

POPULAR CULTURE AS AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING TOOL IN
UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUCTION: FACULTY USES, MOTIVATIONS, AND
LINKS TO BEST PRACTICES

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The purpose of this study is to provide a quantitative snapshot of the use of pop culture in American undergraduate education, and argue that its use can be a tool for increasing students' media literacy in a media-saturated world. Using a survey administered to more than 2,400 undergraduate instructors, I explored how often and which types of media are being used in instruction, which faculty and course characteristics influence the likelihood of pop culture use, and whether pop culture use is linked to other research-based practices in instruction.

In order to answer my research questions, I used a series of OLS regressions to predict the faculty and course characteristics that influence frequency of pop culture use and faculty motivations to use pop culture, as well as regressions to determine the influence of other best practices on frequency of use.

Results from my study showed that the majority of faculty did not use pop culture frequently in instruction. In terms of faculty and course characteristics that predict pop culture use and motivation, disciplinary area was the group of variables that had the most meaningful results. Arts and Humanities was the most likely to incorporate pop culture and most

likely to be motivated to use it. Frequency of pop culture use was positively correlated with other best practices, with reflective and integrative learning showing the strongest relationship.

Results from this study have implications for all disciplines, as one of the primary goals of education is to create informed citizens who are able to constructively engage in our world. One key way to accomplish this goal is to incorporate media literacy and familiarity in undergraduate instruction.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In the fall of 1997, I was a freshman at DePauw University; a small, liberal-arts college of about 2,200 students. As part of a media-focused honors track, I was in my first semester of work at the student newspaper and spending many long and late hours in the media center on campus. That fall also happened to bring the debut of a Comedy Central show called *South Park*; an irreverent, hilarious, fairly profane, and at least moderately offensive cartoon that became extraordinarily popular. One night as I took a quick break from the newsroom, I saw that the television in the building's lounge had been tuned into *South Park* and one student was watching the program. I hovered nearby to watch as well, and pretty soon a small crowd of other students had gathered. By the time the episode ended, the entire lounge was full of students laughing at the show and retelling jokes to each other during the commercials.

At the time, two things struck me about this situation. First, it was notable that a television show had the power to bring together more than 50 students and hold their attention in a classroom building on a late Thursday night. At a school like DePauw, which has a work-hard-play-hard mentality, late Thursday evening was unquestionably a time for the play-hard aspect of student life to begin in earnest – not a time to linger in a campus building. Second, the group of students who had gathered was as wildly diverse as is possible on a majority White, conservative, religiously-affiliated campus like DePauw. Even more amazing to me was that these students were not just passively watching the show, but interacting with each other about it as well. I recall overhearing a couple of students who had just met in that lounge making plans to meet up at the bar later that evening, and thinking that that was a pretty incredible thing at a school siloed by fraternity and sorority affiliations.

This experience with how a television show brought together a group of strangers and gave them something in common has remained with me over the years. It comes back to mind when I hear colleagues at work rehashing an episode of a favorite show from the night before, or see students on campus sharing headphones so that they can listen to the same song together. These moments stoke both my fascination with how popular culture has the potential to bring people together, and my interest in exploring how these shared experiences could be used in undergraduate education. Could a TV show or a song be used as a common platform from which an entire classroom could begin a discussion? What would the implications of such a teaching technique be? Does the pop culture example have to be relevant to all students in the room for it to be effective? Such questions followed me as I began my doctoral studies in higher education, and I knew that looking into whether and how popular culture is widely used in college classrooms would be part of my research focus. What I did not realize as I began this research project, was that although popular culture has a presence in all of our lives, few researchers have examined how and why it might be used as a teaching tool.

Statement of the Problem

In the United States today, popular culture is nearly omnipresent in our daily lives. From seeing billboards and printed advertisements as we travel on foot or by vehicle, to hearing current music in waiting rooms and blasting from car windows, to accessing content on the Internet via computers and smart phones, to settling down for the evening in front of the television, it has become close to impossible to avoid the messages being transmitted by popular (pop) culture (Tisdell, 2007). Traditionally-aged undergraduate students have been accustomed to the popular culture barrage inundating their lives from a very young age (Hartshorne, 1987; Luke, 1997). They have grown up with technology and media such as the iPhone and YouTube,

which debuted in 2008 and 2006, respectively. Streaming video content and portable Internet access to that content (and much more) have been a part of everyday life for today's traditionally-aged college students since they were very young (Twenge, 2014). As Levine and Dean (2012) state, college students live in a world vastly different from those in which their parents and professors came of age.

Students who fall outside of the boundaries of "traditional age" and international students are also inundated with pop culture, though perhaps to a different degree (non-traditionally-aged) and with different content (international students). The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) literature reviewed in Chapter Two supports, among other things, the idea that using pop culture examples in the classroom can provide a common platform for students to engage with the course material. Providing a shared entry point can increase student comfort with the subject matter, regardless of their prior experiences with pop culture (Greenfield, 2007).

Given how enmeshed pop culture is in the lives of undergraduate students today, it seems a reasonable line of inquiry to ask if and how their instructors are using it as a pedagogical tool. As Tisdell (2008) states, pop culture has the potential to educate when consumers critically reflect on the messages they receive. In addition, SoTL findings indicate that the use of pop culture in college courses may increase student interest, motivation, learning, and class participation. Despite these findings, I could not find any broad-based, empirical studies done on the topic, nor evidence that a quantitative inquiry at multiple campuses and with a variety of instructors has been undertaken.

Importance of the Topic

The inquiry at hand will begin to address several gaps in our current knowledge of the use of pop culture in undergraduate education. Because this generation of undergraduates has

been more influenced by pop culture over their lifetimes than any other so far (Twenge, 2014), it is important to understand whether or not educators are using pop culture as a connection between students and course material. The SoTL literature reviewed in Chapter Two suggests that pop culture use in undergraduate teaching is a widespread phenomenon in courses ranging from introductory-level general education courses (Beavers, 2011; Pryor, 2008), to an MBA class (Kane, 1999), to a small American Studies seminar course (Bardsley, 2006), as well as at a variety of institution types where these courses take place; but the details of this use have yet to be quantitatively investigated. Courses based on pop culture are being taught in myriad disciplines at a wide variety of institutions, and have been incorporated in curricula for many decades (Bertonneau, 2010). In addition, courses not based on pop culture, but which use media examples in the classroom are even more commonplace.

While many of the practically-focused articles reviewed in Chapter Two concern single courses and are not meant to be widely generalizable, several themes can be drawn from this body of work as a whole. Each instructor noted an issue in their course, chose an intervention with pop culture to address it, and outlined positive outcomes from the intervention. And, although the specific instructor experiences are localized; the consistency of these themes across such varied course, discipline, and institution types is striking and worthy of further study. It is on these themes that the foundation for this dissertation rests.

Such a widespread classroom practice should be examined to determine patterns in use, areas of commonality and difference in instructor motivations for its use, an overall picture of which instructors and course types are more likely to feature this technique, and whether pop culture use is related to other teaching techniques already documented in the literature. Findings from this study can also provide actionable information to instructors who are in search of new

techniques to enliven their courses and engage students, as well as spark conversations at the department and institutional level about pop culture's use as a teaching technique. My findings also have practical implications for faculty developers who can use this information to help instructors incorporate pop culture and media literacy into their courses.

As noted above, because pop culture is a force in students' everyday lives, it is worth investigating its use by instructors in postsecondary education. Rogers, Kuiper, and Kirker's (1977) findings on the self-referential effect in learning suggest that learners retain more information when it relates to them personally in some way. This finding offers an observation, backed up by the SoTL literature outlined below, that by using examples that are meaningful in students' own lives, better engagement with and retention of course material may be possible. However, we do not yet know how much instructors are engaging with pop culture to obtain this outcome.

Finally, the use of media to teach students to be thoughtful and critical about the pop culture that surrounds them is at the intersection of the goals and purposes of both democracy as a political system and education as an institution. On the one hand, the media are our primary method of obtaining information about the world outside of our own personal experiences. This information allows us to participate in society as knowledgeable citizens. On the other hand, learning how to critique these sources of information is a key step in striving for social justice in terms of whose voices are represented in our media and which issues are receiving attention. The practice of critical pedagogy is one that can be used to address both the engagement of students in the classroom with pop culture, as well as important issues of media literacy. In our current political climate, which encourages distrust in the media, it is even more incumbent on

instructors to help students learn how to navigate the messages they are receiving through pop culture.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a broad, quantitative snapshot of the use of pop culture in U.S. undergraduate education. Such a snapshot can be used to inform practitioners and institutional leadership about this teaching tool and initiate conversations on campus about uses of pop culture in education. In addition, it can help to develop a platform for future research on pop culture in education and its links to effective teaching techniques. Finally, this study is also intended to bring attention to the uses of pop culture for educating students about media literacy and its role in our democracy.

Guiding Research Questions

As mentioned in the introduction, there are three broad areas of pop culture use in undergraduate education about which we know only small fragments: type and frequency of media use, who is engaging in media use in the classroom in terms of instructor and course characteristics, and why instructors chose to use pop culture in instruction. As I demonstrate in Chapter Two, there is enough literature available to support further inquiry into this issue despite the few quantitative studies on the topic. To further our knowledge about the three areas of inquiry just mentioned, I pursued the research questions outlined below.

- Which media are being used in undergraduate instruction and with what frequency?
- What groups of instructors are using this media most frequently and in what course settings is it more likely to be used?
- Why are instructors using media in instruction?

- What, if any, is the relationship between instructors' levels of media use and engagement in Effective Teaching Practices, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Student-Faculty Interaction?

Significance of the Study

In addition to contributing in a new way to the current literature on pop culture in instruction, this study can provide information that supports improved teaching practices in the classroom. For example, information on ways to better engage students during class and stimulate discussion is always salient for instructors. As Svinivki and McKeachie (2014) observe, today's students are accustomed to being surrounded by a fast-paced and ever-changing media environment – to sit in focused silence while listening to an instructor is “not their style” (p. 46). Students pay more attention and think more actively in the classroom when they are engaged in discussion (Svinivki & McKeachie, 2014). One way to encourage discussion is to introduce a common experience or shared topic of interest, for which the authors suggest pop culture examples can serve well. Starting discussion from a common, familiar place puts students more at ease and makes them feel as though they have worthy input to share (Svinicki & McKeachie). Using information from my study to bolster these claims by showing types and frequencies of pop culture use may help to encourage more instructors to try these teaching methods.

In a course featuring a lecture format, pop culture can be a valuable tool for instructors. Because student attention in a lecture may last only 15-20 minutes (Frederick, 1986), these examples can break up the monotony, renew student interest and attention in the topic, and give real-world examples to illustrate the lecturer's points (McKeachie, 2002; Gross Davis, 2009). As McKeachie notes, the lecture should connect what is already in students' minds with the subject

matter. Using pop culture, which we know is lodged in student brains, is one way to accomplish this task. Findings from my study may spark new ideas for instructors who favor the lecture format, encouraging them to incorporate pop culture to achieve improved learning outcomes.

This study may also raise awareness of using pop culture to reach out to and validate non-majority voices in class. Connecting with minoritized students by incorporating diverse media examples can help to provide a non-dominant context for course material and thereby improve critical thinking and achievement within the course (Ginwright, 2004). Further, when minoritized students are shown that their cultures and voices are worthy of study, they are more likely to form stronger ties with an institution (Greenfield, 2007). Given the continued achievement and persistence gaps for minoritized students in higher education (see for Ishitani, 2006 for an overview), this type of attention to these students is important.

Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation contains five sections. The first, this introduction, provides a frame for the work to be undertaken in the rest of the study. Following the introduction, a literature review delves into the intersection of pop culture and undergraduate education more thoroughly. The review includes perspectives on pop culture in instruction, pedagogy, and effective teaching practices; in addition to critiques of the current literature available on the use of pop culture in teaching. Next, methodology for the dissertation is discussed, including the data source and measures used to generate my findings. The fourth chapter consists of these findings and brief discussion; while in the final chapter, I offer interpretations, conclusions, and directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

Popular (pop) culture in the form of mass media such as television, music, text, visual images, and Internet content permeates nearly all aspects of our daily lives. Today's traditionally-aged undergraduate students have grown up with the Internet, making pop culture easily accessible and a strong cultural force in their worlds for its ubiquity (Twenge, 2014). Given how enmeshed pop culture is in the lives of undergraduate students, one might wonder if and how instructors are using it as a pedagogical tool. While SoTL research has found positive student outcomes such as improved academic achievement, increased motivation, and enhanced critical thinking skills from weaving pop culture into undergraduate college courses, no broad-based quantitative investigation of the practice has been undertaken (Greenfield, 2007; Ginwright, 2004).

To explore more of what we do and do not know about the topic, I will first define pop culture as it will be used in this study, examine the importance of it in students' lives, and note the history of its use in the academy. Next, I will examine teaching techniques and pop culture's place as a tool to support effective teaching practices. I will also look at some quantitative research on teaching techniques and FSSE's role as a teaching practice research too. With that foundation in mind, I will turn to what practitioners have told us about this teaching technique so as to better situate my study in relation to the literature. Finally, a critique of the current literature in terms of methodological issues such as reliability and validity, diverse perspectives, and quality of scholarship will be offered. The literature reviewed will be used to underpin research questions for the study as a whole.

Definitions of Pop Culture

Although pointing to examples of pop culture is relatively easy for most people, creating a strict definition for what pop culture encompasses is much more difficult. There are two schools of thought regarding the separation of pop culture from mass media. One, succinctly summed up by Strinati (2004), is that pop culture is nearly inextricable from mass media in that media is the most common vehicle for the distribution of pop culture. On the other hand, McLuhan (1964) suggests that “the medium is the message,” (p. 7 and throughout chapter 1), meaning that we cannot study the messages transmitted by the media without also studying the type of media involved in the transmission. McLuhan’s conceptualization of media is more specific than Strinati’s in that McLuhan believes that the medium in which we receive pop culture shapes the message itself. In other words, viewing a television program causes one to receive its messages differently than if one were to hear the same content in a radio program. In both arguments, pop culture and mass media are intertwined, though Strinati’s approach allows a focus on the message without an in-depth exploration of the media transmitting it. Because the study at hand is not focused on inquiry into communication and media processes, I will follow Strinati’s theory of the comingling of pop culture and mass media.

Strinati further argues that the outlines of a popular culture vary by society, and by groups within each society, depending on what that society/group values and emphasizes in terms of representations of itself through images, sounds, etc. To add an additional layer of complexity, many scholarly theories of pop culture define it in their own ways. For example, feminist theories of pop culture see it as a vehicle to perpetuate a patriarchal culture, Frankfurt School theorists view it primarily as a means of ensuring the continuation of capitalism, and

Marxists scholars see it as a way to inculcate the people to a dominant ideology. Therefore, a broad but strict definition is difficult to apply.

Despite this difficulty, a few scholars have attempted to carve out an overarching definition of pop culture. Some, like Ott and Mack's (2014) statement that "mass media have gone from being one institution among many within our cultural environment to being the very basis of our cultural environment" (p. 13), keep the definition focused on pop culture's broader cultural implications. In contrast, other scholars have created quite specific definitions. For example, Hebdige (1988) defines it as "A set of generally available artefacts: films, records, clothes, TV programs, modes of transport, etc." (p. 47). A third group has claimed that pop culture is often defined as media for the common people, or messages developed in order to generate a profit for their creators and which is available on a broad scale (Bertonneau, 2010; Oliver, 2011; Collins, 2012). Jubas and Knutson (2012) add to this final definition, stating that popular culture media have continued to develop along with technology, and now incorporate radio, television, and Internet content along with film, audio, print media, fashion, and visual images.

Taking these scholarly voices into consideration, I proposed an operational definition of pop culture for this study: mass entertainment in the form of text, visual images, music, and film/video experiences widely available for consumption and created within the past 10 years. This definition does not distinguish between mass media and pop culture because the study is not focused on parsing the differences between the two. Rather, I am interested in exploring the practices of including popular media examples in undergraduate education. The inclusion of a temporal limitation is due to two factors. One, this study is focused on modern pop culture use in the classroom as opposed to, say, popular waltzes from the 1800s. Second, the proposed

definition was given to a focus group of Communication and Culture doctoral students at Indiana University for review, and they suggested such a limitation would be useful in helping respondents to focus on modern media examples.

Influence of Pop Culture on Campus

As noted in the introduction to this study, pop culture is nearly omnipresent in our lives today – in our work, leisure, and connections with other people (Tisdell, 2007). Undergraduate students are no more immune to this phenomenon than anyone else, and have been accustomed to the popular culture barrage inundating their lives from a very young age (Hartshorne, 1987; Luke, 1997). As Luke states, students’ lives are permeated with “the electronic, symbolic, commodity, and ideological signification system of popular culture” (p. 45). Further, according to Strinati (2004), Western society has been particularly affected by pop culture in recent decades, due in part to the massive quantities of it that are readily accessible to great portions of the population. This influence indicates an area of opportunity for instructors to create a connection with students, increase the accessibility of course material, and provide a common starting place for discussions/debates/understanding of material.

Although pop culture’s interest in collegiate life in the form of magazine articles, clothing styles, pulp fiction, coverage of athletic events, and songs that reflected campus culture began at the turn of the century (Thelin, 2004), pop culture began to be used in college classrooms by left-leaning cultural studies faculty members in the early 1950s (Bertonneau, 2010; Trier, 2006). At that time, its primary use was one of social and cultural critique, highlighting what some in the academy saw as dominant, bourgeois cultural production. These faculty members were greatly concerned by post-war cultural propagation, and believed it was limiting freedom by constraining the consciousness of the masses and limiting social progress (Bertonneau). Many of

these intellectuals followed the “Frankfurt School” – a group of critical media scholars led by Germans Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno who fled to the United States during World War II and wrote about their negative confrontations with U.S. popular culture (see Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944 for a classic example). The intellectual work of the Frankfurt School and the debates it started in the U.S. helped to create popular cultural studies departments in universities around the country, the monikers of which were later shortened to simply “cultural studies” (Bertonneau).

Along with cultural scholars, English departments were also early adopters of the use of pop culture in teaching (Bertonneau; Trier, 2006). The inclusion of popular fiction as a topic of study was widely in place by the late 1970s, though this shift did not come without debate. Adding courses on popular literature – or indeed, pop culture in any form – was attractive to students and those courses filled quickly and regularly. This popularity drew enrollments away from Great Books courses, in which some professors still saw value but which students found to be more challenging (Bertonneau). History shows us that not all courses on the classics have been left by the wayside as pop culture became included in the academy. However, debates are still ongoing about the role that material some perceive as entertainment should play in undergraduate education.

Echoing professorial fears about loss of focus on the classics, some critics of the use of pop culture in education assert that using these media dumbs down the learning process. As Pryor (2008) notes, for example, many believe that television “rots the mind” (p. 396) – not a pedagogical technique many educators would embrace. Greenfield (2007) expands the critiques more broadly, stating simply that courses on subjects such as sports, graffiti, and punk rock are considered by some to be frivolous. While conservative critics have concerns about the potential

use of violent and sexual images, texts, or song lyrics, liberal critics maintain their worries about cultural domination and propagation (Tisdell, 2007).

