

# Graphic medicine

from library to classroom



MONIQUE CLAR, Medical librarian, Bibliothèque de la santé

ISABELLE BRAULT, Assistant Professor, Faculté des sciences infirmières

# GRAPHIC NARRATIVES IN HEALTH SCIENCES EDUCATION

## COMICS AT THE MEDICAL LIBRARY

### INTEGRATION IN THE CURRICULUM

# GRAPHIC NARRATIVES IN HEALTH SCIENCES EDUCATION

Graphic medicine can be defined as the use of comics (graphic narratives) in health sciences education and patient care.



grap  
hic  
medi  
cine



IMAGE COPYRIGHT THOM FERRIER 2011

<http://www.graphicmedicine.org/>

# Graphic medicine in education

Graphic narratives about personal experiences of illness from patients and their families can be used to illustrate:

distress

empathy

and collaboration between family members and health professionals

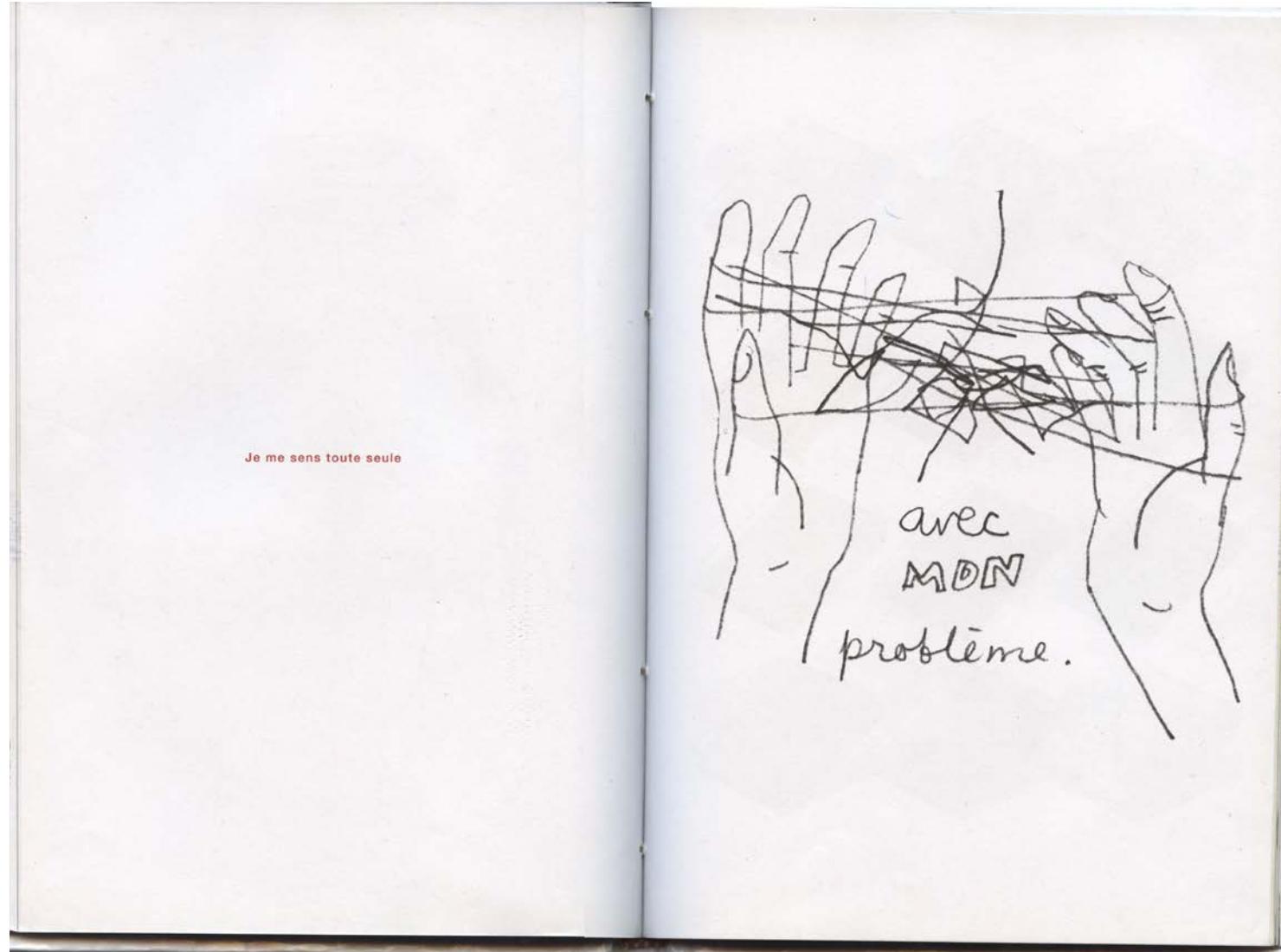
and thus give students a broader experience of health and illness.

