

## Representation, Re-presentation, and Representin' through Graphic Novels

Kelly Gross

Vermont College of Fine Arts

How do we change perceptions and understandings about disability through reading and creating graphic novels? This paper analyzes representation, re-presentation, and representin' of disability experience in the visual form of graphic novels. Research on the representation of disability in graphic novels and visual media will be discussed. Several graphic novels for students in grades K-12 that feature protagonists with disabilities will be analyzed. How are disabilities portrayed in graphic novels? How are our understandings of the lived experience of disability changed through a re-presentation of scenarios from the viewpoint of someone with a disability? How do the portrayals of disability in these graphic novels represent disability experience? Visual representin', social issues, literature, and art-making as relevant to disability issues is examined. Research with pre-service art teachers concerning the impact of reading these graphic novels and producing comics focused on the topics of inclusion, diversity, and empathy will be presented.

### Bio:

Kelly Gross is Faculty Chair of Graduate Studies in Art and Design Education at Vermont College of Fine Arts and a lecturer in Art Education at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her research interests include art and design education, disability studies, social justice, art and cognition, and STEAM. Kelly has published on disability issues in art and design education through the LearnxDesign (2015) Conference and the National Art Education Association's Advisory (Summer 2014). Kelly helps run a STEAM program in the Chicago area and recently published an article on constructivist thinking and STEAM education in Art Education (November 2016).