



**THE
EDUCATIONAL
CONFERENCE
YOUR STUDENTS
ARE ALREADY
ATTENDING...**

Hi educators,

Before you dismiss this please hear us out.

As an instructor, you are probably already familiar with our event through talk from your students from ones that attended and others that wish they could attend. Behind all the facade of costuming, gaming, and other escapist fun at the Grand Rapids Comic-Con there is over one hundred hours of programming on ten stages. We bring in numerous experts in the fields of art, writing, literature, film, business and even history and mental health to give educational panels on their expertise or profession.

Your students will find our event engaging for your students for a few reasons. First of all, they will be surrounded by pop culture which I don't have to tell you reaches into their sphere of interest. Second, they already know quite a few of the people speaking and their impact on their hobbies outside of school so their interest level is piqued. Third, you will be surprised how many high school and middle school-level students attend panels and presentations willingly already. It is a perfect opportunity to engage them in extra credit projects, small groups, and other educational opportunities.

In this pamphlet we will cover the educational panels at the Grand Rapids which will be broken down by curriculum and day. We will also show how to use our event for student engagement as well as furthering your own knowledge, and how to use the event to better reach your students in the future.

Thank you for your time, and we hope you find this information useful.

Mark Hodges

Event Director

How To Use Our Event For Your Students

There are numerous ways to use the Grand Rapids Comic-Con for your students who may plan on attending:

1. Assign the event for extra credit: For the students who can attend, pick a selection of talent and ask the students to attend one or two of those panels. Have them attend on their own and write a report on what they hear . Give extra credit for their efforts.
2. Organize a small group of most interested students to attend: We do have a group rate of only \$23 for attendance on Friday, November 12, for any group of five or more. You can find that information at www.grcomiccon.com/group-rates.
3. Field Trip!: You can always arrange a field trip on any of the three days. Friday has the discounted group rates (sorry, none on Saturday or Sunday), but you could buy tickets at www.grcomiccon.com/tickets if you wanted to attend as a group on Saturday or Sunday.

How To Use The Event For YOU

There are numerous ways that you, as an instructor, can use the Grand Rapids Comic-Con for your own educational advancement:

1. Attend Panels Yourself: Maybe some of these panels are 101-level stuff, but many of them are not. Also remember that the instructors are not people who learned it in a college, but rather the school of hard knocks and experience so their perspective may be very different than a standard textbook.
2. Engage with the panelists: Educational questions that the average high school student may not ask are welcome. Many of the panelists will save time for questions so please take advantage of the opportunity.
3. Follow-Up: Just about every panelist will have a booth in the vending hall, so find the one(s) you may wish to engage with and ask them more detailed questions at their booth in quiet times.
4. Bring the panelist to your classroom: If you find somebody who is particularly engaging then go to their booth and check to see if they do panels on Zoom, which you could share with your students.

How To Use The Event To Engage With Your Students

It may not look like it, but this is a perfect opportunity to engage your students outside of the classroom and reach them on a different level than the traditional classroom:

1. Attend yourself: If you can go for a day pop on in and check out all the fun!
2. Say hi to your students: You might be surprised on how a simple hello at a show like ours will change the perceptions of your students. They get to see you outside of an educational setting which will challenge their views of their day to day instructors.
3. Wear a costume: This may sound ridiculous to some of you, but there will be literally hundreds and hundreds of adults in some form of costume so you won't be alone. In addition, your students who see you in a costume will see a very different side than what you display at school which can change a lot for a student, especially if you do something that is involved in education such as an instructor at Hogwart's or a Jedi knight. Plus, be honest to yourself: your best memory of past educators in your life was when they stepped out of their stereotype and cut loose a bit, so give your students the same memory of you.

Programming Panels

The following are suggested programming panels for students within specific fields of study. As an educator, you may find something that better fits your students' needs and your current curriculum than what we think, so make sure to read the whole thing for a better picture.

A full schedule of panels and times for each panel can be found at www.grcomiccon.com/programming.

Schedule is subject to change without notice.

WRITING

Friday, November 14th 4:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook A-B Creative Writing Masterclass

Ken Johnson

For new and experienced writers alike, few things are scarier than “the blank page” Join me in a panel breaking down how to identify your creative process, master media literacy, and learn what it takes to bring the stories in your head to life. With over a decade of experience as a writer, I hope to share all I can to help everyone bring their stories to life.