# Graphic medicine in education

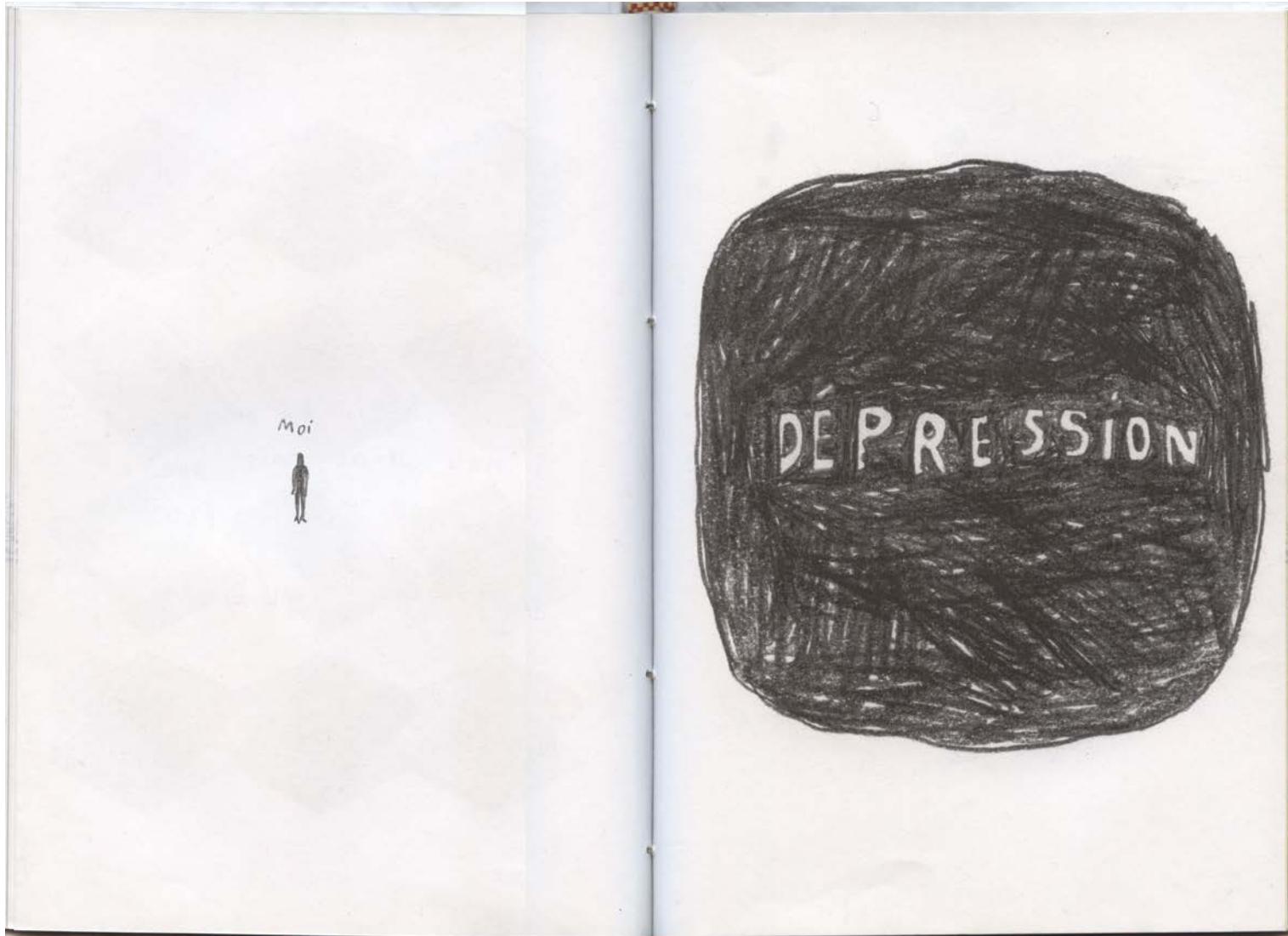
It could also help students improve their observational and interpretive skills.

