**2019 Online KT Conference:**

**Innovative KT Strategies That Work**

*Panel: Infocomics as a Knowledge Translation Tool*

Silas James, Wendy Strobel Gower, Janet Walker and Mary Beth Welch

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>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Welcome back everyone. It’s all about info comics for the rest of the conference and we have three presentations. The way it’s going to work is you guys and gals keep posting your chat comments, questions, and Joann will be moderating and Donna and we will bring them up at the end of the session, which means after all three people have presented. So, first up is Mr. Silas James, who just popped up there on the video cam, as he requested. He’s going to talk to us about why comics for knowledge translation.

Mr. James is a project manager and research assistant at the -- some people call it TBIMS. He works with fellow grantees for quite some time. He has been working since 2012. He's contributed to the info comic project. It creates educational comics that use narratives and other tools to encourage others to connect with the materials.

>> SILAS JAMES: Okay, so you can see on the screen why comics for knowledge translation, but before I do that, I want to kind of we have the next slide. Before I talk about that, and then this was what I was talking about. My I drew a different slide for my animations. There we go. Thank you.

I want to just talk about what comics are before I start talking about why to use them. For the purpose of my presentation Italy just say the I'll just say the obvious comics are a series of images arranged in a sequence. They can imply a narrative and the key here for me is implied, but I'll get to that more later, and then using that definition I would say that InfoComics are comics that intentionally information witnessing a narrative with the goal of increasing engagement, comprehension and retention, so at least that's what I mean when I say, and I'll use comics and InfoComics interchangeably. Why comics what you see on the screen is the first panel of an InfoComic that I created, and it summarizes my research since 2012. It includes 100 hours much qualitative hours with people and researching and small mixed method and my graduate thesis, and then I'll talk more about that in future slides.

And then I'll just be using this comic as a prop and a couple of spoilers. As you got have gathered my slides are very self referential, and I'll also I’ll disclose all the panels you see is metaphors, so you have questions during my presentation, feel free to post them, and I'll try to answer if their pertinent with what I'm talking about.

Comics grab and hold your attention. If you imagine a table covered with fact sheets if there's one comic your eyes would naturally go to the comic because your eyes are drawn to novelty so for obvious reasons comics end up in people's hands more often and fact sheets on more. We can never bring enough comics to the presentations at conferences and we always run after lunch. Not only new comics capture people's attention they deliver information in a way thatch like to consume it. Our research found people prefer to inform their assumption with visual representation of products as opposed to visual descriptions of them in other words people would rather see pictures of things rather than seeing words together.

Think about it have you ever put together furniture at IKEA and try to do it with a small subscription with here's the small bags and you want to say so the study I did it was small study in 2018, and one of the clear things is that I the study was 18 divided the people into two groups and 9 got fact sheets and discussed headaches after brain injury and the same people got the same information only an InfoComic and then we asked which mode they would prefer to receive the information in and about 80% of people said they would prefer the comic to the fact sheet, and it doesn't break my age and a lot of people assumed younger people preferred the comics, and one 18 preferred the over 50 and 60 preferred the comics, and it indicates that they're not broken down by age.

So, comics are accessible and this is one of the biggest things having a chronic condition is really stressful for a lot of reasons. They could be changes in people's physical abilities, changes in your social status, your place in your family. Economic changes especially in this country, economic burden, a chronic condition is huge, so all these things together are disease burden, and they can quantitatively act as a barrier to the acquisition of new information, and it's not just something that someone with a chronic condition experience. That can also be something they be caregivers to family and friends. Anyone with a chronic condition can experience a disease burden. There's an advantage is first pictures communicate a lot of information, so we need less words to deliver a message, obviously, less words also means translating into a different language is easier.

Because comics use sequential images, we can position information within the implied story. You can also think of it as a matrix where relative time relative to other elements is something that we can mitigate or order as I mentioned. We can leverage to other elements, so the sequential narrative can also act as a framework that will help with retention of information. Or in other words, story's mnemonic device. I like to compare it to trying to remember a random of words as opposed to learning a whole sentence. You learn one thing, so that's kind of how a story works in helping couch information and making it more retainable. I'll talk more about that in later science.

Comics show Intel, so the obvious, comics, you know, especially the ones we make they don't all, but the comics we make use both words and images to convey messages, and this is important because our brains engage with both of the different things in different ways. So when I look at this picture, I don't just see a collection of I couldn't don't a collection of lines, and you made me recognize Desi our narrator from previously panels, and we can see it immediately, so we can see the whole thing at once, but there's also words. The brand recognize the symbols separate from the image and words are processed by brand sequentially, so you decode the meaning of the symbol, and then you take the text one, and so you probably saw immediately what's happening in this panel, but I just now finished and the doing the same thing that I just told you.

So, oh, and words are better at promoting the recall of names and facts while images are better conveying meaning and triggering emotional responses, and so comics engage both of these types of processings subtly and the result a readers comprehension and recall are duly resourced, so collection of words associated with images and images are associated with these collection of words meaning in theory a memory of one will conjure the other. And a good place to start Edward's book visual explorations, but I'm digressing. He has a lot of historic examples of this type of pairing of pictures and language to help with recall.

