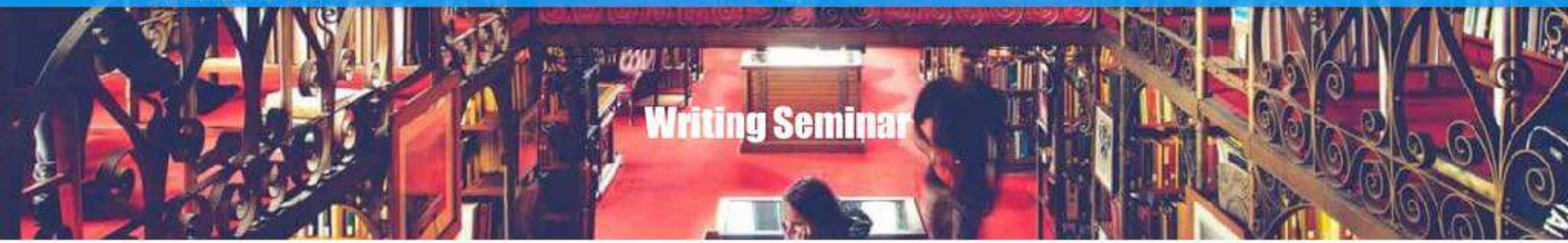
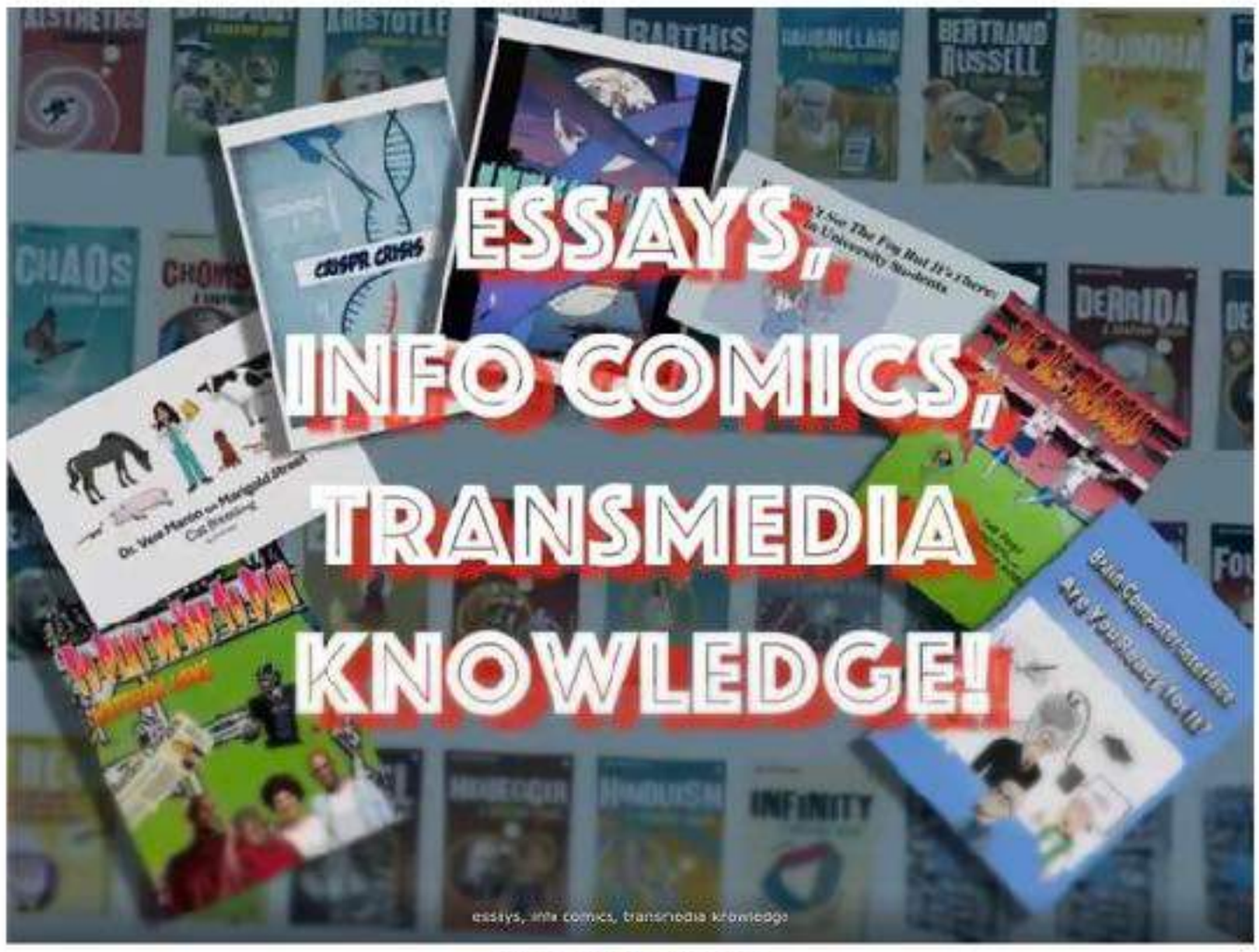




Prof. Jon McKenzie

ENGL 1168 First-Year Seminar Spring 2025

Section 110 - TuTh 1:25-2:40 - 110 Google folders

Section 111 - TuTh 2:55-4:10 - 111 Google folders

Comics, Posters, PAR&D Exhibition

Project 4: Information Comics

Using the Comic Life software, compose a 4-6 page info comic that uses dialogue and images to situate and dramatize the concept you researched in Projects 2 and 3.