"To read a comic effectively, you must understand not only what is overtly seen and said but also what is implied. This is because much of the action takes place outside the boundaries of comic panels in the blank space known as the gutter. Thus, readers of comics, like doctors in the exam room, must determine meaning by inferring what happens out of sight and without words."

*Green MJ, Myers KR. Graphic medicine: use of comics in medical education and patient care. BMJ 2010;340: 574-7.*



From *12 mois sans intérêt* ©2007, Catherine Lepage & Mécanique générale, Montréal. Reprinted with permission.



From *12 mois sans intérêt* ©2007, Catherine Lepage & Mécanique générale, Montréal. Reprinted with permission.

# Nature Lover

93



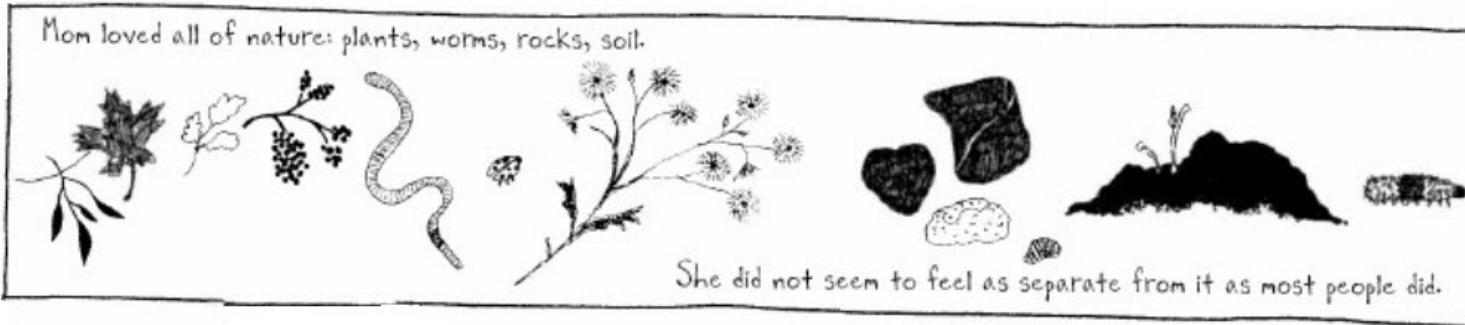
This tree had sweeter sap than the others. We would drink it fresh out of the bucket. We called it "tree juice." It had little bits of bark floating in it.



My mother used to say that she wanted her ashes spread under the sugar maple tree beside the old farmhouse where we lived in Maine.