These critiques have not stopped the inclusion of pop culture in college courses. Institutions as diverse as the University of California at Berkeley, Frostburg State University, Skidmore College, Ball State University, Brown University, Lebanon Valley College, and the University of South Carolina all offer at least one course with a title that references television shows, music artists, actors, sports figures, or books from the last decade. These courses take place in departments such as gender studies, sociology, business, fine arts, urban studies, education, and English, to name just a few. It seems clear that the appeal of combining academics with pop culture is widespread and unlikely to halt anytime soon (Pryor, 2008). What is also clear from the literature is that, although pop culture in courses is widespread, we do not have widespread information on what media instructors are using, why they choose to use it, and what outcomes they expect from this use.

Effective Teaching Techniques

There are many ways to approach the topic of student learning: teaching techniques, measures of quality, learning theories, pedagogies, standardized testing, etc. have all been gateways for researchers to explore how students engage with and retain information. Two commonalities are present across all of these approaches: they all examine (1) the ways in which students behave and (2) the ways in which instructors behave. Because the current study focuses on how and why instructors utilize pop culture, I will use instructor behavior as my primary lens and focus on how it can be used to study effective teaching techniques.

“Principals of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” The importance of teaching techniques in student learning has been well documented. For example, Chickering and

Gamson's (1987) landmark article on "principals of good practice for undergraduate education" (p. 2) sets forth seven research-supported techniques which instructors can utilize. These practices include interaction between faculty and students, developing cooperation among students, and good active learning techniques – techniques which are frequently mentioned in the SoTL literature examined below. Although that literature will illustrate how individual instructors used pop culture to support these practices, a more broad word here about how it can be utilized for these ends may be helpful.

For example, instructors who use pop culture in the classroom, particularly pop culture examples that resonate with current student culture, make themselves more relatable to students (Greenfield, 2007). Students begin to view the instructor as someone not completely unlike themselves, which allows for increased comfort between students and instructors in the classroom. This increased comfort encourages, among other things, students to challenge the instructor and increase the dialog and interaction between instructor and students (Greenfield). In this way, Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principal of interaction between students and instructors can be met through the use of pop culture.

In addition, cooperation among students can be achieved through pop culture by creating pop culture-based group assignments. An illustrative instance of this type of use is given by Burks (2011). Burks placed his calculus students into teams and motivated them to compete in math exercises as though they were contestants on the television show Survivor. Burks then noticed an increased sense of camaraderie among students on each team, as well as increased learning and retention of the material. Another example of pop culture's support of cooperation among students is a group assignment that centers on students collecting pop culture examples to

illustrate a theme in the course, debating which examples to include, and presenting these to the class.

Finally, active learning, or learning in which students are engaged with the material rather than passively taking notes from a lecturer and regurgitating information on exams, can also be well supported via pop culture (Meyers & Jones, 1993). Meyers and Jones include small group work and cooperative projects as two of the primary means of achieving active learning in the classroom and, as noted both above in the discussion of student cooperation and throughout this literature review, pop culture can easily be used to support such assignments.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) further state that the overall goal of undergraduate education should be to “prepare students to understand and deal intelligently with modern life” (p. 3). This statement connects to at least two other arguments made in this literature review. First, as noted throughout this chapter, pop culture is a force in our lives now more than at any other time in history. Thus, it is not hard to see how using pop culture as a part of teaching undergraduates can help instructors meet this goal of preparing students to deal with this facet of modern life. Second, as Giroux (2011; 1998) and Dewey (1916; 1997) have argued, developing students’ media literacy is important not only to increase their learning and understanding of the world around them, but to help them become informed and active participants in our democracy. In other words, incorporating lessons on how to intelligently critique pop culture not only helps to prepare students, but provides them tools to be better members of society.

Other teaching techniques. In addition to supporting Chickering and Gamson’s principals, pop culture use as a teaching tool can benefit both students and instructors in a number of ways. Gross Davis (2009) positions films, videos, and multimedia as teaching tools that can be used to enliven and improve undergraduate classrooms. Further, she proposes that

media can help faculty become more “efficient, effective, powerful, and flexible” in their teaching (Gross Davis, 1993, p. 334). However, Gross Davis (2009) is also careful to underline the importance of instructor explanations of and expectations for pop culture use in the classroom. For example, prefacing a film or video clip by connecting it to recent course material, then asking students to critically view the clip teaches students how to contextualize and critique media while also providing a fresh viewpoint on course material.

Gross Davis also notes that research has shown using video clips increases student interest and understanding of foundational ideas (Eaton & Uskul, 2004), and that students learn more when asked to write answer to open-ended questions while watching (Lawson, Bodle, Houlette, & Hobner, 2006). Other suggested techniques for utilizing video as an effective teaching tool include incorporating an activity after the clip to reinforce ideas presented in it and requiring critique of media material in student papers and exams to underline its importance and relevance to the course (Gross Davis, 2009). These practices help to fully integrate pop culture as a teaching technique in the classroom.

Other teaching technique research comes from practitioner-researchers such as Svinicki and McKeachie (2014), who note that students think more actively and pay more attention in the classroom when they are engaged in discussion. As mentioned in the Introduction, opening a discussion with a common experience or shared topic of interest can help to encourage such engagement, even from students who are less prepared on the material for the day. Svinicki and McKeachie state that using a familiar starting point, such as a film clip or an issue in the media, to introduce a topic puts students more at ease and makes them feel as though they have worthy input to share. Pop culture examples can serve well as such starting points by offering touchstones within student culture or reference points from more specific cultures. When using

media examples or readings, Svinicki and McKeachie suggest asking critical questions such as, “An eminent authority states thus and so. Under what conditions might that not be true?” (p.44) to help keep the discussion percolating.

In addition to engaging students in discussion, Yoo, Shallert, and Svinicki (2015) found that when both students and instructors believe that the instructor is flexible in their teaching, student learning improves. Flexibility is a foundational component of effective teaching, and the researchers found that instructors who are flexible are also constantly aware of and adapting to student cognition, or lack thereof. Instructors who are flexible may consider the use of pop culture to approach course material in a new way, adding and enhancing students’ understanding of concepts.

Although many courses across disciplines offer opportunities for students to engage in discussion, there are others that are primarily lecture-based. And, while pop culture examples may open avenues for analysis in discussion-based courses, lecture-style teaching can also benefit from such examples as well. Frederick (1986) and Cooper and Robertson (2014) note that student attention in a lecture may last only 15-20 minutes, a fact that suggests lecturers may want to seek out ways to reengage their audiences several times throughout a class session. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) support this idea, explaining that the most effective lecturing techniques incorporate active learning periodically. Pop culture examples can be used to break up a lecture, renew student interest and attention in the topic, and give real-world examples to illustrate the lecturer’s points (McKeachie, 2002). Further supporting the use of media in lectures, McKeachie notes that the lecture should connect what is already in students’ minds – which we know are permeated with pop culture - with the subject matter.

Quantitative Research on Teaching Techniques

Although quantitative research on pop culture as a teaching technique is sparse, such investigation of the relationship between certain teaching practices and student gains, both cognitively in general and at the course level specifically, have been undertaken (e.g. Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). These effective teaching techniques include providing clarity in instruction, giving prompt feedback on student work, encouraging communication between instructors and learners, integrating previously taught material with new concepts, facilitating student collaboration, encouraging reflection on course material, and several others (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Use of these techniques in undergraduate education has been linked to positive student outcomes in academics, retention, and citizenship – to name only a few (Pascarella & Terenzini; Simonds, 1995; Hativa, 1998; Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001).

Umbach and Wawryzynski's (2005) study of faculty behaviors that link with positive undergraduate outcomes is particularly salient for the current investigation. In their analysis of 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement data, the authors found that faculty behaviors and the teaching techniques they use have effects on both student learning and engagement. This indicates that not only what a faculty member chooses to focus on matters, but *how* they present material is also important.

Umbach and Wawryzynski's (2005) findings track with much of the research presented thus far, and indicate that faculty who used teaching techniques that engage students in active learning, placed importance on faculty/student interaction, and emphasized higher-order learning positively affected student engagement and students' self-reported gains. Although use of pop culture in teaching is only one way of supporting these teaching techniques and faculty

behaviors, Umbach and Wawryzynski's findings provide a quantitative basis for the notion that these techniques could, in fact, be important and effectual in increasing positive outcomes for students.

Quantitative Research on Pop Culture and Instruction

While I have noted several times that broad-based quantitative studies of the practice of incorporating pop culture into undergraduate instruction is non-existent one survey-based project and one mixed-methods project on the topic have been done. Peacock, Covino, Auchter, Boyd, Klug, Laing, and Irvin (2018) surveyed 212 faculty at one mid-sized research university, asking them about frequency and type of pop culture use and attitudes toward pop culture in general. The majority of respondents only used pop culture "occasionally" in their teaching practice, but believed in the use of pop culture to support critical thinking and agreed that it is important to reference in the classroom. Significant areas of difference were found by disciplinary area in terms of frequency of use and beliefs and attitudes about pop culture in instruction.

Tisdell and Thompson (2007) surveyed 215 adult educators about their incorporation of pop culture in teaching, finding that less than one third of respondents referred to pop culture "frequently" or "very frequently." This study also found that 40% of instructors used television or movie clips "occasionally" or more frequently. Fifteen adult educators were also interviewed as part of this study, and their qualitative responses showed that they used pop culture primarily to explore ideas of "otherness" in terms of social identities and to process the way pop culture influences our lives as a society.

Several important differences between these studies and mine exist. First, my study was distributed at more than one institution, yielding a larger group of respondents and possibly more generalizable results. Additionally, my study focused on undergraduate education, not on adult

or graduate education. Another difference is that Peacock, et. al. distinguished between casually referencing pop culture in the classroom (e.g. mentioning a song or television show while lecturing or during discussion) and using pop culture examples (e.g. movie clips or television show segments) in a planned way. Although the researchers found that the largest group of faculty planned their pop culture use, the second-largest group of respondents reported using casual references. Another difference relates to the variables examined: Peacock et. al. did not look at race/ethnic identification, years of teaching experience, gender identity, employment status, or any of the course-based variables used in my study. Finally, Peacock et. al. also measured faculty attitudes towards pop culture, asking about the importance of using it and whether instructors believed it enhanced critical thinking skills. These areas of difference and similarity make Peacock et. al.'s study and mine good companion pieces for discussion about pop culture's role in instruction.

FSSE as a Teaching Practice Research Tool

The FSSE instrument can be used to quantitatively explore effective teaching techniques, as the items on the survey were developed based, in part, on best teaching practice literature. In particular, the scales used in this study - Effective Teaching Practices, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Student-Faculty Interaction – are rooted in the literature.

The Effective Teaching Practices scale items were crafted to explore how instructors organize and communicate course material to students. Results from the 2007 and 2010 Wabash National Study for Liberal Arts Education indicated that positive student perceptions of faculty practices such as clarity of communication, use of examples to illustrate complex points, and timely feedback on assignments were linked to students' increased problem-solving skills, persistence in higher education, and interest in life-long learning (Pascarella & Blaich, 2013).

Other researchers (e.g. Ginsberg, 2007) have noted the importance of clarity in instruction, which includes transparency in course goal-setting to help students understand expectations (BrckaLorenz, Ribera, Kinzie, & Cole, 2012). Drawing from this literature, the eight items in this scale ask instructors how much they include practices like using examples to illustrate points, clearly explaining course goals, and providing standards and feedback for assignments in their courses.

Based, in part, on Marton and Säljö's (1997) work on deep approaches to learning (e.g. those that go beyond rote memorization), the Reflective and Integrative Learning scale incorporates research findings that suggest students learn and retain information better when they reflect on and integrate new material with existing knowledge (Nelson Laird, Shoup, & Kuh, 2005). Huber and Hutchings (2005) noted that these skills are important outside of the classroom as students enter a world and workforce that is increasingly fast-paced and globally-focused – much like our current media landscape. In addition, Nelson Laird, Seifert, Pascarella, Mayhew, and Blaich's (2014) recent examination of the effect of students' reflection on materials suggests that such practice is a key component in increasing critical thinking, cognition, and literacy skills in college. The seven Reflective and Integrative Learning scale items focus on how instructors foster students' abilities to connect ideas and knowledge across courses and with previously-learned material, include diverse and different viewpoints, and consider societal issues in their thinking.

At least as far back as 1977, researchers have documented the positive effects of academically-related interactions between students and faculty, particularly in terms of student persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) have also documented the positive effects such interactions have on students' cognitive growth, satisfaction with their

institution, and overall development. More recently, Trolan, Jach, Hanson, and Pascarella (2016) found that

“quality of faculty contact, frequency of faculty contact, research with faculty, personal discussion with faculty, and out-of-class interactions with faculty, have a positive influence on academic motivation, even when controlling for a host of student background characteristics and institutional characteristics, including a precollege measure of academic motivation” (p. 830).

FSSE’s four Student-Faculty Interaction scale items inquire about the frequency of both in-class and out-of-class interactions instructors have with students on topics related and unrelated to their courses.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning on Pop Culture in Instruction

Since the publication of Boyer’s (1990) book *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*, advocating for a renewed emphasis and scholarly importance given to the teaching facet of college instructors’ roles, a growing body of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) literature has developed. Furthered by Hutchings and Schulman’s (1999) article that discussed how engagement in investigation in the classroom is a central piece of the scholarship of teaching and learning, practitioners have contributed hundreds of articles outlining teaching methods they have used to address challenges in the classroom. A segment of this work describing teaching practices used to address a variety of classroom issues is one that details instructors’ uses of pop culture. Although the vast majority of these pieces strive to offer advice rather than generalizability, the sheer volume of them available allows for themes to be drawn from them as a whole.

Although there are numerous pedagogical reasons why instructors might choose to include pop culture in their teaching, the SoTL work in this area indicates that there are other, more practical reasons as well. While each separate example is not generalizable to the national population of students or instructors, due to very specific course settings and small sample sizes, a review of these articles reveals several commonalities that can be used to categorize these practical rationales. The first, perhaps obvious commonality amongst the literature is that each article includes a description of instructor uses of pop culture in his/her specific course (type of media used; specific television show, movie, or music genre; etc.). A second commonality is that instructors saw a need in their courses that motivated them to incorporate pop culture. This need was mirrored with the expectations for the use of pop culture in the classroom – e.g. an instructor sees a need to increase student attention during a particular segment of the course and expects that using a movie clip to illustrate the point will increase attentiveness. A final commonality is that all of the instructors reported positive outcomes they observed after using media examples in their courses.

These three commonalities are consistent across each article, regardless of course subject, instructor, and institution type. This consistency indicates that the commonalities, rather than the specific findings from each individual instructor, may be generalizable across a broad variety of courses. As such, the three commonalities will be used as the basis of the quantitative research questions for the study at hand. We will begin our review of the literature with instructor-reported uses of pop culture in teaching to get a sense of how this practice is being enacted in undergraduate education.

Instructor uses of pop culture. The first commonality across the SoTL research is that each instructor described the pop culture examples used in his or her course. The descriptions

ranged from detailing specific television shows used to simply mentioning broader categories like “films” or “visual images.” For example, Kalogeras (2014), who taught an online course on Greek mythology, noted that the use of pop culture narratives engaged students through storytelling devices and also allowed her to keep class lively by conveying information through many different forms of media. Bennett (2018) outlines the use of the Monty Hall Dilemma; a way of examining choice, regret, and estimation of odds made famous by the television show *Let's Make a Deal*; in behavioral sciences courses ranging from psychology to statistics. The nature of the dilemma is counter-intuitive, and the use of the game show format engages students to think about why we make the choices we do. Pryor (2008), who incorporated pop culture examples like episodes of the *Star Trek* television show into his introductory biology courses, was motivated to do so because it allowed him to present course material from a fresh perspective. He also discovered that pop culture gave students who were intimidated or uninterested in the course material a foothold to begin to engage with the material. Bardsley (2006) wanted to teach a small sociology seminar course on third wave feminism, a movement for which activism through media was a central tenet. Without basing her course in popular music, film, print media, and art of the 1990s, studying the topic would not have been possible. Beavers (2011), who used *The Daily Show* in her introductory political science course, believed that pop culture would help her compete with distractions like texting and browsing online via laptops during class. Deflem's (2013) sociology of fame course centered on Lady Gaga's status as pop culture icon as well as on her music. Jubas and Knutson (2012) wanted to explore the effects, if any, of watching medical workplace television shows on pre-service nursing and medical students. They posited that such shows could be used to generate lively discussion on students' assumptions about the workplace. Sprau and Keig (2001) used films in history survey

courses to encourage students to develop more sophisticated skills in watching movies and critiquing them for historical accuracy.

Other examples include Collins's (2012) exploration of the uses of clips from sports movies by coaching instructors to illustrate the coaching profession, Greenfield's (2007) incorporation of hip hop in his urban sociology course, Springer's and Yelenik's (2011) use of examples from *The Jersey Shore* in their information literacy class, and Burks's (2010) adaptation of the television show *Survivor* as a template to teach calculus by forming students into teams that competed in math exercises. Across these scholarship of teaching and learning articles, it is clear that the pop culture used varies significantly, and that many types of media are being used for instructional benefit.

Instructor-observed needs in the course. The second commonality shared across these scholarship of teaching and learning articles is that each instructor saw a student need within his or her course that warranted attention. These observed needs ranged from increasing the accessibility of assignments and readings in hard science courses for non-majors to using pop culture to create a course that filled a need for feminist voices on campus. The fact that a number of instructors saw the same solution (pop culture) to such wide-ranging academic needs is fascinating.

For example, Kalogeras (2014) stated that that the use of pop culture narratives in her online course engaged students through storytelling devices and also allowed her to keep class lively by conveying information through many different forms of media. Bardsley (2006) argued that without basing her course in popular music, film, print media, and art of the 1990s, studying the topic of third wave feminism would not have been possible. Beavers (2011) saw her students becoming distracted in class by texting or browsing online via their laptops, as well as believing

inaccurate information about our political processes coming into her course. She thought that using *The Daily Show* would allow her to impart accurate information in an interesting way while increasing student engagement with the material. Jubas and Knutson (2012) saw that there was an unaddressed need for pre-service nursing and medical students to discuss their assumptions about their future workplaces, and posited that medical workplace television shows could be used to generate lively discussion on the topic. Sprau and Keig (2001) believed their students' skills in watching movies and critiquing them for historical accuracy was lacking, so they used films in history survey courses to encourage practice in this area.

In addition, Rothe and Collins (2013) wanted students to retain more course information, and believed this retention would increase when it was linked to songs and films that were relevant in students' own lives. Similar to Jubas and Knutson (2012), Collins (2012) saw a need for coaching instructors to have a common platform from which they could critique student assumptions about the coaching profession, and thought that using clips from sports movies would allow instructors to connect the films to real world professional situations. Greenfield (2007) wanted to increase the ownership non-majority students took over course discussions by using hip hop. He expected that students would feel comfortable challenging his intellectual authority because the course was using their own language to approach the material. Burks (2011) saw the need to increase learning among remedial pre-calculus students, and thought that competing against each other Survivor-style would accomplish both this goal and help students to become better team members as well. These goals were particularly important at his institution, The Citadel, which emphasizes teamwork, competition, and cooperation among students.

Finally, Jensen, Janak, and Slater (2012) noted a lack of alignment in pre-service teacher expectations about teaching work, the realities of the profession. They expected that viewing the film *Waiting for Superman* would shift pre-service teachers' attitudes and expectations, and allow for more discussion about what may await these students as they become professionals. Despite the disparate course subjects listed here, a common thread linking them together is that each instructor felt that incorporating pop culture would bring positive outcomes, such as increased critical skills, more attentiveness in class, or easier access to course materials to their students.