So, another really big point and I can't overstress this, comics don't tell us stories. I'm just say it again. Comics don't tell stories. They can suggest or imply stories but when you read a comic, you're telling yourself a story. A comic is just the series of static images. That's literally all it is. It's just a bunch of images put into sequence, so when you look at this panel, you're comparing it to your memory of the last panel, what's the same, what's different? Once you figure out what's the same and different, you use and draw on your past experiences, your beliefs and your values and your imagination to fill in the gaps that exist between this panel and the one we just saw.

So, I'll illustrate this by asking you to think about how did Desi and data get on the plane? And no matter what you're thinking I got to tell you you're right because we don't know, so you're making up a story, and that's how it happened because the story is happening, so I'm just showing you images. You're creating the narrative and because of that, the story you perceived is very special, and it's a unique story that only you will ever know, and I'll say that again, as a reader of a comic you're literally putting pieces of yourself into the story, and that's huge as far as educating people because it means you, the reader you cannot help but to identify with what you're reading because it is in part you.

So, it's connected to comics, and it enables a potentially deeper level of understanding and recall because you're engaging your emotional your emotional level.

So, there are things that I as a reader can do to help shape the dynamic relationship that you have with the content, but that's my 10-cent workshop topic.

And I'll refer to the study that I'll do again. It was small at the end of 18, and there's was one conclusion that I found the people connected with the comics connected more personally, and they appeared to internalize the information more and draw conclusions about potential future courses of action. People reading the fact sheet referred to separate themselves, and then discussed the examples of reading that confirmed their existing knowledge.

So, they use more "I" statements when they recommended and what happened in their contents. So, this is just another big point. Comedy sees rich communication. You can understand the obvious. I'm sure you've noticed the titles that appear first, and they're I styling indicating a certain type of mention, and you probably noticed a certain subtext at the bottom of the screening, which is another type of information if you've really been paying attention to this information you would see that data kind of give different types of information too, and there's other things you can do with images. Graphic elements can be I can use think boarders, thin borders and multiple panels tight sequence so on just to convey some things intuitively to the reader so to put simply if I showed you the same type of information or styling or placement you pretty quickly understand the elements. I don't need to provide a key because you intuitively learn it, and I want to say this is a metaphor.

When I originally wrote this presentation there were multiple pages of content, but I have to summarize because it's just too much, so comics are powerful tools. They're visually appealing sophomore see them and pick them up because the reasons I talked about. They make information more easy to consume. They also can help create more general memories so for these reasons and many, many more comics are great information for conveying people who lacks content have barriers to access to new information, like low literacy, limited time or disease burden. They're just useful tools for delivering intentions and providing information in highly successfully ways.

My colleagues and I love to talk about comics, and this really the tip of the iceberg, and I firmly believe that comics can help make any type of specifically researched, intended to help shape people's behavior more accessible and more effective. There's no one size fits all solution. It's definitely hard to make things look easy so if you're interested in talking more, please do take down my information and reach out. If you have questions or you want to talk about a project comics would work for. Feel free to reach out. This is written kind of at a higher level you would use more or less consumers for health information, but it's all because I'm gearing it for a different audience. If you want to see comics written at a level I think we write it like eighth or seventh grade level most of the comics, you can also see the website at the bottom of the screen at comics.TBI.Washington.edu you can see our other work, and that's my presentation. Back to Kathleen. Thank you.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Silas, that was super interesting, and kudos to you for talking about a lot of high level concepts without too much jargon. I was very expressed by that, so I'm sure I will be equally if not more expressed with our next presenter, Wendy Strobel Gower using comics to define concepts so she is a senior extension associate and a program director at Cornell University's K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Employment and Disability Institute at the school of industrial and labor relations at Cornell University, and she's also project director for the Northeast American’s with Disabilities Act Center , which is a project funded by our funder, NIDILRR. And another NIDILRR she works with is diversity partners. She holds a master’s degree in rehabilitation of testing at the Medical College of Virginia Commonwealth University commonly referred to as VCU. So, Wendy, I'll turn it over to you.

>> WENDY STROBEL GOWER: Thanks, Kathleen. We were just going to talk about how we use comics in a kind of a survey that we did to define some key concepts, and I am sad to have to follow Silas because I would really like to learn a lot more from him, and it would be more interesting than having me talk. So, with that, I'll get started. I apologize to the audience.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Measurement is important, Wendy, that's why we invited you.

>> WENDY STROBEL GOWER: Just to give you some context, the northeast ADA center were doing some qualify the quantitative research on implementation of Title 1 of ADA in small business because we had heard anecdotal evidence that there wasn't really a lot of knowledge in the small business community about disability and about what it means to have people with disability working with you.

The problem that we found was that they when we asked some simple questions about: Do you have people with disabilities working for you? Have you ever accommodated anyone, they didn't understand that terminology, and they would always answer no, so in order to create kind of a common script for people when we did the survey portion of our research because we did the qualitative inquiry followed by a quantitative inquiry, and I always get those two words mixed up, we didn't want the same thing to happen where there was confusion with our research subjects in the qualitative study because we weren't there to explain anything, so we wanted to ask about some of the questions that we were talking about.

What we did was a really simple comic, and we did it just to explain a definition, so the first comic that we did was: What a disability? And it's basically a manager and an H.R. person talking about the ADA and how he knows it applies you know, to small companies, but he doesn't see how he has to worry about it because he obviously doesn't have anyone working for him who has a disability to the H.R. person explains, yeah, so not all disabilities are obvious, and then he starts thinking about, oh, okay. So maybe I do of have some of them with a disability and much like Silas said, we're trying to lead people in a direction; right? We're trying to get them to think about something without having that judgment in place that says, you didn't know, so it's in this guy in the comic that didn't know it, and it's those managers, which is really a great thing about comics is we can we can convey these ideas and say many people don't know without, you know, pointing fingers.

