacy and creative writing.

“Maybe it was his use of cartoons in class or lab experiments that stimulated thinking. Whatever the reason, William Heineman of the University of Cincinnati McMicken College of Arts & Sciences has distinguished himself as a teacher of national reputation. Heineman earned the American Chemical Society’s 1997 Award for Excellence in Teaching.”
University of Cincinnati President’s Report, 1998

Clarke found cartoons useful for educating children about stereotypes claiming that because today’s students are media oriented, one way to examine stereotypes is through the use of cartoons.

Whilst some have found the use of cartoons in education to be childish, others have embraced the use of cartoons as a major training and learning aid. The intelligent use of cartoons can simplify ideas and make otherwise intimidating concepts understandable. Much of that intimidation has been around subjects

such as the sciences (in particular, physics), and statistics. Teachers who have increasingly included cartoons in lessons and texts claim to have greatly benefited.

Cartoons have been used in other fields too such as cognitive behavioural therapy and treatment of social phobias.

Type education

Cartoons have been used in Type education for at least 20 years. Because of the rich nature of Type material, it loans itself very well to explanations in cartoon form. Practitioners may have also utilised cartoons not specifically developed for Type education. Some cartoons loan themselves to being very good illustrations of Type preferences, such as those drawn by Eric Larson (most noticeably, his *Farside* cartoons) and Scott Adams (*Dilbert*). Use of these by others in class or training rooms can however, create copyright issues.

Some early Type authors using cartoons for Type education include: Otto Kroeger (1981), Earle Page (*Looking at Type*, 1983), Williams, Armstrong and Malcolm (*The Negotiable Environment*, 1985), Alan Brownsword (*Psychological Type: An Introduction*, 1988) and Peter Malone (*Let a Viking Do It*, 1988).

Otto Kroeger used cartoon-style stick figures and words to demonstrate temperament characteristics. Earle Page used cartoons that are stick figures combined with line drawings to demonstrate the different preferences. Williams et. al. used a few cartoons and line drawings (as well as charts and tables) to illustrate different points in their text including what different office environments might look like that appeal to different preferences. Brownsword’s cartoons are line drawings with preference letters used to illustrate Type dynamics.

In Peter Malone's book *Let a Viking Do It*, the cartoons of Dik Browne of *Hagar the Horrible*, (a well-known cartoon strip) are used to provide insight into the MBTI®. The 16 Types are explained using a humorous and informative approach that is useful for both expert and general readers.

Sandra Hirsh in her book *Work It Out*, uses humorous cartoons to illustrate examples of Type preferences. The cartoons display people as well as animals in anthropomorphic mode in different situations, illustrating different Type preferences.

Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger have co-authored four Type-related books - *Do What You Are*, *The Art of Speed Reading People*, *Just Your Type* and *Nurture by Nature*. All four books utilise cartoons, although mostly on their covers!

I originally developed a PowerPoint® slideshow which mostly consisted of Screen Beans (black, bean-shaped figures of no apparent gender) which I'd chosen to illustrate preference characteristics as part of the verification process one goes through after administration of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator®. I liked to use the Screen Beans because I felt that they avoided many possible gender and cultural issues. Some of these illustrations I animated.

I first started development of TypeFace™ with the intention of providing appealing visuals with succinct text. The language used has been specifically developed intending to be accessible to people of all ages, (well, aged 10 and above). To this end I was very mindful of the words and language, to consistently provide this accessibility. The cartoons are simple and bright.



Conclusion

Throughout the ages, cartoons have been used to amuse, entertain and educate. They have been found to be a very useful training tool because they are more readily processed by the brain: after all, a picture tells a thousand words. Cartoons can also be more easily processed by people who may lack language skills and can help avoid cultural bias that may occur in other forms of media or in materials that are more reliant on text. Appealing to both children and adults, cartoons appear to be increasingly utilised in educational contexts including Type education.

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