

**A Qualitative Evaluation of the Use of Book Clubs
within an Undergraduate Diversity Course**

J. Mitchell Vaterlaus, PhD, LMFT
Montana State University,

Whitney Whittecar
Montana State University

Rebecca L. Koltz, PhD, NCC, LCPC
Montana State University

JennieLynn Stanley
Montana State University

ABSTRACT. To strengthen integration of diversity issues within college courses, the authors implemented the Diversity Analysis Project (DAP) within a Gender, Race, Class, and Family Diversity course. The DAP used a book club format and integrated mainstream literature (including non-fiction and realistic fiction books) into the learning experience. Books were selected to help students apply diversity concepts more thoroughly. A qualitative evaluation approach was used for understanding experiences of the DAP for 18 students in the course. Results of the study indicated three themes: structure of the DAP, perceived learning and personal outcomes, and shared group dynamics in the group book club. Along with these themes, the authors provide an in depth case study of one participant. Future implementation of DAP and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords: diversity, book club, qualitative evaluation, group dynamics

Direct correspondence to Dr. J. Mitchell Vaterlaus, Montana State University, P.O. Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540, Phone: (406) 994-3229 Email: j.vaterlaus@montana.edu

A Qualitative Evaluation of the Use of Book Clubs within an Undergraduate Diversity Course

Muraco, Totenhagen, Corkery, and Curran (2014) suggested that family science students may benefit from deeper integration of diversity issues within their college courses. Through participation in diversity education, students become more knowledgeable about the experiences of others. The experience of reading mainstream literature has been associated with increases in the qualities of cultural competence (Johnson, Huffman, & Jasper, 2014; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Mensah, 2009; Twomey, 2007; Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2014). Various disciplines utilize the reading of nonfiction books, memoirs, or novels to educate students on topics related to their field of study. However, published evaluations of the benefits of this pedagogical practice is sparse (Polleck, 2011). Research is needed to identify the potential utility of this pedagogical approach for integrating books into diversity education.

Mauerer and Law (2016) spoke to a need for family-based Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research guided by Felton's (2013) principles of SoTL. Felton proposed SoTL inquiries should implement "intentional and rigorous application of research tools that connect the question at the heart of a particular inquiry to student learning" (p. 123), be grounded in the environmental context (e.g., institution, classroom), and conducted in partnership with students. Results from SoTL should also be made public so that other professionals can use the work and provide critiques. Hutchings (2000) presented a taxonomy of questions to be asked within the SoTL because a scholarly field is "defined in part by the questions it asks" (p. 11). The current study relied on Hutchings' *what is* (i.e., not focused on proving effectiveness, rather focused on what the approach/intervention looks like) and *visions of the possible* (i.e., "meeting goals for teaching and learning that have not come to fruition"; Vaterlaus & Asay, 2016, p. 150) SoTL questions. Guided by these two questions, the researchers developed a qualitative evaluative study to explore use of books (i.e., mainstream literature) and book clubs in an undergraduate family diversity course.

Family Diversity Education and Books

Diversity education promotes understanding perspectives of others, creates a sense of empathy for diverse experiences, and prepares students to work with diverse populations when they enter the professional world (Muraco et al., 2014). A major tenet within diversity education is to deepen understanding of cultural competence. Emerging research in diversity education suggests a positive connection between reading mainstream literature and understanding diversity principles (Johnson et al., 2014; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Mensah, 2009; Twomey, 2007; Vezzali et al., 2014). Kidd and Castano (2013) found that reading literary fiction was associated with improved reader consideration of another person's experience. Additional research indicated that reading books (a) encouraged students to explore ideas that might differ from theirs (Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Twomey, 2007; Mensah, 2009), (b) reduced their racial bias (Johnson et al., 2014), and (c) improved their attitudes toward stigmatized groups (Vezzali et al., 2014).

Family Diversity Education and Book Clubs

Book clubs are typically composed of small groups (Addington, 2001; Beach & Yussen, 2011; Polleck, 2011) and function over specific periods of time (Beach & Yussen, 2011; Clark, Zuk, & Baramée, 2000; Kooy, 2003). Most often, participants have opportunities to contribute to the selection of the book or books to be read within the group (Beach & Yussen, 2011; Childress & Friedkin, 2012; Kooy, 2003). Lapp and Fisher (2009) found that participants' ability to choose books may contribute to the club's overall success. Research indicated that book club discussion after reading novels is beneficial (Clark et al., 2000; Mensah, 2009). During book club discussions, participants create awareness of personal biases and beliefs (Mensah, 2009) and have opportunities to "unmask...stereotypes and myths" about culturally diverse people (Clark et al., 2000, p. 202). Currently, however, there is no available research on how book clubs have been used in family science education and specifically in family diversity education.