We also did a similar comic for reasonable accommodation, and so there's a few very complex concepts that are wrapped around reasonable accommodation. The first is disability disclosure, and then there is: What is a reasonable accommodation, and then there's the reasonable accommodation is a process idea, so we wanted to have one simple comic that kind of laid that whole process out for people so when we say: Has anyone asked you for an accommodation and have you accommodated them? There's some context for that question.

So disclosure is really hard for people to recognize when it's not something that they live every day, so the manager says Sylvia tells me she's having trouble reading small text on the computer and the H.R. person says, oh, hey, that's disability disclosure, and that's just a really great way to say, here's a simple example of something that managers hear all the time but can't classify, and then she says well, she disclosed to you she probably needs an accommodation and here's how we get started in that process, so it's just again a real simple approach to explaining a complex concept without putting any blame on the small business owner or manager without making them feel bad about themselves.

What we found when we did our survey, because we did ask if it helped at all because we were skeptical, it was the first time we had done something like this, but Jon McKenzie I guess spoke to you guys earlier I'd done a session with him a two semester session with him on knowledge translation, and he said, no, this actually works, and so we're like, let's try it! We found that the comics were actually very helpful. 69.5% of the people we surveyed said they were very helpful and another 25% said they were somewhat helpful. And really only 1.6% of people said that they weren't helpful at all. And for us what that meant was the amount of space it took up in our survey was well worth dedicating to that comic to explain those concepts.

We're going to continue using comics to do some of this work but more on our informational products, and they won't be long comics. We want to use 1 to 3 panel comics to just get people thinking about a topic and wanting them to learn more, and so we're going to do these Dear Ada, which is dear Americans With Disabilities, teasers with single panel lead in and use that in social media to get people interested in our ticks, and then we're also going to expand those single panel teasers into 3 panel comics to begin to introduce those complex issues, and we'll back those up with more traditional written information, so that is our plan. Oh, that's my disclaimer is not in there, but it is developed by a grant, so thanks to NIDILRR for giving me the space to do this and with that I'll turn it back to Kathleen.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Okay. So next up we have a presentation comic from a young adult point of view, so that will link in very nicely to Lisa Lachance’s presentation perhaps in the discussion with Janet Walker and Mary Beth Welch.

Janet Walker, PhD, she’s a research professor in the School of Social Work and the regional research institute at Portland State University in Oregon. She serves as director of the Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures. The center she directs a lot of other projects. They aim to improve outcomes for older adolescents and young adults with serious mental health conditions by developing and evaluating interventions based on principles of positive development and recovery. As well as by improving organizational and system capacity to implement and sustain effective interventions through workforce development and the use of fidelity of quality assurance tools, back to that point we've been trying to stress how much we've been valuing membership here at KTDRR. Her co-presenter, Mary Beth Welch is a peer support training specialist in that pathways research and training center. Ms. Welch also has lived experience as a young person in the mental health, foster care, and special education systems, so she's been able to use those experiences to guide her work both as a youth peer support specialist and as a peer specialist trainer.

I did want to mention, Owen Swifter is not going to be co-presenting, and he's involved in the center's info comic as a multimedia freelancer he works on animation, graphic design and 3D modeling for creative and practical amplifications, so with no further ado, I'll Hop off this camera, and we'll get going with Janet talking about comics from a young adult point of view.

>> JANET WALKER: Well, thank you, Kathleen, this is Janet speaking. We already had introductions, but just wanted to see a little bit of our I guess personalities there. One of the things that we encourage and love about working with young people is that we feel licensed to have fun, and so we try that when we to do that when we can, and that's what led us to the work on comics. Mary Beth, did you want to add in anything here?

>> MARY BETH WELCH: Not yet.

>> JANET WALKER: Okay. Very good. So, we are actually going to be talking about our comics and another set of tools that we are just calling eLearning tools. They're sort of a grab bag at this point, but they're based on kind of comic engagement aspects as well, so you'll see those later on.

At pathways Research and Training Center we have always had now we have well, actually, Mary Beth she moved to Idaho, but she has been with us quite some time. We've always had full time and part time young people on staff who have had significant health and experiences. Who does some of our main training with our presenters with youth and young adult population, and the one thing I personally have always loved about the research and training center mechanism is that they actually fund dissemination, so part of the mission and what we're actually being paid to do is to develop engaging materials to translate what we're finding out in our research or best practices more generally in the field and make that accessible to various stakeholder groups.

To the young people we have had on staff saw a role for comics in this work and really wanted to use the comics and other eLearning tools that you'll see in a minute to address some of what they see some of the main issues of that are problematic with mental health services and systems, and this all kind of stems from recognizing that young people who are in systems don't really see mental health issues the way that providers, researchers and funders do and just to give you an example is a really good example, when we respond to our call for proposals, the language in the proposal is, first of all, children with serious what is it serious emotional disturbance, so that's one of the populations so children even though we're tasked with are basically 14 18, so they're children, and they're seriously emotionally disturbed, so that's one piece, and then young adults with serious mental illness. As you can imagine it's not really relatable for young people

I think the other thing is that the story of treatment or the story of being a person who experiences a mental health condition is not really the same as the story kind of told think of a research paper in the way that we think of research. You get a diagnosis, and then you're eligible for treatment and study and outcome and, again it doesn't feel like life to young people.

