

# Graduate Project Puts Comics In Action In Classroom

A middle school language arts teacher's graduate project has earned high marks for classroom ingenuity and created lasting impressions on her students who harnessed their creativity from several different educational disciplines to produce a "Marvel-ous" comic book.

"The Race for Marvel" is a product of White Cloud Middle School teacher Anne Patterson's Comics In Action project. It is an eight-page, action-adventure comic book planned, written, drawn and produced by her 8th grade students at White Cloud Middle School.

The project is an innovative, multidisciplinary program designed to integrate art into the middle school curriculum. Patterson developed it to enhance teacher teaming, morale and student achievement. The study of comic art enabled students to understand how all discipline areas are interconnected in the world of work.



Anne Patterson, middle, and her students received assistance for their 'Comics In Action' project from artist Scott Rosema, left.

The White Cloud students received additional expertise from freelance cartoonist Scott Rosema of Muskegon. Rosema has done work for Marvel Comics, D.C.

Comics and Warner Brothers, among others. Along with hosting a field trip to the Muskegon Museum of Art to see a display of his work, Rosema also gave students drawing lessons and worked with 7th and 8th graders on their portfolios.

The project received

involvement from many different classrooms in the school.

English class students collaborated with the art students to design the comic book. The teachers in the building designed lessons — from math to science to health — with comics as a theme. A logo was designed, copies of the comic book were sold as coloring books and proceeds were donated to the Shane Radford Fund, set up for a classmate who had undergone a liver transplant.

"What we tried to do was give students an idea of how all the disciplinary areas are involved in education, as well as in the work field," Patterson said. "The thing that made this project so fantastic is that there were so many aspects that went into it and so many people contributed to it. And, because comics so often focus on heroes, we took it one step further and let each grade level choose people in their own communities who they thought were heroes."

Additional financing was provided by the Fremont Foundation, in conjunction with White Cloud Public Schools, and the Muskegon Museum for Art. A video was recorded during the separate phases of the project.

"The greatest thing about it was the sense of pride our students felt in their own accomplishment," Patterson said. "I work in an extremely disadvantaged school district, and this project gave these kids a sense of pride and exposure to the world beyond them."

Patterson's idea for the project began while preparing her M.Ed. thesis. Her advisor was Robert Hagerty, now Dean of the School of Education.



## Lecture Series Is A Big Success

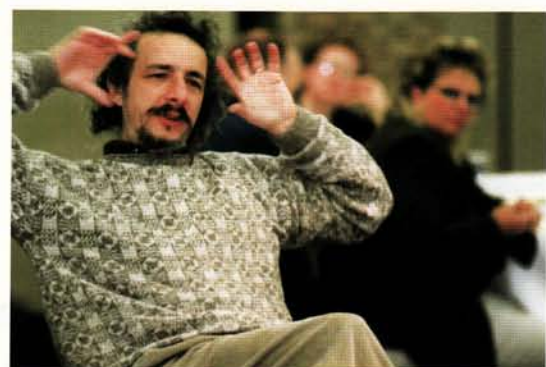
On the heels of success of the School of Education's inaugural lecture series last fall, organizers are planning for the 1999 event.

The October lecture series at GVSU's Eberhard Center, which was open to educators, students and parents, focused on the pros and cons of technology in the classroom.

In separate presentations, nationally renowned speakers Jan Hawkins, vice president of the Center on Children and Technology in New York City and Stephen L. Talbott, senior editor of technical publications company O'Reilly & Associates, presented the merits of classroom technology and its uses for the future. In separate presentations, Roger Schank, director of the Institute of the Learning Sciences at Northwestern University, and Clifford Stoll, author of "Silicon Snake Oil," urged a return to more grass roots and traditional teaching and learning methods.

The lecture series — underwritten by corporate donations from URS Greiner, Owen Ames Kimball, Beta Design Group, Tower Pinkster Titus Associates Inc., Michigan Education Association, Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, Pioneer Inc., National Heritage Academies and VanWien Professional Group P.C. — was open to the public, and over 1,000 attended.

The fall 1999 lecture series promises to be just as stimulating with a new panel of experts making presentations on the topic of character education. See the 1999 fall edition of *Colleagues* for more details.



Author Clifford Stoll stresses a point during a focus group discussion as part of the School of Ed's 1998 Fall Lecture Series.

## Computer Certification Classes Offered By School of Ed

While school districts have committed large investments in technology, many of them have not matched that investment with the appropriate staff training. Therefore, much of the technology available to those districts goes unused.

Grand Valley State University is filling a need for public schools by offering computer certification classes for districts that lack the means to either utilize the technology or teach it. Certificates in Computer Enhanced Instruction are being offered through the School of Education.

"Michigan has a lot of technology in the

classroom, but there still is a need to get teachers trained to use that technology," certification program faculty coordinator Sheryl Grove said. "Even worse than not having the technology is not using the technology available to them. This certification process allows teachers to use the technology that is available to them."

The intense four-weekend program provides instruction in areas from hyper-studio, Power Point, scanning and importing images, to more intricate areas of enhanced computer technology.

The program can be taught in classes held in a district's own schools and on its own systems,

or at a GVSU facility.

A pilot certification program was launched at Allendale Public Schools last fall and expanded into the West Ottawa and Reading districts during the current semester.

"There is a real need for it out there," Grove said. "We'll go wherever there is a need for it."

Some of the coursework credit from the certification program may be applied toward a master's degree. For additional information on implementing a computer certification program, contact Grove at (616) 895.3409, or access her by e-mail at groves@gvsu.edu.