Making Voice Visible: Using Graphic Narrative in the Composition Classroom

Jessi Thomsen

This article addresses the challenge of teaching voice in the introductory composition classroom, using graphic narrative to make voice visible for students as they identify and rhetorically compose their own voices.

Voice is a nebulous concept, sometimes slippery even for confident, experienced writers and certainly more so for students taking introductory composition courses. The idea of voice immediately indicates the sense of sound, but, in practice, the reader must translate the visual text on the page into the imagined sound of a voice. In composition courses, we logically focus on words, but images potentially make voice more accessible.

As children, we intuitively know that sight and sound reflect each other. I remember watching hippos in tutus pirouetting across the television screen between lines of static from a well-worn VHS tape, all in tune with the ballet Dance of the Hours. I was fascinated by the composition created by the collaboration of artists and musicians in Disney’s animated film Fantasia. Although I probably would not have understood the nuances of classical music at that age, I was better able to make sense of the music through the synthesis of video and audio. The images and music carried a complementary attitude, feeling, tone, or, in short, voice. Similarly, crafting voice in writing requires a leap in modalities, audial voice grafted onto visual text. Since voice can be a tricky concept to teach, understand, and perform, images from graphic narratives open new avenues for composition students to feel less adrift as they learn about voice, incorporate it into their writing, and shape it for specific rhetorical contexts.

In “Words Made Flesh,” Kristie S. Fleckenstein describes “polymorphic literacy” as “reading and writing that draw on verbal and nonverbal ways of shaping meaning” (613). Applying this notion to graphic narratives, I locate a productive starting place for composition students to grapple with identifying voice and to eventually translate their own voices into text. To begin, I briefly justify teaching voice and its importance in student writing. I define voice visually and illuminate the connection between language and image to build a foundation for relating, more specifically, voice as both audial and visual. This leads to the use of graphic narrative.
as an ideal pedagogical tool since it is already a combination of text and image (see Figure 1). Finally, I provide practical suggestions for implementing graphic narrative as a teaching tool for voice in the composition classroom.

From Intuition to Intention

In the composition classroom, questions about voice invariably surface during discussions and peer review groups, in conversations after class, and in comments on essays. Peter Elbow recognizes that, even in classrooms where voice is not explicitly taught, students instinctively exercise voice and authenticity in their writing (“Voice” 170). Teaching voice is challenging, partly because people subconsciously shift their speaking voices depending on situation and audience. Unfortunately, strong spoken voices do not necessarily translate into effective written voices. Students must learn to close the gap between their intuition about voice and their intentional composition of voice. If they can bridge this gap, they can achieve “writing into which someone has breathed. It has that fluency, rhythm, and liveliness that exist naturally in the speech of most people when they are enjoying a conversation” (Elbow, Writing 299). For composition teachers, this is the kind of writing that we all actually like to read, the kind of writing that we hope will spring out of the pile of papers we were supposed to grade three days ago, the kind of writing that our students might even admit they enjoy. As a starting point, Toby Fulwiler presents several questions in an effort to locate his own voice: “Do I have an authentic voice (or more than one)? Where can I find it (them)? What does it (they) actually look like? How much does it (they) vary according to circumstance? And how much conscious control do I exert over it (them)?” (215). In order to attain, create, and control voice, we should guide students to ask similar questions, focusing especially on what voice looks like and how it can be controlled during the writing process (see Figure 2).

Voice in a Visual Framework

Voice is already a much-debated aspect of writing. I define voice as the writer’s portrayed presence within a text that provides the reader with both an audial and visual...
reflection of a particular slice of the writer and persona. This definition excludes related terms such as tone and style that students (and teachers) often interchange with voice. Darsie Bowden, a critic of voice in composition studies, demonstrates the ambiguity: “Good writing reveals to the reader not only a personal attitude but points to the person behind that attitude, that is, the author. Both function in creating a speaker’s ‘tone of voice.’ In other words, style—especially style that makes appropriate use of euphony, rhythm, and energy of expression—should be markedly individual” (42–43). So which is it? Are we talking about voice, tone, style, or all three? For clarity, I consistently use voice. To me, voice gets at a very personal quality, a quality that is inherent to each writer but that can also be transformed and tailored to a situation. We have different voices in the same way that we can wear different hairstyles or hats. Our voice, and hairstyle, are still ours, unique to us, but they can be modulated based on situation, intent, and mood.