Friday, November 14th 1:45 p.m • Grand Gallery Overlook E Twists, Fears & Fantasy: The Imaginative Worlds of T.L. Shively TL Shively

Join YA fantasy author T.L. Shively for an inspiring look into the creative mind behind *The Guardians* and the *Spider Trilogy*. From whimsical childhood stories to tackling personal fears, like turning arachnophobia into an epic tale of gods and aliens, Shively’s writing is full of unexpected twists and heartfelt imagination. Whether you’re a reader, writer, or daydreamer, come explore how fear, fun, and fantasy can fuel unforgettable stories.

Friday, November 14th 3 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E Dark Visions & Dead Badgers: A Conversation with Lucy A. Snyder Lucy A. Snyder

Step into the mind of five-time Bram Stoker Award winner Lucy A. Snyder, author of over 100 short stories and 15 books spanning horror, science fiction, fantasy, and the delightfully bizarre. From her chilling novel *Sister, Maiden, Monster* to her cult-favorite nonfiction guide *Shooting Yourself in the Head for Fun and Profit*, Snyder’s work has captivated readers across genres and around the globe. In this candid conversation, she discusses her journey through speculative fiction, shares insights into her latest release *The Star-Stained Soul*, and reflects on the strange, unsettling beauty of writing dark stories in a chaotic world. Bring your questions, and prepare to get weird.

Friday, November 14th 4:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E Book Therapy

Bryan Donihue, Jean Davis, and T.L. Shively

What’s keeping you from making progress on your creative project? Authors Bryan Donihue, T.L. Shively, and Jean Davis will offer solutions to your stalled projects.

Friday, November 14th 5:30 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E You Call That a YA Novel?

Adam Cesare

Young adult horror author Adam Cesare discusses his career in spinning scary stories including the *Clown in a Cornfield* franchise and what constitutes a book for the young adult crowd.

Saturday, November 15th 5:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook C
Making Creator-Owned Comic Books

Kenny Porter and Ryan Lee

Join writer Kenny Porter and artist Ryan Lee as they talk about their experiences building, pitching, and publishing creator-owned comic books. They'll cover how to build a compelling series, what it's like working with publishers and collaborators, the business of comics, and they'll answer any questions you've ever had about making your own comics!

Saturday, November 15th 12:30 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E
Self Publishing Your Novel

Jean Davis

We'll cover all the "fun" stuff that comes after writing: editing, formatting, cover design, distribution, and marketing. What you can do yourself, where to find resources, and what you should and shouldn't pay for.

Saturday, November 15th 1:45 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E
The Art Of Writing a Movie Novelization

Daniel Kraus and Adam Cesare

Daniel and Adam discuss the unique end of writing for a career when one takes an existing screenplay from a major motion picture and turns it into a novel.

Saturday, November 15th 3 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E
Rising in Romantasy

Megan Linski

Romantic fantasy is a hot genre, but what exactly is it? Learn the basics of the genre, how to create characters readers will love, and the craft of building a compelling love story without losing the action, adventure, or plot. In this panel, we discuss just what makes romantasy so addicting, and why the genre is more diverse than you think.

Saturday, November 15th 5:30 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E
Crafting A Good Story

Christy McCulfor

Come find out how to make an engaging and meaningful story from scratch, using art, writing, and sheer determination! We'll cover character arcs, the best editing practices, and what art can do to enhance your story's appeal.

Sunday, November 16th 10:45 a.m. • Grand Gallery E-F

Reimagining Legends in Modern Comics: Heroes, Outlaws, and Alternate Realities

Jason Douglas, Thom Zahler and Paul Storrie

Explore updating classic tales for today's readers - updating Robin Hood or re-telling Beowulf, transforming Cupids into hitmen or Twilight Sparkle into Sherlock Holmes, or parallel worlds and World War II America. Jason, Paul and Thom will regale you with stories of what's worked, what hasn't, the challenges involved and what's next, all while taking your questions, too!

Sunday, November 16th 11:15 a.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook C

The Future of Comics

Seth Damoose

A discussion and workshop about making the next generation of comic book books. From character creation, storytelling techniques, page and book design. Making the comics you want to read.

