

Instructors' Use & Perceptions of Film as a Teaching Tool – Phase 2 Preliminary Results — December 2015

Study Rationale

Film and television have been used as teaching tools in multiple disciplines and levels of the education system (e.g., Luccasen & Thomas, 2010; Madsen, 2014; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Sealey, 2008). Past research suggests that audio-visual texts can support a number of pedagogical goals, including increasing empathy (Jarvis & Gouthro, 2013), illustrating concepts (Andrist et al., 2014; Pelton, 2013), and promoting the development of professional skills (Ber & Alroy, 2002; Lumlertgul et al., 2009). Instructor motivations for using film, however, are wide-ranging, and have not always been carefully thought through or made explicit to students (Hobbs, 2006). Understanding the diverse ways in which instructors use film in teaching is an important step in making visible pedagogical decisions that often remain hidden, thereby increasing the efficacy of teaching and learning through film.

This report presents the preliminary results of the second phase of a study that aims to make visible faculty motivations for using film for teaching and learning across a wide range of disciplines.

Research Questions

- Do faculty use film and/or video in their teaching? Why or why not?
- What are instructors' perceptions of the efficacy of film and video as pedagogical tools?

Methodology

- Following ethics clearance, publicly available email addresses were collected for instructors at 6 Ontario universities: Algoma University, Lakehead University, Queen's University, University of Ottawa, University of Windsor and York University.
- Instructors at these institutions were sent an email invitation to complete an online survey containing both closed- (e.g., Likert scale, multiple choice) and open-ended questions

Respondents

- 528 responses (of approximately ~6000 invitations sent)

Institution

- Algoma: n=15
- Lakehead: n=42
- Queen's: n=98
- Ottawa: n=161
- Windsor: n=61
- York: n=137
- Unspecified: n=14

Disciplinary Grouping

- Business: n=30
- Engineering: n=27
- Health Sciences: n=29
- Humanities: n=172
- Interdisciplinary Studies: n=3
- Science: n=121
- Social Sciences: n=138
- Unspecified: n=8

Instructional Experience

- 0-5 years: n=69
- 6-10 years: n=116
- 11-15 years: n=97
- 16-20 years: n=65
- 21-25 years: n=43
- 26+ years: n=130
- Unspecified: n=8

Key Findings

Most respondents (more than 80%) reported using film and/or video in their current teaching.

Purpose for film/video use (instructors who currently use film/video)

Most common:

- to engage student attention
- to help students learn course concepts
- to provide variety in instructional methods

Least common:

- to help students develop audiovisual literacies
- to encourage analysis of how media function in society

Type of film/video used

Most common:

- Documentaries
- YouTube clips and other user-generated content

Least common:

- Avant-garde and art films

Agreement with the statement: “Film and/or video can be effective tools for teaching and learning in my discipline”

(5 point scale; 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree):

- Mean = 4.25
- Median = 5

Next Steps

- Compare the findings with those from a pilot study conducted at McMaster University, and develop a manuscript for publication
- Design a complementary survey to send to students regarding their perceptions of film in the classroom
- Form discussion groups with instructors and students to generate specific feedback/ideas on facilitating the use of film in the classroom

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