We have focused so far on the academic essay and the importance of making clear arguments through clear writing, sharpening concepts and their connections through lean, active sentences, coherent paragraphs, and an overall structure that builds toward concluding insights, questions, or recommendations.

At the same time, we have seen that info comics' visual narratives can translate specialized knowledge into common everyday situations and thereby appeal to *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* in subtle yet powerful ways: thus, *It Takes a Village* embodies the concept of culturally competent care for Aboriginal women in ways that a scientific article simply cannot.

However, essays and info comics also share many traits, such as tackling conceptual material, incorporating multiple perspectives, and providing choices and recommendations. Essays usually cite different authors' perspectives, while comics often stage different perspectives through characters. Essays present logical alternatives, whereas narratives present characters' behavioral choices situated in specific situations.

In this project, you will apply what you've learned about info comics and essay writing to experiment and create your own info comics. You will need to decide how to translate your conceptual analysis into an engaging narrative. The basic steps:

To create your info comics, follow these steps:
1. Decide on a scenario to situate key elements of your conceptual analysis: use 2-4 characters with three or more scenes that stages the struggle/drama of your concept.
2. Turn your question into a quest: QUEST=ADDRESS A PROBLEM.
3. Outline quest using sparkline (what is/what could be) and why‐what‐how (problem/explanaon/soluon).
4. Write up your quest as a 500-750 dialogue with specific scene/location,, protagonist(s), antagonists,, and helpers and hinderers (may be scientists, policy makers, industry, etc.).
5. Storyboard/visualize your quest as a series of images using pen and paper.
6. Collect images using camera, Creative Commons, Google image search, etc.
7. Create full comic using Comic Life (or drawing), integrating dialogue & images and revising as needed
8. Export as PDF and print drafts either in B/W or color to share with friends and family

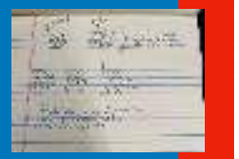
Regarding characters: what characters can best embody your issue as protagonists, antagonists, helpers, and hinderers? Also, information comics target specific audiences, not just school children, but adults and researchers. Your audience here: fellow students and professors and/or friends and family.

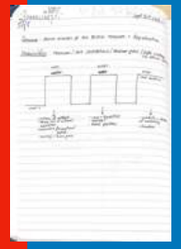
Use Creative Commons or Google Image Search tool to filter for reusable images.

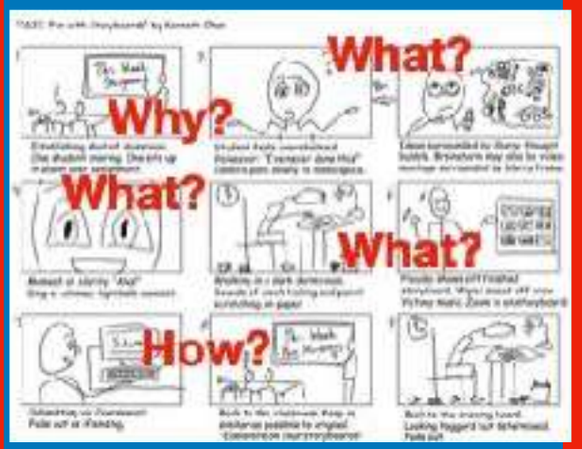
We will hold workshops on dialogues, Comic Life, and narrative sparklines that will provide additional guidance on creating your info comics.

Draft dialogues due: T 10/21 Draft comics due: Th 10/30 Final comics due: T 11/4 Comix Show Fri 11/7

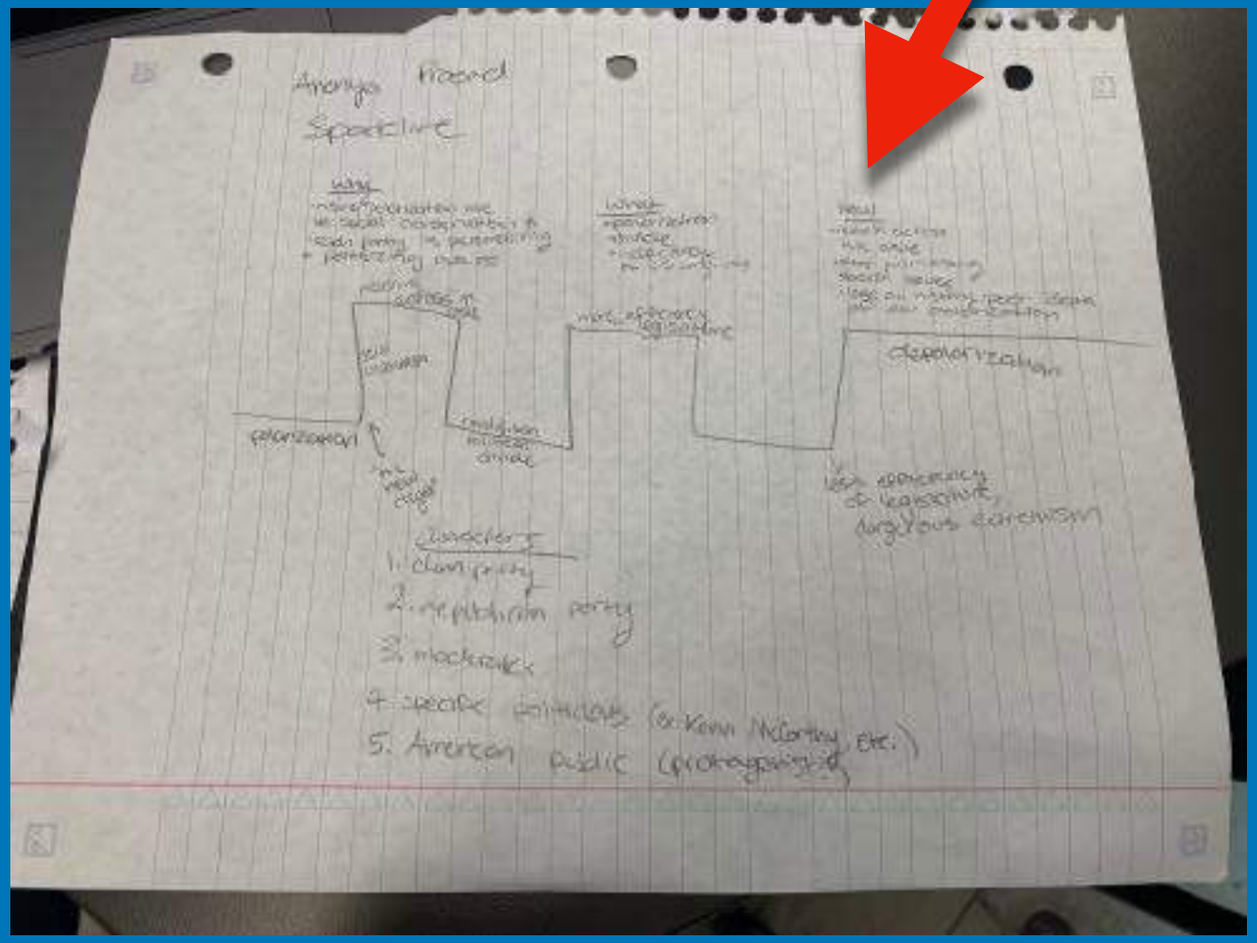
OPEN WORKSHOP
Sparklines, Scenario/Dialogues, Storyboards