Instructor-observed outcomes of using pop culture. A final commonality amongst the SoTL research on pop culture in undergraduate teaching is that each practitioner offers insight into how this practice affected student outcomes in their course. For example, Springer and Yelenik (2011), who taught an information literacy class, realized that using clips and examples from a television show in which students are invested (*The Jersey Shore*, in this case) helped them connect with the students on an emotional level. This emotional connection helped students learn the material better than in courses the instructors taught without pop culture examples. Jubas and Knutson (2012) found that nursing and medical students who watched episodes of *Grey's Anatomy* felt reaffirmed about their own career paths and used the show to better understand how their own race, gender, and ethics might be affected their work in a real hospital setting. Beavers (2011) used post-course evaluations to discover that 100% of her political science students felt the use of *The Daily Show* enhanced their engagement with course material and 84% learned something new from the program. Pryor (2008) also analyzed course evaluations and found that 97% of students reported the pop culture examples were helpful in learning and retention. Pryor's findings are similar to those of other introductory biology

instructors like Borgwald and Schreiner (1994) and Edwards (1997). Collins (2012) found over her years of experience in teaching with pop culture that doing so creates an effective learning environment and helps increase students' connection to the material. Burks (2011) found that using the television show *Survivor* in his math courses increased student interest because they were familiar with the show, while also increasing their comfort with calculus concepts.

On the whole, this segment of SoTL literature tells us that when instructors incorporate pop culture into their courses, student experiences and learning are affected in a positive way. Further, this body of literature underscores the fact that instructors from a variety of departments and institution types are utilizing pop culture to achieve better student outcomes in their courses. Again, the widespread use of this teaching technique has not been paced by widespread study of the practice, particularly methodologically rigorous quantitative study. Further investigation of such a common teaching technique that purports to have positive student outcomes is warranted.

Gaps in the literature. As mentioned above, although there is a plethora of SoTL research on individual instructors' uses of pop culture in undergraduate education, there is no concise view of the practice across multiple courses and institutions. In addition, the bulk of the data in these studies is qualitative in nature, and not necessarily rigorous in methodology. These two qualities do not discount the usefulness of the literature, but they do highlight the need for other types of studies on this phenomenon. Using the body of SoTL literature as its foundation, my study offers a different view of pop culture in instruction that is grounded in the work reviewed above. My study is meant to complement this SoTL literature by offering generalizable data and a broader view of practice. Conversely, the SoTL literature offers specific advice and deeper insights into individual practice.

Methodological Issues in the Literature

O'Meara (2006) has commented on the misalignment of traditional quantitative research imperatives such as generalizability, reliability, and validity; and the emphasis placed by SoTL work instead on practicality and utility for instructors. This misalignment can lead to a lack of recognition of SoTL work in more traditional research-oriented venues (O'Meara). Therefore, while I will offer a critique of the literature cited above in order to define the scholarly space into which my study fits, I do so with the recognition that generalizability underpinned by robust validity and reliability measures is not necessarily the point of SoTL work.

Reliability and validity. As Polkinghorne (2005) describes in his discussion of data collection in qualitative research, issues of reliability and validity can be addressed in several ways. One of these is the intentional selection of participants so that variation in experiences can be gathered. None of the SoTL articles employ this research technique, as they all use convenience samples of the students in their courses. Convenience sampling is, in fact, the least preferred method of participant selection, according to Polkinghorne, because of its tendency to miss out on “perspectives that expand and enhance the understanding of the breadth and depth of a studied experience” (p. 141). Sampling also plays into reliability and validity of the research findings in that when samples are not representative or are not rigorously selected, both the reliability and validity of the study are lessened. However, because we are examining the body of these SoTL articles as a whole and drawing themes through them all, I argue that we might also consider viewing the populations from the articles in a similar way. That is, as we look across this work for themes, we should also take into account that the researchers are drawing from diverse groups of students in widely varied settings. As a whole, then, the population from which these studies draw is much broader than any one of them alone.

Within SoTL work, Hutchings and Schulman (1999) advocated for researchers to create work that would not only improve their own teaching (and learning), but also the practice of others. In this way, many of the articles cited above fall a bit short of the standards set by Hutchings and Schulman. For example, Polkinghorne (2005) notes the importance of recording observational data that is later used to support qualitative findings. These notes contribute to the detailed descriptions of the experiences that researchers are studying and help to bolster claims about those experiences. And, such detailed descriptions serve to assist other researchers and practitioners who are interested in applying the practices found in SoTL work. Surprisingly, none of the practitioner-focused research mentions using recordings (written, audio, or video) to support their recollections of the effects of pop culture in the classroom.

Polkinghorne (2005) also states that the purpose of qualitative inquiry is to describe a lived experience and that the data gathered should provide evidence of that experience. This statement makes it all the more surprising that the SoTL articles on pop culture in undergraduate teaching do not include more of the methods Polkinghorne describes, since those articles are all seeking to describe and provide evidence of an instructor's experience. Creswell and Miller (2000) also have suggestions for qualitative researchers looking to support the validity of their studies. Researchers can disclose their own biases, assumptions, and beliefs so that the reader can evaluate how these might impact the researcher's perceptions of the data; triangulate the data from multiple sources; and search for disconfirming evidence that contradicts themes or categories the researcher has established after a first pass through data analysis. Study participants may play a role in establishing study validity by checking the researcher's interpretations, collaborating with the researcher on study design, or by interacting with the researcher over a prolonged period of time at the study site. Finally, incorporating external

reviews of the study may add to validity when the researcher's audit trail of processes and decisions is made available; the researcher provides thick, rich description of the site and participants; and when peers of the researcher review the study and findings then offer feedback (Creswell & Miller). Unfortunately, the SoTL articles that form the bulk of the literature on pop culture in undergraduate education do not engage in these practices.

Diverse perspectives. An additional, notable aspect of the literature is the lack of attention given to how minoritized students consume pop culture and how they receive its use in the classroom. The work focusing on minoritized students and pop culture is often limited to how the use of hip-hop music can be used to reach out to this cohort, passing over any other pop culture created by minoritized artists. The literature also does not address how students of cultural backgrounds that differ from the artists used as classroom examples may make meaning of those examples. This omission is important to note because some authors have suggested that pop culture can help to affirm non-majority student culture, influencing their connection to course material in even more significant ways than majority students. For example, Nieto (1999) states that pop culture may be especially salient as a learning tool for non-majority populations who form stronger ties with and retain greater interest in school when aspects of their culture are affirmed.

Similarly, Greenfield (2007) reports that using pop culture featuring minoritized artists/actors may make non-majority students more comfortable in the classroom. This increased comfort allows them to take more ownership over course discussions and feel comfortable challenging the instructor's intellectual authority because the course uses students' own language to approach the material. Although the present study will not be able to address how students

receive pop culture examples when they are used in instruction, this is an important area to highlight for future research and investigation.

In addition to lack of analysis of pop culture use as it is received by minoritized populations, the literature is also curiously free from negative perspectives on pop culture in undergraduate teaching. All of the SoTL research details instructors' positive experiences with this teaching technique and the positive outcomes it can have for students and classroom engagement. Perhaps instructors who have had negative experiences using pop culture have chosen not to publish these experiences, but it is hard to believe that in every instance, pop culture use has been a positive experience for all involved. More information on potential negative consequences of using this teaching tool would bring a more balanced perspective to the literature.

Quality of scholarship. A final critique of the current literature on pop culture in undergraduate teaching is the quality of the journals that have published findings on this topic. No first-tier journals have published research that examines this teaching technique, although all of the journals represented in this literature review are peer-reviewed. This absence of SoTL work on pop culture in prestigious publications reinforces O'Meara's (2006) assertion that many qualities of SoTL work that make it valuable to practitioners are not as valued in traditional research venues.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Although no one study would be able to address all of the gaps in the current body of literature on pop culture use in undergraduate education, inroads can still be made. Referring back to the Introduction of this proposal, I noted that this study would add to the literature on higher education by giving insight in four primary areas: type and frequency of pop culture use, instructor motivations for using pop culture, characteristics of instructors and courses that use/do not use pop culture in the classroom, and links between pop culture use and other best practices in teaching. In order to study these areas and begin to fill in our quantitative knowledge on the subject, I developed a short set of survey items that were administered to select institutions at the end of the 2015 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). In the section that follows, I will discuss the source of data for this study, elaborate on my methodological approaches, and discuss the research questions.

Source of Data

Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

Launched in 2003, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement is a nation-wide, annual survey that measures aspects of faculty experiences and faculty perceptions of undergraduate student engagement. In addition to these measures, FSSE collects demographic information on respondents, which will be used in my work here. The instrument was developed as a complement to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which collects engagement and demographic information from undergraduate students nation-wide. To date, more than 250,000 faculty at over 800 institutions have participated in FSSE.

General areas of measurements. In this study, I will explore several areas of instructor practice as it relates to the use of pop culture in teaching and effective teaching practices overall. It is important to note at the outset that the pop culture item set is related to the core FSSE instrument in at least two ways. First, and most obviously, the item set was appended to the end of FSSE for a random selection of institutions (more on this process below). Instructors who chose not to, or were not able to complete FSSE would not have access to the pop culture set, meaning that the respondent pool for FSSE 2015 and this set are related (though not exactly the same because some instructors may have chosen not to answer this set although it was available to them). Second, respondents who complete FSSE are asked to keep one specific undergraduate course in mind as they respond to questions. The pop culture set asks respondents to recall the course they kept in mind for the core FSSE items, and to once again use that course to answer these questions. Thus, the information given by respondents on the pop culture set should add to, not contradict, the information already given on the core survey. In other words, the pop culture set should provide a new light in which to examine practices explored by the main FSSE instrument.

As noted above, FSSE measures faculty perceptions of undergraduate student experiences, areas of instructor experiences, and demographic characteristics. More specifically, FSSE collects information on how instructors spend their professional time in and out of the classroom, type of course taught (e.g. online or classroom-based) their use of teaching practices shown through research to be effective, and the emphasis instructors place on such things as creating a supportive environment for students and interacting with students in and out of the classroom. Amongst the questions asked on FSSE, a number of items have been grouped into scales which measure faculty perceptions of, and the importance given to certain aspects of

student engagement. Three of these scales will be used in my study: Effective Teaching Practices, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Student-Faculty Interaction.

Psychometric Properties of FSSE

Psychometric testing of survey instruments is an important way researchers can affirm that the instrument they use is stably measuring what they intend across repeated administrations. The FSSE instrument has recently been shown to have robust psychometric properties in many different areas, as have the scales drawn from survey items. In this section, I will outline the psychometric properties of FSSE and its scales in terms of reliability, validity, and other quality indicators.

Reliability. In terms of reliability, the overall instrument has been shown to be stable temporally. Chiang and BrckaLorenz (2015) conducted an institution-level analysis of responses from 27 schools that participated in FSSE in both 2014 and 2015. Significant correlations ($p < .01$) between these schools' scale scores from one year to the next proved to be relatively high, ranging from .456 to .838. These findings indicate that, at the institutional level, scores remain relatively stable from year to year. This, in turn, indicates that FSSE is reliable instrument year to year.

An additional study of FSSE's reliability was conducted by Chiang, Dumford, Nelson Laird, and BrckaLorenz (2015a). The researchers examined FSSE's equivalence and explored whether a set of FSSE questions asked with vague response options and again with specific response options yielded similar results. Chiang et al found that respondents "assigned distinct and increasing absolute values" to the vague response options, and these lined up with the specific response options (p. 2). In other words, respondents to FSSE indicate their responses in similar ways whether vague or specific options are available to them.

Validity. Using responses from the 2013 FSSE administration, BrckaLorenz, Chiang, and Nelson Laird (2013) conducted exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to assess the validity of all FSSE scales except the Effective Teaching Practices scale (which was added to FSSE later). Their exploratory and confirmatory analysis showed that each of the scales, including the Reflective and Integrative Learning and Student-Faculty Interaction scales used in the study at hand, factored as expected. This finding supports the validity of the Reflective and Integrative Learning and Student-Faculty Interaction scales as useful and valid tools.

Because the Effective Teaching Practices scale was added in 2014, a separate investigation of its construct validity was undertaken after the study just mentioned above. Looking only at this scale, Chiang and BrckaLorenz (2015c) used data from the 2015 FSSE administration for exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. They found that the eight Effective Teaching Practices items do form a valid scale, and that this scale fits well under the theme of experiences with faculty.

A final study of FSSE scales, conducted by Wang and BrckaLorenz (2015), concerns the reliability of all eleven scales. In order to examine their reliability, Wang and BrckaLorenz ran intercorrelations to determine the internal consistency of the scales. The researchers report that the Reflective and Integrative Learning scale had Cronbach's alphas of 0.88 for both upper and lower sections of the intercorrelation matrix, the Effective Teaching Practices scale had Cronbach's alphas of 0.75 (lower) and 0.77 (upper), and the Student-Faculty Interaction scale had Cronbach's alphas of 0.77 (upper) and 0.78 (lower). Their findings support the reliability of these scales, as the closer the alpha score is to 1, the more reliable the scale (Santos, 1999).

Other quality indicators. Turning back to the full FSSE instrument, not only the scales, a 2015 psychometric study was conducted to examine whether non-response effect bias was a

factor biasing survey results. Chiang and BrckaLorenz (2015b) studied non-response information based on responses to the 10 FSSE scales and whether various instructional staff characteristics such as racial identity, gender identity, and employment status had any effects. They found no non-response bias by any instructional staff characteristics on any of the FSSE scales, indicating that this type of bias does not affect the results of the survey.

Miller and Dumford (2017) conducted a social desirability bias inquiry on FSSE 2014 data to determine whether respondents to FSSE might feel pressure to give socially acceptable responses, rather than truthful ones. The researchers administered a short item set, appended to the core FSSE instrument, at 18 institutions to test for levels of social desirability. After conducting 10 OLS regressions with this item set and FSSE scales, Miller and Dumford concluded that respondents to FSSE were not giving answers with social pressures in mind. The Effective Teaching Practices scale was the most likely to be predicted by social desirability scores, but both the magnitude and practical significance of this outcome were small.

Sample

Institutions that choose to administer FSSE also have the opportunity to append up to two topical modules to the end of the survey, or to add a module and a question set of items salient to a consortium of similar institutions. Those schools that add one or none of these optional item sets are eligible to receive an experimental item set, of which the pop culture set was one in 2015. These experimental item sets are randomly assigned and institutions have the chance to opt out of adding them to their administration.

In the case of the pop culture set, 20 institutions received the items yielding just over 2,450 respondents. FSSE respondents are asked to answer many survey items while keeping in mind one undergraduate course they are currently teaching, or have taught within the past year.

Respondents to the pop culture set were asked to recall the course they used to answer items on the main survey, and answer this question set with the same course in mind. This connection with the items on the core survey allows for exploration of how use of pop culture may be linked with other effective teaching practices. To be eligible for this study, respondents had to answer at least one item in the pop culture set. A description of the institutions, faculty, and course characteristics that comprise the sample for this study follows below.

Institutions

While I did not make use of institution-level characteristics for this dissertation, a brief description of the 20 institutions that administered the pop culture set is useful for setting the scene. Overall, the institutions skew towards small, private, Master's level schools, though they range quite a bit by locale. In terms of Carnegie Classification, one institution is a R1 research university (highest level of research), four are Master's level institutions with large programs, three are Master's level institutions with medium programs, three are Master's level institutions with small programs, two are baccalaureate institutions with arts and science focus, and five are baccalaureate institutions with diverse fields of study. Five are public institutions, and fifteen are private. Regionally, the institutions are mostly clustered in the Mid-East (five), Southeast (six) and Plains (four); with the Far West (two), Great Lakes (two), and New England (one) regions also represented. Finally, in terms of size, two institutions are considered large, four are medium-sized, 10 are small, and four are very small. Aside from the disproportionate representation of private schools in the sample and slight underrepresentation of research universities, these institutions are a reasonable cross section of higher education in the United States (FSSE, 2015). Overall FSSE response rates for these schools ranged from 31% to 77%.

Faculty and Courses

FSSE collects information on both faculty and course characteristics, allowing researchers to contextualize findings on faculty behaviors and perceptions of undergraduate engagement. The faculty characteristics used in the current study include: years teaching, racial/ethnic identity, gender identity, discipline, tenure status, employment status, and academic rank. Course characteristics used in the study include: format (online, main campus or satellite, etc.), discipline, general education status, class size and division (upper or lower). The sample is described more fully in terms of these characteristics next.

Faculty. The faculty respondents in the sample were nearly evenly split in terms of traditional gender identities with 48% ($n = 1,029$) identifying as women and 47% ($n = 995$) identifying as men. A majority of respondents (44%, $n = 940$) were tenured faculty, with tenure track (15%, $n = 318$), non-tenure track (30%, $n = 655$), and faculty whose institutions did not have tenure tracks (11%, $n = 234$) also represented. In terms of racial/ethnic identity, White respondents made up 76% ($n = 1,626$) of the group and Black/African American faculty (6%, $n = 130$) were the next largest portion of the sample. The discipline with the largest number of faculty represented was arts and humanities (24%, $n = 550$), although social sciences (11%, $n = 251$); business (11%, $n = 245$); education (10%, $n = 240$); and physical sciences, mathematics, and computer engineering (10%, $n = 240$) were also strongly represented. The largest group of respondents (29%, $n = 625$) had 10-19 years of teaching experience, although the sample was fairly evenly split between academic ranks. See the Appendix for more information on faculty characteristics, as well as response options.

Compared to the national picture of faculty across U.S. higher education, there are

slightly fewer Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and Health Professions instructors in this sample than are represented nationally (FSSE, 2015). Conversely, there are slightly more Business; Communications, Media, and Public Relations; and Education instructors; and more who are ranked as Instructor/Lecturers represented in the sample than are present in the national landscape (FSSE). The most notable difference is there are many more full-time instructors in the sample (78.7%, $n = 1,699$) versus nationally (57%), and fewer part-time instructors in the sample (21.3%, $n = 459$) versus nationally (43%) (FSSE).

Courses. As mentioned earlier, faculty are asked to keep in mind one specific course they are currently teaching or have taught recently as they respond to FSSE. The pop culture set began with language asking respondents to recall that course they used as a reference on the core survey and use it to answer these questions as well. Faculty described the course they kept in mind in several ways. For example, by far the most frequently mentioned course format was on-campus classroom instruction (85%, $n = 1,796$). There were slightly fewer courses that met general education requirements (46%, $n = 976$) than those that did, and slightly more upper division courses (51%, $n = 1,085$) than lower division. Class sizes reported were on the smaller side, with the most frequently reported size being 20 students or fewer (36%, $n = 763$). For more information on course characteristics, see the Appendix.

Measures

The FSSE core survey is comprised of 133 items that collect information on classroom practices, how instructors spend working time outside of the classroom, their expectations and perceptions of student behaviors, and demographic items. Its purpose is to give institutions a more comprehensive view of student engagement and learning on their campuses, and to spark discussions about ways to improve those aspects of the undergraduate experience. Institutions

also have the option to add up to two topical modules to the core FSSE survey, or an additional question set developed by a consortium of like schools. Institutions that append one or no extra question sets are eligible to receive a randomly-assigned experimental item set, like the pop culture set. Respondents are instructional staff (including full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty; graduate students who teach; and instructors) who have taught at least one undergraduate course within the past academic year.