Diversity Analysis Project

The Diversity Analysis Project (DAP) was an assignment designed for a senior level course entitled *Gender, Race, Class, and Family Diversity*. The course is required for Human Development and Family Science majors and is an elective within the Human Development minor. The DAP is based on Integrated Learning (IL) theory (Huber & Hutchings, 2004), which argues that one challenge in undergraduate education is to help students move beyond viewing courses as isolated requirements. In line with this instructional theory, the instructor contemplated ways that students could move beyond simply learning specific diversity principles, to having opportunities to connect those principles with real-world experiences. The DAP was created to help students apply course content with more depth. Additionally, the DAP is informed by research and served to meet the stated course objective: "students will synthesize their knowledge through applying the principles they learn in this course to an intensive case study."

Emerging research (Johnson et al., 2014; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Lapp & Fisher, 2009; Mensah, 2009; Twomey, 2007; Vezzali et al., 2014) and existing diversity education practice (Nacoste, 2015) provides support for using mainstream literature (fiction and nonfiction books) as an educational tool to enhance undergraduate diversity education. Thus, the instructor determined to include nonfiction and realistic nonfiction books to serve as intensive case studies in the DAP. To be considered, books had to address concepts of gender, race, and class, and have a major focus on family relationships. Books were identified by reviewing several senior level undergraduate diversity education syllabi available online at reputable universities and by consulting with professionals in fields of literature, history, women and gender studies, and human development and family science. The instructor and one colleague read several of the identified books and discussed together how the books addressed the focal concepts in the course. Final decisions were made by ensuring representation of multiple perspectives across all books that were selected (e.g., perspectives from different racial groups, international and national perspectives, historical and contemporary time periods). The process resulted in selection of seven books (see Table 1) for use in the assignment.

During the first week of the semester the instructor introduced each book briefly in class and provided links to detailed information about each book on the online course management system. Students were directed to an online survey where they could rank preferences regarding which book they would read (i.e., each student only read one book during the semester). There were also options for reporting if they had already read a book and to indicate if reading a specific book's content would adversely affect their mental health. After survey completion, students were divided into book clubs by book preference. Table 2 describes main components of the DAP, which included three in-class book clubs, three in-class workdays to prepare an interactive presentation for the class, a 30-minute in-class presentation, group evaluations, and an opportunity to debrief in roundtables. Throughout the project the instructor took an active role, including joining in all book club discussions and mentoring as presentations took shape.

Table 1.
Books Selected for the Diversity Analysis Project

Book Title	Author(s)/Publication Year	Brief Description
<i>Behind the Beautiful Forevers</i>	Katherine Boo (2012)	This narrative non-fiction book explores family life and survival in Annawadi, a Mumbai undercity.
<i>Emma</i>	Jane Austen (1815)	Set in the 1800s, this work of fiction explores the role of gender and class in romantic relationships and family life.
<i>Half the Sky</i>	Nicholas Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn (2008)	Investigative journalists report real-life accounts regarding the oppression women experience in their families and communities across the world.
<i>Outcasts United</i>	Warren St. John (2009)	The true story of an immigrant woman who coaches a refugee youth soccer team in Georgia.
<i>The Color of Water</i>	James McBride (1995)	A memoir that relates the experiences of a Jewish woman who marries an African American man in 1942 and raised 12 children in a Harlem neighborhood in New York City.
<i>The Glass Castle</i>	Jeannette Walls (2005)	A memoir centered on the experiences of an impoverished and transient American family.
<i>The Power of One</i>	Bryce Courtenay (1989)	A work of fiction focused on an English boy's experiences living in South Africa during the 1930s and 1940s.
<i>The Round House</i>	Louise Erdrich (2012)	A realistic fiction book set on a North Dakotan Reservation where a mother's experience with rape leads to questions regarding legal jurisdiction.