Sparkline



Dialogue

1: Intro to the Case

: "We are gathered here to discuss the case of Johnson vs. GlobalLink, where the plaintiffs allege negligence on the part of GlobalLink contributed to the tragic suicide of their teenage daughter Alexandra Johnson. Both parties are present, and we will proceed with opening statements. Plaintiff, you may begin."

Plaintiff's Attorney: "Your Honor, members of the jury, we are here today not just to seek justice for the Johnson family but to hold GlobalLink accountable for the role they played in fostering an environment where cyberbullying thrives. Evidence will show that GlobalLink failed to implement necessary safeguards to protect its users, directly impacting the Johnson's child, Alex, and leading to an irreversible tragedy."

GlobalLink DA: "Your Honor, while we deeply sympathize with the Johnson family's loss, GlobalLink provides a platform for free expression and has policies against harassment. The responsibility of monitoring and controlling individual behavior online should not solely fall on GlobalLink. We will demonstrate that the company has made considerable efforts to safeguard its users."

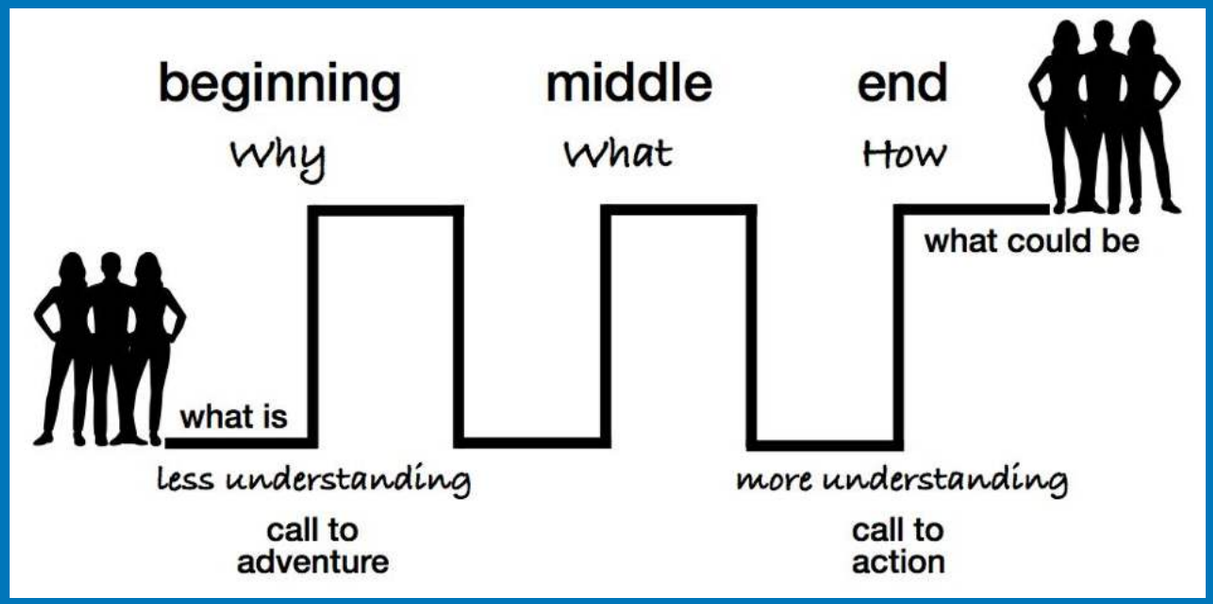
Scene 2: Witness Testimony - Friend

Plaintiff's Attorney: "Please state your name and relation to Alexandra Johnson."
Witness (Friend): "I'm Jamie Carter. I am … was Alex's best friend. We spent everyday together, and we spent a lot of that time on GlobalLink."
Plaintiff's Attorney: "Can you describe what Alex experienced on GlobalLink, Jamie?"
Witness : "At first everything was fine, Alex would post videos of her singing and people were really positive, but then a nasty rumor started spreading."
Plaintiff's Attorney: "What was the rumor?"
Witness : "That she had messed around with multiple guys at school. None of it was true but that didn't stop anyone from leaving hateful comments telling her she should kill herself. It was so bad they ended up making a hate group dedicated to her and the rumors surrounding her."
Plaintiff's Attorney: "Did she ever report this behavior?"
Witness: "Yes, multiple times but every time she did nothing would happen or their accounts would be banned for a couple days before they were allowed to come back and keep doing what they did."