Pop Culture Items

Within the pop culture set, items measure the type and frequency of media used by instructors and instructor motivations for using this media. In this dissertation, I examined three question stems, and a total of 14 items in the set. Response options include descriptive statements for the overall frequency of media use (e.g. “Every class session”), responses for frequency of use for specific types of media (e.g. “Very often”), and options for the extent to which instructors feel motivated by various reasons for using pop culture in teaching (e.g. “Very much”). Also included in the response options for instructor motivations is a write-in text box in which respondents could offer other rationales for their use of pop culture. However, qualitative responses were not part of the analysis conducted here. As mentioned above, respondents are asked to recall the course they kept in mind as they were answering the core FSSE questions, and use the same course to answer this item set as well. Frequencies for responses to all pop culture items used in this analysis can be found in the Appendix.

Results from the pop culture item set have been primarily used in a descriptive manner, due to the general lack of quantitative knowledge available on these practices. I used descriptive statistics to illustrate how often media is being used, the types of media are most frequently used, and the most frequently reported motivations for engaging in media use. Once a broad scope of

the media use landscape was drawn, I explored whether or not relationships exist between instructor/course characteristics and frequency, type, and motivations for pop culture use in the classroom.

Source of questions. The questions and items in the pop culture set were created with the dual intentions of collecting descriptive information on the practice of using media in teaching, and to learn about instructor motivations for engaging in this practice. With this first purpose in mind, the first two question stems gather information about instructors’ frequency of media use and types of media used in their selected course section.

In order to explore instructor motivations, I wrote an additional question stem and items based on the SoTL literature reviewed above. The question stem is: To what extent is each of the following a part of your rationale for using current pop culture in your selected course section? One item, “pop culture is the basis for my course topic” was not sourced from the literature. Instead, this item was included to help give context to responses that were at the high end of reported frequency of use. The table below details the other items that follow this stem, and their source(s) in the literature.

Table 3.1

Items and their sources

Item	Source(s)
To capture and/or hold student attention	Kalogeras (2014), Beavers (2011), Rothe & Collins (2013)
To make myself more relatable to students	Pryor (2008)
To analyze the dominant culture	Greenfield (2007)
To make material relatable for students	Greenfield (2007), Springer & Yelenik (2011)
To provide a fresh outlook on course material	Pryor (2008)
To incorporate diverse voices	Greenfield (2007)

Scale derived from item set. As a preliminary step in my analysis, I conducted a factor analysis of the instructional staff motivation items in order to determine whether or not the items hang together to form a single scale. The first item in the motivations question (Pop culture is the basis of my course) was excluded because that item’s purpose was to give context to respondents with the highest levels of media use, as opposed to the more pedagogically-focused motivations the other items explore. The remaining six items formed a “Motivations scale,” which will now be described more fully.

First, I recoded the items to a 0-60 scale in which Very much = 4 is recoded to 60, Quite a bit = 3 is recoded to 45, Some = 2 is recoded to 30, Very little = 1 is recoded to 15, and None = 0 remains 0. Individual faculty responses to these items were then averaged together to create a scale score. This recoding was done to mirror the recoding of all other FSSE scales, easing interpretation of results once the analysis is conducted. Faculty were required to respond to at least five of the six motivations items in order to receive a scale score. Descriptives for the scale can be found in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

Motivation scale descriptives

Count	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cronbach’s Alpha	ICC
1,528	0	60	30.900	14.377	.859	.000

Index. The second pop culture item asks faculty about their frequency of use of specific types of media (film/video, text, visual images, and music). I used responses from this item to create an index of media use that is more descriptive than the overall picture of media use derived from responses to the first pop culture question. In this index, responses of “very often”

or “often” were coded as 1, while responses of “sometimes” or “never” received a 0. Possible index scores for each faculty respondent ranged from 0 – 4.

Faculty and Course Characteristics

The faculty and course characteristics used in this study come from the core FSSE survey. Characteristics chosen for this study align with my research interests – I am curious about how each of these characteristics might (or might not) influence pop culture use. More broadly, however, many studies have found that teaching practices are likely to vary based on these characteristics (e.g. Nelson Laird, Lambert, Cogswell, & Ribera, 2014; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005; BrckaLorenz & Nelson Laird, 2017; Kezar & Sam, 2010; Cole, 2007). In addition, research has shown that when faculty behaviors vary, student outcomes also vary (Kuh, Nelson Laird, & Umbach, 2004). For response options and frequencies for these items, see the Appendix.

One note about the measure of faculty racial/ethnic identity used in this study should be highlighted. Due to small numbers of respondents in the “American Indian or Alaska Native” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” categories, I added the respondents from those two groups to the “Other” category. I moved these respondents in order to keep them in the analysis, as their numbers (10 American Indian or Alaska Native respondents and one Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander respondent) would have been prohibitively small when kept in the separate categories.

FSSE Scales

Items on FSSE have been grouped into 10 scales that measure faculty perceptions of certain aspects of student engagement. Of these scales, three will be used for the study at hand:

Effective Teaching Practices, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Student-Faculty Interaction.

Effective Teaching Practices. The eight survey items in the Effective Teaching Practices scale are centered on behaviors that instructors themselves undertake in their undergraduate courses. For example, respondents indicate the extent to which they use examples or illustrations to explain difficult points, use a variety of teaching techniques to accommodate diversity in student learning styles, and teach courses in an organized way. Response options are “very much,” “quite a bit,” “some,” and “very little.” I am interested in using this scale to determine whether instructors who report higher levels of pop culture use also report utilizing effective teaching practices “very much” or “quite a bit.” Descriptives for the Effective Teaching Practices scale can be found in Table 3.3 below.

Reflective and Integrative Learning. The Reflective and Integrative Learning scale contains seven items that measure the importance instructional staff place on student behaviors in their selected course section. Specifically, these items inquire about the importance of students connecting concepts between courses, valuing diverse perspectives in coursework, being open to new ideas, etc. Response options are “very important,” “important,” “somewhat important,” and “not important.” As with the Effective Teaching Practices scale, this scale is included in the current study because I want to see if instructors who indicate higher levels of pop culture use also report viewing these reflective and integrative learning behaviors as “very important” or “important.” Descriptives for the Reflective and Integrative Learning scale are below in Table 3.3.

Student-Faculty Interaction. The four items in the Student-Faculty Interaction scale capture information on how often faculty report connecting with students both in and outside of

the classroom on topics related and unrelated to their course. Response options are “very often,” “often,” “sometimes,” and “never.” This scale is included in the current study because, as with the two scales described above, I am interested in investigating whether faculty who report higher levels of pop culture use also report engaging in student-faculty interaction practices “very often” or “often.” Descriptives for the Student-Faculty Interaction scale are below in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

FSSE scale descriptives

	Count	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cronbach's Alpha	ICC
Effective Teaching Practices	2,121	0	60	48.80	8.765	.772	.069
Reflective and Integrative Learning	2,002	0	60	44.36	13.494	.881	.055
Student-Faculty Interaction	2,084	0	60	35.09	13.501	.787	.093

Analysis

Although the data collected for this dissertation included institution characteristics, my analysis will be conducted at the faculty and course levels. This decision was based, in large part, on my own research interests. However, an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) analysis was also conducted on the Motivations scale to discern whether institution-level variance was likely to impact the findings in a significant way. The ICC for the Motivations scale was .000, which confirmed that institutional context was not an influence, and all variation is taking place at the instructor level.

Research Questions

The research questions which will guide this study have been referenced throughout the preceding pages. However, a more detailed description of these questions, along with the methods used to answer them, is appropriate here. My analysis will use quantitative responses only, and the actual survey items used to answer these research questions and frequencies of responses can be found in the Appendix.

The first research question is: which media are being used in instruction and with what frequency? In order to answer the question broadly, I first used descriptive statistics (frequencies) to determine how often instructional staff in the sample indicated they use any type of pop culture in their selected course section. Response options for this item were “every class session;” “often, but not every class session;” “a few times per semester;” “once per semester;” and “never.” To look into reported pop culture use further, I then ran frequencies to determine how often instructional staff indicated they used each of four types of media: television, film, music, printed materials. Response options for this question were “very often,” “often,” “sometimes,” and “never.”

The second research question is: who is using this media more frequently and in what course settings is it more likely to be used? Once I determined how often instructional staff use pop culture overall, and which types of media they use with what frequency, I then looked more deeply into faculty and course characteristics which might influence these levels and types of media use using two OLS regressions. The first regression model I created includes faculty and course characteristics, with the outcome describing general frequency of pop culture use (i.e. responses from the first pop culture item). The second model explores frequency of use of specific types of media (i.e. responses from the second pop culture item) by faculty and course

characteristics. OLS regressions are appropriate here because this study does not include institution-level variables which have the potential to muddle or change certain individual-level variables when they are aggregated to the institutional level (Ethington, 1997). Further, according to Frank, Fabregat-Traver, and Bientinesi (2016), OLS regression is useful when the research question incorporates a number of variables, all of which may influence the outcome variable.

Again, pop culture use and type of media used are the dependent variables in these equations, with faculty and course characteristics as independent variables. The faculty characteristics included in these models are those mentioned earlier in the description of the sample: gender identity, tenure status, employment status, racial/ethnic identity, rank, discipline, and years of teaching experience. Although it would be preferable to have prior research that supports including these variables in the models (Field, 2013), the lack of quantitative research on the topic makes this support difficult to find. Instead, I based my decision to include these faculty characteristics on theoretical importance (Field), in that the SoTL research on pop culture in undergraduate education was written by instructors with a variety of backgrounds who taught in a variety of disciplines and course formats. To explore the course context side of these questions, I tested for significance between course characteristics (course format, general education status, division, and class size) and level and type of media used.

In order to avoid extreme multicollinearity, one group from each of the faculty and course characteristics categories served as a reference group (Allison, 1999). The reference groups for this model were selected based on which group in each category had the lowest average response to the pop culture use question. To be more specific, the following groups within the faculty characteristics variables were used as references: Man, Engineering, Tenured,

Full Professor, Full-time, and Asian. Years of teaching experience will be analyzed as a continuous variable, so no reference group was selected for this faculty characteristic. As mentioned earlier, due to the small numbers of cases in the “American Indian or Alaska Native” and “Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander” racial/ethnic categories (see frequencies of responses in Appendix), these two groups were folded into the “Other” racial category. There were also too few cases in the “Another gender identity” category, and that group was dropped from the analysis altogether. In addition, the following groups within the course characteristics were used as reference groups: course size of 31-40 students, Lower Division, Not a General Education Requirement, and course format of Distance Education.

Regarding the second OLS regression for this research question, the dependent variable (frequency of type of media used) was recoded as an index in order to more clearly discern levels of use for each type of media. As mentioned above, respondents who indicated they used a type of media “Very often” or “Often” were grouped together as “frequent users,” and those who indicated they used a type of media “Sometimes” or “Never” were grouped together as “less frequent users.” Those in the first group were coded as 1 in the index, while the second group was coded as 0.

The third research question is: why are instructors using media in the classroom? The third item in the pop culture set asked to what extent each of seven motivations contributed to respondents’ decisions to use pop culture in instruction. Response options for each item were “very much,” “quite a bit,” “some,” “very little,” and “none.” Using another OLS regression model in which motivation is the dependent variable, I tested for significance between the faculty and course characteristics noted above and the Motivation scale scores to see if any of those characteristics influence faculty motivations. As above in the model for question two,

reference groups were selected based on which had the lowest average responses for pop culture use in the classroom.

The final research question links the pop culture set with three FSSE scales (described above): Effective Teaching Practices, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Student-Faculty Interaction. Using three OLS regressions, I tested for any relationships between instructors' levels of media use and their engagement in practices described in these three scales. Specifically, I used responses from the first pop culture question (overall frequency of media use) and scale scores from each of the three FSSE scales to perform this analysis. In each of the three regression equations, the scale score is the dependent variable; with use, faculty, and course characteristics as independent variables.

In addition, I also examined whether there are any correlations between FSSE scale scores and index scores drawn from responses to the second pop culture question (frequency of type of media used). Each faculty respondent received an index score of 0 – 4, which gave me a sense of how much media they use. Recoding responses into an index in this way allowed me to determine whether there is a relationship between using more media and engaging in better teaching practices. Overall, for this last research question, I hypothesized that instructors who report a greater use of media also reported more engagement in other beneficial teaching practices as well.

Study Limitations

There are a few limitations on this inquiry which should be noted at the outset. First, the sample has several levels of self-selection bias which have the potential to influence its makeup somewhat. Institutions opt-in to administering FSSE, and not all institutions in the country participate. In addition, institutions were able to choose whether or not to administer the pop

culture item set, and three did opt out. Finally, instructors were able to choose whether or not to respond to the item set and which items to complete within the set. Despite these potential areas for bias, the sample largely mirrors the national picture of institutions and instructors for the characteristics being examined in this study, aside from the exceptions noted above in the description of the faculty respondents (FSSE, 2015).

There is also a limitation on generalizability in terms of the institution types that are studied here. FSSE includes only four-year, bachelor's granting schools; and no two-year or community colleges. Thus, the results of this study should not be generalized to those schools from which data did not come. As mentioned above in the description of institutions in the sample, these data pull from a group represented by more private schools and slightly fewer research universities than are present in the national landscape (FSSE, 2015). And, while quantitative studies such as this one are more easily generalizable to broader populations, it should be noted that the lack of qualitative analysis may limit the capturing of nuances that affect practice at the classroom level.

Finally, the operational definition and items used in this study are new, and likely have room for updates and edits as such work continues in the future. However, peers and colleagues in several disciplines reviewed the operational definition and items, and this variety of input reduces the likelihood that the definition and items are wildly off-base.

Chapter Four: Results

As discussed in Chapter Three, descriptive analyses and OLS regressions were chosen to analyze my survey data and to answer the research questions. In the chapter that follows, I describe the results of that analysis, leaving interpretations and recommendations for Chapter Five. I have included results tables in the chapter, where appropriate, and noted when additional findings appear in the Appendix if not immediately necessary to contextualize the questions at hand. The results below are organized by research question.

Research Question One

The first research question, regarding which media are being used and with what frequency, was answered using descriptive analysis of the first and second survey questions. As shown in more detail in Table 4.1, when responding to the first survey question, the largest group of faculty reported using media “Often, but not every class session.” While only 8.5 percent of faculty reporting media use “Every class session,” when combined with the “Often, but not every class session” group, a total of 47.3 percent of faculty indicated they used media more than a few times per semester. In contrast, the majority (52.7%) of respondents said they use media “A few times per semester” or less.

Table 4.1

Frequency of reported in-class media use

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Every class session	155	8.5
Often, but not every class session	708	38.8
A few times per semester	625	34.3
Once per semester	113	6.2
Never	222	12.2

The second part of the first research question looks at media use in a different way, inquiring about the frequency of use of specific types of media. As shown below, faculty responded most frequently that they “sometimes” use film/video, text, and visual images, and “never” use music. Among media types, visual images were used “very often” and “often” more than other types. Overall, the majority of faculty used each media type “sometimes” or “never.” This finding aligns with the results shown in Table 4.1 above, in which the majority of faculty reported using media “A few times a semester” or less.

Table 4.2

Frequency of media use by type of media

	Very often <i>n</i> / %	Often <i>n</i> / %	Sometimes <i>n</i> / %	Never <i>n</i> / %
Film/Video	285 / 18.1	341 / 21.6	749 / 47.5	202 / 12.8
Text	329 / 21.8	346 / 22.9	547 / 36.2	290 / 19.2
Visual Images	415 / 27.1	382 / 24.9	568 / 37.1	168 / 11.0
Music	113 / 7.6	122 / 8.2	493 / 33.1	762 / 51.1

Research Question Two

The second research question asks amongst which instructors and in what course settings is pop culture more likely to be used. This question was explored using two OLS regressions. The first regression used general frequency of pop culture use in the form of responses to the first survey question as the dependent variable and faculty and course characteristics as independent variables. Results from that first equation are below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Summary of regression results predicting general pop culture use by select faculty and course characteristics

	(Constant)	B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
		1.715	.231		***
Faculty racial or ethnic identification	Multiracial	0.328	0.215	0.041	
	Black or African American	0.181	0.162	0.037	
	Hispanic or Latino	0.345	0.218	0.042	
	White	0.163	0.124	0.062	
	Other	0.047	0.217	0.006	
	Prefer not to respond	0.324	0.162	0.080	*
Gender identity	Woman	0.023	0.054	0.010	
	Prefer not to respond	0.041	0.147	0.008	
Tenure status	No tenure system	0.035	0.097	0.010	
	Not on tenure track	0.041	0.096	0.017	
	On tenure track but not tenured	-0.049	0.110	-0.016	
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	1.087	0.137	0.432	***
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	0.683	0.154	0.163	***
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	0.128	0.146	0.036	
	Social Sciences	1.085	0.146	0.306	***
	Business	0.799	0.148	0.218	***
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	1.505	0.168	0.300	***
	Education	1.095	0.151	0.292	***
	Health Professions	0.943	0.158	0.230	***
	Social Service Professions	1.088	0.198	0.161	***
	Other disciplines	1.007	0.166	0.207	***
Rank	Associate Professor	0.038	0.071	0.015	
	Assistant Professor	0.074	0.100	0.028	
	Lecturer	-0.003	0.154	0.000	
	Instructor	-0.075	0.108	-0.025	
	Other rank	-0.214	0.158	-0.036	
Employment Status	Part-time	0.061	0.083	0.022	
Years Teaching		-0.007	0.003	-0.067	*

Table 4.3 - Continued

Summary of regression results predicting general pop culture use by select faculty and course characteristics

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
	(Constant)	1.715	.231		***
General Education requirement	Yes	0.199	0.057	0.090	***
Course Format	Classroom, on-campus	0.230	0.118	0.074	
	Classroom, auxiliary location	0.360	0.220	0.043	
	Combination classroom instruction / distance education	0.333	0.145	0.082	*
Division	Upper Division	0.110	0.057	0.050	
	Other division	-0.078	0.128	-0.014	
Course Size	20 or Less	0.126	0.082	0.055	
	21 - 30	0.174	0.082	0.073	*
	41 - 50	0.315	0.112	0.076	**
	51 - 100	0.319	0.113	0.077	**
	100 or more	0.588	0.147	0.102	***
F = 7.363***, R ² = .141					
Note: Reference categories for faculty characteristics are Asian, Man, Tenured, Full Professor, Full-time, and Engineering. Reference categories for course characteristics are Not a general education requirement, Distance education format, Lower division, and Course size of 31-40.					
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$					

The results from this first regression model tell us several things. First, looking at the faculty characteristics, the most significant findings are by disciplinary area. Faculty who teach in Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources and non-STEM fields were more likely ($p < .001$) to use pop culture while teaching than their Engineering or Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Engineering colleagues. In addition, faculty who preferred not to respond to the racial/ethnic identity question were more likely ($p < .05$) to use pop culture than those who did respond to that item, while those who have taught longer were less likely ($p < .05$) to use it. In terms of course characteristics, pop culture was more likely ($p < .001$) to be used in general education courses, as well as in courses taught in a combination classroom / distance-education format ($p < .05$). Notably, as class size increases, so does the significance of likelihood that pop culture will be used.