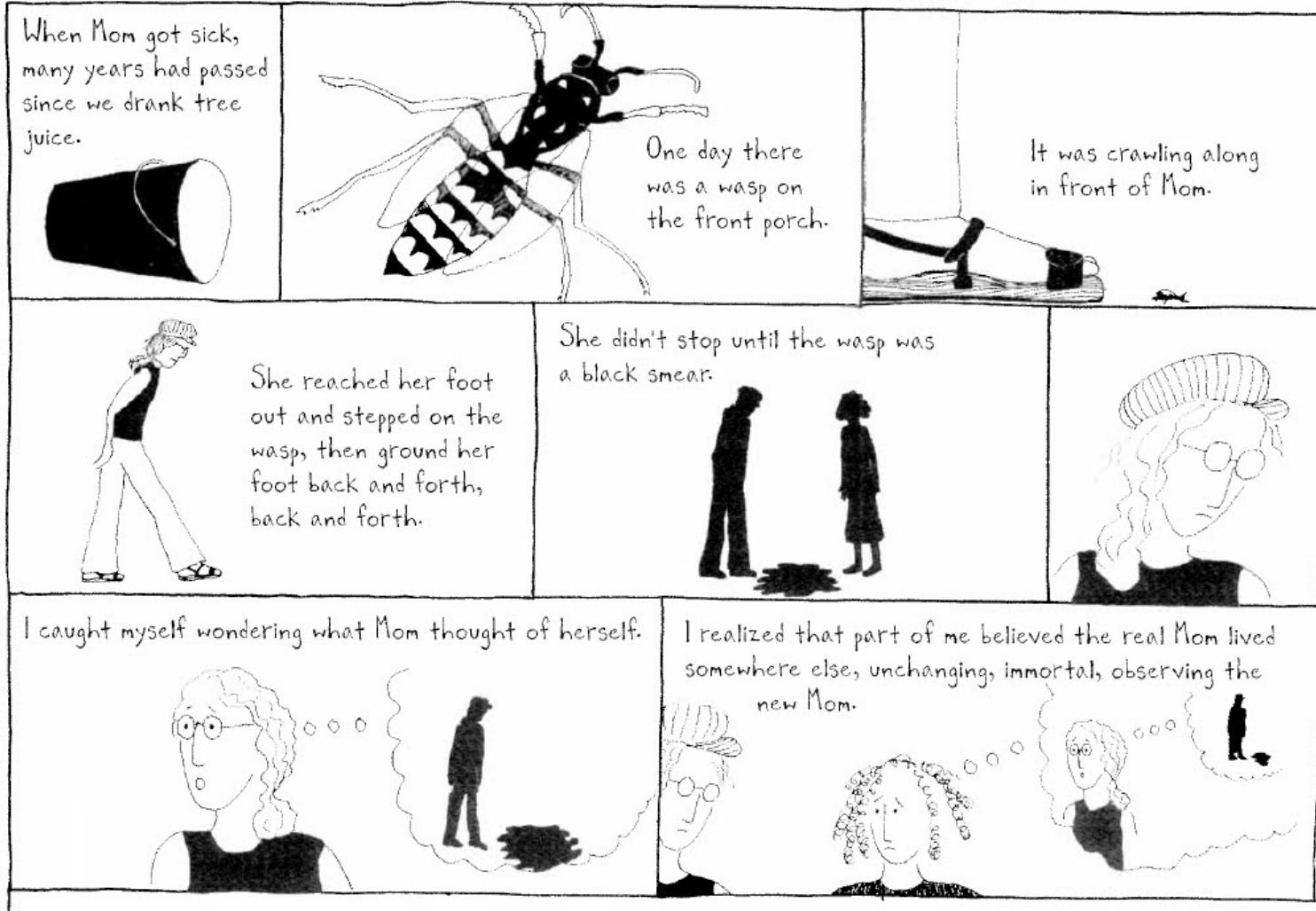


She also used to say that she wanted to be reincarnated as a maple tree. She felt a strong kinship with trees, especially maples.



She did not seem to feel as separate from it as most people did.

From *Tangles: A Story about Alzheimer's, my mother, and me*, copyright © by Sarah Leavitt. Calgary: Freehand Books, an imprint of Broadview Press. Reprinted with permission.



From *Tangles: A Story about Alzheimer's, my mother, and me*, copyright © by Sarah Leavitt. Calgary: Freehand Books, an imprint of Broadview Press. Reprinted with permission.

AT EVERY VISIT, THE DOCS ALWAYS SAY:



THIS SIMPLE ORDER TURNS OUT TO BE SURPRISINGLY HARD TO FOLLOW.



