

MEDICAL EDUCATION

Teaching Confidentiality through Comics at One Spanish Medical School

Artwork by Mónica Lalanda, MD, MSc, and caption by Mónica Lalanda, MD, MSc, Rogelio Altisent, MD, PhD, and Maria Teresa Delgado-Marroquín, MD, PhD

Abstract

At the University of Zaragoza in Spain we developed an innovative way to teach the concept of confidentiality to medical students, which we tested by comparing the use of customized comics with more traditional methods. We proved that using comics is more attractive to students than lectures and class discussions, that it increases class participation and students' self-awareness of learning, and that it maintains the same academic results. We share our experience visually in a two-page comic.

COMICS FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS: A SPANISH EXPERIENCE

It is a well-recognized fact that medical students suffer what has been called "ethical erosion" during their years in Medical School.

Their sense of empathy and bedside manners deteriorate.

The reasons are complex and multiple.

Students also demand teaching techniques that are better adapted and more entertaining...

I FOUND OUT ABOUT ALL THIS AS I STUDIED FOR MY MSC IN MEDICAL ETHICS. I WAS SHOCKED!

IF MEDICAL SCHOOLS CHANGE PEOPLE FOR THE WORSE, WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, SHOULDN'T WE?

Houston, we have a problem!

I STARTED TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE (EVEN IF WEIRD) WAYS TO IMPROVE MATTERS AND I CAME ACROSS COMICS

I COULDN'T STOP READING **GRAPHIC PATHOGRAPHERS*** A WHOLE NEW WORLD I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW EXISTED!

*GRAPHIC NOVELS ABOUT ILLNESSES (as defined by Michael Green and Kimberly Myers)

I NOT ONLY READ COMICS BUT ALSO READ **ABOUT** COMICS. *SCOTT MCCLOUD IS A GENIUS*

IT TURNS OUT TO BE AN UNUSUAL GENRE AND NOT JUST FOR KIDS.

"The invisible art"

In comics, we see boxes and we connect them and turn them into ideas. We get to understand things that aren't really there. It's quite magical. A sequence of only two images can contain a long story.

UNDERSTANDING COMICS IS INNATE TO OUR BRAIN

A COMIC CAN BE USEFUL IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

- IT INVITES PONDERING AND MEDITATION
- MORE INTENSE AND FUN THAN READING TEXT

DIABETES

IT HUMANIZES ILLNESS, INCREASING EMPATHY.

John, who lives with diabetes

IT PROMOTES THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIAGNOSTIC SKILLS (after all, diagnosing is coming up with ideas where there are only clues, as you do when reading comics)

$A+B=Dx$

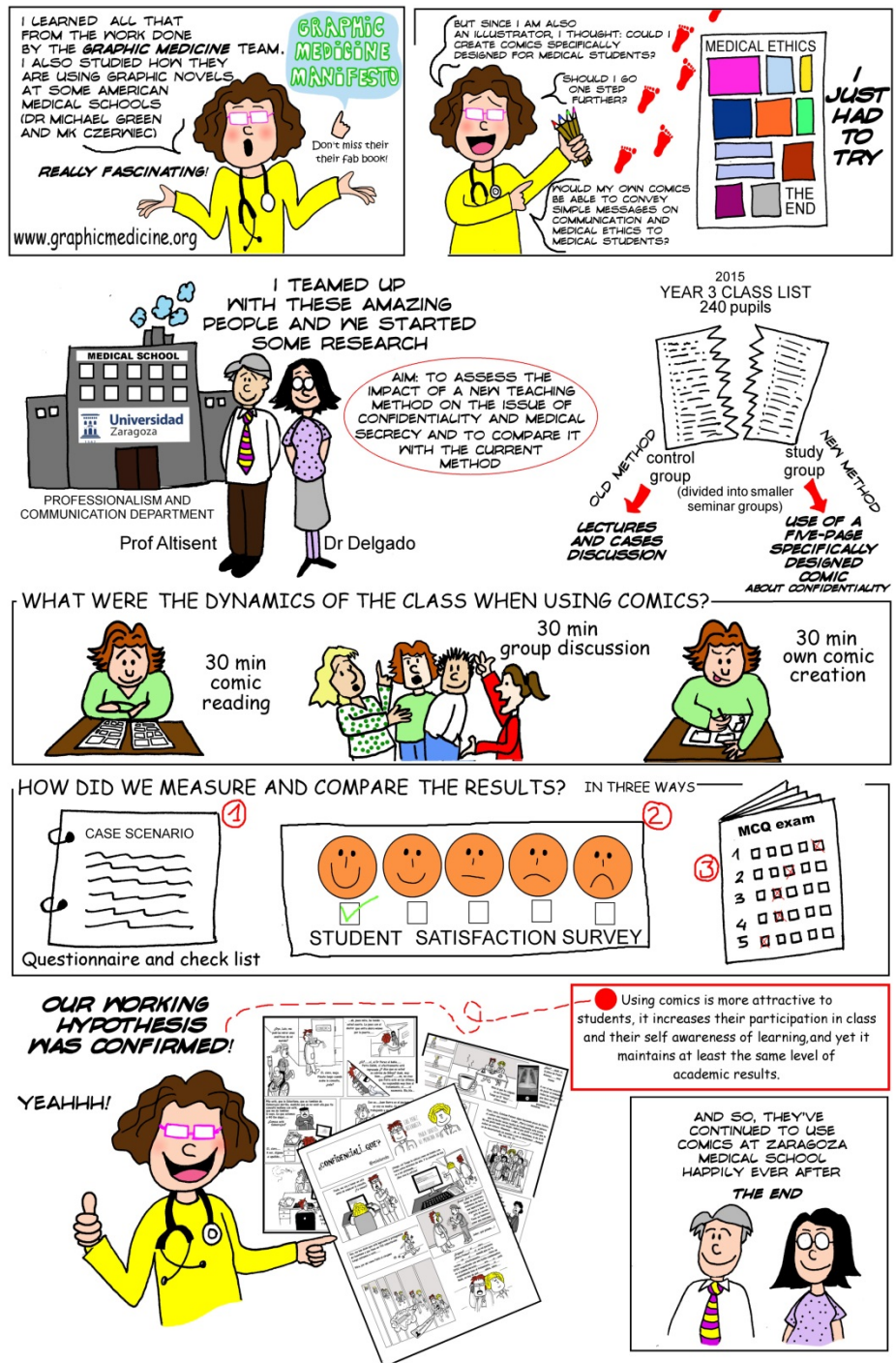


Figure 1. Comics for Medical Education: A Spanish Experience, by Mónica Lalanda, Rogelio Altisent, and Maria Teresa Delgado-Marroquín

Caption

Comics are increasingly used in medical schools as a tool for students to reflect on their own experience, increase their empathy towards patients, and improve their communication skills [1]. However, as far as we are aware, using customized comics to teach students specific content in health care ethics has not been attempted anywhere before. At the University of Zaragoza in Spain, we developed an innovative educational project: we created comics about confidentiality specifically for medical students and used them to teach preclinical students as part of their compulsory training. We're now so convinced that comics should be used to teach even the most ethically complex concepts that we use a comic format to explain our experience to you as readers.

References

1. Green MJ. Use of comics in medical education and patient care. *BMJ*. 2010;340:c863. <http://www.bmj.com/content/340/bmj.c863>. Accessed November 29, 2017.

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