In addition, scholars often characterize voice nonverbally by describing the writer’s spirit (Hamalian), presence (Bryant), or DNA (Romano). Elbow describes voice as “sound or texture” (Writing 288). Texture is visual and tactile, much like printed words on a physical page. If we recognize that voice also crosses the boundary between visual and audial, we can tap into its power, its ability to transcend the words on the page, its “resonance” (299). Framing voice in a visual context allows students to break through the nebulous quality of voice and see it as more concrete.

A Visual and Verbal Polymorphic Literacy

If voice is an ambiguous concept, the term visual is equally so, due to the “subtle tension among kinds of images (mental, graphic, etc.) and modalities of image (visual, kinesthetic, etc.)” (Fleckenstein, “Words” 616). I use visual when referring to a learning style or specific intelligence, as a contrast to a verbal learning style or intelligence. I use image as the product of the practical application of a visual learning or teaching style. To further complicate this, “an image can be either perceptual, mental, graphic, and/or verbal, or all simultaneously” (Fleckenstein, “Words” 618). To lend some clarity, I refer to drawings and panels in graphic narratives as graphic images, the practice of visualization as mental images, and the images created by written or spoken words as verbal images.

For children, like me with the dancing hippos, a bond between image and word exists naturally, both contributing to voice. Myra Barrs, a specialist in children’s writing, explains: “For many children drawing and writing are viewed as linked or complementary in some way,” but unfortunately this connection is broken when writing is favored over drawing during early education (56). By relating word and image in the composition classroom, we are simply rediscovering that “word and image are inextricable” (Fleckenstein, “Words” 621). Some students in the composition classroom are adept at working with words, but others are more kinesthetically or visually inclined. As composition teachers, generally verbal thinkers, it is possible to forget that not everyone composes using the processes we commonly employ. Being open to these differences allows us to better guide students who embody various learning styles.
While Fleckenstein explores polymorphic literacy in a broader sense of multiple intelligences, I focus on her application of the concept to graphic visuals and textual language (see Figure 3). Fleckenstein argues: “Literacy operates on the levels of bodies, minds, and contexts, across which swirl images with words, words as images. We might disentangle the threads of a single semiotic system, but a single thread is only one of many, all interwoven in meaning. Meaning consists of a web, an ecology of symbol systems feeding into and evolving out of one another” (“Words” 616). Like literacy, voice is a unique combination of words, images, feelings, perceptions, and interpretations. By focusing on these tensions, we create a deeper understanding of voice in our students that translates into the crafting of voice in composition.

Why Use Graphic Narrative to Teach Voice?

Traditionally, writing teachers address voice only in terms of words, but many, even a majority of students, are visual learners (Felder and Silverman). While a variety of visuals could be used to teach voice (advertisements, paintings, sketchbook drawings, movie clips, etc.), graphic narrative is ideally suited to the task. Scott McCloud, in his theories surrounding comics, believes graphic narratives have “some kind of hidden power” (3). This power stems from the integration of textual language and graphic image, or “double mapping,” that immediately situates students to explore voice as both a verbal and visual phenomenon through “a process of deliberately layering different ways of making sense of reality on one another” (Fleckenstein, Embodied 137). Graphic narrative might appeal more readily to visual thinkers, but the presence of text keeps verbal thinkers from feeling alienated. As Elbow says so well, “we can learn to step outside of either/or thinking (usually adversarial) and work out a both/and approach that embraces contraries” (“Voice” 184). As with the old adage “show, don’t tell,” I want my students to embrace the images evoked by their written words, thereby making voice more concrete. Teaching our students about voice from a purely verbal framework limits them to a single perspective for understanding and composing voice. For better or worse, “the frame from which we operate automatically determines the questions we ask, the knowledge we create, and the praxis we enact. If we transform the frame by which we understand reading and writing, we can potentially transform our teaching” (Fleckenstein, “Words” 615). Let’s transform our own understanding of voice and share with our composition students a visual and verbal framework for reading the voices of others and composing their own voices.

FIGURE 3. Polymorphic literacy.

Remember that polymorphic literacy uses (non)verbal ways of meaning-making.
Putting It Together and into Practice

I propose three exercises using graphic narratives to illuminate the concept of voice and provide techniques for students to begin consciously crafting their own voices. First, particularly in graphic memoir, the writer/artist represents self within the graphic images, giving a concrete source for voice and providing the reader with clues about the connection between writer or persona and voice. Students apply this technique to their own writing by depicting themselves as writers, creating their own concrete sources for their writing. In the second exercise, students consider how the quality and style of line, shape, and color change with the voice of the writer/artist. Since visual style often mimics the verbal sound of voice as it shifts to fit the situation, composition students consider voice in their own writing; interpret this voice as lines, shapes, and colors; and identify unintentional shifts in voice for revision. The third exercise focuses on how visual organization and rhythm of frames, pages, and spreads solidifies voice in graphic narratives. Students use this concept to visualize the impact of organization and structure on voice in their text-based essays.