Scene 3: Expert Testimony - Psychiatrist

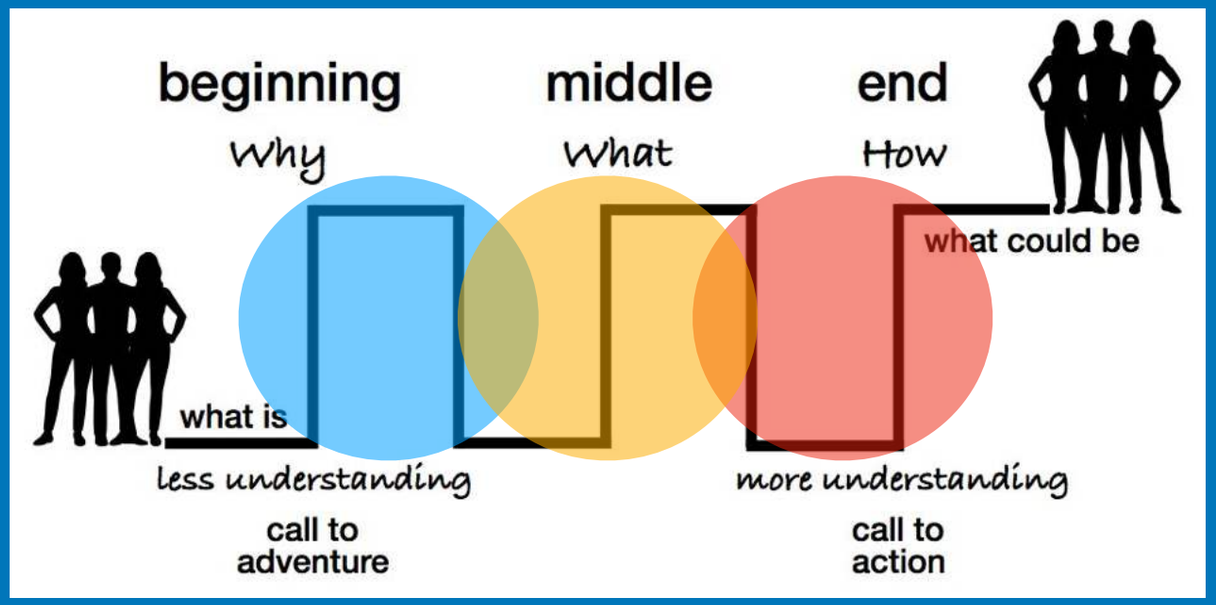
Plaintiff's Attorney: "Please introduce yourself and explain your expertise."
Witness (Psychiatrist): "Yes, I'm Dr. Emilia Rivera, a psychiatrist specializing in adolescent mental health. And my work primarily involves counseling teens, usually those who have faced cyberbullying themselves."

Sparkline workshop



- Scenario: specific situation in which concept is embodied in life event
- 3-4 Stakeholders as characters, plus protagonist
- Conceptual plotting: Use WWH sparkline
    - Why (context: values and goals of each stakeholder)
    - What (what concept/issue is for each stakeholder)
    - How (actions each stakeholder can take)
- Call to adventure: appeal to values and goals of different stakeholders.
- Call to action: desired actions for different stakeholders.

Scenario Dialogue workshop



- **Scenario** : a clear quest/question and suitable time and place with flexibility and potential: topos can be
  - literal (robots in robot factory), metaphor (intersectionality at intersection),
  - borrowed (AI in Matrix); abstract (atoms nowhere), surreal (dental floss farm), mix (ITAV)
- **Character dialogue**: stakeholders sharing distinct perspectives and knowledges:
  - Logos and ethos over pathos (concepts and action over emotions)
  - Stakeholders with values and ideas, while Hollywood characters emotions and actions
  - Avoid single or two stakeholder scenarios: goal is diversity of perspectives/ideas

- **Scenes**: Use scenes to bring different stakeholders/ideas together
  - topos where topics/ideas explored, developed, contested, reframed,
  - Scenes arranged in sequence that takes reader from what is to what could be (sparkline)
  - Scenes have internal structure of old/new way, what is/what could be (sparkline)
  - Scenes function like sections/paragraphs that articulate and shape quest/ion