Table 2.
Diversity Analysis Project (DAP) Components and Descriptions

Component of DAP	Description
In-Class Book Clubs	A reading guide was provided for each book indicating the required chapters to be read by each book club. Each group met in an assigned area of the classroom. Students each brought one discussion question to share with their group. The instructor provided additional questions to be discussed on a handout that was turned in to document student participation and that helped prepare them for their presentation. Each book club was student led and took one entire class day.
In-Class Workdays	Three class days were set apart for creation of the presentation. Students' handouts from their three book clubs were returned to them to use in the creation of their presentation. This approach was used so the instructor could provide mentorship as the students were developing their content, activities, and assessments for their final presentation.
Presentation	Students were provided with a detailed rubric for the presentation. The major goal was to allow the students to guide their peers in a culturally sensitive exploration of the culture represented in their book, while connecting the concepts of gender, race, class, and family diversity. They were required to make the experience engaging for the learners, so the presentations typically took a 30-minute workshop format. Peers completed evaluation forms for each presentation.
Group Evaluation	Each group member completed an online individual evaluation (only seen by instructor) about their general experience working with their own group.
Round Table Debriefing	On the last day of class, the book clubs met individually at the beginning to review anonymous peer feedback and professor feedback. They wrote down the strengths of their presentation and what they would do differently if they were to present again. After this, the students transitioned into pre-assigned groups where they were the only person from their book club. In this second group activity, students had the opportunity to discuss their experience with the project, discuss challenges/successes, and make recommendations for future assignment improvement.

Purpose of Current Study

The purpose of this exploratory study was to evaluate implementation of the DAP within a family science diversity course. The research was guided by the following question: What are students' experiences completing the Diversity Analysis Project?

Methods

Sample

The final sample included 18 seniors ($n = 16$ women; $n = 2$ men) enrolled in a section of the Gender, Race, Class, and Family Diversity course. Participants in the sample were all Caucasian and were between the ages of 21 and 32 ($m_{age} = 22.6$). The books (see Table 1) participants were assigned to read were *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* ($n = 6$), *Emma* ($n = 2$), *Half the Sky* ($n = 2$), *The Glass Castle* ($n = 2$), *The Power of One* ($n = 2$), *The Round House* ($n = 2$), *Outcasts United* ($n = 1$), and *The Color of Water* ($n = 1$).

Procedures and Data Collection

The University Institutional Review Board approved the project. A qualitative evaluation approach (Vaterlaus & Higginbotham, 2011) was selected to obtain in-depth experiences of students completing the DAP. The sample was randomly selected from two different sections of the course ($N = 71$ enrolled students). The research team aimed for a sample of 15-20 participants and oversampling was used to account for non-participation and attrition. During the first week of classes, a researcher unaffiliated with the course randomly selected 25 students from the class lists. Emails were sent inviting students to participate in an optional research study about their experience in the course. The informed consent indicated the instructor would not know who was participating, would not see their anonymous responses until final grades were posted, and that their decisions on participating would not influence their course grades. In total, 20 students agreed to participate (80% response rate). The research team determined sample inclusion required participant completion of at least two of the data collection points. Two of the participants completed only the first survey and were excluded from the sample.

Data collection included four phases. First, on day one of class (before being assigned to a book) participants received a Qualtrics (see www.qualtrics.com) survey asking about their initial thoughts and feelings regarding their participation in the DAP (e.g., *Please explain your level of interest in participating in book clubs in this course?*; *Currently, how do you think the different components of the DAP will impact your learning of race, class, gender and family diversity?*). Second, immediately after completion of the third and final book club, students completed another online survey about their book club experience (e.g., *What was your experience participating in the three book clubs?*; *What was your experience with the content of the book?*). Third, after the DAP was complete, participants completed another online survey reflecting on the activity (e.g., *What, if any, was the influence of the book you read on your understanding of race, class gender and family diversity? What, if any, was the influence of participating in book clubs on your understanding of race, class gender and family diversity?*). Fourth, ten participants from the sample were randomly selected to participate in 30-45 minute

in-depth audio recorded interviews about their experiences completing the DAP. The semi-structured interview schedule was developed by two researchers unaffiliated with the course after reviewing participant responses in the three previous phases in order to gain additional clarity and understanding (e.g., *How did you experience conflicts and/or disagreements within your book club? Which parts of your book will linger with you? In consideration of any concerns, thoughts, or apprehensions you might have had regarding learning about race, class gender, and family diversity, how did the book club experience help or hinder you?*). See the appendix to view all items used in this study. Participant codes were assigned to protect participant confidentiality and match their responses. Students received \$25 cash total for completing the online surveys and an additional \$20 cash for completing in-depth interviews.

