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Developing College Student Intercultural Competence in a Childhood Diversity Course: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT. The primary aim of this study was to investigate pedagogical mechanisms that promote student understanding of diversity and intersectionality in national and global childhood experiences in order to foster openness, acceptance of diversity, and civic engagement. In this mixed-methods study, participants included 127 undergraduate students in a child development diversity (CDD) course and a control group of 63 undergraduate students in a research methods psychology (RMP) course. Students in both groups self-rated their knowledge of 18 diversity topics, their Openness to diversity, Acceptance of cultural differences, Awareness of racism and sexism, and Plans to advocate for others (OAAP variables). Quantitative results showed significant increases in CDD course groups' knowledge of all topics from beginning to semester-end and greater knowledge compared with the RMP course control group. For CDD course students, diversity knowledge was positively and more strongly correlated with their OAAP scores. Qualitative written responses from CDD course students illustrate their perceptions of the importance of intercultural awareness and knowledge of childhood intersectionality and diversity, the effectiveness of specific content delivery methods, and how they relate to their advocacy and volunteer plans.

Keywords: diversity education, pedagogy, intercultural awareness, intersectionality, child advocacy

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Developing College Student Intercultural Competence in a Childhood Diversity Course: A Pilot Study

Given the increasingly diverse United States (U.S.) population and trends associated with globalization, college graduates must learn to live and work effectively within multicultural settings and with otherwise diverse individuals (e.g., diversity associated with age, ability, ethnicity, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation). National opinion polls indicate that the majority of U.S. adults (55% White, 59% Black, and 60% Latinx) believe the diversity within the United States population "is a very good thing for the country" (Horowitz, 2019, para 6). Many adults report that diversity enhances life within the United States (Drake & Poushter, 2016). Yet forms of color-blindness and more subtle and implicit forms of bias, discrimination, and micro-aggressions (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Bouley, 2021; Kahl, 2018) continue to sustain power and structural inequalities for under-represented groups.

Students themselves are increasingly diverse individuals. More colleges and universities recognize the importance of supporting all students' achievement by reducing structural barriers (e.g., costs and complicated university policies) and embedded social-psychological processes that may deter some individuals, including LGBTQ+, racial-ethnic minority, and first-generation college students (Murphy et al., 2020). A primary socialization goal of higher education is to develop students' abilities to work effectively within diverse social contexts. U.S. colleges have been encouraged to promote and sustain diversity in their student bodies and through their institutional policies and practices (Dortch & Patel, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). What types of courses facilitate the development of diversity knowledge? More importantly, what courses enable students to recognize what they don't know, check their assumptions about what they think about diverse others, embrace inclusiveness, and cultivate global self-awareness? Research indicates that racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity courses and curricula are associated with improvement in intergroup attitudes (Lopez, 2004), increased openness and course participation (Faloughi & Herman, 2021), and social action or civic engagement (Denson & Chang, 2009; Nelson Laird et al., 2005).

The current study examined the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches (i.e., curriculum delivery methods and assignments) in developing college students' knowledge of childhood global diversity and intersectionality. In this study, participants were enrolled in three sections of the same child development diversity (CDD) course and one research methods psychology course (RMP group) and then compared in their knowledge of diversity topics. Associations between student diversity knowledge, openness and acceptance of diversity, and civic engagement plans were examined and compared across these groups to examine potential positive outcomes associated with a curriculum focused on global perspectives of children's experiences for the CDD course groups.

Literature Review

Global self-awareness has been described by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as individuals' identity within local and global communities (Whitehead, 2019). Some research indicates that intentional university experiences with diverse peers can support improved intergroup attitudes and civic engagement (Denson & Bowman, 2013). *Intersectionality* describes how multiple categories of identity, such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and social class, interact to create systems of oppression and discrimination (Proctor et al., 2017). Intersectionality has been described and applied as a theoretical and analytical framework for understanding how social categories and identities can combine to empower and provide privileges or to marginalize and oppress (Holley et al., 2016; Zinn et al., 1996). Intersectionality has been the focus of research, articles, and books on student intersectional identities that shape their educational experiences (Byrd et al., 2019; Miller, 2018),

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women's experience in higher education (Robinson, 2018), curriculum and professional practices in social work (Rubin et al., 2018), medical education (Muntinga et al., 2014), music education (Kallio, 2021), criminology (Stockdale et al., 2021), gender studies (Ferré & Rodó de Zárate, 2016), and more germane to this study, global issues in higher education (Wiggan et al., 2009); the latter specifically reviewed international studies on race, class, gender, ethnicity, culture.