Dialogue workshop

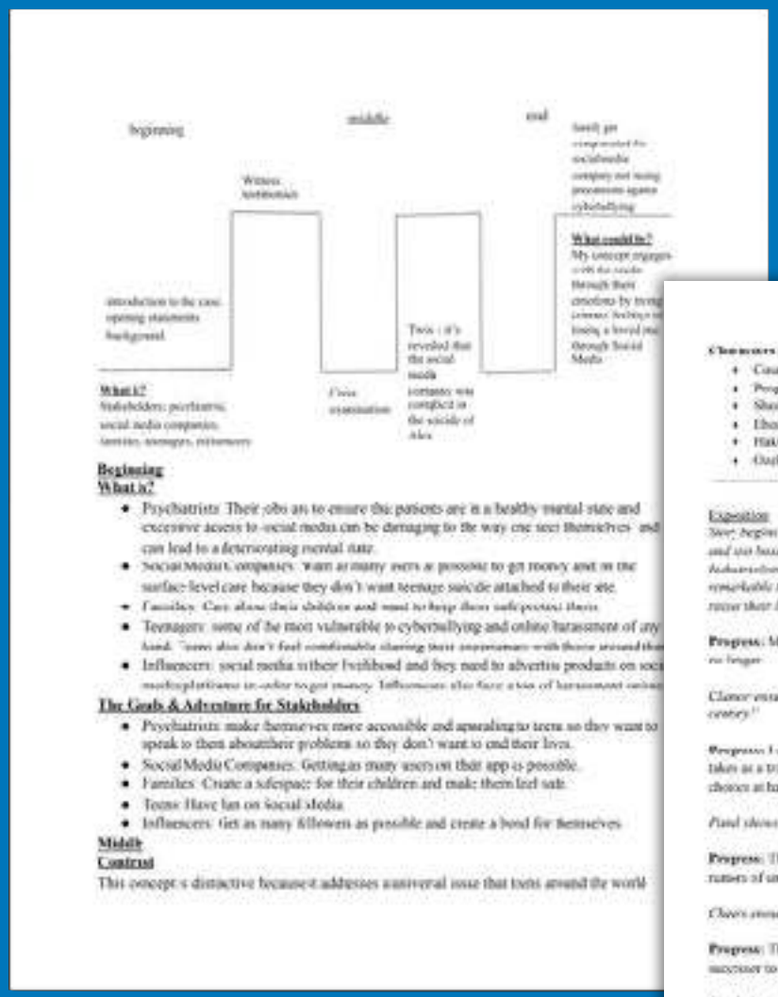
- **Does the dialogue transmediate a specific concept into a good scenario for an info comic?**
- **Does it have a good title?**
- **Are there multiple stakeholders portrayed by characters?**
- **Is there a clear narrative arc (beginning/middle/end) structured by WhyWhatHow?**
- **Does the comic need more narration (eg, direct framing of scene, background information, definition of concept?)**
- **How conceptually rich is comic?**
- **Who is the intended audience?**
- **How can the author improve the dialogue?**
-

Tool: Writing Dialogue

Best Practices:

- Use the scenarios as prototypes or working models of the desired interactions you want to have with your stakeholders. Use the strategic sparkline, strategic matrix and transmedia grid to guide your work.
- Use the why, what, how structure to organize each scenario, focusing on the call to adventure and the call to action, the key moments of engagement and transformation.
- Try starting at the end, with a scenario's call to action and working your way back: write to capture decisions and key steps leading to them.
- At the same time: start fast at the beginning by jumping to the chase, envisioning how the stakeholder hears your call to adventure and enters into the storytelling.
- Use narrator boxes to introduce scenarios and key background information.
- Use dialogue to dramatize information and interactions as well as describe them abstractly. Long passages are fine: dialogues act out and act upon information. Show and tell your project in action while demonstrating its value.
- Use thought bubbles to convey characters' internal deliberations. Avoid dumbing down and strive to smarten up your work by framing it from different perspectives.
- Compose interactions using conversational language, the way you speak out loud to others. Avoid slang and jargon while using everyday language to translate and share specialized terms associated with your project.
- Write about a page of double-space dialogue for each stakeholder, striving for clarity and concision, focusing on calls to adventure and action, STAR moments, and the dramatic arcs of transformation.
- Scenarios can run one after the other with different sparklines, or form a layered structure with one overarching sparkline, or be embedded or entwined within different sparklines, much like TV shows and life. Err on the side of simplicity and concreteness.
- Use the sparkline, matrix and grid to model interactions between different stakeholders and transmedia forms, as well as different platforms they appear on: if you don't know your stakeholder's media ecology, where and how they engage with your work, do some formal or informal demographic research.

Transmedia Shuttling/Channel Switching
Sparklines, Scenario/Dialogues, Storyboards


beginning

middle

end

Writers workshop

Twin 1 (F) revealed that the social media company was complicit in the suicide of Alex

Twin 1 (F)'s examination

What if?
Stakeholders: psychiatrists, social media companies, families, teenagers, influencers