Portrayal of the Writer: Seeing the Person(a) behind the Voice

It is difficult to locate and compose voice in our writing. We are complex, and we have to decide which slice of ourselves we want to reveal in this particular composition. Fulwiler says, “perhaps I could shed some light on the verbal constructions associated with my own name, that apparently present me—re-present me—for good or ill, to the rest of the world” (215). I began this process with my students in a fairly standard way, assigning a short autobiography at the beginning of the semester. Although I told my students that they could address the assignment in a variety of ways (with photos, a blog, unusual formatting), I mostly received writing samples in more-or-less MLA format. I kept requirements for the assignment simple and somewhat vague in the hopes that students felt able to use their natural voices. I collected these essays as initial writing samples, which provided a foundation for talking more about voice in the class.

To initiate a conversation about voice, I tapped into my students’ intuitive recognition that voice “has to do with feeling-hearing-sensing a person behind the written words” (Bowden 97–98). I introduced my student writers to the idea of representation, the portrayal of writer and voice, by having them read and discuss how Rosalind B. Penfold achieves this in her graphic memoir *Dragonslippers*. She represents herself and her voice as she chronicles an abusive relationship and explains in the introduction, “I kept a diary, but when words failed me, I drew pictures” (iv). In the midst of abuse, language fails to give her a voice; images are there to take the place of words and provide a necessary outlet. She continues: “And then one day I found my pictures. My brain could rationalize and deny, but my art went straight to the truth” (Penfold iv). Penfold’s graphic images contain the power of her voice, the power of her personal truth as she portrays it on the page, and they serve as a way back into language when Penfold writes her graphic memoir.
As students viewed a selection of panels from *Dragonslippers*, they noticed that Penfold initially draws herself as a successful, independent woman. She reveals these details through graphic images of herself wearing conservative clothing and a modern hairstyle while working at her business and conversing with friends (12, 15, 23–25). Her stance is confident, her expression happy and self-assured, much like the voice reflected in the text. She seems straightforward when she greets a new acquaintance: “Hi! My name is Roz . . . what’s yours?” (15). She’s decisive but playful by the pool: “No! No! If you throw me in, I’ll take you with me!” (17). But, as the abusive relationship engulfs her life, her voice shifts in both the details of her graphic representation and the language of the text. Her expression becomes puzzled, her brows furrowed and eyes downcast. She slouches under pressure, constantly defers to her abuser, and asks strings of questions: “Can’t I learn to say the right thing? If only I were more understanding . . . Where did I make my mistake? Maybe things’ll get better . . . Shouldn’t I forgive? Is it really so bad?” (96–97). Students looked at examples of these different voices and discussed how Penfold develops her voice both visually and verbally (for examples, see www.dragonslippers.com/learn.html). I used these graphic images paired with text as effective discussion-starters for students to think about how writers present themselves on the page and, more specifically, how each of Penfold’s voices was honest but also only a part of her.

Next, I asked students how they viewed themselves as writers and how they wanted to portray themselves in their own writing (see Figure 4). They considered a series of questions: Where do you write? What do you like to wear? Which tools or technology do you prefer? How does your expression reflect your attitude about writing? At this point, students drew themselves as writers for our composition class. These graphic images, or avatars, of the writers provided a platform to see each writer’s voice and the translation of that same voice into text.

After students had a few minutes to draw, I projected several of the students’ graphic images onto the screen for discussion. Students related more to the attitude and voice of the reluctant writer (see Figure 5), but noticed they were more interested in reading an essay from the writer who was grinning and typing to music (see Figure 6). The enthusiastic student’s voice jumped out of the drawing and reminded me of a quote from his autobiography writing sample about his experiences at trance music festivals: “Once I started listening to it for the first time, my reaction was mind blown and party dancing reaction . . . It was totally a super dancing blast music festival.” I could visually see the enthusiasm and lack of restraint that came through so obviously in his writing. I used this as the foundation for a conversation...
when I conferenced with him for his first major essay assign-
ment. This essay on technology, compared to the autobiography,
was completely devoid of the voice that the other students
and I reacted to upon seeing his drawing. In this essay, he included
references to music, something he showed a strong passion for
in his autobiography; however, he didn’t use the same version of his
voice for this assignment: “Also
we can use [technology] for fun
for example, watching videos,
playing online games, look at
random pictures, and listening
to online music.” Instead of using
his natural voice as he did in his
autobiography, he chose a voice
that, while more academic, came
across as flat, stilted, and devoid of
emotion. The visual representa-
tion of himself as a writer was
a concrete way to discuss the
incorporation of his enthusiastic
voice into a more academic essay.