One survey study with a midwestern undergraduate sample (N = 932) indicated that students valued diversity education. Participants recognized that developing their ability to interact successfully with diverse individuals increased their employability (Littleford, 2013). Moreover, Smith et al. (2010) found that the number of multicultural classes university graduates completed predicted multicultural competence and volunteer service five years later. The benefit of these courses was greater for graduates who reported fewer close college friends of different ethnicities, religions, or sexual orientations (Smith et al., 2010). Other research suggests that White students may be more negatively impacted by diversity-oriented courses, perhaps because such courses often confront the realities of dominant race, gender, and class privilege (Cabrera, 2014; Ellison et al., 2019; Nelson, 2010). Nevertheless, diversity courses have the potential to promote greater civic engagement and enhance awareness of discrimination and oppression associated with intersectionality.

Not only do diversity courses appear to increase multicultural awareness and deepen students' understanding of course materials (Elicker et al., 2010), some research indicates that completing a single college diversity course fosters students' critical information literacy skills (Stockdale et al., 2021) and cognitive development. One longitudinal study of over 3,000 first-year students at 19 U.S. institutions showed that students who took at least one diversity course showed greater gains in their general interest in ideas and effortful thinking compared with students who had not taken diversity courses. Students from middle to lower-income families and White students reported the most significant cognitive growth within diversity courses (Bowman, 2009).

Given the potential benefits of diversity education, it is important to examine the pedagogical methods or types of curricula that foster students' diversity knowledge and engagement. For example, diverse academic disciplines have used documentary and narrative films as teaching tools (Barnett et al., 2006). These films can be used to support students' visual and auditory learning preferences and engagement (Miller, 2009), to explore social issues and evoke students' critical thinking (Brown, 2011), and to enhance understanding of cultural diversity (González et al., 2016). Additionally, these types of films have been shown to address sociocultural topics that may change student perceptions and actions (Rorrer & Furr, 2009) as well as student attitudes toward race relations (Loewen, 1991), and to dispel stereotypes and promote equality (Schwartz et al., 2010).

Faculty typically have some control over their curricular decisions and approaches to teaching diversity courses that may be influential in developing student perspectives and openness to diversity (Baillargeon, 2013; Tharp, 2012). Additionally, faculty members' acceptance of diverse students (Prieto, 2018) and the creation of inclusive activities within their courses can promote these goals in students (Novak & Bracken, 2019; Wiggan, 2009). One goal of this study was to assess students' perceptions of effective pedagogical methods that link to their diversity knowledge and civic engagement (e.g., plans to advocate for others and community volunteering). Elicker et al. (2010) found that student perspectives, rather than instructor perspectives of knowledge gained, were essential in fostering outcomes associated with civic engagement.

Research on student definitions of diversity reveals a typically narrow focus primarily on race and culture and not necessarily an understanding of how diversity, inequality, and oppression are linked (Dingel & Sage, 2019). In contrast, the American Psychological Association (APA) Multicultural

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Guidelines define *diversity* by age, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, workplace role/position, religious and spiritual orientation, and work/family concerns (APA, 2002). Ali and Ancis' (2005) definition of multicultural education includes learning objectives related to promoting human rights and social justice, emphasizing the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

The term *intercultural competence* developed from research in several disciplines in which cross-cultural adaptation, adjustment, and effectiveness have been examined. Communication research emphasizes intercultural communication competence. Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) provide this definition "the appropriate and effective management of interactions between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world" (p. 7). As the term has been applied within service professions, intercultural competence includes evolving knowledge and skills that enable individuals to "respond respectfully, reciprocally, and responsively to children and families in ways that acknowledge the richness and limitations of families' and practitioners' sociocultural context" (Barrera & Corso, 2003, p. 34). These definitions suggest the importance of developing knowledge and skills that enable more effective interactions with diverse others, skills that would appear to be highly useful for college students, particularly in terms of their employment marketability (Littleford, 2013).