So more typically youth and young adults often do not feel like they relate to the diagnosis that they've been given. Often, they don't really agree with it. Many young people in our studies have had multiple different diagnoses over the course of many years, and you won't know this unless you go to read the comic but our main character in the comic we haven't even said anything about a diagnosis and where we've been working on him for about a year. We know about what he experiences, so we also didn't want to leave how great treatment is since young people have had a lot of bad experiences with treatment systems.

So what we really want to do to talk about mental health issues just as a part of life and to emphasize the things that are key for young people in their lives that contribute to positive mental health including friends, lots of supportive adults, pets, exercise, getting out, doing stuff, et cetera.

So it's kind of different from the idea of an InfoComic in that we're not really trying to get specific information that people would obtain but going back to what Silas said about that issue of creating empathy with the characters, I think, that that is really a huge part of what we're trying to do.

So just looking back to the slides, obviously, we're looking at life and life with a mental health challenge from the perspectives of young people. We really want to sort of show what does and doesn't support them in life from their perspective. We want them to be funny and engaging, and we'll talk a little bit about this later, but we want them to be easy to integrate into professional development activities, so that providers could use them in a staff meeting or something, and we've been creating these so called study guys to go along with the comics. Focus on everyday life and treatment is not the starting point.

So, I think Mary Beth was going to chime in here a little bit about the process of creating the comics and everything else like that.

>> MARY BETH WELCH: Yes are basically the way that we went about creating this was our team has a lot of peers who have lived experience in the mental health system and have gone on to be peer support specialists who work with youth who are currently experiencing the youth mental health system and so have a lot of lived and, so we have a lot of lived experience combined that we would kind of have a meeting and brainstorm what are some of the big pieces that or even like things that might seem small from the outside but can have a really big impact as young people are starting to engage with the mental health system or starting to try to transition to adulthood while also navigating their own mental health.

And so we came up with ideas. We have a couple of characters where there's one where kind of is like, wow, this would have been helpful, and that's neighbor Mike. He'll be mentioned in a second, and then also recognizing as Janet mentioned, like, different supports like having pets and sometimes having to make choices that are the best for you in that moment but adults in your life might not necessarily agree with, such as skipping school, different things show up in the comics instead of coming from an adult's provider type perspective of, like, clearly you should not skip school, so we're not going to have our main character skip school kind of a thing, and so we would put that all together; come up with a script, and then send it to Owen and see what he could do for drawing it, and he's come up with some really fantastic ways to navigate when we put, like, too much text into it or too much information to try to integrate it in a more visual way, so that it is more of a you're experiencing the situation of the comic instead of just having to read all the text and be told step for step what is going on.

>> JANET WALKER: Thanks, Mary Beth, excellent point. So, I'm just going to quickly go through just sort of talk about some of the things in the different issues of the comics that we've had, so we have 3 that are complete. Each of those is, you know, several pages of multi-panel stuff. I don't really know how you count these things. They're like little mini stories, and the first one really focuses on natural support, and it introduces James as our main character who's got the blue hair and Jarvis is the dog and in full disclosure I have a dog named Jarvis and also as pesky and fun as we going and Mike the neighbor as Mary Beth mentioned and sort of touches on, you know, how to ask for help who is sort of around who could be helpful, a little bit of roll playing goes on. We don't actually label it as role playing. What asking for help can look like and, of course, how a bet can be supportive because we're all being pet advocates.

In the next issue called: Not so good, James' ghost has to go to the school counselor where he has kind of not like the greatest experience. I'm really like this panel that we sort of pasted or there from the work that Owen did because he did a great job of integrating a whole bunch of words but until the have to really read them. The words are there just as the swirl that's demoralizing James as he's sitting in a chair in the counselor's office.

Some of the things that are touched on in this one did stigma around having a mental health condition, things that are unhelpful in terms of therapy that are being pushed on a young person without really his necessarily wanting them, the importance of respecting decisions that young person might make, the shock that comes when you find that other people have been talking about your mental health and what you should do about it without consulting you and, of course, the positive power of human humor, exercise and pets.

>> MARY BETH WELCH: And just to add really quick In this part, it talks about, you can see that the counselor is suggesting his diagnosis of dealing with depression, but that still is not something that James has identified YET or recognized as true to him. We do try to really make that distinction.

>> JANET WALKER: Yeah, and then our third one the next panels slides, sorry, I'm getting my terminology mixed up. In this one we just are out and about in the community and really talking about the fact that people even if they might need help, they don't always want it. Sometimes they really don't want it and the importance of connections with friends and, of course, pedestrians. And also introduces the idea of the peer run drop and center where the panel or I guess the issue that is currently being completed James and Jarvis and their friend Zoe who's pictured there go to the peer drop in center to do some stuff there. I think it takes us to the eLearning tools and Mary Beth feel free to add more about the comics and

>> MARY BETH WELCH: Okay. So, Janet mostly covered the comics. I'll mention that along with the comics we do have study guides for each comic that we make, and I'll be touching on that a little bit more in a second, but that is part of this eLearning tools part as well.