Data Analysis

The research team used Saldaña's (2003) approach for longitudinal qualitative analysis. Consistent with the approach, data were collected before, during, and after participants' experiences with the DAP. Each participant's responses were organized in time order from beginning, middle, to end (Saldaña, 2003). Two independent researchers immersed themselves in the data to identify key words and ideas. Three themes were identified and agreed upon by the researchers. The two researchers then independently coded the data (89% agreement). When there were coding disagreements the two researchers returned to the original data to ensure that participants' experiences were being accurately presented. A third researcher, who did not participate in the analysis, checked results against the raw data to assess for accuracy. After reviewing all participant responses and the identified themes, one participant (whose experience was determined to be generally representative of the sample) was selected to provide an in-depth case study related to the experience of completing the DAP. One researcher constructed the case study; a second researcher checked the case study for accuracy with the raw data. To increase trustworthiness of the results, methods of triangulation were implemented (i.e., multiple data sources, more than one data collection method, multiple coders; Vaterlaus & Higginbotham, 2011).

Results

Three themes were identified through qualitative analysis. First, participants focused on their experiences with the structure of the DAP. Second, students discussed perceived learning and personal outcomes of completing the DAP. Finally, participants shared their experiences with group dynamics in their book club. Results are presented in order of prevalence. Participant gender and ages are provided parenthetically for context. Following the results, one complete case study (a pseudonym was used) is presented to provide an in-depth look at the student experience of completing the DAP.

Assignment Structure

All participants ($n = 18$) shared perspectives on the structure of the DAP. Before the project began some participants ($n = 4$) indicated concerns about the project (e.g., "don't enjoy reading", "A lot to do on top of my already full course load", "group work is hard"), but the greater part of the sample ($n = 10$) reported being interested in the differentiation of learning

opportunities provided by the project. Prior to project implementation, one student stated, “I think it is an interesting approach to teach diversity through novels and I am excited to see how it works” (female, 22). A few participants ($n = 4$) were particularly interested in reading a book versus a textbook—“Books can add a personal element that can be missed by a textbook” (female, 32). Before the project all but one of the students indicated they planned to read their assigned books in full.

After completing DAP the majority of students ($n = 17$) reported they had read their books in their entirety and all participants ($n = 18$) indicated that the structure of the project was beneficial to their learning about gender, race, class, and family diversity. Specifically, participants indicated that the project differentiated the classroom instruction, allowed for focused small group discussion, and promoted learning about many cultures from the in-class presentations. Focusing on differentiation of instruction, one student shared:

I liked that we could work in groups in class, that was really nice ... and I liked that it was a chance to not do lecture on the material and a chance to incorporate another form of literature in ways that ... I don't know, it's just not like a typical class. (male, 27) .

Commenting on inclusion of book clubs, a student stated, “In some of the other [courses], we’re all reading the same book, but we don’t ever really stay and talk about it, so it was nice to have a specific group that was smaller” (female, 23).

Participants ($n = 9$) indicated the DAP was well situated within the larger class structure. Speaking about the roles of the professor, the assigned book, and the book clubs in relation to their learning, a student stated:

Yeah, and [Professor, Book Clubs, and Book] all connect. The ideas [the professor] talks about in class helped with our presentation and understanding the book and, in group we used, we used a lot of the stuff that he'd given us in class. It all just worked really well together, and I think if one of those three wasn't there, it would be a lot different. (female, 23)

Finally, there were participants ($n = 5$) who indicated areas for improvement in the assignment structure. One student recommended requiring students to read two different books during the semester (in book clubs) to deepen knowledge about more than one culture. In terms of the role of the instructor, two students indicated they were exposed to challenging topics (e.g., rape, genital cutting) and wanted more time to process these with the professor. Two students also experienced challenges in terms of group member participation (e.g., a group member “was rude” and the other “hardly spoke up”) or completion of reading (e.g., the professor “isn’t going to know if they read or not”). They did not recommend specific solutions but wondered if there could be something included in the assignment structure to address these challenges.

