

## Editorial

In early 2011, the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA) Executive Team began discussions regarding a journal, which would serve as an outgrowth of the organization. We wanted to make more widely available some of the excellent scholarship that we were seeing on an annual basis at our February conference, as well as provide a venue for popular culture scholars outside of the SWPACA membership. At the same time, we knew that we needed to set ourselves apart from other publications focusing on popular culture studies; the result was a focus on pedagogy as well as popular culture, as indicated in the journal's title.

Simultaneous to these discussions, two areas within the SWPACA organization began to gain momentum—Popular Culture and the Classroom, and Pedagogies and the Profession—eventually combining to become Pedagogy and Popular Culture area, which has continued to thrive, becoming one of the largest areas at the annual meeting. To celebrate this momentum, in 2013 the organization established the Popular Culture Pedagogy award, which honors the organization's late Executive Director, Phil Heldrich, a writer/professor with a passion for teaching. The award is presented each year for a graduate student paper which addresses an issue in the application of a new, engaging, popular culture teaching strategy in a specific area of popular or American culture

The result of this growing interest is *Dialogue's* Volume 3, Issue 1, *Popular Culture Pedagogy: Theory and Application in Academia*. This issue features several different approaches to the role of popular culture in the classroom, including case studies, curriculum development, applications, and reviews. The pieces variously incorporate research, theory, and best practices, ranging from classroom-ready exercises to reflections on the ever-increasing use of popular culture in secondary and higher education.

The article section of this issue includes a sociocultural and socio-constructivist examination of learning, and by extension teaching, in *Orange is the New Black*, *The Walking Dead*, *Megamind*, *Sherlock*, *Exit Through the Giftshop*, and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*; three autoethnographic assignment reflections which demonstrate the utility of popular culture artifacts as a tool for teaching and learning writing; and two discussions of using music to teach sociological theory and media literacy. The applications section focuses on Harry Potter in higher education and the role of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *The Walking Dead*, and *King of the Hill* in an educational psychology course.

We conclude the issue with our reviews, featuring a retrospective of the pedagogy panels at the 2015 Southwest Popular/American Culture Association conference, a discussion of the current state of online pedagogy, and a comparative analysis of adaptations of *Much Ado about Nothing*.

With this first special issue on popular culture and pedagogy, we bring together insights into classroom practices in academia, providing a peek into the ways in which learning and teaching can be enhanced. We look forward to the continued expansion and discussion of the multifaceted ways in which education and popular culture interrelate.

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