Overall, this model may not be the best way to predict pop culture usage. The R^2 value of .141 indicates that the predictors included explain only 14% of the variance, a relatively low amount. Further, many of the coefficients are quite small – another indication that while some faculty and course characteristics were significant, they may not be particularly meaningful. However, the significant ($p < .001$) F -ratio tells us that this model does predict the use of pop culture, and the findings should not be dismissed out of hand. In other words, it is a functional and useful model, though considering other predictors in the future may increase its usefulness.

Because my second survey question captured more in-depth information about which types of media instructors were using with what frequency, I prepared a second OLS regression with that data. First, I recoded the responses to the second survey question into an index. Faculty who responded that they used a type of media “very often” or “often” received a score of 1 for that type of media. Conversely, faculty who responded that they used a type of media “sometimes” or “never” received a score of 0 for that type of media. By doing this recoding for all four types of media measured and adding up the scores, I was able to give faculty an overall rating of 0 to 4 for frequency of media use. Results from that index are reported below in Table 4.4 and show that the greatest portion of faculty respondents are infrequent users of pop culture in the classroom, while the smallest portion use it very frequently.

Table 4.4

Pop culture use index

Index Score	Frequency	Valid Percent
0	435	30.5
1	292	20.5
2	337	23.6
3	247	17.3
4	116	8.1

Once the index was made, I used it as the dependent variable in the second OLS regression addressing this research question. The independent variables were, again, faculty and course characteristics. Results from this second equation are below in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Summary of regression results predicting index scores by select faculty and course characteristics

	(Constant)	B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
		0.929	0.346		**
Faculty racial or ethnic identification	Multiracial	-0.293	0.312	-0.030	
	Black or African American	0.007	0.241	0.001	
	Hispanic or Latino	0.079	0.306	0.008	
	White	-0.389	0.188	-0.123	*
	Other	-0.162	0.318	-0.016	
	Prefer not to respond	-0.147	0.241	-0.030	
Gender identity	Woman	-0.054	0.074	-0.021	
	Prefer not to respond	-0.391	0.205	-0.065	
Tenure status	No tenure system	0.132	0.132	0.031	
	Not on tenure track	0.075	0.129	0.027	
	On tenure track but not tenured	0.033	0.149	0.009	
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	1.091	0.213	0.376	***
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	0.499	0.235	0.100	*
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	0.168	0.230	0.036	
	Social Sciences	0.509	0.223	0.127	*
	Business	0.824	0.229	0.185	***
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	1.477	0.246	0.267	***
	Education	0.944	0.231	0.217	***
	Health Professions	0.779	0.240	0.163	**
	Social Service Professions	0.508	0.290	0.064	
	Other disciplines	0.659	0.249	0.118	**

Table 4.5 - Continued

Summary of regression results predicting index scores by select faculty and course characteristics

	(Constant)	B	SE(B)	β	Sig. **
Rank	Associate Professor	0.080	0.098	0.027	
	Assistant Professor	0.000	0.136	0.000	
	Lecturer	0.304	0.207	0.048	
	Instructor	-0.050	0.148	-0.015	
	Other rank	-0.249	0.214	-0.036	
Employment Status	Part-time	0.103	0.116	0.032	
Years Teaching		-0.004	0.004	-0.036	
General Education Requirement	Yes	0.213	0.079	0.082	**
Course Format	Classroom, on-campus	-0.128	0.169	-0.035	
	Classroom, auxiliary location	0.337	0.314	0.033	
	Combination classroom / distance	-0.016	0.202	-0.003	
Division	Upper Division	0.117	0.079	0.045	
	Other division	0.024	0.173	0.004	
Course Size	20 or Less	0.066	0.115	0.025	
	21 - 30	0.152	0.116	0.054	
	41 - 50	0.244	0.157	0.050	
	51 - 100	0.259	0.159	0.053	
	100 or more	0.228	0.198	0.035	

F = 4.009***, R² = .103

Note: Reference groups for faculty characteristics are Asian, Man, Tenured, Engineering, Full professor, and Full-time. Reference groups for course characteristics are Not a general education requirement, Distance education, Lower division, Course size 31-40.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The results from this regression equation allow us to look a bit more deeply into faculty and course characteristics that predict more or less frequent use of pop culture. Only one course characteristic – general education status – produced a significant result in this model. Those courses that are designated as general education were more likely ($p < .01$) to include frequent pop culture use than those that do not carry that designation.

Although most of the faculty characteristics did not produce significant results, in terms of racial/ethnic identities, White faculty were less likely ($p < .05$) to be frequent users of pop

culture. Disciplinary area differences were the most significant in this model, with Arts and Humanities; Business; Communication, Media, and Public Relations; and Education instructors being much more likely ($p < .001$) to be frequent users of pop culture. Health Professions and Other Disciplines faculty ($p < .01$), as well as Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources and Social Sciences ($p < .05$) faculty, were also likely to be frequent pop culture users. In contrast, only Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Engineering and Social Science instructors were not likely to be home to significant numbers of frequent users.

As with the first regression equation in this research question, this model may not be the best way to predict which instructor and course characteristics lead to high or low frequency of use of pop culture. The R^2 value of .103 tells us that only 10 percent of the variance is explained by this equation, leaving the vast majority of variance unexplained. Small coefficients again indicate that the practical influence of many of these areas of significance is limited. Still, the significant ($p < .001$) F -ratio indicates that this model does predict which faculty and course characteristics are likely to influence higher or lower frequencies of pop culture use and should not be discounted.

Research Question Three

After exploring the frequency of media use and how faculty and course characteristics influence those levels of use, I studied instructor motivations for using pop culture. As explained in Chapter Three, I created a Motivations scale using six of the seven items in the third question on the pop culture experimental set. The seventh item was omitted because it asked instructors to what extent pop culture was the basis of their course, not about their motivations for using media in instruction. Using the Motivations scale as the dependent variable and faculty and course

characteristics as independent variables, I ran an OLS regression. The results are below in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Summary of regression results predicting Motivation by select faculty and course characteristics

	(Constant)	B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
		15.908	3.591		***
Faculty racial or ethnic identification	Multiracial	4.471	3.130	0.043	
	Black or African American	4.703	2.407	0.074	
	Hispanic or Latino	0.746	3.150	0.007	
	White	0.029	1.901	0.001	
	Other	4.200	3.219	0.039	
	Prefer not to respond	3.060	2.453	0.057	
Gender identity	Woman	3.048	0.769	0.106	***
	Prefer not to respond	-0.617	2.124	-0.009	
Tenure status	No tenure system	1.206	1.370	0.027	
	Not on tenure track	1.675	1.357	0.053	
	On tenure track but not tenured	2.368	1.555	0.058	
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	15.317	2.210	0.479	***
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	6.311	2.453	0.114	**
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	4.498	2.402	0.087	
	Social Sciences	15.199	2.322	0.337	***
	Business	14.184	2.378	0.290	***
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	15.630	2.574	0.250	***
	Education	12.244	2.385	0.256	***
	Health Professions	12.200	2.484	0.233	***
	Social Service Professions	14.633	2.985	0.170	***
	Other disciplines	14.236	2.587	0.229	***
Rank	Associate Professor	1.608	1.026	0.049	
	Assistant Professor	-0.047	1.410	-0.001	
	Lecturer	1.519	2.175	0.022	
	Instructor	1.982	1.546	0.052	
	Other rank	-0.209	2.244	-0.003	
Employment Status	Part-time	-1.231	1.203	-0.035	
Years Teaching		-0.091	0.039	-0.071	*

Table 4.6 – Continued

Summary of regression results predicting Motivation by select faculty and course characteristics

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig. ***
	(Constant)	15.908	3.591		
General Education Requirement	Yes	1.554	0.816	0.054	
Course Format	Classroom, on-campus	1.047	1.793	0.026	
	Classroom, auxiliary location	1.893	3.320	0.017	
	Combination classroom / distance	-0.800	2.134	-0.016	
Division	Upper Division	-0.593	0.817	-0.021	
	Other division	-1.262	1.799	-0.018	
Course Size	20 or Less	-1.679	1.200	-0.056	
	21 - 30	-0.411	1.210	-0.013	
	41 - 50	-0.584	1.607	-0.011	
	51 - 100	-2.370	1.654	-0.044	
	100 or more	1.302	2.106	0.018	
F = 6.114***, R ² = .140					

Note: Reference groups for faculty characteristics are Asian, Man, Tenured, Engineering, Full Professor, Full-time. Reference groups for faculty characteristics are Not a general education requirement, Distance education, Lower division, Course size 31-40.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Looking at faculty characteristics that may have bearing on instructor motivation to use pop culture yielded several significant results. First, respondents who identified as women were more likely ($p < .001$) than those with other identities to have higher levels of motivation to use pop culture. In contrast, instructors with more years of teaching experience were slightly less likely ($p < .05$) to be motivated to use it. Again, as with results from my other research questions, the areas of greatest significance in this model were found by disciplinary area. Instructors in Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Engineering were not likely to have higher levels of motivation than their peers, but faculty in all other disciplines were. Arts and Humanities; Social Sciences; Business; Communications, Media, and Public Relations; Education; Health Professions; Social Service Professions, and Other disciplines faculty were likely ($p < .001$) to

have higher levels of motivation, as were faculty in Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources ($p < .01$). No course-based characteristics were significant in this model.

Examining the utility of this model shows us that there is room for improvement in measuring faculty motivation for using pop culture. The R^2 value of .140 indicates that this model explains only 14 percent of the variance, and most of the coefficients are small – indicating limited practical meaning, even though some of the findings are significant. As with the other regression equations above, however, the F -ratio here is significant; meaning that the model does predict motivation.

Looking at the results of this regression alongside the results of the results from research question two, there are areas of apparent mismatch in the results. For example, instructors who preferred not to respond about their racial/ethnic identities were significantly more likely ($p < .05$) to use pop culture, but this group was not more motivated to do so. Similarly, the larger the course size, the greater the use of pop culture; but instructors of larger courses were no more likely than others to be motivated. General education courses were more likely to include pop culture, but instructors who teach them were not more likely to be motivated to use it than their counterparts. In contrast, respondents who identified as women were not more likely than respondents who identified as men to use more pop culture, but they are more likely ($p < .001$) than men to be motivated to use it.

To explore this apparent mismatch further, I ran correlations between the Motivation scale and the results from the general frequency of use question to determine whether instructors who are more likely to use pop culture are also more motivated to do so. Not surprisingly, there is a moderately strong positive correlation ($p < .01$) between use and motivation, as shown below in Table 4.10

Table 4.10

Correlations between Motivation scale scores and overall frequency of use

		Motivation Scale	Reported overall frequency of media use
Motivation Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1528	1517
Reported overall frequency of media use	Pearson Correlation	.482**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1517	1823

** $p < .01$ level (2-tailed)

Next, I ran correlations between the Motivations scale and the results from the second question in my item set: frequency of use for each type of media individually. Again, there were significant positive correlations ($p < .01$) between motivation and use of each type of media, with Film/Video having the strongest relationship with motivation. See Table 4.11 for more information.

Table 4.11

Correlations between Motivation scale scores and frequency of media use by type

		Motivation Scale	Film/Video	Text	Visual Images	Music
Motivation Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.413**	.292**	.344**	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	1528	1507	1455	1473	144
Film/Video	Pearson Correlation	.413**	1	.319**	.454**	.370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	1507	1577	1503	1517	1482
Text	Pearson Correlation	.292**	.319**	1	.516**	.245**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	1455	1503	1512	1481	1452
Visual Images	Pearson Correlation	.344**	.454**	.516**	1	.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	1473	1517	1481	1533	1461
Music	Pearson Correlation	.292**	.370**	.245**	.282**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	1440	1482	1452	1461	1490

** $p < .01$ level (2-tailed)

Research Question Four

My fourth and final research question asked what, if any, is the relationship between instructors' levels of media use and engagement in Effective Teaching Practices, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Reflective and Integrative Learning as measured by FSSE Scales. To study this question, I ran two types of analyses: correlations between instructor level of media use and FSSE Scale scores, and OLS regressions.

The correlations between instructors' FSSE Scale scores and pop culture index scores help us see the relationships between these measures without controlling for other variables. Results from the correlations are below in Table 4.10. Each Scale was positively correlated ($p < .01$) with faculty index scores, indicating that the more faculty use pop culture, the more likely it is that they also engage in increased Student-Faculty Interaction, Reflective and Integrative

Learning, and Effective Teaching Practices. Correlation coefficients ranged from a high end of .260 between index scores and Reflective and Integrative Learning, to .258 between index scores and Effective Teaching Practices, to .203 between index scores and Student-Faculty interaction. These correlations are on the smaller side and indicate that there is a fairly large amount of scatter in the linear relationship between the two variables (Allison, 1999). However, there is no reason to reject a model with a low R^2 value, as it still indicates a relationship is being measured (Allison).

Table 4.12

Correlations between index scores and FSSE Scale scores.

		INDEX	Student-Faculty Interaction	Reflective and Integrative Learning	Effective Teaching Practices
INDEX	Pearson Correlation	1	.203**	.260**	.258**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	1427	1394	1410	1419
Student-Faculty Interaction	Pearson Correlation	.203**	1	.246**	.274**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	1394	2084	1954	2069
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Pearson Correlation	.260**	.246**	1	.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	1410	1954	2002	1994
Effective Teaching Practices	Pearson Correlation	.258**	.274**	.330**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	1419	2069	1994	2121

** $p < .01$ level (2-tailed)

I also created three OLS regressions in which one of the FSSE Scales just mentioned is the dependent variable and responses to the first pop culture question, faculty, and course characteristics are the independent variables. In each regression, overall frequency of pop culture use was significantly related ($p < .001$) to the Scale, and each Scale was significantly correlated ($p < .01$) with the pop culture index. Because my research question focuses on the relationships between frequency of pop culture use and FSSE Scale scores, I will report only those results

below in Tables 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9. Full results from these equations, including relationships between faculty and course characteristics and FSSE Scales can be found in the Appendix, beginning with Table A-11.

Table 4.13

Summary of regression results predicting Student-Faculty Interaction by overall frequency of pop culture use.

	B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
(Constant)	24.295	2.877		***
How often do you use examples from current pop culture (film clips, YouTube videos, magazine articles, political cartoons, popular novels, photographs, etc.) in your selected course section?	1.944	0.295	0.159	***
$F = 7.269^{***}, R^2 = .146$				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4.14

Summary of regression results predicting Reflective and Integrative Learning by overall frequency of pop culture use.

	B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
(Constant)	29.323	2.635		***
How often do you use examples from current pop culture (film clips, YouTube videos, magazine articles, political cartoons, popular novels, photographs, etc.) in your selected course section?	2.721	0.270	0.223	***
$F = 16.578^{***}, R^2 = .277$				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4.15

Summary of regression results predicting Effective Teaching Practices by overall frequency of pop culture use.

	B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
(Constant)	44.761	1.861		***
How often do you use examples from current pop culture (film clips, YouTube videos, magazine articles, political cartoons, popular novels, photographs, etc.) in your selected course section?	1.518	0.190	0.192	***
$F = 6.711^{***}, R^2 = .134$				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Of these three models, the one that explores the relationship between Reflective and Integrative Learning and frequency of pop culture use proved to be the most powerful. This equation explained the highest level of variance ($R^2 = .277$) of the three, and its coefficient was the largest of the three as well. The Student-Faculty Interaction ($R^2 = .146$) and Effective Teaching Practices ($R^2 = .134$) regressions both explain less variance and have smaller coefficients, indicating smaller effect sizes of the relationships. However, all three OLS regressions had significant ($p < .001$) F -ratios, pointing to the fact that they all predict the relationships between the Scales and frequency of use significantly well. Despite this, none of the R^2 values indicated that any of the models explained more than 28% of the variance in these relationships. It is worth thinking about other factors that might be at play, influencing these relationships.

While the correlation coefficients and the coefficients from the OLS regressions both give measures of the relationships between the Scales and the index, the correlation information helps us to understand these relationships after controlling for the effects of other variables in the models. In the results from both the regressions and correlations, the relationships between the index and Scale were similar. That is, the relationship was strongest between index scores and the Reflective and Integrative Learning Scale in both the regression and correlation results, and weakest between index scores and the Student-Faculty Interaction Scale.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

Since the beginning of this research project in 2015, much has changed in the media landscape in the United States. Questions about the veracity and biases of news organizations are rampant, identity politics has led to distrust based on perceived political affiliations of media sources, and the very natures of truth and facts have been called into question. At the highest levels of our government, politicians criticize the media and encourage citizens to question or reject any news or popular culture that shows these politicians in a negative light – without regard to the accuracy of those depictions. The power of the “fourth estate,” what the framers of the U.S. constitution once intended to be the watchdog of democracy, has been undermined because of these forces; leaving us to wonder which media voices are really trustworthy.

Although an existential crisis has developed in the news media that creates questions for our society and democracy, the results from my study offer insights into how instructors use pop culture in the classroom. Further, the results presented in Chapter Four point to linkages between use of pop culture and other effective teaching practices that should be examined. In the chapter that follows, I will discuss significant findings from my analyses and implications they hold for future practice. I will conclude with suggested future directions for research in this area, which will touch on the shift in our perceptions of the media over the past several years.

Research Question One

Findings from the first research question, asking how often pop culture is used by instructors and with what frequency each type of media is used, indicate that the majority of respondents (52.7%) use pop culture “A few times a semester” or less. When looking at type of media used, instructors reported they most often used visual images and least often used music. This result mirrors the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) literature reviewed in

Chapter Two, in which instructors mentioned using music in the fewest number of articles. However, the visual images result is not supported by the literature and is an interesting finding to consider. It is possible that instructors considered movies or television shows – the pop culture medium most often mentioned in the SoTL pieces – to be “visual images.” But because those response options were also available, that scenario seems unlikely. More likely is that instructors are considering “visual images” to be inclusive of graphs, charts, diagrams, photographs, and other visual aids that help to represent information in an alternative way to texts or lecture. Although we cannot assume this is true, it is an area for fine tuning the survey questions, should this study be undertaken again in the future.

Responses to the second question on the survey show that most faculty use each type of media “sometimes” or “never.” This finding echoes the results from the frequency of use question, showing that on the whole, faculty are not engaging in pop culture use at high rates. Despite the majority of respondents indicating that they do not use pop culture in the classroom on a regular basis, there is still a notable group (47.3%) of instructors who do use pop culture “Often, but not every class session” or “Every class session.”

Implications. The primary implication from the results of this research question is that it is the first documentation of the national practice of faculty using pop culture in undergraduate teaching. Prior to this study, only localized research studies (Tisdell & Thompson, 2007; Peacock, Covino, Auchter, Boyd, Klug, Laing, & Irvin, 2018) had been conducted, making results less generalizable. We now have a better picture of what faculty engagement in this teaching technique looks like overall, and within each type of media studied in this project.

Additionally, my results mirror the findings of Tisdell and Thompson (2007) and Peacock et. al (2018) who found that the majority of instructors used pop culture “occasionally,”

rather than “frequently.” Although the measures used to define frequency of use and the populations vary somewhat between all three studies, the similar results increase the likelihood that these findings are reliable. What is less clear are the results of this “occasional” use. For example does occasional use result in higher levels of student satisfaction and success, or does pop culture need to be utilized more frequently to influence these outcomes? None of the three quantitative studies of pop culture use to date have examined student outcomes, though the SoTL literature tells us that students’ satisfaction and perceptions of their own learning increased when instructors incorporated pop culture in a course (Springer & Yelenik, 2011; Jubas & Knutson, 2012; Beavers, 2011; Pryor, 2008; Borgwald & Schreiner, 1994; Edwards, 1997; Collins, 2012; Burks, 2011). The SoTL literature contains a variety of frequencies of instructor use, possibly indicating that any level improves student outcomes. However, quantitative study of defined levels of instructor use to confirm if and how frequency is linked to student outcomes is an area of potential future research.