We discussed the use of personal experience and a balance between formal and informal prose.

Although this student is still working toward shaping his voice to specific rhetorical contexts, his final draft incorporated a couple of phrases that better reflected his natural voice: “Events encourage friends to come to a place to hang out with other friends and ‘chill’ with them,” and “I go online pretty much every single day if it something I need to do for school or do something to kill time.”

When he and the other students submitted final drafts, they reflected on their strengths and weaknesses in their essays as well as their use of voice in their writing. I specifically asked them: How well does your essay reflect you as a writer? And, how well does it reflect your voice? We also discussed the questions: How does your essay reflect the graphic representation of you as a writer? Has your view of yourself as a writer changed since you wrote your autobiography and initially drew yourself? These activities generated subtle shifts in class discussion and, ultimately, in students’ writing as we continued using visual exercises to engage voice as part of the composition process.
Voice as Visual Style: Line, Shape, and Color

Using certain types of lines, shapes, and colors in a graphic image creates a certain voice. As McCloud explains, “In truth, don’t all lines carry with them an expressive potential? . . . By direction alone, a line may go from passive and timeless—to proud and strong—to dynamic and changing” (124–25). These graphic elements have the potential to emphasize certain qualities of the writer, to make that aspect of the writer’s voice the one that is perceived by the reader. Much like a writer’s voice can shift from one piece of writing to another or even shift within a particular composition, line, shape, and color can reflect these changes. I had students begin identifying these visual representations of voice by describing the lines in McCloud’s panels in Understanding Comics (125). During class discussion, students identified the voice of a plain horizontal line as “flat, monotone, dull, and boring,” whereas a curved line’s voice was described as “comfortable, soft, gentle, and poetic.”

Students applied their understanding of McCloud’s lines to the impact of line and shape in Ellen Forney’s Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, and Me. Her graphic narrative provides particularly distinct qualities of lines and shapes that shift with her textual voice as she experiences the different stages of bipolar disorder (19). Although this is an extreme example regarding voice, it does show the impact that line quality and shape formation have on voice, making mood and energy visible (for examples, see www.tcj.com/reviews/marbles). Students noticed that during a manic stage Forney draws with lines that roam the page in zigzags or lightning bolts, bold dashes for emphasis, and a chaos of arrows pointing in every direction (6–7). The textual voice uses interjections for a similar effect: “Suddenly, a network in my head lit up! Krak!! Gasp! dzzzt! ping! ping ping!!” (6). Her voice shouts from the graphic lines and shapes just as clearly as it does from the text. In contrast, students recognized that lines and shapes from her depressive stage are minimalistic, amorphous, and stifled. She depicts herself as little more than a blob (77). In some cases, the pages are devoid of any text, but the voice still carries through the shapes as exhausted, depressed, and resigned. Even her hair has lost its eccentric curl and flops lifelessly over her forehead as she hesitantly responds on the phone, “I . . . I’ll . . . I’ll look at my calendar,” while repeating to herself, “I can’t” (78). For each version of Forney’s voice, students characterized the lines in terms of what they would sound like.

Students then reversed this procedure and described quotes from essays in terms of visual lines, shapes, and colors. They said Wendell Berry’s voice sounded like a “straight line in black” when he states, “A number of people, by now, have told me that I could greatly improve things by buying a computer. My answer is that I am not going to do it. I have several reasons, and they are good ones” (170). They explained that Berry’s voice was very clear and straightforward. In contrast, they described Nancy Mairs’s voice as a “scribble of blue” when she says, “I was thinking hard in one of the stalls of the women’s room in my office building . . . So many movements unbalanced me, and as I pulled the door open I fell over backward, landing fully clothed on the toilet seat with my legs splayed in front of me”
In comparison to Berry’s voice, students claimed that Mairs sounded humorous, self-deprecating, and approachable. Visualizing each essayist’s voice allowed my students to further articulate the distinct differences between them.