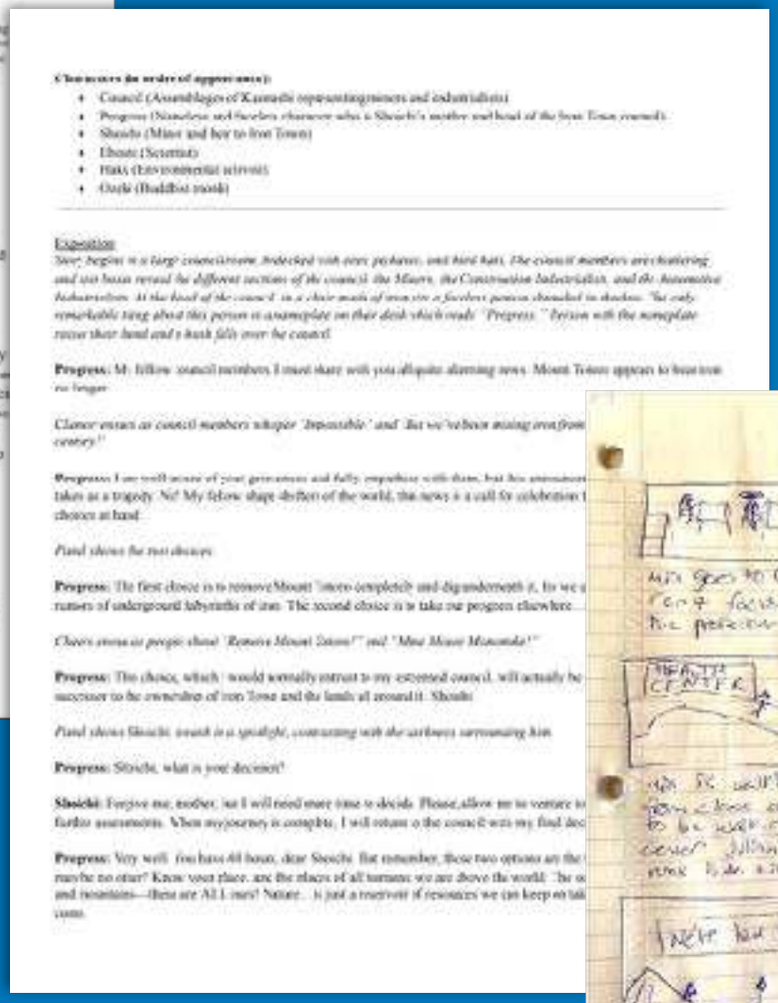
Beginning
What is?

- Psychatrists: Their jobs are to ensure the patients are in a healthy mental state and excessive access to social media can be damaging to the way one sees themselves and can lead to a deteriorating mental state.
- Social Media Companies: Want as many users as possible to get money and on the surface level care because they don't want teenage suicide attached to their site.
- Families: Care about their children and want to keep them safe/protect them.
- Teenagers: some of the most vulnerable to cyberbullying and online harassment of any kind. Some also don't feel comfortable sharing their experiences with those around them.
- Influencers: social media is their livelihood and they need to advertise products on social media platforms in order to get money. Influencers also face a ton of harassment online.

The Goals & Adventure for Stakeholders

- Psychatrists: make themselves more accessible and appealing to teens so they want to speak to them about their problems so they don't want to end their lives.
- Social Media Companies: Getting as many users on their app as possible.
- Families: Create a safespace for their children and make them feel safe.
- Teens: Have fun on Social Media.
- Influencers: Get as many followers as possible and create a bond for themselves.

Middle
Context
This concept is distinctive because it addresses a universal issue that tests around the world


Characters (in order of appearance):

- Council (Assemblages of Kaumatii representatives and industrialists)
- Progress (Nameless and faceless character who is Shoichi's mother and head of the Iyon Town council)
- Shoichi (Miner and heir to Iron Town)
- Ebonte (Scientist)
- Hiiki (Environmental activist)
- Ozyki (Buddhist monk)

Exposition

Story begins in a large conference room bedecked with ores, pickaxes, and hard hats. The council members are chattering, and we hear reveal the different sections of the council: the Miners, the Construction Industrialists, and the Automotive Industrialists. At the head of the council, in a chair made of iron ore is a faceless person shrouded in shadow. The only remarkable thing about this person is a nameplate on their desk which reads "Progress." Person with the nameplate raises their hand and a hush falls over the council.

Progress: Mr. fellow council members, I must share with you allquite alarming news. Mount Tenno appears to have run no longer.

Clamor ensues as council members whisper "Impossible" and "But we've been mining iron from century!"

Progress: I am well aware of your grievances and fully empathize with them, but this announcement takes as a tragedy. No! My fellow shape shifters of the world, this news is a call to celebration! choices at hand.

Panel shows the two choices.

Progress: The first choice is to remove Mount Tenno completely and dig underneath it, to see rumors of underground labyrinths of iron. The second choice is to take our progress elsewhere...

Cheers ensue as people chant "Remove Mount Tenno!" and "Mine Moore Mountain!"

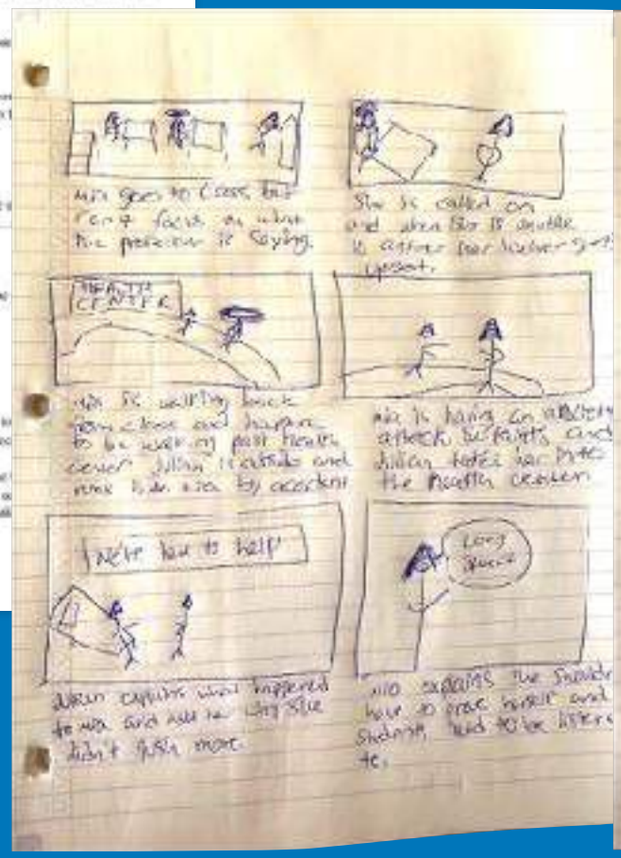
Progress: This choice, which I would normally entrust to my esteemed council, will actually be successor to the ownership of iron Town and the lands all around it. Shoichi

Panel shows Shoichi, seated in a spotlight, contrasting with the darkness surrounding him.