Implications for faculty. Despite the lack of quantitative support for a connection between frequency of pop culture use and better student outcomes, the available body of SoTL literature cited above does support this link. And, such a wide range of instructors and courses finding benefits in this teaching technique implies that it can be useful across disciplines. Further, results from my study show that almost half of instructors are already using pop culture frequently. With the supporting literature and my results in mind, I argue that faculty who have interest in this technique but who do not currently use it should consider incorporating pop culture into at least one assignment to test how it works for them.

Implications for faculty developers. Although about half of instructors are using pop culture frequently, that leave about half who are not. The successful use of this technique in the

SoTL literature points to the potential to target faculty development to groups who are less likely to use pop culture, making these instructors aware of its potential uses and the positive outcomes that can be realized through thoughtful use. The results from the second part of this research question identify who those instructors are, as well as the courses that are less likely to incorporate this teaching technique, and give a roadmap to developers to conduct this targeted outreach.

Research Question Two, Part One

Instructor characteristics. While it is interesting to see the overall picture of how often pop culture is being used in the classroom, it is even more interesting to look at the characteristics of instructors who are more likely to be in this group of frequent pop culture users, and the course settings in which it is more likely to be found. Results from analysis of this portion of the second research question showed no significant differences in pop culture use by instructor gender identity, tenure status, employment status, rank, or course division. The only significant result by racial identity was that those who selected “Prefer not to respond” were more likely ($p < .05$) to include more pop culture than any other group. This finding is difficult to interpret because scholars in the field have little information about respondents who chose “Prefer not to respond.” Hampson, Edmonds, Goldberg, Barckley, Klest, Dubanoski, and Hiller (2016) and Durant, Carey, and Schroder (2002) have found that when asked highly sensitive questions on topics such as sexual behaviors and attitudes, or trauma and abuse; women tend to select “prefer not to respond” often than men. However, the items on the pop culture set, and on FSSE overall, do not approach this level of sensitivity; making it less likely that these findings are applicable here. What is notable, though, is that pop culture use does not seem to be influenced by instructor characteristics which other research has shown to affect teaching

practices (e.g. Nelson Laird, Lambert, Cogswell, & Ribera, 2014; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005; BrckaLorenz & Nelson Laird, 2017; Kezar & Sam, 2010; Cole, 2007).

One area of significant difference was found when looking at the number of years an instructor has been teaching. In terms of this characteristic, faculty who have been teaching longer were less likely ($p < .05$) to use pop culture examples in the classroom. This finding may be attributable to older faculty being less comfortable with or aware of current trends in pop culture. As Danesi (2019) observes, popular culture has always been developed and enacted by young people, and, generally, resisted by older generations. Because my operational definition of pop culture limited it to examples from the past 10 years, I may have excluded older faculty who do use pop culture, but choose to incorporate examples with which they are more familiar.

Alternatively, it is possible that instructors with more years of experience have found techniques that they feel are effective and do not feel the need to experiment with new methods. However, there is research to suggest that students perceive older professors as less effective than their younger counterparts (Wilson, Beyer, & Monteiro, 2014). Wilson, Beyer, and Monteiro's work suggests a possible lack of alignment in how older faculty perceive their methods versus how students perceive them, which offers another way in which pop culture may be useful. Greenfield (2007) explained that instructors who use current pop culture examples in the classroom make themselves more relatable to students, which could help to eliminate the misalignment of student and faculty perceptions. In addition, as Greenfield notes, using current pop culture examples can increase student-faculty interaction, which we know benefits students (Trolan, Jach, Hanson, & Pascarella, 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

The final area of instructor characteristics in which significant differences were found was in instructors' disciplinary areas. Instructors teaching in every discipline except Physical

Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Engineering were more likely ($p < .001$) than the reference group (Engineering) to use pop culture in the classroom. While we often find a break between the practices of STEM faculty and non-STEM faculty (e.g. Nelson Laird, Shoup, Kuh, & Schwarz, 2008; Blair, Miller, Ong, & Zastavker, 2017; Nelson Laird, 2011), the results in my study are more muddled. Here, instructors in the Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Sciences join the traditionally non-STEM fields in being more likely than their Engineering colleagues to use pop culture.

Implications for faculty. The fact that no significant differences in frequency of use were found by many of the faculty characteristics included in this study is striking. One possible reason for this result is that pop culture permeates all of our lives, regardless of our racial/ethnic or gender identity, how often we go to work, the professional titles we hold, or with whom we work (e.g. upper- or lower-division students). The type of pop culture we consume may vary by any or all of those factors, but the fact that it is present in our lives does not. This again speaks to the idea that pop culture can be used to introduce new ideas to students using elements that are familiar to them, regardless of some of these areas of potential difference. Looking at this finding another way, it is interesting to note that none of these faculty characteristics negatively influenced frequency of pop culture use. In other words, pop culture use appears to be accessible across these faculty characteristics, a finding which may help counter any hesitancy faculty may feel about trying pop culture in instruction because of these variables.

Implications for faculty developers. The SoTL literature suggests that using pop culture relevant to students is one way to help learners connect coursework with other influential facets of their life. And, as Rogers, Kuiper, and Kirker (1977) found, learners retain more information when it relates to them personally in some way. Similarly, research on effective teaching

practices indicates that, among other things, using examples to illustrate points helps students increase problem-solving skills and persist at greater rates (Pascarella & Blaich, 2013). With these findings in mind, it seems intuitive that leveraging the importance of pop culture in students' lives can be used to help students learn more effectively. Faculty developers should use this research to make the argument that pop culture can be used to increase learning in this way.

The variable with the most significant findings was instructors' disciplinary area. Here, there was not a clear STEM/non-STEM split, with Biological Sciences joining non-STEM disciplines in being more likely than Engineering to use pop culture. Although the effect size of this result ($\beta = 0.163$) is small, use of pop culture in Biological Sciences is not unsupported in the SoTL literature. Pryor (2008) used episodes of *Star Trek* in introductory biology courses to engage students who were uninterested or intimidated by the course material, and to offer a fresh perspective on foundational elements of biology. However, Pryor is an outlier in the literature, with his work the only SoTL piece written by a Biology instructor. In contrast to Pryor's practice, Peacock, Covino, Auchter, Boyd, Klug, Laing, and Irvin's (2018) small-scale study of pop culture in instruction found a traditional split in which instructors in STEM fields used less pop culture and were less likely to think of it as a worthy teaching tool than instructors in non-STEM fields. This finding in my study, although limited in its practical implications, counters Peacock et. al. and indicates an area for potential intervention by faculty developers. Developers should encourage STEM faculty to consider pop culture as a means of giving their courses a fresh perspective.

Course characteristics. Turning to course-based factors that influence pop culture use, no significant differences were found between upper- and lower-division courses. However, each of the other course characteristics examined did yield significant results. Most striking among

these are the effect sizes and levels of significance that increase as course size increases. Course sizes of 20 students or less were not more likely to use pop culture than the reference group (31-40 students). Beginning with course sizes of 21-30 ($p < .05$) through courses with 100 or more students ($p < .001$), though, the larger the size of the student group, the more likely the course was to include pop culture. The effect sizes also increase as course size increases, beginning with $\beta = 0.073$ in course size of 21-30, and increasing to $\beta = 0.102$ for course sizes of 100 or more students. However, the increase in effect size from the smallest to largest course size is minimal, indicating that there is little practical difference in levels of significance between these variables. While these effect sizes are all small, this finding makes sense intuitively. In larger courses where small group work during class might be logistically challenging, using pop culture examples could help to break up the monotony of lectures and to hold students' attention (McKeachie, 2002).

Along with larger course size, those courses designated as general education requirements were more likely ($p < .001$) to include pop culture than those without that designation. A small effect size ($\beta = 0.090$) limits the practical implications of this significance, although this finding is supported in the SoTL literature (Beavers, 2011; Pryor, 2008). Pop culture examples provide both a means of engaging students who might not be interested in the course and a common place to start class discussions or assignments so that students who feel intimidated by the course have a familiar entry point to the material.

Finally, examining course format shows us that only courses taught in a combination of classroom instruction and distance education were significantly more likely ($p < .05$) than distance education courses to use pop culture, although, again, the effect of this significance is small ($\beta = 0.082$). Combination courses face unique challenges in terms of building both in-class

rapport between students and instructors, as well as facilitating productive online or remote interactions and dialog. And, while I argue that pop culture can be effectively used in any course setting, it is perhaps exceptionally well-suited for hybrid courses. Viewing a film or listening to an album can work as effective connectors between students, between course materials, and can be done in any location. This quality, along with lowering students' levels of intimidation to engaging with course materials, make pop culture ideal for combination course formats.

Implications for faculty and faculty developers. The findings related to course-based characteristics do not offer many surprises. Combination, larger, and general education courses all face a variety of challenges in engaging the students who enroll in them, and pop culture examples are one method of addressing these challenges. What makes pop culture unique and versatile as a means of overcoming these issues is that it gives instructors the ability to create not only a common platform from which to interact with course material, but a familiar one. Doing so may help students who are intimidated by, or uninterested in, the course subject to feel more connected to it and more confident in engaging with it (Pryor, 2008). Faculty should take these findings into consideration when they are assigned to teach large, combination, or general education courses; and consider using pop culture as a way to connect students with the material. Further, faculty developers should target outreach to instructors assigned to these courses and encourage them to not only use pop culture as a means of lowering barriers for students to interact with the course topic, but to critically examine the subjects and voices represented in the examples used.

Research Question Two, Part Two

The second part of research question two looked more deeply into instructor frequency of media use by using an index to sort faculty into “frequent user” and “less frequent user” groups.

Faculty who responded that they used a type of media “very often” or “often” received a score of 1 for that type of media and were considered frequent users of that media. Conversely, faculty who responded that they used a type of media “sometimes” or “never” received a score of 0 for that type of media and were considered less frequent users. By doing this recoding for all four types of media measured and adding up the scores, I was able to give faculty an overall rating of 0 to 4 for frequency of media use. Results from creating this index mirrored those from the frequency analysis in that the largest portion of faculty use pop culture infrequently, and the instructors who use it very often formed the smallest group. Next, the index scores were used as the dependent variable in an OLS regression in which faculty and course characteristics were the independent variables.

Instructor and course characteristics. Looking at faculty characteristics, the largest group of significant findings were in instructors’ disciplinary area. However, as with other results, the effect sizes are generally small except for Arts and Humanities ($\beta = 0.376$). And, as with the results described above, there was not a STEM versus non-STEM split, as we often see in teaching practices. Here, faculty in every discipline except Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Engineering and Social Service Professions were significantly more likely to be frequent users of pop culture. Instructors in Arts and Humanities ($\beta = 0.376$), Education ($\beta = 0.217$), Business ($\beta = 0.185$), and Communications, Media, and Public Relations ($\beta = 0.267$) were the most likely ($p < .001$) to be frequent users of pop culture, although as just mentioned, all but the Arts and Humanities effect sizes are small.

In addition to disciplinary differences, White faculty were significantly less likely ($p < .05$, $\beta = 0.123$) to be frequent users although the effect size of this result is small. No other instructor characteristics (years teaching, rank, employment status, gender identity, tenure status)

were significant in this equation, nor were any course characteristics except general education requirement status. Courses designated as general education were more likely ($p < .01$) to frequently use pop culture than non-general education courses.

Implications. In some ways, the results from the second part of research question two are not surprising, given the findings from the first part of the question. For example, as in the first equation, disciplinary area differences were the largest group of predictors of which instructors were more likely to be frequent users of pop culture. Arts and Humanities had the largest coefficient in both models, indicating that the effect of this significance is greater in this discipline than in the others. This finding fits with other research on teaching practices, which has shown that Arts and Humanities is one of the disciplines most likely to use Effective Teaching Practices as measured by the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) (Strickland & BrckaLorenz, 2018). And, as with the first equation, courses designated as general education were more likely to incorporate frequent pop culture use than those that do not carry that designation. As mentioned above, this finding is supported in the SoTL literature that described using pop culture to engage students in general education courses in which they might have limited interest, feelings of intimidation; or to break up lecture formats that are often used when course sizes are larger.

One area of significance in the second part of the research question that was not mirrored in the first is that while White faculty were no more or less likely to use pop culture in instruction, this group was significantly less likely ($p < .05$) to be frequent users than faculty who identify with other races or ethnicities. While the effect size of this finding is small ($\beta = -0.123$), it is interesting to explore. One explanation for Whites being less frequent users of pop culture is that other research shows this group also engages less in other positive teaching practices. For

example, Strickland and BrckaLorenz (2018) also found that faculty who identify as White were significantly less likely ($p < .001$) than almost all other racial or ethnic identities to use Effective Teaching Practices, as measured by FSSE. Relatedly, BrckaLorenz and Nelson Laird (2017) found that faculty who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander; Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino; and American Indian, Alaska Native, Other races, and Multiracial were all more likely ($p < .001$) than White faculty to use practices that support FSSE's measure of Reflective and Integrative Learning. Given this additional context about the frequency with which White faculty engage with other positive teaching methods and tools, my finding that this group is also less likely to be the most frequent users of pop culture in the classroom makes sense.

Implications for faculty developers. Faculty developers should consider the finding that White faculty are less likely to use pop culture within the context of other research about White faculty. Because Whites make up the majority of instructors in higher education and are often less likely to engage in research-based teaching techniques, it is incumbent upon both White instructors and faculty developers to find ways to improve their practice. By moving the needle on this largest cohort of instructors, not only in terms of pop culture use but with other best practices as well, the quality of instruction overall can be influenced.

Research Question Three

Instructor and course characteristics. The third research question asked which instructor and course characteristics predict instructor motivation to use pop culture in their instruction. Using the Motivation scale as the dependent variable, I included the same instructor and course characteristics as independent variables in this OLS regression as in the equations in research question two. Looking at instructor characteristics first, respondents who identified as

women were significantly more likely ($p < .001$) to be motivated to use pop culture in instruction, while instructors who have been teaching longer were slightly less motivated ($p < .05$) to use it. Here again, as with the results from the second research question, we see a slightly non-traditional split in terms of discipline. Faculty in all non-STEM disciplines were more likely ($p < .001$) than Engineering to be motivated to use pop culture, but so were instructors in Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources ($p < .01$). No significant differences were found among any of the course characteristics, showing that none of the course factors influenced motivation in an appreciable way.

Implications. The results from this research question are interesting to ponder. This question was the only one which resulted in a significant difference between gender identities, with women being more motivated than other identities to use pop culture examples. One theory that may explain some of this this motivation comes from persistent literature indicating that male students perceive female instructors as less effective than their male counterparts (MacNell, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2015; Arbuckle & Williams, 2003; Sprinkle, 2009). Although other research suggests that context matters more than gender identity (e.g. Nelson Laird, Garver, & Niskodé-Dossett, 2011), women instructors may be looking for ways to support their viewpoints by using examples from pop culture.

Another interesting way to think about results from this question is to compare them to the results from research question two. In research question two, we learned about which faculty and course characteristics influenced increased frequency of pop culture use in the classroom. Here, we learned about which faculty and course characteristics influence *why* that use was taking place. Instructors who preferred not to respond about their racial/ethnic identities were significantly more likely ($p < .05$) to use pop culture, but in the results for research question

three, this group was not more motivated to do so. Similarly, the larger the course size, the greater the use of pop culture; but instructors of larger courses were no more likely than others to be motivated. General education courses were more likely to include pop culture, but instructors who teach them were not more likely to be motivated to use it than their counterparts. In contrast, respondents who identified as women were not more likely than respondents who identified as men to use more pop culture, but they are more likely ($p < .001$) than men to be motivated to use it.

One explanation for the apparently incongruent results from research question two and research question three comes from looking at the effect sizes for these areas of significant findings in each research question. None of the effect sizes are above 0.106, which is so small as to have very limited practical influence. In other words, while certain faculty and course characteristics may have been significant in one question and not the other, these results have little real-world meaning.

Another potential explanation is that the items that make up the Motivations scale are not the ones that best capture the reasons instructors use pop culture in their teaching. Other factors not captured in the Motivations items, perhaps purely logistical ones (e.g. to break up lectures, maintain student attention), that better explain instructor motivation may be at play. It is possible that instructors who use pop culture simply did not identify with the items on the Motivations scale, and thus scored lower on it. This is an area ripe for future research into what does motivate these instructors to use pop culture.

Despite the areas just mentioned, there are other faculty and course characteristics that were significant in both research questions two and three. For example, instructors who have been teaching longer were both less likely ($p < .05$) to use pop culture, and less likely ($p < .05$) to

be motivated to use it. Among disciplinary areas, faculty in every discipline except Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering were more likely ($p < .001$) to use more pop culture and more likely ($p < .001$) to be motivated to use it than their colleagues in Engineering. The congruent findings between levels of likelihood and motivation are supported by the significant, positive results from the correlations between motivation and overall frequency of use; as well as between motivation and use of each type of media.

Implications for faculty developers. In terms of practical interventions, these congruent results could help faculty developers hone in on instructor groups that are the least likely to use or be motivated to use pop culture. Outreach to those groups to educate them on the literature-based benefits other instructors have observed may be an effective way to convince them to try a pop culture intervention in their own courses. Alternatively, faculty developers could target outreach to those disciplines, such as Arts and Humanities, that are already using pop culture and are motivated to do so. Developers should encourage these instructors to deepen their use of this technique by using it to give representation to voices not present in the classroom, or by assigning students to critically examine the messages they are receiving through pop culture.

Research Question Four

My final research question examined the links between instructors' frequency of pop culture use and their engagement in Effective Teaching Practices, Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Student-Faculty Interaction as measured by FSSE Scales. As noted in Chapter Four, each of the three OLS regressions was significant ($p < .001$), showing that more frequent use of pop culture is linked to more frequent engagement by instructors in other practices that are beneficial for student learning. This relationship is further supported by the correlations between

frequency of use and Scale scores; which indicated that as frequency of use increases, so does engagement with these other practices ($p < .01$).

Implications. Results showing links between use of pop culture and use of other positive teaching practices are, in many ways, unsurprising. For example, the Reflective and Integrative Learning Scale captures the extent to which instructors encourage their students to make connections between their learning and the world around them. Pop culture is an excellent avenue for making those connections, as it is a key element in creating students' worlds. The Scale also measures the emphasis placed on examining issues or viewpoints from other perspectives. As the SoTL literature reviewed in Chapter Two points out, many instructors use pop culture to provide viewpoints that are not represented in a given classroom.

Similarly, the Effective Teaching Practices Scale quantifies several classroom practices that have been shown to enhance student learning (Pascarella & Blaich, 2013). One of these is the use of examples to reinforce a topic or theme. Clearly, examples in the form of pop culture fall into this category and should be considered a worthy part of instructors' toolkits to support student learning.