Perceived Impact of Diversity Analysis Project

All participants ($n = 18$) discussed the role that the DAP had on their understanding of diversity principles and increasing their personal awareness. Participants ($n = 16$) indicated that

reading the book allowed them to develop deeper understanding of the concepts of gender, race, class, and family diversity in a “real” and “truthful” way through application, analysis, and being exposed to different perspectives. A student elucidated, “[The DAP] allowed me to see the [course] concepts from a different perspective. We get caught up in our own world so often, and the book/book club allowed for other perspectives to be brought forth” (female, 22).

Several participants ($n = 15$) reported the experience expanded their knowledge about diverse experiences around the world and found the experience to be “eye opening.” Students reported acquiring additional knowledge in areas such as “arranged marriages,” “sex trafficking,” “Apartheid,” class systems in the 1800s, “suicide,” “poverty,” “refugees,” “slums,” “religion,” “historical trauma,” and the “difficulties behind Tribal land, public land, and private land.”

Some participants ($n = 10$) discussed how the “real life” nature of the project and exposure to different perspectives affected their behavior or ideas about interacting with other people. This was evidenced by participants acknowledging personal “privilege” and “bias” that required deeper personal reflection. One student explained:

I am having to try to look at this family [in the book] through some very different lenses than I have had to before. I have found that I would have a very hard time working with people who could not try to put their child's needs before their own. I am having to learn about different family values and need to understand that my own feelings need to be dealt with before I would ever be able to truly help this family. (female, 21)

Exposure to different perspectives in the DAP was also thought to increase the ability to interact with people who have opposing viewpoints and motivate students to be more aware in their interactions with other people. For example, two students stated after completing the project that, “It’s easier for me to hear things that I don’t necessarily agree with coming from people” (female, 22); the second learned the importance of “being sensitive and culturally aware, just aware that everyone has their own story or their stance, and that listening is probably the key to start” (male, 23).

Book Club Dynamics

The majority of participants ($n = 17$) reported on group dynamics of their book clubs and the outcomes they perceived from participating in the clubs. Several ($n = 14$) described their experience working with their book club as “engaging” and reported there was no conflict experienced in their group ($n = 6$). Others reported ($n = 5$) some disagreements while participating in the book club but indicated that they were handled respectfully. These disagreements generally related to having too many ideas about what to share in the final presentation and some ($n = 2$) associated this challenge with large group size. Two participants reported not enjoying their book club experiences because of personality clashes or because their group members were not completing the reading. One of these students indicated that the role of the professor during the book clubs improved her experience. She disclosed, “I loved when [the professor] would join our discussion, he brought interesting points to the book and was engaging” (female, 22). She also had three people in her club and wondered if a larger group size

would have been helpful. The book club sizes ranged from three to seven members ($m_{\text{group size}} = 6$ members). In contrast, three participants indicated the book club was one of their most positive group experiences in their school careers. One student was especially enthusiastic:

My book club experience was perfect. I have not ever had that kind of an experience with a book club in the past ... our team really meshed. ... It was probably because we would come to our group, our book clubs, arms linked. This is so relatable and so potent and so real. (male, 23)

In terms of perceived outcomes, participation in the book club was thought to increase clarity of the book's content. A student shared her experience:

The book was a little hard to get into at first. The names got a little confusing and the story jumps around some, but after talking to the people in my book club, we were able to figure out the characters a little more and that made the rest of the book easier to read. (female, 22)

Along with adding understanding, the book club experience was thought to highlight new ideas and perspectives gained from interacting with peers. "It was nice collaborating because it helped in understanding different parts of the book and realize new ideas" (female, 23).

Case Study: Sarah

Sarah was a 22-year-old student. She reported high interest in the DAP before it began and reported no worries or concerns about the project. She stated, "I am excited to read through a whole book within this course. I think it will be very enlightening to share perspectives with others." Sarah also appreciated the assignment structure, which allowed in-depth coverage of a topic "that we would've maybe covered in class, but maybe not as deep, and so I think one thing I like about the book club, is that you can learn a bunch of information." Sarah was assigned to read *Outcasts United* and planned to read the book in its entirety. Her book club included five other students (1 male, 4 females). She reported that interactions within her book club were "lively" and "engaging." She indicated that through three book clubs, "Our group did really well ... our group brought up topics that were important and we were able to discuss them appropriately and respectfully" and "...once we started working together, we meshed really well." In addition to positive group dynamics, Sarah highlighted how the book club influenced her experience of understanding the book. She explained, "...I found that I was able to understand the book a lot more than if I had just the reading myself."