The American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AACU) development of the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Principles of Excellence provides a framework for general education diversity curriculum and learning outcomes (AACU, 2020). LEAP Principle *Engage the Big Questions* refers to teaching and discussing contemporary and long-standing issues related to cultures, values, global interdependence, the changing economy, human dignity, and freedom. The LEAP Principle of *Connect Knowledge with Choices and Action* is intended to prepare students to be informed citizens and workers through knowledge and learning experiences regarding current world issues. This principle corresponds closely with LEAP Principle *Foster Civic*, *Intercultural*, *and Ethical Learning*, which emphasizes the development of personal and social responsibility. LEAP High-Impact Educational Practices associated with these principles focus on developing global self-awareness and citizenship. Global learning objectives should allow students to analyze and explore complex global systems and challenges. Global self-awareness requires knowledge of these systems and diversity so that individuals may place their own cultural heritage within a broader multicultural context. This includes understanding the origins and limitations of one's own and other cultures in addressing human dignity and fundamental human rights, including freedom of choice in directing one's life (Whitehead, 2019).

Thus, a primary goal or desired outcome associated with a global diversity course is to develop students' capacity to understand the interrelationships between multiple perspectives (i.e., personal, societal, cultural, local, national, and global). Global self-awareness and perspective-taking are intended to foster LEAP Principle *Personal and Social Responsibility*. Service learning, advocacy activities, and volunteerism may provide opportunities for students to experience, develop, and demonstrate knowledge and skills related to this principle through their civic or community engagement.

The experiences of children are not typically the focus of college diversity courses, yet it is clear that class, gender, race, privilege, and oppression impact children. For students intending to work within service professions (e.g., teaching, social work, parent education, and family services), intercultural competence must include global self-awareness and the skills to respond optimally to children and families' sociocultural contexts, specifically economic, lifestyle, religious, spiritual, political, and regional differences (Barrera & Corso, 2003). An undergraduate course in global childhood diversity can provide information consistent with LEAP Principle *Engage the Big Questions* in teaching and

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discussing contemporary and long-standing issues related to age, gender, race, ethnicity, and sociocultural influences on childhood.

Theoretical Orientation

The child development diversity (CDD) course in this study was designed and is currently taught within a child development department. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1974, 1989; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000) provided the theoretical foundation for exploring course topics and objectives. Bronfenbrenner's theory describes children's development as a complex system of relationships embedded within multiple other dynamic systems that include proximal or immediate settings such as family and school, as well as distal or broader cultural values, laws, and customs (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). To understand children's development and life experiences, it is important to consider and study both proximal and distal environmental influences, considering broader factors including gender, race, ethnicity, and social class.

Course topics were organized around Bronfenbrenner's five environmental systems (i.e., micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-) that influence children's behavior and development across the lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The CDD course begins by explaining how individual characteristics shape childhood experience and intersectionality is associated with age, ethnicity, gender, and class. *Microsystems* (e.g., children's interpersonal interactions and relationships) in this course included children's exposure to family violence (i.e., domestic violence, corporal punishment, and child abuse) and with peers (i.e., bullying). *Mesosystem* influences are linkages between microsystem settings such as family and school experiences in the United States and developing countries. *Exosystem* (e.g., elements that may not directly involve a child but may indirectly affect a child), such as school policies and parents' employment, and *Macrosystem* (e.g., cultural patterns, values, and societal norms) influences were addressed through readings and discussion of U.S. and international policies and laws affecting children (e.g., *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*, U.N. General Assembly, December 12, 1989), U.S. social welfare policies, and transnational adoption. *Chronosystems* (e.g., time-based influences on a child's life course) include a focus on the social and historical construction of childhood in the United States, as well as in a global context that included child trafficking, child marriage, street children, and children's experience of war (e.g., as refugees, soldiering, combat wives).