Finally, the Student-Faculty Interaction scale captures in- and out-of-class interactions between students and faculty. Although responses to the Motivation scale item asking to what extent faculty use pop culture to help make themselves more relatable to students showed that only a quarter of instructors use it in this way "very much" or "quite a bit," the SoTL literature indicates that using pop culture with which students are familiar can increase instructor relatability, and thus student comfort in interacting with their instructors (Pryor, 2008). The low number of faculty who responded that they use pop culture in this way highlights another area of potential intervention for faculty developers. By using pop culture, faculty have the opportunity

to not only anchor class material in students' worlds, provide examples of course topics and themes, and make themselves more relatable in order to create a more welcoming environment for student-faculty interaction.

Implications for faculty and faculty developers. Faculty developers can utilize the research underpinning the FSSE scales used in this study as a way to start a conversation with instructors about the techniques they encompass. Developers should use pop culture as one suggested way to operationalize these practices, explaining the benefits of critically engaging with media examples, rather than using them as class time filler. Faculty who are already engaging in the techniques described in the FSSE scales should consider creating assignments that use pop culture as the vehicle for these tools.

Overall Implications

Examining the results from all research questions overall reveals several take-aways. First is that tenure status, rank, employment status, and course division were not significant in any model. These results point to areas of faculty and course characteristics which likely do not need to be considered in future studies on what shapes faculty use of pop culture in teaching.

Second, it is notable that disciplinary area was the variable in which the most significant results were found across all questions. From the perspective of the pop culture and media literature, this conclusion is somewhat surprising. As much of the research reviewed in Chapter Two notes, pop culture can have quite a lot to do with identity – that is, certain television shows, music, fashion, etc. may appeal to different groups of people based on aspects of their identity such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and so forth (Strinati, 2004). This is not to say that these identities determine which pop culture we consume, but rather that identities help us to form social groups, which in turn influence our tastes in entertainment. In contrast to this

literature, my study indicates that these characteristics have some influence in faculty use of pop culture in teaching, but discipline is a greater determinant.

However, looking at this finding through the lens of higher education literature, the fact that disciplinary differences in teaching practices were prevalent fits with other research that has been previously conducted (e.g. Neumann, 2001 for an overview). For example, inquiries into teaching practices of STEM and non-STEM instructors have often found disciplinary differences in engagement in innovative and effective teaching practices (e.g. Nelson Laird, Shoup, Kuh, & Schwarz, 2008; Blair, Miller, Ong, & Zastavker, 2017; Nelson Laird, 2011). My study's results were nontraditional in that Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources faculty were more likely than other STEM fields to incorporate pop culture, which is curious. It is possible that instructors from this area who responded to my item set incorporate other practices more akin to soft sciences, such as requiring students to synthesize and analyze course material (Neumann, 2001).

Overall Implications for Faculty and Faculty Developers

Although the majority of the SoTL research does not link instructor motivations for using pop culture with pedagogical theories, several of these theories specifically mention the use of pop culture as a means to increase learning and engagement in the classroom. Critical pedagogy is prevalently mentioned in the literature (e.g. Sfier, 2014; Giroux, 1989; Buckingham, 1998; Daspit & Weaver, 2012, Sandlin & Miliam, 2008, etc.) as a rationale for using pop culture to incorporate diverse voices in the classroom and to enhance students' media literacy so that they can become informed citizens in our democracy. In addition to critical pedagogy, transformative pedagogy and constructivism both highlight pop culture as an effective medium through which to teach undergraduates. In thinking about how the findings from this study can be practically

incorporated into undergraduate education, each of these pedagogical theories offers exciting suggestions.

Critical pedagogy. In the introduction to this dissertation, and throughout each chapter, I have noted where pop culture has been or could be used by undergraduate educators to incorporate diverse voices in the classroom and to help students become informed participants in our society via greater media literacy and engagement with the media. The fact that pop culture can be a place of common ground not only in the classroom, but in broader society, has implications for instructors tasked with preparing students to be thoughtful citizens in our world. Throughout this current chapter, I have mentioned that there are areas of intervention that could be undertaken by faculty developers to make instructors more aware of the benefits of using pop culture in teaching. A deeper explanation of the theoretical and practical groundwork for these interventions, either undertaken by faculty developers or by instructors in their own classrooms, will be useful as well.

Critical pedagogy is the teaching philosophy perhaps most often linked with discourse on teaching and popular culture. As Giroux (2011) defines it, critical pedagogy is one in which students are encouraged to question themselves, course materials, and the world around them about issues of social justice and cultural domination. It touches on issues of democracy, communication, education, and whose voices are represented in our discourse; and has its roots in the original ideals of democratic education to develop an informed and engaged citizenry.

Giroux (1998) put it clearly when he stated

“it is precisely within the diverse terrain of popular culture that pedagogical practices must be established as part of a broader politics of public life—practices that will aggressively subject dominant power to criticism, analysis, and

transformation as part of a progressive reconstruction of democratic society” (p. 49).

John Dewey (1916; 1997) discussed higher education as a means to achieve these ideals. He argued that a democracy is not just a form of government, but rather a set of shared living experiences and common interests which take effort by every individual involved to sustain. A primary vehicle of this effort is obtaining education, and Dewey presciently noted that: “A society which is mobile, which is full of channels for the distribution of a change occurring anywhere, must see to it that its members are educated to personal initiative and adaptability” (p. 88). Dewey could not possibly have imagined our current mobile society, overflowing with channels that constantly distribute events across thousands of miles, but his point is still relevant today.

Critical pedagogy is particularly salient for non-majority students who are just as inundated by messages from the dominant culture as majority students. In particular, developing media literacy can be a way for these students to make meaning of, and argue against the majority-focused messages they receive. As Morrell (2002) describes, students can use pop culture examples to break down dominant messages into more basic arguments and representations, then develop arguments and narratives counter to the dominant ones. The outcome of this process is not only a more educated and aware group of students, but, eventually, a more egalitarian society through the development and dissemination of these alternative messages (Morrell). This notion is particularly relevant today, as pessimism in government officials and public life has grown over the past several decades (Giroux, 2011) and exploded in more recently. One means of addressing this pessimism is giving young people the tools needed

to critique the messages they are receiving and offer alternatives to the grim outlook that has settled around us.

Transformative learning. Related to Giroux's thoughts on combating social pessimism is the idea of transformative learning. Transformative learning, an aspect of critical pedagogy, advocates critical reflection on the media and its capitalist messages in order to change the way students view and consume those messages (O'Sullivan, 1999). As with the larger body of critical pedagogy, transformative learning seeks to raise the consciousness of the viewer and help her/him interrogate power dynamics portrayed between majority/minority groups. However, O'Sullivan does not set forth any practical guidelines for conducting this transformative learning. Goulah (2007) and Hanley (2007) both take O'Sullivan's ideas into the practical realm, creating learning opportunities for their students to not only debate popular film (Goulah) and hip hop (Hanley), but to develop their own projects in these media. By learning not only how to critique these media but how to put together their own messages, students integrate both the practical and theoretical (Goulah; Hanley) and begin to pursue a modern version of Dewey's (1916; 1997) educational ideals.

Constructivism. Finally, the use of pop culture in undergraduate education offers the opportunity for students to co-construct their learning along with their instructors (Jubas & Knutson, 2012). A constructivist approach to learning through pop culture asks students to share examples of media messages they have received and critique them as they would a body of literature. Students look at pop culture for themes, metaphors, imagery, and so forth – rather than absorbing it passively as entertainment (Jubas & Knutson). Doing so allows students, both majority and non-majority, to become aware of the messages being transmitted in the entertainment that surrounds them (Hartshorne, 1987). This awareness leads back to Dewey's

ideas about education creating informed democracy in which individuals articulately voice their own experiences.

A common theme throughout all of these pedagogies is that both instructors and students are actively engaging with the pop culture, rather than passively observing the examples being used. This step is crucial for the effective use of pop culture as a teaching tool. Without critical reflection on how people and ideas are represented in pop culture, use of it in the classroom runs the risk of becoming simply a time-filler and not a tool for teaching. Further, by using it in the classroom, instructors imply that pop culture is worthy of students' time and attention. Without unpacking the messages and representations of people in the media used, instructors also run the risk of endorsing viewpoints from the dominant culture which may be incorrect, biased, or not fully comprehensive of the issue under discussion. In other words, pop culture has the potential to expand students' thinking or to reinforce dominant messages, depending on how instructors choose to use it.

Faculty who are interested in these pedagogies already should apply them to pop culture and encourage students to examine the messages they are receiving, rather than passively consume them. Faculty developers could package these pedagogical tools with the research-based practices from the FSSE scales and use pop culture as the means by which to operationalize both. For example, the Reflective and Integrative Learning scale, which had the strongest relationship with pop culture use, asks how often instructors encourage students to explore other viewpoints. Faculty developers could use critical pedagogy to ground this practice in theory, and encourage faculty to enact it by designing an assignment in which students critique a pop culture example to dissect whose voices are represented and how.

Directions for Future Research

As described at the beginning of this chapter, there has been a seismic shift over the past four years in the way that people perceive and critique the media. Where once the manner in which information was presented, especially in news sources, may have been questioned; now the information itself is a target of suspicion. It would be fascinating to survey faculty again about their use of media to see if the number of instructors using it as a teaching tool – particularly around issues of democracy, ethics, and representation – has increased since these changes in our public discourse have taken place.

Asking not only the frequency of use question again to determine whether our current social conversation around the media has caused instructors to increase their use of it in instruction, but turning the motivation scale items to more timely topics would be fascinating as well. As explained above, the motivation scale items were likely not the ones that best captured instructors' actual motivations for using pop culture. Reorienting these items to be more responsive to our current social landscape, as well as to reflect elements of critical pedagogy (e.g. questioning the world about issues of social justice and cultural domination), might resonate more with faculty. However, additional items that inquire about more logistical motivations (e.g. the need to break up lectures) are also warranted, as much of the SoTL literature mentioned these motivations as well.

Because disciplinary area was the group of variables that consistently had significant and meaningful results across my research questions, another area for future research is to explore pop culture use by discipline more fully. Arts and Humanities faculty reported using more pop culture and being more motivated to do so than all other disciplines. Delving into how these instructors use pop culture and whether they are more motivated by questioning cultural

propagation and critiquing dominant messages than the motivation items in this study would provide more nuanced and actionable information for faculty developers.

In addition to Arts and Humanities, the results from this study included a slightly surprising finding in that faculty in Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources joined non-STEM disciplines in being more likely to use pop culture, to be frequent users of pop culture, and to be motivated to use pop culture than other STEM fields. Further examination of why this discipline appears to break with its STEM counterparts on the issue of pop culture in practice is needed to illuminate the factors that may be at play here. Specifically, determining which instructors and courses within Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources use pop culture and why could inform faculty development efforts to engage other STEM fields in using pop culture as well.

Conclusion

This dissertation represents the first national quantitative study of undergraduate faculty that gathered data on the frequency of their use of pop culture in instruction, the types of media they use, their motivations for use, and relationships between their use of pop culture and use of other researched-based teaching practices. The results showed that the majority of faculty are not engaged in frequent use of pop culture, but that frequency of use is positively correlated with Effective Teaching Practices, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Reflective and Integrative Learning. In addition, pop culture use has roots in critical pedagogies that encourage students to question messages they receive and become informed and active participants in our democracy. Drawing all of these threads together, I argue that pop culture should be considered not only a valid and respected teaching tool; but a vital one for preparing students to think critically, seek

out different sources of information, and consider whose voices and viewpoints are represented in the media that is their constant companion.

Appendix

Table A-1

Faculty characteristics

	Response options	Frequency	Valid percent
Faculty racial or ethnic identification	American Indian or Alaska Native	10	0.5
	Asian	74	3.5
	Black or African American	130	6.1
	Hispanic or Latino	40	1.9
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.0
	White	1626	75.9
	Other	31	1.4
	Multiracial	41	1.9
	I prefer not to respond	188	8.8
Gender identity	Man	995	46.7
	Woman	1029	48.3
	Another gender identity	2	0.1
	I prefer not to respond	106	5.0

Table A-1 (Continued)

	Response options	Frequency	Valid percent
Tenure status	No tenure system at this institution	234	10.9
	Not on tenure track, but this institution has a tenure system	655	30.5
	On tenure track but not tenured	318	14.8
	Tenured	940	43.8
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	550	23.9
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	169	7.3
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	240	10.4
	Social Sciences	251	10.9
	Business	245	10.6
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	102	4.4
	Education	240	10.4
	Engineering	75	3.3
	Health Professions	223	9.7
	Social Service Prof.	65	2.8
	Other disciplines	143	6.2

Table A-1 (continued)

	Response options	Frequency	Valid percent
Rank	Professor	566	26.2
	Associate Professor	539	24.9
	Assistant Professor	523	24.2
	Instructor	365	16.9
	Lecturer	87	4.0
	Other	83	3.8
Years teaching	4 or less	310	14.6
	5-9	351	16.5
	10-19	625	29.3
	20-29	497	23.3
	30 or more	347	16.3
Employment Status	Part-Time	459	21.3
	Full-Time	1699	78.7

Table A-2

Faculty characteristics variable coding

Faculty characteristic	Variable coding	
Racial or ethnic identification	American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or Other	AIAN, NHOPI, or Other = 1; Else = 0
	Asian**	Asian = 1; Else = 0
	Black or African American	Black or African American = 1; Else = 0
	Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino = 1; Else = 0
	White	White = 1; Else = 0
	Multiracial	Multiracial = 1; Else = 0
	I prefer not to respond	PNR = 1; Else = 0
Gender identity	Man**	Man = 1; Else = 0
	Woman	Woman = 1; Else = 0
	Another gender identity	Another = 0; Else = 0
	I prefer not to respond	PNR = 1; Else = 0
Tenure status	No tenure system at this institution	No tenure system = 1; Else = 0
	Not on tenure track, but this institution has a tenure system	Not on TT = 1; Else = 0
	On tenure track but not tenured	On TT but not T = 1; Else = 0
	Tenured**	Tenured = 1; Else = 0
Employment Status	Part-Time	PT = 1; Else = 0
	Full-Time**	FT = 1; Else = 0

**Reference group

Table A-2 (continued)

Faculty characteristic		Variable coding
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	A & H = 1; Else = 0
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	Bio = 1; Else = 0
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	PSMCS = 1; Else = 0
	Social Sciences	SocSci = 1; Else = 0
	Business	Business=1; Else=0
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	Comm = 1; Else = 0
	Education	Educ = 1; Else = 0
	Engineering**	Engineer = 1; Else = 0
	Health Professions	Health = 1; Else = 0
	Social Service Professions	SocServ = 1; Else = 0
Other disciplines	Other = 1; Else = 0	
Rank	Full Professor**	Full Prof = 1; Else = 0
	Associate Professor	Assoc Prof = 1; Else = 0
	Assistant Professor	Asst Prof = 1; Else = 0
	Lecturer	Lecturer = 1; Else = 0
	Instructor	Instructor = 1; Else = 0
Years teaching	0-100	Analyzed as continuous variable

**Reference group

Table A-3

Course characteristics

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Format	Classroom instruction on-campus	1796	85.2
	Classroom instruction at an auxiliary location (satellite campus, rented facility, etc.)	41	1.9
	Distance education (online, live or pre- recorded video or audio, correspondence, etc.)	98	4.6
	Combination of classroom instruction and distance education	174	8.3
General education requirement	No	1130	53.7
	Yes	976	46.3
Division	Lower division	935	44.2
	Upper division	1085	51.3
	Other	95	4.5
Class size	20 or fewer	763	36.1
	21-30	681	32.2
	31-40	266	12.6
	41-50	170	8.0
	51-100	157	7.4
	More than 100	79	3.7

Table A-4

Course characteristics variable coding

Course characteristic		Variable coding
Format	Classroom instruction on-campus	ClassOn = 1; Else = 0
	Classroom instruction at an auxiliary location (satellite campus, rented facility, etc.)	Aux = 1; Else = 0
	Distance education (online, live or pre-recorded video or audio, correspondence, etc.)**	Distance = 1; Else = 0
	Combination of classroom instruction and distance education	Combo = 1; Else = 0
General education requirement	Yes	GenEd = 1; Else = 0
	No**	NoGenEd = 1; Else = 0
Division	Lower division**	LD = 1; Else = 0
	Upper division	UD = 1; Else = 0
	Other	OtherD = 1; Else = 0
Class size	20 or fewer	20Less = 1; Else = 0
	21-30	21-30 = 1; Else = 0
	31-40**	31-40 = 1; Else = 0
	41-50	41-50 = 1; Else = 0
	51-100	51-100 = 1; Else = 0
	More than 100	100+ = 1; Else = 0

**Reference Group

FSSE Scale Items

Table A-5

Effective teaching practices

Question stem	Items	Response options
<p>In your undergraduate courses, to what extent do you do the following?</p>	<p>Clearly explain course goals and requirements</p>	<p>Very little; Some; Quite a bit; Very much</p>
	<p>Teach course sessions in an organized way</p>	
	<p>Use examples or illustrations to explain difficult points</p>	
	<p>Use a variety of teaching techniques to accommodate differences in student learning styles</p>	
	<p>Review and summarize material for students</p>	
	<p>Provide standards for satisfactory completion of assignments (rubrics, detailed outlines, etc.)</p>	
	<p>Provide feedback to students on drafts or works in progress</p>	
<p>Provide prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments</p>		

Table A-6

Reflective and integrative learning

Question stem	Items	Response options
<p>In your selected course section, how important is it to you that the typical student do the following?</p>	<p>Combine ideas from different courses when completing assignments</p>	<p>Not important; Somewhat important; Important; Very important</p>
	<p>Connect their learning to societal problems or issues</p>	
	<p>Include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments</p>	
	<p>Examine the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue</p>	
	<p>Try to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective</p>	
<p>Learn something that changes the way they understand an issue or concept</p>	<p>Connect ideas from your course to their prior experiences and knowledge</p>	

Table A-7

Student-faculty interaction

Question stem	Items	Response options
	Talked about their career plans	
During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following with the undergraduate students you teach or advise?	Worked on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	Never; Often; Sometimes; Very often
	Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts outside of class	
	Discussed their academic performance	

Popular Culture Survey Items and Frequencies

Table A-8

Question 1: How often do you use examples from current pop culture (film clips, YouTube videos, magazine articles, political cartoons, popular novels, photographs, etc.) in your selected course section?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Every class session	155	8.5
Often, but not every class session	708	38.8
A few times per semester	625	34.3
Once per semester	113	6.2
Never	222	12.2

Table A-9

Question 2: In your selected course section, how often do you use the following types of media to present current pop culture?

	Very often <i>n</i> / %	Often <i>n</i> / %	Sometimes <i>n</i> / %	Never <i>n</i> / %
Film/Video	285 / 18.1	341 / 21.6	749 / 47.5	202 / 12.8
Text	329 / 21.8	346 / 22.9	547 / 36.2	290 / 19.2
Visual Images	415 / 27.1	382 / 24.9	568 / 37.1	168 / 11.0
Music	113 / 7.6	122 / 8.2	493 / 33.1	762 / 51.1

Table A-10

Question 3: To what extent is each of the following a part of your rationale for using current pop culture in your selected course section?