Progress: Shoichi, what is your decision?

Shoichi: Forgive me, mother, but I will need more time to decide. Please allow me to venture to further assessments. When my journey is complete, I will return o the council with my final dec

Progress: Very well. You have 48 hours, dear Shoichi. But remember, those two options are the maybe no other? Know your place, are the places of all humans we are above the world. "Be o and mountains—these are ALL ours! Nature... is just a reservoir of resources we can keep or tak cows.


Man goes to Coast but can't focus on what the professor is saying.

Man is called on and when Man is unable to answer professor is upset.

Man is walking back from class and happens to be walking past Health Center. Man is outside and sees a sign by accident

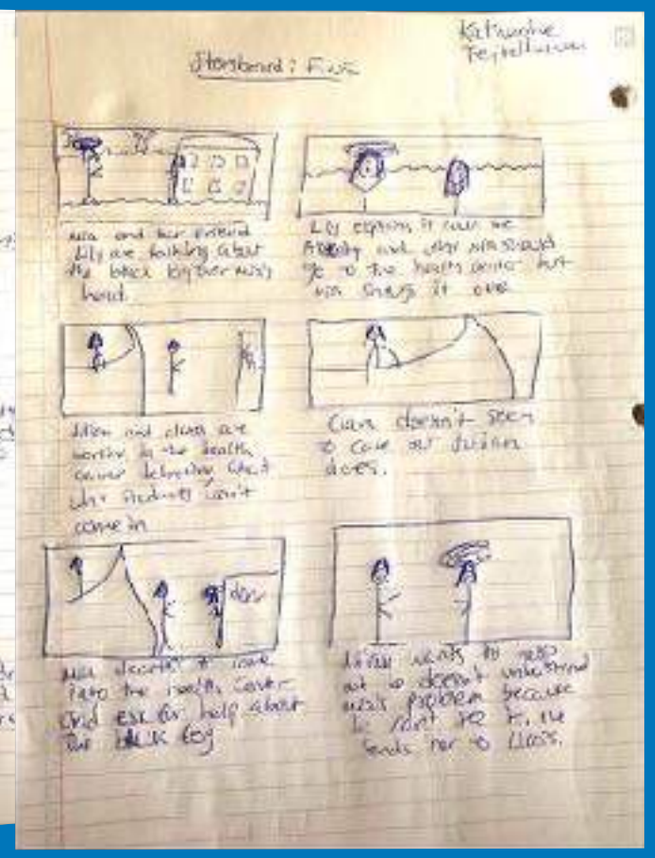
Man is having an anxiety attack he forgets and the Health Center

"We're here to help"

Long queue

Man explains the situation to receptionist and tells her he's here

Man explains what happened to him and asks to stay. She didn't quite


Storyboard: Four

Katherine Fejellaran

Man and his friend Lily are looking at the black keyboard

Lily explains it can be frustrating and that man should go to the health center but man shrugs it off

Man and Lily are waiting in the health center lobby but the patient can't come in

Man can't seem to care as much as Lily does.

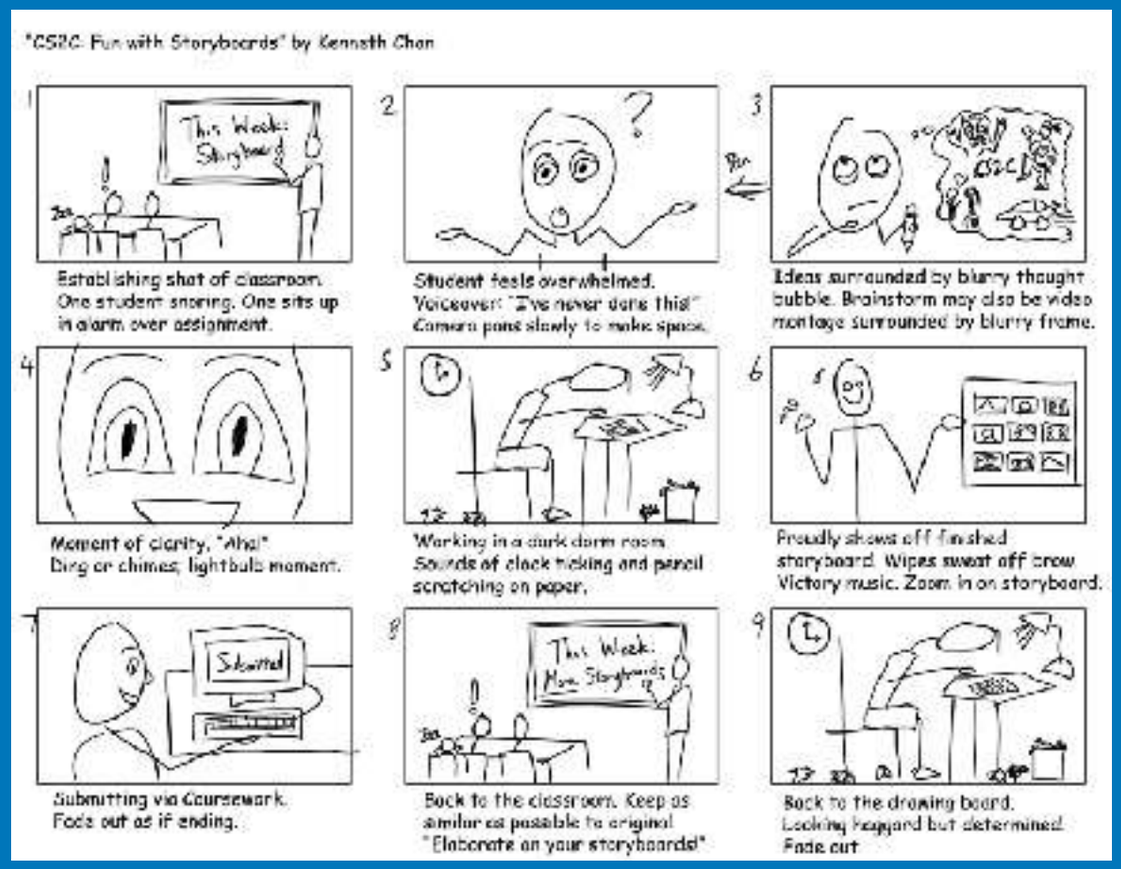
Man decides to go into the health center and ask for help about the black key