They also looked at excerpts from their own essays about technology. Students drew a diagonal line and a crescendo to an abrupt peak to describe the voice in the quote, “When my boyfriend and I are out on a date and he is just on his phone the entire time (which is not rare), I could really slap him.” This graphic image showed the building tension and sudden shift in voice with the word “slap.” Students were also better able to contrast the voices of different writers. This became obvious when one quote was described with sharp, jagged lines and another was depicted as a subtler, wavy line (see Figure 7). The students explained that the jagged edges showed that the voice was “opinionated” and on the verge of being “offensive” when the writer used phrases such as “underlying issue” and “attention seekers.” These characteristics were further exemplified by drawing the line in bright pink. In comparison, the wavy line was meant to show “sophistication” and the choice to draw it in blue highlighted its more “academic” voice. Students pointed out that the scholarly voice was created specifically by the words “interaction,” “idealism,” “psychological,” and “deception.” After seeing the different lines, students recognized that the quotes from these two writers actually presented arguments, but the different voices completely altered the reader’s perception of the writer and the content.

This realization led to a discussion about the appropriateness of certain versions of voice for particular genres. To facilitate this discussion, students drew lines or shapes to reflect the different voices they used throughout the day with friends, families, siblings, neighbors, teammates, opponents, mentors, teachers, and coaches (see Figures 8 and 9). Students also had the option of using colors to represent these voices. They then transitioned from thinking about their daily audial voices to thinking about the different voices they used in their writing. This was especially useful to help students recognize changes in voice within a written text during the revision process. It was
common for them to say, “It sounds different here.” With the foundation of line quality as a representation of voice, they could now ask themselves: If the writing could be described in lines, would it be choppy? Fluid? Spiraled? And, where does it change from one to the next? Why? If students are able to qualify the difference in voice by describing it visually, they are then more likely to determine why it changed, what voice it changed to, and whether or not the change is appropriate. This discussion not only helped students consider the appropriateness of voice based on word choice, but also opened an opportunity to address the effectiveness of voice created by organization and format.

Echoes of Voice in Visual Arrangement: Sentence Structure, Paragraphing, and Organization

Although voice, in graphic narrative, can be pieced together from lines, shapes, and representations of the writer, the overall composition is also key to its power. Graphic narratives have just as many formats, structures, and organizational patterns as text-only essays. Looking at the layouts of frames, pages, and spreads within graphic narrative gives a larger, more comprehensive sense of voice within the composition. In *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, Alison Bechdel explores her relationship with her father while carefully crafting her voice through her choices in structure and organization.

Students began by analyzing Bechdel’s definite rules regarding the organization of *Fun Home*. As Bechdel explains, “I never wanted there to be more than four lines of text above the panels, so that the words didn’t overwhelm the pictures,” and she creates consistent organization by using a grid for images and text that is generally “three tiers, two panels across” (qtd. in Chute 1011). Students realized these “rules” actually contribute quite a bit to Bechdel’s voice. Despite the view of graphic narrative as a creative work, Bechdel’s voice is very academic. Even on the pages when she first learns of her father’s death, the panels remain rigidly snapped to the grid, echoing a logical rather than an emotional response, and the text says, “It could be argued that death is inherently absurd, and that grinning is not necessarily an inappropriate response. I mean absurd in the sense of ridiculous, unreasonable. One second a person is there, the next they’re not” (Bechtel 47). Students noticed the way Bechdel’s organization reflected her stilted voice and engaged in a deeper discussion regarding her overall structure of the narrative and the impact of her format on voice within each chapter and throughout the narrative as a whole. Students also discussed the consistency of Bechdel’s voice in comparison to both Penfold and Forney before applying the concept to their own writing. (For examples of Bechdel’s voice, visit www.itsnicethat.com/articles/alison-bechdel).
Finally, students translated this discussion into a revision exercise for a text-only essay. Although visual organization and features were not nearly as obvious as in a graphic narrative, students considered headings, subheadings, paragraphing, pagination, margins, font, and spacing as contributors to the voice behind the composition (see Figure 10 for a graphic outline of the structure of this journal article).

