**USING COMIX TO REFLECT ON ACADEMIC WORK**

**START STUDENTS EARLY**

* **The first thing I do is have students take out their cell phones and have them shoot photos of themselves, their classmates, and me. This takes maybe 5 minutes.**
* **Make the comix important enough so that students recognize that shouldn’t do a shoddy job. I make the comix worth 15% of the grade for the course.**
* **I refer students to the “Comic Life 3” computer program (by Plasq) and tell them it’s free at first, but will cost some money later.**
* **Students are told to create a one-page comix due at the end of the first week of class. Their real comix are a minimum of 12 pages, with 6 panels per page.**
* **Ask students for their permission to use or display their comix.**
* **Make room for exceptions: a few students have asked if they could draw their comix rather than use Comic Life 3, which uses photographs. I have always said “yes” to these students, and have never been disappointed with the results.**

**GIVE STUDENTS INSTRUCTION**

* **Let students know that you are taking the assignment seriously. That is, the comix should be a real reflection on the academic work they have done for the class. It should not be only about the student’s methods of procrastination.**
* **Quality comix require planning and outlining, page to page and panel to panel. If they try to create their comix the night before it is due, the comix will probably suck.**
* **I give students a handout about “brainstorming” ideas, as well as a “criteria sheet” that will be used for the students’ final project (see attached).**
* **Make sure that students understand that I’m okay with students using me in their comic (e.g., as helper, antagonist). Students will ask you for additional photo-ops.**
* **Ask students for a bullet-point outline of their story well in advance.**
* **I’ll revisit the assignment a few times during the semester. I may ask students to come up with very specific ideas that deal with some particular aspect of the course work (e.g., APA writing style) or something very basic that should be part of each student’s comix(e.g., create a moment of internal conflict.**

**EXPECTATIONS FOR FINISHED PROJECT**

* **Not stapled; artwork for comix needs to be treated with care.**
* **Insert single-sided pages back to back in clear plastic sleeves.**
* **Put sleaves in half-inch three-writing binder.**