Sunday, November 16th 3 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook C

Crafting Iconic Villains: The Psychology Behind Memorable Antagonists

KaPow! Studios

Every hero needs a compelling villain. This panel dives into the psychology of creating complex and memorable antagonists in comics. Join narrative experts and Ka-Pow!! faculty as they unveil the secrets to developing villains that resonate with readers and challenge heroes in profound ways.

Sunday, November 16th 2:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E

So You Want To Write A Book

Chelsea Banning

Writing the "great American novel" and having writer's block? Author Chelsea Banning will step you through ideas and techniques to push through stagnation to complete that budding masterpiece.

ART

Friday, November 14th 4:45 p.m. • Grand Gallery E-F

Heroes Among Us: The Real Impact of Comic Art

KaPow! Studios

Comics are more than just entertainment; they are a catalyst for change and a reflection of our society. Join industry leaders and Ka-Pow! The Comic Art Academy educators as they discuss how comic art drives real-world action, inspires social movements, and fosters a new generation of artists committed to making a difference.

Friday, November 14th 3:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook D

Crafting Your Artistic Arsenal: Essential Skills for Comic Creators

KaPow! Studios

Every comic artist starts with a fundamental toolkit. This panel explores those essentials, from foundational drawing techniques to narrative crafting, and how Ka-Pow! The Comic Art Academy equips aspiring artists with the skills necessary to excel in the competitive world of comics.

Saturday, November 15th 2:45 p.m. • Grand Gallery A-D

Pose Like a Pro: Mastering Dynamic Human Anatomy

KaPow! Studios

What makes a comic character leap off the page? Dynamic posing. In this live demo, professional instructors from Ka-Pow! break down the essentials of human anatomy in motion. Ka-Pow! Pros cover gesture, balance, weight, and flow. Whether it's a quiet stance or a mid-air punch, learn how to push your poses to new heights.

Saturday, November 15th 11:45 a.m. • Grand Gallery E-F

Drawing with Deadpool: How to Draw Superheroes

Reilly Brown

Reilly Brown, artist for many comic books, from Deadpool to Batman, gives step-by-step instructions on how to draw heroic and dynamic characters with personality. Bring your art supplies and learn tips to bring your drawing skills up to the next level!

Saturday, November 15th 4 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook C

Build-A-Panel: Live Page Layout & Sequential Design

KaPow! Studios

Panels aren't just boxes but essential storytelling tools. This live drawing session shows how to plan comic pages that flow, hit, and captivate. Ka-Pow! pros walk through realtime layout construction, discussing composition, rhythm, pacing, and using page-turn anticipation tactics.

Saturday, November 15th 10:45 a.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook D

Character Design on the Fly: From Prompt to Personality

KaPow! Studios

Watch creativity unfold in real-time! Ka-Pow! artists take random audience prompts and design brand-new original characters on the spot. As they draw, they'll explain how shape, silhouette, costume, and expression all work together to build unforgettable heroes and villains.

Saturday, November 15th 1:15 p.m.

Grand Gallery Overlook D

Understanding the Importance of Awesome: Making Work That Connects
Douglas Paszkiewicz

This isn't just for aspiring pros - it's for creators who want their work to truly resonate. Douglas Paszkiewicz (Arsenic Lullaby, Mad Magazine, Eisner/Harvey nominee) offers no-nonsense, practical advice on transforming good work into unforgettable art. Learn how to dig deeper, when to break the rules, what to research, and how to create work that connects with your audience on a lasting level.

Saturday, November 15th 4:15 p.m.

Grand Gallery Overlook E

Cartooning Classic Characters

Robert Pope

Join Robert Pope as he demonstrates how to draw some of the many characters he's drawn over the years, including Scooby-Doo, Looney Tunes, Batman, the PEANUTS gang and many more.

Sunday, November 16th 11:45 a.m.

Grand Gallery Overlook A-B

Fantasy Illustration (Creatures, Wizards & Castles)

Corrine Roberts

Using basic shapes, learn to create imaginative characters, creatures and scenery. No prior drawing experience needed. Attendees only need simple paper, pencil, and eraser.

Sunday, November 16th 1:45 p.m.

Grand Gallery Overlook C

Drawing One Character Multiple Styles

KaPow! Studios

What if Spider-Man starred in an anime? What would Wonder Woman look like in a vintage 1930s cartoon? In this live demo, Ka-Pow!! artists redraw one character in drastically different art styles & break down what defines each look and how you can experiment & perfect a style all your own.