Child Development Diversity (CDD) Course Description and Assignments

The CDD course is included within a university-wide general education global studies concentration. The course learning objectives include the development of student knowledge of how children's development (i.e., physical, cognitive, social-emotional) and life experiences are shaped by intersectionality (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, class, religion), their relationships, social policies (local, national, international laws), and cultural practices. Intersectionality is discussed and linked to sexism, racism, implicit bias, and social reproduction (i.e., the cost of paying for the material goods necessary for the maintenance and production of life). Children's experiences within the United States and other developing countries or regions (e.g., Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin, and South America) are compared. The distribution of wealth and power and its implications for children's lives, especially within the context of relative and extreme poverty, is the focus of class readings (Wells, 2015) and assignments. Other course topics address child-caregiver attachment and trauma, risk factors and resilience or protective/promotive factors, and child advocacy. These topics were conveyed to students via class discussion of required readings from the textbook *Childhood in a Global Perspective* (Wells, 2015) and other readings and media sources (e.g., Ted Talks). Additionally, students watch and discuss documentaries on children's experiences of war, participation in labor, child sex trafficking in the United

States and Thailand, the U.S. public school system, and poverty. Learning is fostered by in-class activities (i.e., small group discussions and guided individual inquiries), individual writing assignments, discussion boards, and small group presentations at the end of the semester.

Students write a paper in this course that begins with selecting a non-fiction book. Students select from a list provided by the professor at the beginning of the semester (see Appendix A). Books were selected to illustrate the diversity of childhood experiences associated with gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and geo-political contexts. The large number of books provides opportunities for students to choose a topic of particular interest. Students are encouraged in the assignment instructions to select something that describes circumstances very different from their childhood to expand their understanding of childhood diversity. In addition to summarizing the main character's life circumstances, including economic, political, and social conditions, students select two passages that capture the essence of this child's experience or the author's main thesis. Students must select other course materials (e.g., textbook chapters or articles) that may explain the circumstances, events, or perceptions of the child(ren) in their book. Finally, students are asked to explain the personal significance of the book's information, as well as how information in their book changed, influenced, or confirmed their knowledge about children's development or diverse childhood experiences.

Small group presentations are scheduled for the end of the semester. Groups of three to four students select a topic focused on current childhood issues (e.g., poverty, education, child marriage, trafficking, soldiering). They must compare that issue in two different countries and provide recommendations for local advocacy. Topics are introduced with definitions of key concepts or terms (e.g., *food insecurity* or *combat wife*) and current statistics. A brief explanation of the topic's importance is followed by empirical information about the topic based on research studies or governmental or nongovernmental organization (NGO) reports and a description of an organization that specifically advocates for the rights of children regarding their presentation topic. Presentations conclude with information about how students can volunteer locally to support children in their communities. Such a course can embody LEAP Principle *Connect Knowledge with Choices and Action* by preparing students to be informed citizens and professionals who may work with children. Course content and assignments are designed to address children's current problems nationally and globally and align with LEAP Principle *Foster Civic*, *Intercultural*, *and Ethical Learning*.

Study Design, Goals, and Hypotheses

A mixed-method study design was employed to capture both the group differences in CDD students' and RMP students' knowledge, openness, and acceptance of diversity, as well as more individualized responses to the CDD course. A triangulation mixed-method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) can potentially provide different but complementary data on the same topics. Based on previous research (e.g., Pascarella et al., 1996; Remer, 2008) linking diversity education with students' openness and acceptance of diversity, this study examined associations and student differences in the CDD and RMP courses for the following variables: Openness to diversity, Acceptance of cultural differences, Awareness of racism and sexism, and Plans to advocate for others (OAAP variables). The OAAP variables were intended to provide indicators related to LEAP Principles *Connect Knowledge with Choices and Action* and *Foster Civic*, *Intercultural*, *and Ethical Learning.*

