PRACTICING TEXT-IMAGE RELATIONSHIPS by C HILL

Comics express ideas through both words and images. The comic artist should play with both. That is how you learn to best use these two modes of storytelling.

Some relationships to explore:

1. REDUNDANT
The words and the image say the same thing. It is useful if you need to make an important point crystal-clear or if your audience is less flexible (as with young children or foreigners)

2. CONTRASTING
The words and the image convey opposites. This will startle the reader or suggest sarcasm. For example, the opposite of fire is no fire (or water, right?! Think broadly).

3. COMPLEMENTARY
The words and image combined tell an idea that neither alone completely expresses.

4. UNRELATED
No connection seems obvious between the words and the image. It can suggest confusion, stream-of-consciousness, altered states, or poetic associations.

Practice combining words and image in the next 4 panels…

1. Fill the thought balloon above with REDUNDANT text.

2. Fill the thought balloon above with CONTRASTING text.

3. Fill the thought balloon above with COMPLEMENTARY text.

4. Fill the thought balloon above with UNRELATED text.

Experts such as Thierry Groensteen, Benoit Peeters, or Scott McCloud have come up with other words-image categories. McCloud lists seven (*Understanding Comics*, 153-155; *Making Comics*, 131-140).

Find more comics teaching resources at the National Association of Comics Art Educators website. www.teachingcomics.org