Sunday, November 16th 12:45 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook D

Sequential Art Secrets: The Language of Comics

KaPow! Studios

Uncover the subtle art of storytelling through panels and pages. This panel explores the unique language of comics, from visual pacing to panel transitions. Discover how KaPow!! trains its students.

BUSINESS/CAREER

Friday, November 14th 4:30 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook D

How to Hire an Artist

Daniel M. Monroe

This presentation is tailored for the beginner and aspiring content writer/creator. Whether you are writing indie comics, stories, editorials, and find yourself in need of a good artist who will help your project become a success. Many people do not know how to find that artist in an effective and positive way - which can often lead to misunderstandings and negative outcomes. This lecture/presentation is designed to be a guide to aid in finding the perfect artist for your outcome which is desired by all parties involved.

Friday, November 14th 3:45 p.m. • Ballroom A

Gods, Monsters & Survivors

Jason Douglas

Jason Douglas is a versatile and seasoned actor whose career spans film, television, and voiceover work. He's perhaps best known for his chilling portrayal of Satan in Preacher, his role as Tobin, a steadfast protector of his community in The Walking Dead, and as the commanding voice of Beerus, the God of Destruction, in Dragon Ball Super. With a dynamic range that bridges live-action intensity and animated power, Douglas shares insights into his diverse and compelling body of work in this interview.

Friday, November 14th 5 p.m. • Ballroom A

We Have Other Jobs, Too!

Amir Talai, Krystina Alabado, Blake Roman, Daphne RubinVega, Joel Perez

The cast from Hazbin Hotel takes the time to discuss their careers on Broadway and what is next for each of them.

Friday, November 14th 6 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook C

Con Horror Stories

Join various heads of cons as they tell you the good, the bad, and the ugly of running a convention.

Saturday, November 15th 5:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery A-D

This is the Life...?

Mogswamp

YouTube and streaming personality Mogswamp discusses his unique career as a gaming streamer and the pitfalls of a career such as this. Questions from the audience are welcome.

Saturday, November 15th 1:30 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook C

Art Etiquette

Daniel M. Monroe

This presentation is tailored for the beginner and aspiring artist/illustrator as a quick guide on how to navigate the waters of becoming and being a professional artist in the modern world. These are the things which are not taught in art school, but should be!

Saturday, November 15th 3:45 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook D

Breaking Into Comics: No More Rules

Josh Blaylock

Are you an aspiring professional comic creator, or even as a veteran struggling to keep up with the industry's rapid changes happening all around you? As an industry veteran of over 25 years, author, artist and publisher Josh Blaylock explores all of these changes and new challenges (and opportunities) now facing us, and aims to help guests formulate the best approach that works for them. Because these days, the old rules don't apply!

Sunday, November 16th 12:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery A-D

A Stuntman's life

Bobby Clark

Bobby Clark has played numerous roles in Star Trek: The Original Series including the legendary Gorn character, but his career spans 30 years. Listen to him reminisce about his career and take questions from the audience.

Sunday, November 16th 2:45 pm • Grand Gallery A-D

YouTube Building 101

Mogswamp and Others

With over 2.5 million subscribers, it is safe to say that Mogswamp is an expert at making a living through streaming. Mogswamp discusses the basics in building your own YouTube empire and takes questions from the audience.

Sunday, November 16th 2:15 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook A-B

Behind Springfield's Smile: The Art of Bill Morrison

Bill Morrison

Join legendary artist Bill Morrison for an in-depth conversation about his incredible career bringing the world of The Simpsons to life. From his early days illustrating The Simpsons comics and movie posters to serving as the founding editor of Bongo Comics, Morrison has helped shape the visual identity of one of the most iconic animated families in history. In this panel, Bill will share behind-the-scenes stories, discuss his artistic process, and reflect on how The Simpsons has influenced pop culture over more than three decades. Whether you're a longtime fan or an aspiring artist, this is a rare opportunity to hear firsthand from one of Springfield's original creative minds.