So, as Janet mentioned earlier, we try to make pretty engaging, like, dissemination tools, so that everybody can know what we're learning or what we're what we're bringing in and understanding, so that it's not just, like, we're doing this research, and it stays with us. We want everybody to know this stuff.

To these eLearning tools meant to engage with multiple audiences of people and really prove a thought around whatever subject that they are on, and we try to make them, so that they're quick like, quick to look at, quick to engage with, and then also provide again a study guide, so that there can be deeper engagement as well fingerprinted, so that it can be part of a training without taking up an entire meeting time, but it can be part of it, and then maybe it could be a one on one professional development thing with between, like, provider and their supervisor kind of thing.

This could also be used by people on their own testing it out, what they know and, you know, maybe they go through it a couple of times if they want to, so we have various different eLearning tools and on the next slide we can dive deeper into one of them. So just young man's name is Gerald and this eLearning tool is where you kind of practice being a provider working with the young person who is working on a goal or at this point the goal that he's working on is trying to figure out what classes to take, so you walk through the different like a conversation with him, and you make choices on what to say, so the white dialog box is Gerald's dialog and the yellow is choices how you want to respond for him.

We ask that everybody who is taking that training, click on maybe not the best choices first so go through the two that you're like, no, that's not what you actually want to say, and then after you click on one, it pops up with a diagnosis, quote unquote, of, like, whether or not that was the best choice that you could make in that moment, and then maybe why, and it shows Gerald's reaction as well, and then it takes you back to this screen, and you make the other choice, and so then you can go through and learn what are some common tripping points for engaging with young people around services, around goal setting, around planning for their future. So, in this instance, Gerald is saying, I'm stressing out about what classes to take, and I recall need to get that figured out. I don't want to take any classes that I don't need, so if we choose not the best response let's go to the bottom one, as a provider I click on: I'm hearing that you're stressed out, why do you think that is? Then you see a not a good response with Gerald where he gets frustrated, so he we see that like he says that he already tried that. Provider is offering a suggestion or -- There we go, so this is where Gerald is unhappy as the provider you chose to say: Why do you think that is? Instead of really engaging with him trying to figure out the classes, it's like can you even listen to me, and so the diagnosis, quote unquote, is the provider's reflecting the emotion but is using, quote unquote, therapy speak kind of way that many young people don't, like, so instead of listening to what Gerald has to say, they're taking it off-track to talk about feelings instead of actually working on this problem.

So with this one it kicks you back to this slide, so you can pick on another choice, and so then you choose the second the second best choice, and so that would be in this situation, I think it's pretty easy to go on the college website and see what he needs to take to graduate. There you go. That's where Gerald shows where he's frustrated, and he said: Do you think I'm stupid? I already tried that. In this position the provider is offering a suggestion. Instead of trying to help Gerald explore more about what he has tried and come up with more ideas, so this is about building self-determination skills for Gerald, so that he can decide what's his next step. Instead of just telling him what to do because he's probably already done some stuff.

And then you pick the best choice you think it is and say something, oh, yeah, I remember my last term of college, I found out about a class that was required for my major, and I didn't even know about it, what do you think you could do to help with figuring out the class situation?

And with that you see Gerald is kind of like, I feel heard. I'm not sure I already checked on just, but I can't figure how many credits are counting towards my major. The information is totally confusing, so with that response you're able to empathize with Gerald. You were able to prompt him to share more about what he has already tried to be able to move forward on brainstorming more things, so in that we say this is the best choice because it gives a little bit of, like, personal information for that engaging with the young person, but it keeps it small and also returns the focus to Gerald trying to get his ideas.

Oftentimes providers are taught not to talk about themselves, and that's okay advice, but it's also really helpful to have a little bit of yourself put into that, so that you are also there's that back and forth instead of you just telling a young person what to do, and it also normalizes that maybe what the young person is going through is difficult for a lot of people and that can really, really help engaging with young people.

So, this is kind of a small token of training that is about. Sometimes you pick a choice, and you see that it's really not a great choice for Gerald and overnight really upset and he gets really upset knows like do you think I'm fricking stupid. I've been on the department's website, like, a million times and on this website we also have the comment of, like, maybe don't remember to respond to Gerald's suggestion, of contacting the advisor, and then provider is also offering another suggestion that sounds somewhat they're encouraging Gerald to take the lead, but they really aren't, but it really kind of shows the pitfalls of what can come up when you're working one on one and not being as or as guiding and more leading with the young person. You don't want to be as leading.

So, I love these eLearning tools, and I suggest everybody goes through them. I'm horribly biased 'cause I love them, but, yeah. Janet, do you want to add anything else to this eLearning tool, specifically?

>> JANET WALKER: No, that this is it's actually fairly complicated to do these things, but they're very flexible, and you could you can put any kind of content and make the branching and the logic and the roots to be anything that you want. I think they're super powerful. People have reacted very, very positively towards this tool in particular, but to all the eTools.

>> MARY BETH WELCH: Definitely, all right. So, as I mentioned earlier, we also make study guides for the comics and the eLearning tools, so we try to make them like the teacher's editions of textbooks. We got different pieces of looking at what's the point of this eLearning tool in general or what's the point of this comic and who made this, and things keep in mind in engaging with the material, and then also discussion points in case this is being gone over with a group, and then reflections as well, things to maybe consider within yourself of your own practice, your own practice growth, and then other resources that can help with other resources that can help with learning more in depth about whatever topic we're talking about, so we like to put out a lot of resources, and so sometimes one of our tools can point to another one to go a little bit more in depth.