Sarah added, "I think that the book club affirmed that working with people and working culture, it can be a different experience every day, and it's important to get to know the people you're with." She further explained:

It's awesome to be able to apply all the ideas that we had learned in class and being able to see how they really do work through like gender, race, class, and diversity and all of that, how it works within a culture and just be able to pinpoint exactly how it works.

Finally, Sarah also stated she developed deeper understanding about experiences of refugees in the United States through content in her book. Before reading the book, she was not aware that “there are that many refugees in America” and became more aware of the trauma refugees might be experiencing because of the “political and historical background of where they came from.” She reported that the experience has led her to recognize “that there’s [sic] issues that are going on [in America] and that it’s [sic] important to know about.” In terms of in-class presentations, she acknowledged learning about many different cultures but wished she could learn about all the other books in the same depth that she had brought to the reading of her own text.

Reflecting on the DAP as a whole, Sarah felt the project was situated well within the larger class. She reported that lecture information from the professor, peer discussion, and content in *Outcasts United* went “hand-in-hand” in learning about gender, race, class, and family diversity.

Discussion

This study evaluated students’ experiences completing the Diversity Analysis Project (DAP) in an undergraduate diversity course. Qualitative results indicated students were largely satisfied with the project’s structure and their group experience; they learned more about diversity from completing the DAP. Results are discussed in relation to existing literature, instructional theory, and implications for practice.

Diversity Analysis Project

Students reported that the assignment structure and group dynamics of book clubs within the project promoted engagement. Integrated Learning (IL) theory suggested that creating curricula that allow space for students to integrate course content to real-world experiences can be challenging (Huber & Hutchings, 2004). In line with IL (Huber & Hutchings, 2004), students indicated that the structure of DAP promoted integration by incorporating group discussion through formation of book clubs and allowed them to gain new perspectives by applying course content to a book or novel. The small group structure encouraged students not only to read their assigned books, but the experience also fostered active participation within the book club, which is consistent with previous research (Mensah, 2009).

Taylor (2011) reported that some students do not like group work because of the increased responsibility for course participation, the addition of preparatory work, and concerns about other group member’s participation. In the DAP, most of the students’ initial concerns regarding workload were addressed and resolved throughout the course. Most participants reported that their groups worked well together. A few students indicated that reconsidering group sizes would be helpful in enhancing the project. Mixed results have been published on the topic of group size. For example, Tomcho and Foels (2012) conducted a meta-analysis with 35 articles to investigate the prediction that group size was negatively related to student learning outcomes. Group sizes in the selected studies varied from three to nine students and no significant relationship was identified. In another meta-analytic study ($n = 78$ studies), Karau and Williams (1993) investigated the role of group size on social loafing (i.e., benefitting from the

efforts of others in the group). The authors reported that as group size increased so did social loafing in groups of men, but not for groups of women. Budhai and Skipwith (2017) recommended keeping group sizes around three members. In the future, those implementing the DAP could consider keeping the groups of students small.

To further address some challenges with group work, Barkley (2010) proposed that students may be more engaged in completing their group work responsibilities or contributing to the group when there are individual and group components to their grades. The DAP allowed for confidential group evaluation, but it may be helpful to create an additional individual assignment (e.g., a research paper related to their book). This may promote more student engagement because their grades would be calculated based on the group components and the individual assignment. Furthermore, in larger class sizes it may not be possible to have several in-class presentations with the number of book club groups and semester time restraints. A possible adaptation of the DAP for larger class sizes may be to have the individual assignment take the place of group presentations.

Most students reported that the book clubs supported their learning about diversity. Students indicated that the DAP provided an opportunity to clarify course information within the books read and to share ideas and new perspectives. Students also reported that working in book clubs was an engaging experience, with minimal conflict among the group members. Similarly, Beach and Yussen (2011) suggested that book clubs often lead to collaborative discussions.

Some students mentioned that they enjoyed when the professor could contribute to the group conversations in their book club and others wished they could have had more time to process concepts with the professor. In the future it may be helpful to include graduate teaching assistants when instructing this course in order to provide more support in this area. Students perceived that the DAP positively impacted their learning regarding diversity. Consistent with Lapp and Fisher's (2009) research about book clubs, students indicated that participation in the project encouraged them to see and learn about different perspectives and led to recognition of personal privilege and bias.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

The current study was guided by Hutchings' (2000) *what is and visions of the possible* SoTL questions. To answer these questions, we first highlighted the assignment structure and then sought to understand what the DAP looks like in practice from student experiences. Second, we began exploring a deviation from traditional teaching models by using mainstream literature and book clubs in undergraduate diversity education. Consistent with Felten's (2013) recommendations, our research design was informed by these questions and embedded in the context of the university classroom and instructional theory (i.e., integrated learning). Consistent with Felten's (2013) recommendations, we are also sharing our teaching approach and evaluation results with the public.