In addition, on a smaller scale, sentence structure and length contributed to voice. Students created a visual representation or graphic outline of a draft of an essay to carefully analyze the voice constructed by their organization. To begin this exercise I projected the following steps on the screen, modeled the process, and asked students to complete the exercise during class:

1. Number the paragraphs of your essay.
2. Divide a separate sheet of paper into frames for each paragraph, taking into account the relative lengths and positions.
3. Consider one paragraph at a time. Draw or divide the section on your paper to reflect the organization of the paragraph.
4. Compare your graphic image to the “required” components of each paragraph. Check your introduction for a hook and thesis; the body paragraphs for point, illustration, and explanation (PIE); and your conclusion for a restatement and expansion of the thesis.
5. Insert spaces for transition words or phrases and additional support from your sources.
6. Do the same for the other paragraphs.
7. Which paragraphs are going well? How do they compare to each other in terms of length, content, and voice?
8. Where do you need to add components?
9. How does the current organization reflect the voice in your essay? Does this work? Why or why not?

Students found that the frames varied in size depending on the length and complexity of the sentence or idea. This allowed them to see the overall organization or flow of the draft, identify inconsistencies, and purposefully manipulate the structure. As the students worked, I projected several of the students’ diagrams onto the screen. For the first example, students immediately recognized that the eleven panels, representing eleven paragraphs, might be a bit excessive for a three-page essay (see Figure 11). Students commented, “It looks like it would sound choppy,” and “It might feel like it’s jumping around too much.” The creator of the graphic image said, “It looks like I’m not sure what I’m talking about.” I also projected a graphic image with six equal-sized panels. For this sample, students recognized that the voice would be...
“consistent” and “easy to follow.” However, the voice might also come across as “repetitive” or “boring.” After a few more examples, the students considered the difference in voice depending on the variety or consistency of the types and lengths of sentences. They also brainstormed alternative structures that might help the essay create a more appropriate voice for the assignment.

For the final draft, the eleven-paragraph essay that was “choppy” and “confusing” was revised into a six-paragraph essay that focused on only two of the writer’s main ideas. The writer said it seemed “easier to read” and “sounded like I knew what I was trying to say.” The student whose essay contained precisely consistent paragraph lengths developed her draft by rearranging, combining, and dividing paragraphs to create subtle variation. She thought her final draft sounded “more sophisticated” and “interesting.” In the end, they developed a sense of the formats and organizations that were appropriate for certain voices as well as better rhetorical control for enhancing voice through the structure of their own essays.

Conclusion

I agree with Elbow that the conversation surrounding voice needs to be reengaged. Academics, critics, and theorists have debated the practice of teaching voice for years; yet, as Elbow puts it, “voice is alive in our classrooms” (“Voice” 170). We need new methods to meet this challenge. Although the hippos in tutus, dancing to ballet music, may have initially seemed like an unusual link to teaching voice, think about that scene as a composition. The creator of the mismatched hippos and ballet has a voice, both audial and visual, that comes through loud and clear, embodying wit, humor, whimsy, and knowledge. The creator knows that voice can be heard perfectly well without any words at all. Similarly, this article contains voice, which I perform through both text and image as I modulate it to fit both theory and practical exercises. My visual avatar enhances understanding of audial voice and allows me to better control the way I present myself see
Figure 12). This tool can be shared with our composition students, who recognize the power inherent in a strong voice, even if they’re not sure how to identify, describe, or reproduce it. Through exercises anchored in graphic narrative, my students are better able to recognize other writers’ voices and gain rhetorical control of their own voices. Let’s take this as a cue that we can pursue new avenues of teaching voice, engaging it from more than a purely verbal angle, layering audial with visual.

**APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL GRAPHIC NARRATIVES FOR TEACHING VOICE**

Portrayal of the Writer: Seeing the Person(a) behind the Voice

- *Blankets*, Craig Thompson
- *Chumsy*, Jeffrey Brown
- *Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White*, Lila Quintero Weaver
- *The Complete Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, Art Spiegelman
- *The Complete Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi
- *To Timbuktu: Nine Countries, Two People, One True Story*, Casey Scieszka and Steven Weinberg

Voice as Visual Style: Line, Shape, and Color

- *Epileptic*, David B.
- *Funny Misshapen Body*, Jeffrey Brown
- *Good Eggs*, Phoebe Potts
- *Tangles: A Story about Alzheimer’s, My Mother, and Me*, Sarah Leavitt

Echoes of Voice in Visual Arrangement: Sentence Structure, Paragraphing, and Organization

- *A Game for Swallows: To Die, to Leave, to Return*, Zeina Abirached
- *Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama*, Alison Bechdel
- *The Imposter’s Daughter: A True Memoir*, Laurie Sandell
- *Stitches: A Memoir*, David Small
- *Vietnamerica*, G. B. Tran

**Works Cited**