So, this really kind of helps also temper when we want to put all the informational in a comic or all the information in an eLearning tool. We can make a study guide to go alongside it, so that people can dive deeper in it and engage more with it if they want to or it can be used one off on its own. Janet, do you have anything else to add about that part?

>> JANET WALKER: No, but I'm very pleased with the idea of the study guides because the general ideas it helps people feel confident if they want to integration or discussion in the staff meeting or training they're doing or even just looking at it themselves that it gives them, some more resources to feel confident if they're leading a discussion or just to think about if they're doing it on their own.

>> MARY BETH WELCH: Definitely. All right. Do you want to take it away for the next slide?

>> JANET WALKER: Sure, the next slide, just very briefly, we were asked how we are evaluating the comics, and to be honest, we haven't done a ton yet. One thing that we do is track the download, so you can see I don't know just a little bit, what, seven months. We had over 2500 downloads of the comics, so which represented 34% of the total downloads from the website. We had a very large and active website we do have a lot of people or there, but that means they're super popular, and you can see the little spikes in the downloads there that correspond to the dates that we released the comics, and we have a monthly RTC update that we send out, so in each one we let people know there's a new comic out there and that appears to send people to the website to do a lot of downloading. Now, that I don't think is disaggregating the comic downloads specifically, so that probably includes other downloads that they might be interested in, from our website.

We also do, next slide, I think a fairly crude kind of annual survey that we do where we have a pop up that occurs during the month and ask people to respond about it gives them an option of the 10 top downloads and have you used this one, et cetera, and we do then ask them how they like the product and whether they thought that the product actually contributed to different kinds of changes so have a tangible impact, and we do have kind of a lottery type incentive system for I think it's $100 1 in 100 people wins $100, et cetera. It's a small, obviously, number of people that respond relative to the number of downloads that we get, so it's not super scientific. Sometimes we get some good suggestions from it, but I would be particularly interested in general to hear people's thoughts on whether they have really clever ways of evaluating the comics. I like hearing Silas's study. I think we could come up with something like that, too, but I think that is kind of the end.

If people are interested in seeing any of the comics, you can put in pathways/RTC into your search engine and it will spit out our website, and there's the address down there and that brings us, I believe, to the next slide, asking questions, so I'll turn it back over to Kathleen. Yeah, that's it.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Sure, thanks, Janet, so you are correct, we are at the point of our discussions, so we have a lot of people here that will be part of your discussion yep, thanks, Silas for turning on your camera, and Wendy and Janet, Mary Beth. Okay. There's also been a lot of chat and discussion, so much, so that I tried to group these questions offline and look and see what kind of themes were coming up in them, so one of them is a very of meaning one of them is a question of meaning as Terry Dunn pointed out well, Silas, it was you in your presentation you made the points that the comics because they have both text and images it's dual channel communication, so they make memories more durable. I was thinking, well, that's, you know, obviously really important when the point of the comic is to convey specific information as Terry was pointing out Delta Airlines now uses an animated cartoon and comics using seatbelts, oxygen masks. Yeah, it's really important that someone understand how to use those things. There's actually a right or wrong way to use that seatbelt, so Silas just to kind of play devil's advocate. Do you think that there are limits to comics because they do allow for that kind of alternative interpretation as part of what I understood as one of your thesis of what you were presenting?

>> SILAS JAMES: Yeah.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: That everybody makes the story that makes sense to them so how do we deal with this question of meaning when there can be deliberate ambiguity of interpretation.

>> SILAS JAMES: So, yeah, you were saying deliberate ambiguity I guess to put it simply, I can adjust how much space I can put in panels. Like ideological space. I can show very tight actions and say, okay. This person walking down the street and show every panel of them walking by there's a tree and fire hydrant, and there's a tight sequence, and you can call them and the next time they go in the store, and so you kind of do that like the more you leave to the reader, the more interpretation you leave.

So what we do all the comics that I make are about chronic conditions mostly TBI and specifically incidents of traumatic brain injury, and I sort of frame the story on the common symptoms that are universally identifiable and that I just believe like people have an ambiguous office or having trouble with a coffee maker that is a universal experience, so we can kind of use milestones that are pretty universally identifiable, and so, yeah, there's identifications but if you target your audience right, and you do a lot of pre-research before I run a comic, a lot of human research, so I have a relevant story that I convey to people.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: I'm looking at some of these other another theme in the comments was: The value that the comics have of creating ironically both empathy that someone can identify with the images but also at times, like, Wendy, you mentioned images oh, that's not me who didn't understand disability. It's who doesn't understand disability. It's that other small business owner. Do you find that you can any tension in that or how did you all deal with that? Did you want people to identify with it or or not?

>> WENDY STROBEL GOWER: In disability research there tends to be the socially responsible response that people tend to tell us what they think they should tell us; right? So we want people to recognize that discrimination and stigma is a thing and even if they themselves don't feel like they're doing it, that it is a thing that happens, and I don't know to what extent it eliminates the socially desirable responses, but it is an attempt to placate feelings of: I would never do that even though they probably are.