Limitations and Conclusions

Despite random selection of students for participation from two sections of the course, the sample was homogenous in terms of race and gender. Having more gender or racial diversity may result in different experiences with the DAP. For example, group dynamics would likely be influenced when book clubs discussed racial topics in their book(s) if some members had personal experiences with racism. Similarly, book club dynamics and discussion would also likely shift with more men participating in conversations on gender. Another limitation was that there was not a comparison group, which makes it unclear if there were variables beyond the DAP that influenced participants' learning experiences and perceived outcomes. The current study focused on Hutchings' (2000) SoTL *what is* and *visions of the possible* questions. Future research could focus on the *what works* (i.e., seeking effectiveness of the approach/intervention). A future evaluation could consider comparing students enrolled in a course that is implementing the DAP with students who participate in a more lecture-based diversity course using pre-post design with standardized measures of cultural competency.

Despite its limitations, this study answers the call (Maurer & Law, 2016) to provide more SoTL in the family science field. Cultural competency and diversity education are critical to the training of future family science professionals (Muraco et al., 2014; National Council on Family Relations, 2014). Qualitative evidence from this evaluation highlights the potential utility of the DAP in enhancing diversity instruction in undergraduate family diversity courses.

J. Mitchell Vaterlaus, PhD, LMFT (Corresponding Author), is an Associate Professor at the College of Education, Health and Human Development, Department of Health and Human Development, Montana State University, P.O. Box 173540 Bozeman, MT 59717-3540, Phone: (406) 994-3229 Email: j.vaterlaus@montana.edu

Whitney Whittecar is a graduate student at the College of Education, Health and Human Development, Department of Health and Human Development, Montana State University, P.O. Box 173540 Bozeman, MT 59717-3540, Phone: (406) 994-3229 Email: w.whittecar15@gmail.com

Rebecca L. Koltz, PhD, NCC, LCPC, is an Associate Professor at the College of Education, Health and Human Development, Department of Health and Human Development, Montana State University, P.O. Box 173540 Bozeman, MT 59717-3540, Phone: (406) 994-3299 Email: rebecca.koltz@montana.edu

JennieLynn Stanley is a graduate student at the College of Education, Health and Human Development, Department of Health and Human Development, Montana State University, P.O. Box 173540 Bozeman, MT 59717-3540, Phone: (406) 994-3229 Email: jennielynn.stanley@gmail.com

References

- Addington, A. H. (2001). Talking about literature in university book club and seminar settings. *Research in the Teaching of English, 36*, 212-248.
- Barkley, E. F. (2010). *Student engagement techniques*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Beach, R., & Yussen, S. (2011). Practices of productive adult book clubs. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55*, 121-131.
- Childress, C. C., & Friedkin, N. E. (2012). Cultural reception and production: The social construction of meaning in book clubs. *American Sociological Review, 77*, 45-68.
- Clark, L., Zuk, J., & Baramée, J. (2000). A literary approach to teaching cultural competence. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 11*, 199-203.
- Felten, P. (2013). Principles of good practice in SoTL. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry, 1*, 121-125.
- Huber, M. T., & Hutchings, P. (2004). *Integrative Learning: Mapping the terrain*. Washington D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Johnson, D. R., Huffman, B. L., & Jasper, D. M. (2014). Changing race boundary perception by reading narrative fiction. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 36*, 83-90.
- Kidd, D. C., & Castano, E. (2013). Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind. *Science, 342*, 377-380.
- Kooy, M. (2003). Riding the coattails of Harry Potter: readings, relational learning, and revelations in book clubs: one teacher educator uses book clubs as a way to model and confirm the value and power of shared reading experiences. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 47*, 136-146.
- Lapp, D., & Fisher, D. (2009). It's all about the book: Motivating teens to read. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*, 556-561.
- Maurer, T. W., & Law, D. D. (2016). The scholarship of teaching and learning in family science. *Family Science Review, 21*, 2-17.
- Mensah, F. M. (2009). Confronting assumptions, biases, and stereotypes in preservice teachers' conceptualizations of science teaching through the use of book club. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 46*, 1041-1066.
- Muraco, J. A., Totenhagen, C. J., Corkery, S. A., & Curran, M. A. (2014). Reflections on family science education: The importance of technology, experience, and diversity in the classroom. *Family Science Review, 19*, 40-49.