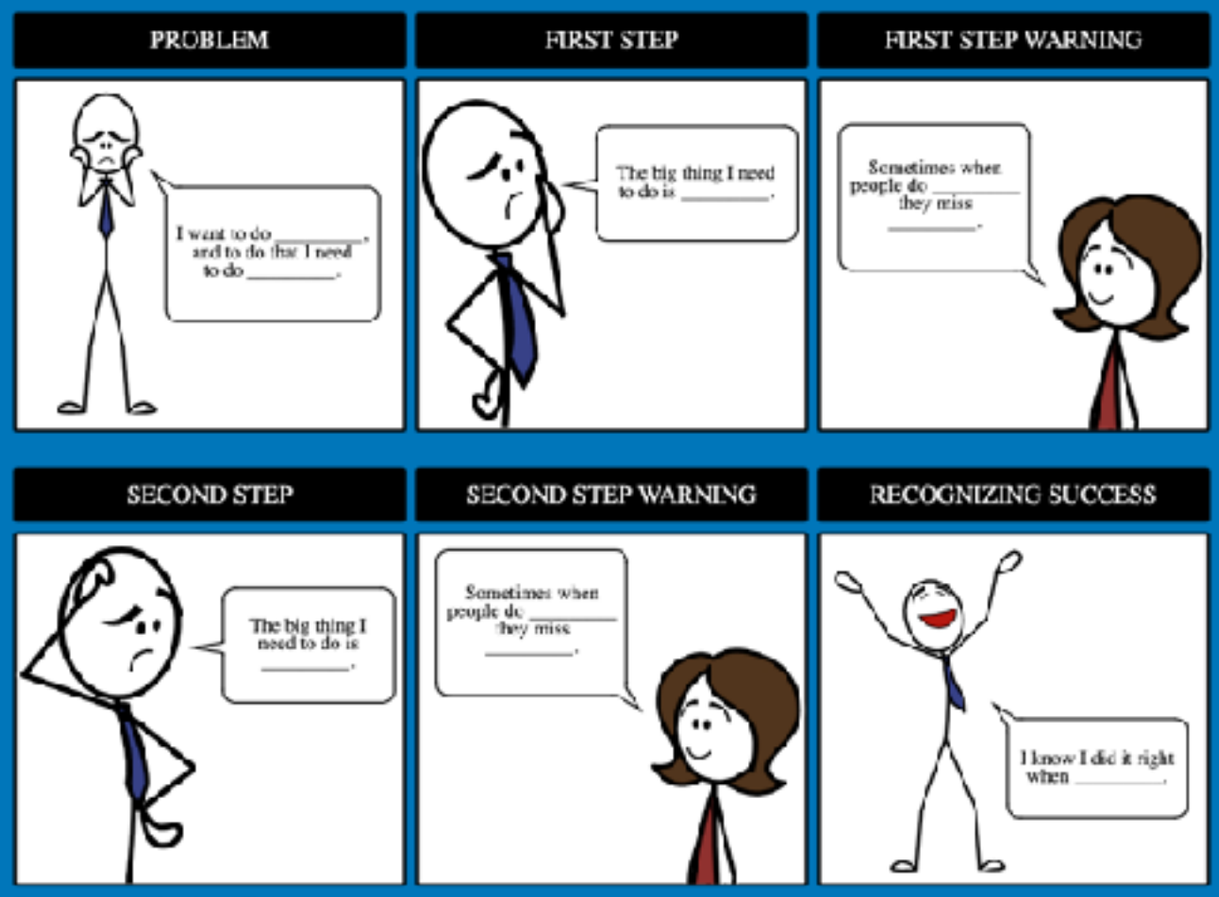
Man wants to help out so doesn't understand what problem because he didn't go to the health center to start.

Storyboard

Storyboards are rough drafts for films, comics and other visual narratives.

- **Break dialogue scenario into different scenes**
- **Draw stick figures either noting or including text of dialogue and narration**
- **Work with distributing graphic narrative into full pages**
- **Don’t forget title masthead or comic cover**
- **Your comics will be in tall “portrait” format, not wide “landscape” format**





Create your own at Storyboard That

Homework

- Work on dialogue
- McCloud, Making Comics 8-57
- Madden, 99 Ways to Tell a Story