>> JANET WALKER: And in our comic, we we actually Jarvis is one of the characters that frequently does what we might consider wrong. I think a lot of things that are maybe not always super helpful to young people are things that are really offered in the best intentions and people want to be helpful but sometimes it's just not quite the right kind of help and Jarvis is always actually trying to tell James what to do, and so I think in a way it spans that friction in a humorous kind of way.

>> SILAS JAMES: I could add something to it if it's Okay. So, people walking in between the line between identification and distance. In this conversation theme one of the comics the we recent did a series on chronic brain injury after an accident, and I tried not in these comics labeled how people got injured and people are sensitive and people don't want to be defined by their injury in this four part series we did about chronic pain it was relevant to show to illustrate a car accident, and I noticed in the movies a lot of times they'll pull back the camera when there's a car accident happening. It kind of makes you feel more removed from it, so that's what we did in a three picture sequence there was a woman in a car, and she was teaching him to drive, and he stopped in a stoplight, but he was in the intersection and a car you can see on the background on his cell phone and each panel they got to where their cars collided, and it's just a bird's eye view, and you feel removed but also you're there. That's education and distance, which is my 2 cents.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Okay. Thanks, Silas. Lauren, are you with us?

>> LAUREN POLVERE: I am.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: So, someone I know you work with people who are living in poverty, and we had a question from Elaine. I'm trying to imagine using one to three panel comics to engage people in defining poverty beyond the normal economic definition of a particular income threshold. For instance, thinking about subjective expressions of poverty. How people experience poverty. Poverty from an intersectional lens and how do I use that in comics inside academia and outside of academia. Marsha suggested thought of a word loud cloud, and it may be more fraught because you're drawing people.

>> LAUREN POLVERE: Right.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: So how do you visually represent poverty, never mind disability. It can be its own sticky wicket.

>> LAUREN POLVERE: Absolutely. That's so interesting, and I would certainly defer to the expertise of the presenters on this matter who I can tell give great thought and expertise in terms of the comics but what I think about in terms of just some of the tensions that you just mentioned, Kathleen, you know, just thinking about the visual representations, and it being such a sensitive matter as a researcher I would think about doing this as participatory way as I could, so I think if there's an and in illustrating this in comics I would like to draw together members of the community I was hoping to engage and visualize to give them a lot of input on how to tell the story about their experience that is true to that experience but not a caricature of it because I think that's a really important line that you have to walk. Of approximate other thing I would maybe suggest I think there's a way that you could think about this from an evaluation lens too. If you're working in a participatory way with a group to develop something like a comic, then drawing together other community members to look at and giving feedback about what they're seeing and what it draws out from them, so I would really be interested in seeing what the presenters who have expertise on the comic piece of it would think about that, but I would just think from the perspective of actually engaging the process that I would really want to be as participatory as I could make sure that I was engaging that issue appropriately and in a way that would lead to the desired outcome of the project.

>> WENDY STROBEL GOWER: There's a really good comic that I can send a sample, and I don't know if I'll find it right away, so I might have to send it to you after, Kathleen, on pregnancy and for teens and the idea of letting the family down and, you know, choices and all this kind of stuff, and it was it was done and drafted over and over again with community members and with the people who would be would be absorbing that information, that made it especially true feeling to that community, and I think that's really critical, so poverty the picture of an empty fridge and a hungry kid, that says a lot of stuff, you know, so so there's so much potential to convey meaning through some of those images, a kid sitting on a bed and putting socks on that are ripped or have holes in them, you know, but I certainly agree, Lauren, that you're going to want to do this with the community, so that you're not putting out stereotypes or creating more damage than you are information.

>> SILAS JAMES: Yeah. Sorry, I definitely agree with Wendy that if you're going to create a comic that's meant to engage to a specific community, it's really important to make sure that you represent the community's voice because you don't want to be in the position of power saying this is what your, and then people try to consume it as the intended consumer and say this is not something I really relate to at all. It just kind of feels like another form of depression, so, yeah, I just I think that's spot on.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Okay. Ideally, actually the artist is from the community when possible. So, another sort of theme gets us back to the pragmatic kind of side of the discussion or aspect of the discussion. There was a little bit of confusion over tools that were mentioned. Janet, you had tools at the end of your presentation, and then Silas, you mentioned something about tools, and I wasn't sure if you meant the same kind of tools. I get the sense one tool in the comic could be for more information, you know, here are some detailed toolkits about dramatic brain injury or did you mean tools about how to do and use InfoComics or both?

>> SILAS JAMES: Well, we made multiple comics around pain, so we made a comic about headaches, and I referred to a four part series pain and, you know, it seems that I don't want to just provide people with information and say: Here you go, so we've attached made a pain diary and an activity log and something people could use for either and attach to each of the four parts of the chronic pain comic, and then, and we made a specific pain diary for the specific head coming, and I also made a longer comic about concussion prevention and the best practices for recovery, and we revised an existing tool for tracking symptoms of concussion and monitoring recovery, and then there was also a study guide at the end of the comic, and we intended but we still intended, but we're seeking funding to turn it into a curriculum for ninth grade students that kind of helps inoculate people against concussions before they happen those are the tools that not the same as the eTools that Janet and her team has made but more tools that we can just embed in the comics.

>> JANET WALKER: Right, I think for our tools, we wanted to come up with kind of a generic name. They contain some of the same elements as our comics, in some cases dialog, but it's it's a little hard, and I think I described them as a grab bag. It's a little hard to describe them as a group, but they're nontraditional, little mini learning helpful things. I don't really we didn't have it very figured out when we named them. We just wanted to put them somewhere to the website, and that's the terminology we came up with so...