39

From *Mom's Cancer*, copyright © by Brian Fies.: Abrams ComicArts, an imprint of Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Reprinted with permission.



SHE'S WRONG WHEN SHE COMPLAINS AND WRONG WHEN SHE DOESN'T.

EITHER WAY, SHE FEELS STUPID.

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW?

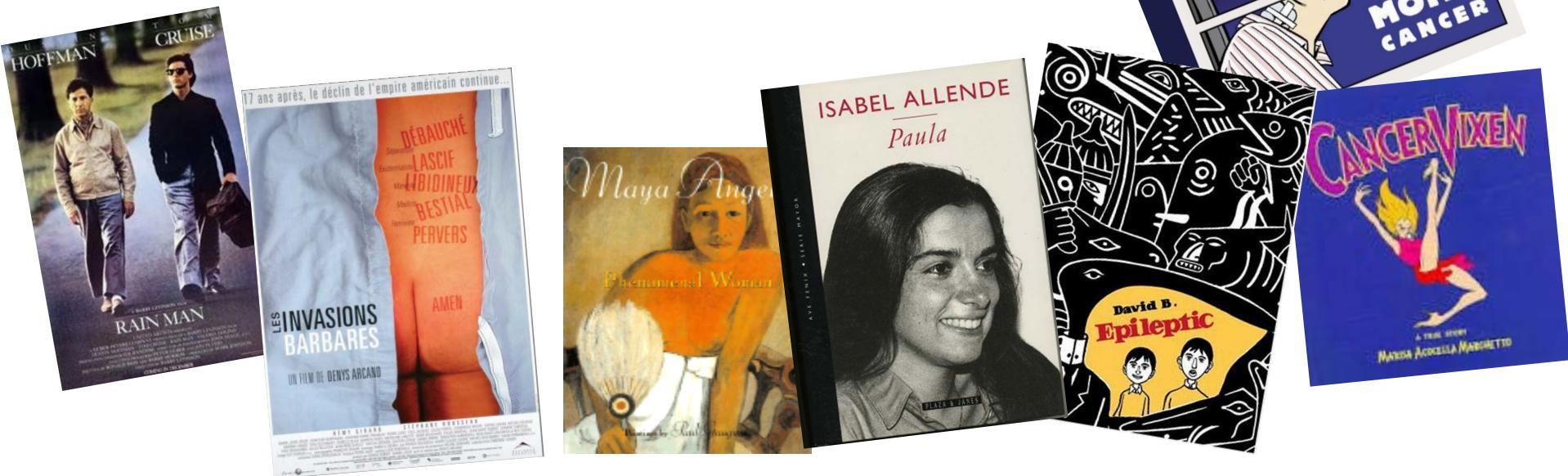
AFTER A WHILE, SHE STOPS TRYING.

40



From *Paul à Québec* ©2009, Michel Rabagliati et Les éditions de la Pastèque, Montréal. Reprinted with permission.

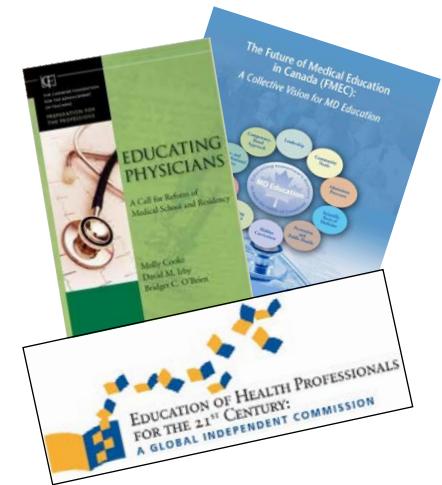
# Graphic medicine is a recent form of narrative medicine which has been part of medical education for many years through the use of novels, films and television



# COMICS AT THE MEDICAL LIBRARY

Context :

- Embedded librarian in the committee for the renewal of the undergraduate medical education curriculum at UdeM.
- Very strong patient-partnership approach of the Medical Faculty.
- Implementing a new reading area in the library
- ...and a lifelong love for comic books.