	Very much <i>n</i> / %	Quite a bit <i>n</i> / %	Some <i>n</i> / %	Very little <i>n</i> / %	None <i>n</i> / %
Pop culture is the basis for my course topic	46 / 3.0	92 / 6.0	248 / 16.3	306 / 20.1	833 / 54.6
To capture and/or hold student attention	219 / 14.2	380 / 24.7	579 / 37.6	196 / 12.7	166 / 10.8
To make myself more relatable to students	122 / 8.0	259 / 16.9	509 / 33.2	305 / 19.9	337 / 22.0
To analyze the dominant culture	161 / 10.6	247 / 16.3	358 / 23.6	243 / 16.0	510 / 33.6
To make material relatable for students	346 / 22.4	480 / 31.0	477 / 30.9	103 / 6.7	140 / 9.1
To provide a fresh outlook on course material	319 / 20.7	496 / 32.2	442 / 28.7	131 / 8.5	151 / 9.8
To incorporate diverse voices	254 / 16.7	324 / 21.3	411 / 27.0	210 / 13.8	325 / 21.3

Table A-11

Summary of regression results predicting Student-Faculty Interaction by overall frequency of pop culture use and selected faculty and course characteristics.

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
	(Constant)	24.295	2.877		***
How often do you use examples from current pop culture (film clips, YouTube videos, magazine articles, political cartoons, popular novels, photographs, etc.) in your selected course section?					
Faculty racial or ethnic identification	Multiracial	2.433	2.632	0.025	
	Black or African American	6.266	1.996	0.104	**
	Hispanic or Latino	0.593	2.668	0.006	
	White	0.882	1.519	0.028	
	Other	6.726	2.647	0.069	*
	Prefer not to respond	0.870	1.996	0.018	
Gender identity	Woman	2.451	0.667	0.091	***
	Prefer not to respond	1.604	1.803	0.025	
Tenure status	No tenure system	2.048	1.205	0.047	
	Not on tenure track	0.049	1.196	0.002	
	On tenure track but not tenured	-0.529	1.369	-0.014	
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	-2.394	1.708	-0.077	
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	0.286	1.900	0.006	
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	-1.949	1.793	-0.045	
	Social Sciences	-0.561	1.821	-0.013	
	Business	-0.145	1.832	-0.003	
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	-2.165	2.104	-0.036	
	Education	-0.199	1.877	-0.004	
	Health Professions	-1.373	1.965	-0.027	
	Social Service Professions	-0.421	2.455	-0.005	
	Other disciplines	-0.793	2.055	-0.014	
Rank	Associate Professor	0.482	0.882	0.016	
	Assistant Professor	0.663	1.244	0.021	
	Lecturer	-1.057	1.911	-0.016	
	Instructor	-1.262	1.338	-0.035	
	Other rank	-1.489	1.967	-0.020	
Employment Status	Part-time	-8.195	1.033	-0.244	***
Years Teaching		-0.053	0.033	-0.044	

$$F = 7.269***, R^2 = .146$$

Note: Reference groups for faculty characteristics are Asian, Man, Tenured, Engineering, Full Professor, Full-time

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A-11 – Continued

Summary of regression results predicting Student-Faculty Interaction by overall frequency of pop culture use and selected faculty and course characteristics.

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
	(Constant)	24.295	2.877		***
General Education Requirement	Yes	-0.175	0.705	-0.006	
Course Format	Classroom, on-campus	0.689	0.706	0.026	***
	Classroom, auxiliary location	1.882	1.610	0.027	
	Combination classroom / distance	0.145	1.011	0.005	**
Division	Upper Division	-0.146	1.011	-0.005	
	Other division	-0.502	1.383	-0.010	
Course Size	20 or Less	-0.595	1.399	-0.012	
	21 - 30	-1.191	1.829	-0.017	
	41 - 50	-0.175	0.705	-0.006	
	51 - 100	0.689	0.706	0.026	
	100 or more	1.882	1.610	0.027	

F = 7.269***, R² = .146

Note: Reference groups for course characteristics are Not a general education requirement, Distance education, Lower division, and Course size 31-40

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A-12

Summary of regression results predicting Reflective and Integrative Learning by overall frequency of pop culture use.

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
	(Constant)	29.323	2.635		***
How often do you use examples from current pop culture (film clips, YouTube videos, magazine articles, political cartoons, popular novels, photographs, etc.) in your selected course section?					
Faculty racial or ethnic identification	Multiracial	0.504	2.421	0.005	
	Black or African American	0.709	1.822	0.012	
	Hispanic or Latino	-2.786	2.453	-0.028	
	White	-2.595	1.397	-0.081	
	Other	2.342	2.462	0.023	
	Prefer not to respond	-1.524	1.840	-0.030	
Gender identity	Woman	3.067	0.606	0.113	***
	Prefer not to respond	0.819	1.675	0.013	
Tenure status	No tenure system	0.658	1.090	0.015	
	Not on tenure track	0.292	1.086	0.010	
	On tenure track but not tenured	-0.457	1.248	-0.012	
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	5.537	1.578	0.180	***
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	1.294	1.755	0.025	
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	-5.422	1.655	-0.125	**
	Social Sciences	6.901	1.682	0.159	***
	Business	3.329	1.686	0.074	*
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	5.081	1.946	0.083	**
	Education	8.178	1.734	0.178	***
	Health Professions	9.288	1.805	0.186	***
	Social Service Professions	9.485	2.267	0.114	***
	Other disciplines	2.713	1.901	0.046	
Rank	Associate Professor	0.895	0.807	0.029	
	Assistant Professor	1.341	1.128	0.042	
	Lecturer	3.328	1.761	0.049	
	Instructor	1.576	1.218	0.044	
	Other rank	1.230	1.782	0.017	
Employment Status	Part-time	-0.337	0.938	-0.010	
Years Teaching		0.007	0.030	0.006	

F = 16.578***, R² = .277

Note: Reference groups for faculty characteristics are Asian, Man, Tenured, Engineering, Full Professor, Full-time

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A-12 – Continued

Summary of regression results predicting Reflective and Integrative Learning by overall frequency of pop culture use.

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
	(Constant)	29.323	2.635		***
General Education Requirement	Yes	2.773	0.643	0.102	***
Course Format	Classroom, on-campus	-1.910	1.331	-0.050	
	Classroom, auxiliary location	-0.411	2.468	-0.004	
	Combination classroom / distance	0.062	1.631	0.001	
Division	Upper Division	3.228	0.644	0.120	***
	Other division	2.298	1.442	0.034	
Course Size	20 or Less	1.054	0.929	0.038	
	21 - 30	-0.048	0.929	-0.002	
	41 - 50	-0.893	1.273	-0.018	
	51 - 100	-2.299	1.276	-0.046	
	100 or more	-2.879	1.682	-0.041	

F = 16.578***, R² = .277

Note: Reference groups for course characteristics are Not a general education requirement, Distance education, Lower division, and Course size 31-40

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A-13

Summary of regression results predicting Effective Teaching Practices by overall frequency of pop culture use.

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
(Constant)		44.761	1.861		***
How often do you use examples from current pop culture (film clips, YouTube videos, magazine articles, political cartoons, popular novels, photographs, etc.) in your selected course section?		1.518	0.190	0.192	***
Faculty racial or ethnic identification	Multiracial	-5.886	1.712	-0.092	**
	Black or African American	-2.952	1.286	-0.077	*
	Hispanic or Latino	-3.257	1.735	-0.050	
	White	-4.853	0.988	-0.235	***
	Other	-2.370	1.722	-0.037	
	Prefer not to respond	-2.237	1.297	-0.069	
Gender identity	Woman	2.609	0.429	0.149	***
	Prefer not to respond	-1.718	1.174	-0.041	
Tenure status	No tenure system	1.092	0.770	0.039	
	Not on tenure track	-0.354	0.766	-0.018	
	On tenure track but not tenured	-1.248	0.877	-0.050	
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	1.142	1.109	0.057	
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	-0.021	1.234	-0.001	
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Engineering	-0.274	1.163	-0.010	
	Social Sciences	-1.025	1.181	-0.037	
	Business	1.100	1.186	0.038	
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	0.518	1.371	0.013	
	Education	3.259	1.220	0.109	**
	Health Professions	0.695	1.270	0.021	
	Social Service Professions	1.149	1.598	0.021	
	Other disciplines	-0.216	1.336	-0.006	
Rank	Associate Professor	0.916	0.568	0.046	
	Assistant Professor	1.989	0.796	0.096	
	Lecturer	0.004	1.232	0.000	
	Instructor	1.477	0.860	0.064	
	Other rank	1.037	1.258	0.022	
Employment Status	Part-time	0.740	0.662	0.034	
Years Teaching		0.058	0.021	0.076	**

F = 6.711***, R² = .134

Note: Reference groups for faculty characteristics are Asian, Man, Tenured, Engineering, Full Professor, Full-time

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Table A-13 – Continued

Summary of regression results predicting Effective Teaching Practices by overall frequency of pop culture use.

		B	SE(B)	β	Sig.
	(Constant)	44.761	1.861		***
General Education Requirement	Yes	1.075	0.454	0.061	*
Course Format	Classroom, on-campus	-0.718	0.941	-0.029	
	Classroom, auxiliary location	1.975	1.745	0.030	
	Combination classroom / distance	-0.094	1.156	-0.003	
Division	Upper Division	0.405	0.455	0.023	***
	Other division	0.894	1.014	0.021	
Course Size	20 or Less	-0.392	0.653	-0.022	
	21 - 30	-0.811	0.652	-0.043	
	41 - 50	-0.559	0.894	-0.017	
	51 - 100	-0.820	0.899	-0.025	
	100 or more	-3.230	1.173	-0.071	**
F = 6.711***, R ² = .134					
Note: Reference groups for course characteristics are Not a general education requirement, Distance education, Lower division, and Course size 31-40					
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$					

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Bridget Yuhas

EDUCATION

Indiana University – Bloomington, IN

Doctor of Education – **Higher Education** (August, 2019)

Indiana University – Bloomington, IN

Master of Science – May, 2006; Betty Greenleaf Award winner

Major: **Student Affairs**

DePauw University – Greencastle, IN

Bachelor of Arts; Cum Laude – May 2001

Major: **English Writing**

Minors: **Spanish, Media Studies**

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Butler University – Indianapolis, IN

August, 2018 to Present

Director of Student Affairs Assessment and Planning

- Develop assessment and strategic plans, as well as co-curricular learning outcomes for the division of student affairs.
- Create resources such as annual report templates, assessment cycle guides, focus group facilitation guides, etc.
- Create survey instruments, analyze data, and prepare reports for the Vice President of Student Affairs.
- Lead staff development sessions on curricular models, assessment practices, and evidence-based action plans.
- Chair the Assessment Committee and liaise with University Assessment to support accreditation efforts.

Center for Postsecondary Research – Bloomington, IN

July, 2013 to May, 2018

Project Associate, Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) and NSSE Institute

- Provided client services for more than 120 institutions during each survey administration year.
- Write and edit content for print publications, client resources, and reports.
- Assist institutions in interpreting their survey results and creating evidence-based action plans.
- Collect best practices information from a variety of colleges and universities and develop easily-accessible resources from this information.
- Design research-based content and surveys for the National Science Foundation CUR Transformation Project grant.
- Create an online survey, administration instructions, and serve as point of contact for CUR TP leadership teams.
- Coordinate all aspects of IRB, technical updates for web administration, document and process updates, communications, and website changes for each FSSE administration cycle.
- Develop a research blog for the Center, write and edit blog posts, and coordinate content across social media.
- Create research-based survey item sets on topical areas (e.g. faculty motivations for teaching; pop culture)
- Contribute to the FSSE psychometric portfolio for reliability and validity of the instrument.
- Conduct quantitative research using SPSS; present findings at national conferences.
- Supervise and train one graduate assistant.

University of Maryland – College Park, MD

November, 2012 to September, 2013

Director, Smith School Annual Fund

Robert H. Smith School of Business

- Promoted to Director, based on 300 percent increases in donors and giving for the Annual Fund.
- Conducted prospect visits, tailoring conversations to address both donor and Smith School interests.
- Developed and led a Smith School Parents Council, including defining roles, recruiting volunteers, and planning events.
- Created a new faculty and staff giving program, using marketing and events to create buy-in.
- Developed and implemented a corporate outreach program for annual giving, including presenting information to corporate and alumni leaders.
- Staffed alumni and development events, hosting prospects and providing a smooth event experience.
- Managed a \$95,000 budget and supervised one full-time staff member.

University of Maryland – College Park, MD

September, 2011 to November, 2012

Assistant Director, Smith School Annual Fund

Robert H. Smith School of Business

- Promoted to develop and lead all aspects of the new annual giving initiative at the Smith School.
- Developed policies, procedures, accurate data tracking methods, goals, and outcomes.
- Compiled reports for the Dean of the school and frequently presented progress updates to Alumni Boards.
- Coordinated all aspects of the marketing campaign for the Annual Fund, including defining audiences, developing concepts and content, approving designs, and developing and managing the marketing calendar.
- Created a mailing and email solicitation schedule in coordination with the University of Maryland Foundation.
- Researched best practices in annual giving and tailored them for the Smith School.

University of Maryland – College Park, MD

November, 2010 to September, 2011

Assistant Director, Alumni Relations

Robert H. Smith School of Business

- Created, marketed, staffed, and assessed a comprehensive program of Young Alumni events, focusing on professional development, social networking, and school spirit.
- Developed and supported regional Smith School alumni clubs in Baltimore, MD and Philadelphia, PA.
- Served as liaison to the Smith Undergraduate Student Association, and assisted with their programs.
- Designed event web pages, drafted, and edited content for the SmithConnector online community.

Towson University – Towson, MD

June, 2009 to November, 2010

Assistant Director of Student Activities

- Assessed campus programming learning and satisfaction outcomes to provide a high-quality, student-centered co-curriculum across campus.
- Served as the main point of contact for all contract and legal issues in the Campus Life department.
- Served as Fraternity and Sorority Life advisor for the fall 2010 National Panhellenic Recruitment process.
- Created and presented training programs for staff and students on contracts and event procedures.
- Managed event space allocation and reservation process for Friday Night Live programming series.
- Collaborated with New Student Programs to create a comprehensive body of Orientation and Family Weekend programming.
- Developed a daytime programming series to serve commuter and Freshman Transition Program students.
- Created and presented graduate assistant training and orientation sessions, instilling a sense of connectedness to the department and to the campus.
- Academic advisor for 15-20 at-risk freshman students annually, as well as Tri Delta sorority.
- Marketed the University to off-campus businesses, highlighting areas of future collaborations to develop mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Developed collaborative programming with all other Student Affairs departments across the campus.
- Maintained and advanced all previous Coordinator responsibilities, below.

Towson University – Towson, MD

September, 2006 to June, 2009

Coordinator for Programming – Outstanding Advisor of the Year, 2009

- Trained and mentored the Campus Activities Board (CAB) students, Towson University's programming body.
- Managed a budget of over \$350,000 per year and allocated those funds to numerous accounts.
- Taught a section of Towson's success strategies course and an Orientation course.
- Designed and presented weekend-long training sessions for CAB members
- Designed and implemented programming and incentives at athletic events to foster increased school spirit.
- Wrote copy, collected and edited event information, and approved designs for campus-wide publications.
- Oversaw the marketing and promotions of various CAB, Campus Life, and Welcome to Towson events.
- Redesigned Friday Night Live programming to encourage diverse student group participation, and maintained the marketing, finances, and logistics of the series.
- Coordinated all aspects of Tigerfest, Towson's largest annual program (10,300 attendees).
- Constructed campus-wide event policies and standards in collaboration with Event and Conference Services.
- Hired, trained, and supervised two graduate assistants each academic year.

Indiana Memorial Union Board – Bloomington, IN

August, 2004 to May, 2006

Program Advisor

- Developed and conducted six to eight training programs for all Union Board retreats.
- Trained 16 student members of the Union Board, providing them with support and input on programming, marketing, budgeting, evaluation, collaboration, and diversity.
- Served as a resource for student directors regarding policy, procedure, and contract and rider approval.
- Liaised with other student groups and administrators to coordinate co-sponsorships and joint programs.
- Coordinated day-of-show events and staff for large- and small-scale programs

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT

American Educational Research Association
American College Personnel Association
Association for Institutional Research
Association of College Unions International
Council for Advancement and Support of Education

National Association of Student Personnel
Administrators
National Association for Campus Activities
Professional Organizational Development Network
(POD)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Yuhas, B., Downing, J., Lohman, B., & Ross, F.E. (October, 2019). How healthy is your assessment of wellbeing? Program presented at the Assessment Institute Annual Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Yuhas, B. & BrckaLorenz, A. (2018). Response process validity: 2013-2016 write-in response analysis. *FSSE Psychometric Portfolio*.

BrckaLorenz, A., Yuhas, B., Nelson Laird, T., Strickland, J. (May, 2018). Ticking away the moments: Assessing faculty roles with time on task. Program presented at the Association for Institutional Research Annual Forum, Orlando, FL.

Stupinsky, R., BrckaLorenz, A., Yuhas, B., & Guay, F. (April, 2018). Faculty motivation for teaching: Testing a SDT-based model across institution types. Program presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY.

BrckaLorenz, A., Yuhas, B., Nelson Laird, T., Strickland, J., & Fassett, K. (April, 2018). Faculty types and effective teaching: A cautionary exploration of how faculty spend their time. Program presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY.

Nelson Laird, T., Hurtado, S., & Yuhas, B. (April, 2018). Measuring the diversity inclusivity of college courses: An update. Program presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY.

Stupinsky, R., BrckaLorenz, A., Yuhas, B., & Guay, F. (2018). Faculty members' motivation for teaching and best practices: Testing a model based on self-determination theory across institution types. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 58, 15-26.

Nelson Laird, T., Hurtado, S., & Yuhas, B. (October, 2017) Examining diversity inclusivity in college courses: Updates and trends. Program presented at the POD Network Annual Conference, Montreal, ON, Canada

BrckaLorenz, A., Yuhas, B., & Stupinsky, R. (October, 2017). Why do we teach? Examining faculty teaching experience and motivation. Program presented at the POD Network Annual Conference, Montreal, ON, Canada.

National Survey of Student Engagement. (2017). Faculty incorporation of diversity and institutional commitment. *Engagement Insights: Survey findings on the quality of undergraduate education – Annual Results 2017*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

Yuhas, B., BrckaLorenz, A & Zilvinskis, J. (May 2017). Using write-in responses to improve survey measures. Program presented at the Association for Institutional Research Annual Forum, Washington, DC.

Yuhas, B. & BrckaLorenz, A. (2017). Student-Faculty Interaction. *FSSE Psychometric Portfolio*.

National Survey of Student Engagement. (2016). Instructional staff race and gender relate to experiences with faculty. *Engagement Insights: Survey findings on the quality of undergraduate education – Annual Results 2016*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

BrckaLorenz, A., Yuhas, B. & Nelson Laird, T. (May 2016). Graduate student surveys: Assessment landscape, challenges, and solutions. Program presented at the Association for Institutional Research Forum, New Orleans, LA.

Yuhas, B. & BrckaLorenz, A. (April, 2015). Social media: An opportunity for engaging undergraduates. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

Yuhas, B. & BrckaLorenz, A. (May, 2015). Something to talk about: Getting your campus excited to discuss data. Program presented at the Association for Institutional Research Annual Forum, Denver, CO.

Robinson, J. M., Yuhas, B., Butorac, R. (November, 2015) "The HumAn Learning Project Phase 1 Report." Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Indiana University.

Yuhas, B. & BrckaLorenz, A. (November 2015). College teaching goes pop: Enhancing the classroom with mass media. Program presented at the POD Network Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA.

National Survey of Student Engagement. (2014). Social media: An opportunity to engage undergraduates. *Bringing the Institution into Focus—Annual Results 2014*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.