>> MARY BETH WELCH: And there's various different types of, so we got a video that pauses and kind of blurbs that are going on with the video. We talked about Gerald's words and click back and forth and clicked through it. We have tip sheets for people to look at, like, ways to engage with young people. We have, like, workbooks like how to learn how to do something so and we just kind of linked to whatever tools are relevant that is currently going on as well 'cause we focus on a lot of the same areas, but we like to dive deeper into specific pieces of it, and that's how we end up having just I think grab bag is a great term for it. A grab bag of different deeper experiences and tools that can be used.

>> WENDY STROBEL GOWER and KATHLEEN MURPHY: So

(Talking Simultaneously.)

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: It was more supplement information. Sorry.

>> WENDY STROBEL GOWER: No, I was just going to say that I think I might have misinterpreted that question because I thought you were asking about tools that we used to create our comics, and I used Pixton if anybody cares. They worked to put in disability friendly graphics, and we were really great. Just if anybody cares.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: I wasn't clear myself either. Like tools for what? What are we talking about here? So thanks for clarifying that Wendy and if you don't mind sticking that software JoAnn is asking the same thing, into the chat that would be great, and I'm sure a lot of people would appreciate it. So, along those lines, you know, super chromatic people, I said to InfoComics. Silas you're obviously an InfoComic artist is there any chance a guild or how would people nationwide find a good artist from a local art school or what.

>> SILAS JAMES: I'm not the artist. We have an amazing artist. David Laskey he's an Eisner Award winner, I think, 2012 for comics, and he has done most all of well, most of the illustrations and comics. We started with a different artist, but the reason we stuck with David he has the intuitive, but I started off I put an ad on Craigslist, and I got an amazing variety of responses. Most of them were not anything that I would follow with, and I think a friend introduced us to David Laskey and what my strategy has just been is asked my talented artist friends for references, and I don't have a magic bullet for finding an artist. It's hard. We've used other artists that were talented ill administrators but didn't know the illustrators but didn't know the comics and how to make things disappear in the background versus yeah, so my answer is we just got lucky, and you can always see an artist like in small local newspapers and reach out to them and say, I liked your art. Would you be interested in doing a collaboration? We're still afraid that, like, we'll have a project and David won't be able to help us, and we don't know what would happen then. Maybe have other options.

>> WENDY STROBEL GOWER: We went software because of costs, honestly. We had contracted it in the past to do a toolkit for youth with a graphic design company, and it was just prohibitively expensive to get the product that we wanted to get so with Pixton is free, and we can't get the subtlety a lot of times that seems Silas is getting but for the for the 1 to 3 panel comics, it's much more cost effective.

The comic life tool that I put in the in the discussion panel you can make actual, like, real comics pretty easily, and you can insert your own pictures, so you could get that context. You import pictures, and then it comic sizes them. I don't know the proper terminology to that, but it's cool.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: Terry, I wanted to put, and you Jess Chaiken into dialog with each other. Terry was suggesting that InfoComics would be a great tool for rehabilitation and, you know, how about if there was some kind of putting out of this message to the audience, and then, I think, for NIDILRR grantees, Jess, that might be – that would do that, but you pointed that if I understood your comment correctly, you wouldn't do that so how I'll let you guys talk to each other.

>> TERRY DONOVAN: Yeah, no this has been absolutely wonderful. I was thinking, well, I've got to steal most of this stuff so, you know, in the time-honored tradition.

Yeah, the piece of: How do we it's a classic knowledge translation piece even backing it up, but this I consider myself sort of up to date on things. I am not seeing and I think maybe the panelists have seen my comment online, but they can correctly me, but I'm not seeing hardly any state or public VR entities that I'm most familiar with using things like comics or graphic design as a way to convey information. They're getting a little bit better about certain things, but this whole you know, they might be using pictures a little bit some of what we talked about earlier today, but I'm not seeing this piece, and so it's we're in that we've got to let people know it's out there sending them to the site could work, but it's almost taking this panel presentation and showing it to a bunch of people of what's possible and what it looks like, and those types of things, particularly, since most of the accidents particularly Wendy and Mary Beth's examples were clearly geared towards population stuff with disabilities.

And even the ADA piece of how do we talk to employers about that we're looking to talk to find opportunities for our clients to work there and often the myth is, well, I'm going to have to put in $20,000 for an elevator, you know, it's not that and the panel about accommodation, I thought was very good. I'll let Jess talk a little bit as well. This, I think, is very, very interesting. I think VR agencies would be responsible I don't think it's ever been dawned I won't say it's ever dawned on them but how to find the intersection between comics and getting people to do things. And Silas had a good comment in the panelist piece as well.

>> KATHLEEN MURPHY: So I just wanted to say thanks to everyone for joining us this week, and this year. We do this every year. We'll be here in 2020 October 26th, 28th and 30th with a popular theme of social media streams and impact. If you don't like that idea fill out that evaluation because there's plenty of room things you would want to see or to give some nuance to that.

I will say we read every single word. We go over with our project officer line by line all of your evaluations. We're very interested. Please let us know and when you're done with that, your job is to have a wonderful weekend, so we look forward to being together with you next year. Thanks so much to all of you.