# The comics collection

- 40 comics ordered during the 2011 Fall semester
  - 27 graphic medicine narratives
  - 5 graphic narratives in science
  - 8 humorous or adventurous stories in a medical or scientific context
- 25 comics in French, 15 in English





# Collection development tools

- Graphic medicine site <http://www.graphicmedicine.org/>
- BDMédicales site <http://www.bdmedicales.com/>
- Articles on graphic medicine
- Public libraries and bookstores !



# Graphic Medicine narratives – Overview of topics in our collection

- Aids (2)
- Alzheimer's disease
- Autism
- Bipolar disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Cancer (11)
- Childhood diseases and disorders (7)
- Depression (2)
- Drug dependence
- Epilepsy (2)
- Leukemia
- Mourning (6)
- Palliative care
- Spina bifida

# The Collection in the Library

- Books catalogued and ready to go in the library reading area by the 2012 Fall semester.
- Publicity campaign planned for the beginning of the semester :
  - Library website, posters, library welcome booth, emails to student associations in health sciences, etc.
  - Our communication librarian showed interest in promoting it throughout campus.

# Financial crisis

- In September 2012, Québec universities entered a financial crisis and the libraries were deeply affected by the situation.
- It was decided that the timing for launching a publicity campaign on a comic books collection at the medical library was most untimely, considering we were not sure we could even buy new editions of the course reserve books.



## INTEGRATION IN THE CURRICULUM

In light of the situation, the librarian decided that the only way to justify the investment, in a budget cut period, and keep this collection growing would be to define it as teaching material at Université de Montréal.

# Step 1 Toward integration :

Collect usage data



# Survey

- Length of time: **16 weeks**
- Number of questionnaires completed : **38**
- Questionnaires completed by health sciences students : **15**
- Questionnaires respondents very positive :
  - All in favor of a comics collection at the medical library
  - Great comments

**Votre opinion s.v.p.**

**Collection BD**

1) Quel titre avez-vous lu ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) Appréciez-vous que la Bibliothèque de la santé offre une collection de bandes dessinées sur des thématiques de santé?

OUI   
NON

Commentaires  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) Quel(s) type(s) de bédés vous intéresse(nt) le plus?

BD romans (= romans graphiques)   
Témoignages de patients   
Vulgarisation scientifique   
Humour

Commentaires ou suggestions  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4) Votre programme/année ou Faculté/département:

**Note :** Lorsque complété, merci de retourner le formulaire au comptoir du prêt ou de le déposer dans la boîte près du présentoir bédés  
Pour toute info : [monique.clar@umontreal.ca](mailto:monique.clar@umontreal.ca)

# Comments from respondents from health sciences departments

I share the comics with my family.  
Super ! 😊

Very interesting !  
I enjoy having adult comics, especially in health.

THANK YOU!

I LOVED THIS COMIC BOOK !

It is a good idea to promote Québec comic books.

Yes !!! Please add more patients narratives and also novels related to medicine.

Very interesting for some courses. You have a great collection.

This is a good addition to the medical library collection.

Please add Alison Bechdel books to the collection.

# Circulation Statistics

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2013

Graphic medicine narratives (27 titles)

49 loans

34 renewals

# Step 2 Toward Integration: Reaching Faculty

Link to the graphic medicine collection added by a professor of physiotherapy to a class outline (*PHT1301 Introduction à la physiothérapie*) :

*"...students need to review a book, movie or art work that give them a different view of health professional-patient relationship, disability, or the role of a natural caregiver."*