- Nacoste, R. W. (2015). *Taking on diversity*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
- National Council on Family Relations (2014). Family Life Education content areas. Retrieved from https://www.ncfr.org/sites/default/files/fle_content_areas_2014_0.pdf
- Polleck, J. N. (2011). Using book clubs to enhance social-emotional and academic learning with urban adolescent females of color. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 27, 101-128.
- Saldaña, J. (2003). *Longitudinal qualitative analysis: Analyzing change through time*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Twomey, S. (2007). Reading "woman": Book club pedagogies and the literary imagination. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50, 398-407.
- Vaterlaus, J. M., & Asay, S. M. (2016). Family Life Education methodology: An evaluation of a university Family Life Education course. *Family Science Review*, 21, 135-159.
- Vaterlaus, J. M., & Higginbotham, B. J. (2011). Qualitative program evaluation methods. *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues*, 16, 1-8.
- Vezzali, L., Stathi, S., Giovannini, D., Capozza, D., & Trifiletti, E. (2014). The greatest magic of Harry Potter: Reducing prejudice. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 45, 105-121.

Appendix

Items Used in the Qualitative Evaluation of the Diversity Analysis Project

Item	Response format
Online Survey One (completed first day of class prior to book assignments by all participants)	
Demographic information	Participants reported age, gender, and race
What is your current level of interest in participating in book clubs in this course?	7-point Scale: Not Interested at All to Very Interested
Please explain why you are interested or not interested in participating in book clubs in this course.	Open-Ended Response
Considering past courses you have taken, what is your typical commitment level to course assigned reading?	5-point Scale: I don't read them at all to I read them in detail; Other response provided (with text response box)
Based on how you feel right now, what is your commitment level to reading your assigned book for the diversity analysis project?	5-point Scale: I won't read it at all to I will read it in detail; Other response provided (with text response box)
How would you rate your interest in working with a group?	7-point Likert Scale: Not Interested at All to Very Interested
Currently, how do you think the different components of Diversity Analysis Project will impact your learning regarding race, class, gender, and family diversity?	Open-Ended Response
Online Survey Two (completed immediately following third book club by all participants)	
What book did you read?	Open-Ended Response
Which of the following would best describe how you completed your reading for your assigned book for the diversity analysis project?	5-point Scale: I didn't read it at all to I read it in detail; Other response provided (with text response box)
Which best describes the level of enjoyment you experienced with the book?	5-Point Likert Scale: No enjoyment in reading this book to I very much enjoyed reading this book.
My book club was comprised of the following people?	Drop down options to report of number of men and women in group
What was your experience with the content of the book?	Open-Ended Response
What was your experience participating in the three book clubs?	Open-Ended Response
Online Survey Three (completed by all participants after the Diversity Analysis Project was finished in its entirety)	
What do you think you got out of taking this gender, race, class, and family diversity course? Please explain.	Open-Ended Response
What, if any, was the influence of the book you read on your understanding of gender, race, class, and family diversity?	Open-Ended Response
What, if any, was the influence of participating in a book club on your understanding of gender, race, class, and family diversity?	Open-Ended Response
Interview (completed by 10 randomly selected participants after the Diversity Analysis Project was finished in its entirety)	
Please talk a bit about the book you read for this class.	Open-Ended Response
Which parts of your book will linger with you?	Open-Ended Response
What did the book, in and of itself, offer you in terms of learning about gender, race, class, and family diversity?(Additional prompts: What about your professor? What about peer discussion?)	Open-Ended Response
What was it like to work in a group discussing gender, race, class, and family diversity?	Open-Ended Response
What did you like and dislike about being part of a book club?	Open-Ended Response
How did you experience conflicts and/or disagreements within your book club?	Open-Ended Response
In consideration of any concerns, thoughts, or apprehensions you might have had regarding learning about gender, race, class, and family diversity, how did the book club experience help or hinder you?	Open-Ended Response