THEATER

Saturday, November 15th 5:15 p.m. • Ballroom A

Voice Actor Extraordinaire

Dee Bradley Baker

From clones to creatures and everything in between, Dee Bradley Baker is one of the most prolific and versatile voice actors in the industry. Best known as the voice behind every clone trooper in Star Wars: The Clone Wars, The Bad Batch, and countless iconic characters in shows like Avatar: The Last Airbender, American Dad!, Phineas and Ferb, Ben 10, and Legend of Korra, Baker brings unmatched depth and personality to his roles, often without uttering a single word. Join Dee for a behind-the-scenes look at his creative process, career highlights, and the art of giving voice to the inhuman, the alien, and the downright bizarre.

Sunday, November 16th 12 p.m. • Grand Gallery E-F

Extreme Wig Styling 101

Sweets4aSweet, Pink Petal, and Pink Opal Cosplay

Ever wonder how some of those cosplay wigs you see become larger than life? Or maybe how they hold impossible shapes? Join Sweets4aSweet, Pink Petal and Pink Opal cosplay as they tell you all the secrets to making impressive wigs and even some interesting tools and materials you can use to help make all your wig dreams come true!

Short demo during panel.

Sunday, November 16th 10:30 a.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook A-B

Special Effects Makeup 101

Sweets4aSweet, Pink Petal, and Pink Opal Cosplay

Join Sweets4aSweet, Pink Petal and Pink Opal for an intense make-up panel about basic makeup techniques all the way to some really cool special effects makeup. Ask any and all those burning questions about how to make makeup stay all day and learn about some brands and techniques that are very outside the box!

HISTORY

Friday, November 14th 7 p.m. • Grand Gallery E-F

Silent Film: The Lost World

Make sure to check out this legendary 1925 film that introduced dinosaurs to the big screen and brought stop-motion special effects to another level. The showing will include an organist and an introduction by our own monster kid, Roger Scholz. Check out how your ancestors would have watched a film 100 years ago!

Saturday, November 15th 12:45 p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook A-B

Around the World in 8.0 Cartoons

Jarrett Ardell and Oliver Ardell

Did you know they make cartoons outside of America & Japan? I know, surprising right?! Tour guide NOAHCLUE has traversed the cartoons of countries near and far to assemble some of the finest international animation for GRCC. Grab your passport and/or VPN for a globe trotting journey through 8 unique animated films made in different corners of the world, all while learning about some of the amazing global talent bringing drawings to life.

Saturday, No

vember 15th p.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook A-B

Hey, Kids! Comics!

Howard Chaykin

Legendary comic artist Howard Chaykin discusses the history of comic books and their importance in society at large.

Saturday, November 15th 11 a.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook C

Comics In The Classroom

Jason Douglas

Join comics author and 26 year educator Jason Douglas for an exploration of where his two passions, comics and teaching, came together and joined forces! From the elementary school classroom, to the middle school, to the stage of the Ringo Awards in Baltimore; come join in to chat, discuss, and ask questions about how comics changed the lives of countless young reluctant readers and eventually sent Jason down the road to becoming a published and award nominated writer of comics.

Saturday, November 15th 2:30 pm • Grand Gallery Overlook D

Code Breakers: From HELP! To Heavy Metal

Jesse "MiLo" Miles

From MAD to Heavy Metal, comic book publishers have been switching their publication formats from comic book to magazine to dodge censorship. One of our underground comic historians discusses how comic book publishers used the magazine format to circumvent the Comics Code Authority and to bring edgier products to market.

Sunday, November 16th 1:00 pm • Grand Gallery Overlook A-B

The World Of Independent Comics

Randy Zimmerman

A veteran of independent and underground comics for 40 years, Randy Zimmerman discusses the history of independent comics, what brought them out into the world, and their impact on the comic world.

Sunday, November 16th 11:45 a.m. • Grand Gallery Overlook E

EC Comics: Seduction of the Innocent 1950-1955

Allen Stewart

It was almost the end of comic books in the mid-1950s. Churches and schools were burning and banning comic books by the thousands all due to one book: Seduction of the Innocent by Dr. Frederic Wertham. Comic book historian and Hall of Heroes Museum Director, Allen Stewart, will take you back in time to the 1950s. You will learn about this infamous book, the creation of the comics code, EC Comics and what part they played in all of this, and the origins of MAD Magazine. A history lesson courtesy of Allen Stewart, curator of the world famous Hall Of Heroes Superhero Museum in Elkhart, Indiana.



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The DeVos Place
Grand Rapids, Michigan

www.grcomiccon.com