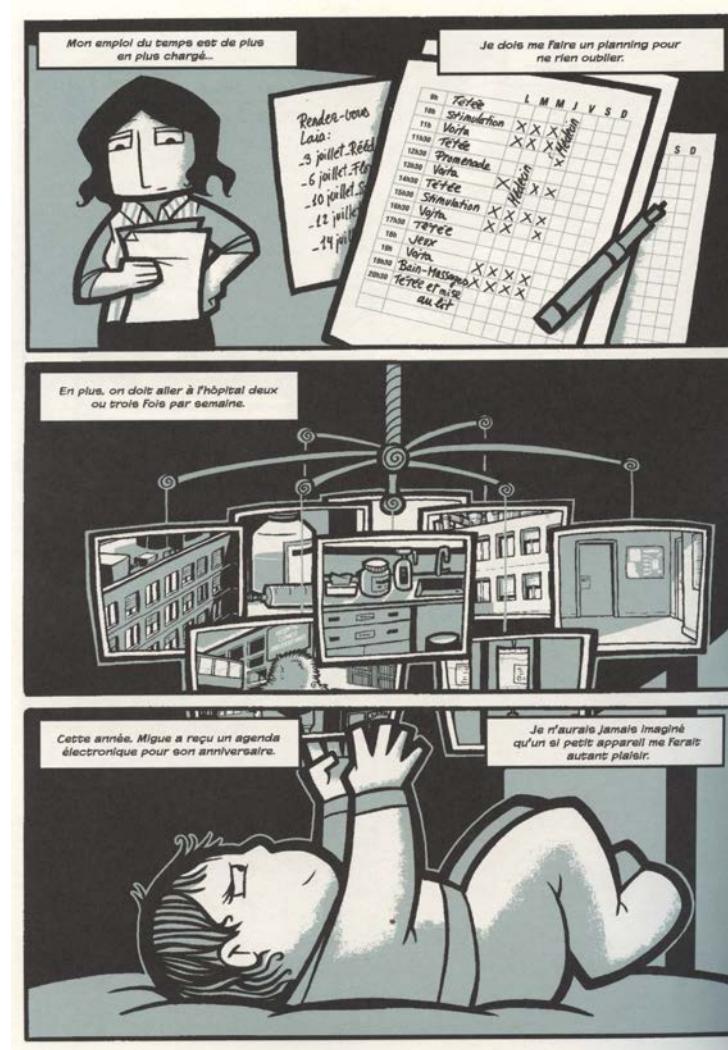
## Step 2 Toward Integration: Reaching Faculty

Partnership between the librarian and the Nursing professor president of the committee for the revision of the e-learning modules for the interprofessional education (IPE) curriculum.

Each of the three health and social services interprofessional courses (CSS1900, CSS2900, CSS3900) reach more than 1000 students annually across UdeM faculties of Nursing, Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, the Psychology and the Social Works departments and the School of Optometry.

# IPE curriculum preparatory activity with Nursing students : use of a graphic narrative

- A graphic narrative about the illness of a child was used to help nursing students prepare for an IPE interfaculty workshop



From *Une chance sur un million*. ©2010 Duran – Giner Bou – Dargaux Bénélux. Reprinted with permission.

# IPE curriculum : E-learning Modules

- Graphic medicine narratives will be integrated into the e-learning modules of the IPE curriculum.
- Excerpts have been selected to illustrate partnership with patients.
- Other excerpts might be selected as the revision of the e-learning modules goes on.

# IPE Curriculum : E-learning Modules

Excerpts selected to illustrate the module on partnership with patients



From *Une chance sur un million*. ©2010  
Duran – Giner Bou – Dargaux Bénélux.  
Reprinted with permission.

Bobby Baker, Wellcome Images;  
Copyrighted work available under Creative Commons



## Step 2 Toward Integration: Reaching Faculty

- Other health sciences courses teaching empathy and partnership with patients have been identified.
- Professors have been contacted through emails to raise awareness of the collection's potential as teaching material.

# Conclusion

- Comics have been integrated in courses.
- More work has to be done to make professors and students aware of this collection and its potential as learning material.
- The library will continue adding titles to this collection.

les bibliothèques / UdeM

Les patients et leurs proches prennent la parole à la Bibliothèque de la santé !

Découvrez notre collection de témoignages autobiographiques touchants, sincères et parfois très drôles, d'auteurs ayant vécu ou côtoyé la maladie.