In this study, a concurrent design was employed in which survey measures of the OAAP variables were administered in class at the semester's beginning to students in the CDD course sections. The same measures were administered again in class and included four open-ended prompts that appeared on a semester-end survey. The survey measures of the OAAP variables were administered at the end of the semester for students in the RMP course. The size and direction of correlations between

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knowledge of diversity topics and the OAAP variables were compared across the two course groups. It was hypothesized that students enrolled in the CDD course would demonstrate greater knowledge of diversity topics from beginning to semester-end (i.e., intragroup change). It was also hypothesized that at the end of the semester, students in the CDD course would report greater knowledge of diversity topics compared with students in the RMP course. Self-rated diversity knowledge was obtained from the quantitative measures on the in-class surveys.

Qualitative data may be useful in explaining or building upon initial quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Others have recommended qualitative methods to explore understudied multicultural issues (Ponterotto, 2010). Thus, a broader study goal was to examine student perspectives of how the CDD course contributed to their increased knowledge of childhood diversity, the perceived value of this knowledge, and intended civic engagement. Research indicates the importance of soliciting students' perceptions of their learning experiences (Warfvinge, et al., 2022), and some studies have emphasized the importance of sociocultural factors in student perceptions of learning (for an integrative review, see Jessee, 2016).

It was anticipated that both data types would yield useful information for those planning or implementing college diversity courses. More specifically, in this study, quantitative group differences confirm students' increased and greater openness to diversity, acceptance of cultural differences, and awareness of racism and sexism, whereas qualitative data of students' responses to the CDD course may provide educators with useful information about pedagogical methods that engage students' interests, facilitate their openness to diversity, or that may support culturally responsive teaching approaches (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Method

Participants

Prior to data collection, Institutional Review Board approval was obtained. Participants read and signed an informed consent explaining that their data was confidential, and they could indicate whether they wished for their responses to be included in the research disseminated from this study. Data were collected from 127 students enrolled in the semester long CDD course across three consecutive semesters and from one group of 63 students enrolled in a research methods psychology course (RMPC group). Student ages for the CDD course groups were between 18 to 30, mean age of 20.06, mode = 19; 84.9% were female. About 29.6% were 1st year, 32.5% 2nd year, 27.8% 3rd year, and 8% 4th year students; the majority were child development majors (57%). All other declared majors (e.g., music, pre-nursing, business, psychology) accounted for less than 3% of each category.

RMP course student ages were between 18 to 42, mean age of 20.44, mode = 19; 68.3% were female. About 19% were 1st year, 41.3% 2nd year, 20.6% 3rd year, and 9.5% 4th year students; the majority were psychology majors (77.8%). All other declared majors (e.g., economics, business, child development) accounted for less than 3% for each category.

Measures and Procedures

Survey 1 was administered in class the first week of the semester in the CDD course over three consecutive semesters (i.e., three sections of the CDD course participated in this study). Students rated their current knowledge of 18 topics (i.e., cultural influences, gender, race/ethnicity, social class/caste, economic influences, poverty effects, child trafficking, child soldiering, and modern wars, risk factors, protective environments, how advocacy protects children and supports child resiliency, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), diversity in school experiences, work, family life,

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U.S. children's diverse life experiences, and sociocultural definitions of childhood) on a scale ranging from 0 (*none*) to 7 (*I have a comprehensive*, *complete understanding of this topic and can explain it to others*).

Survey 2 was administered in class the last week of the semester to CDD course groups and one RMP course group. Students in the CDD course were asked again to rate their current knowledge of the above 18 topics. This design was intended to capture intra-group changes in diversity knowledge across the semester. CDD course students also responded to four open-ended questions: 1) "Which readings helped the most to increase your understanding of childhood diversity?" 2) "Which documentary was most interesting and helpful?" 3) "Which format(s), course content, or assignments increased your knowledge the most?" and 4) "What was the most important thing you have learned from this class?" A research assistant and the principal investigator analyzed each of these four responses independently; response categories were developed and discussed until a consensus was reached (Miles et al., 2014). Percentages for each category were then determined.

During the final semester of this study, the OAAP measures were completed by one CDD course group (Group 3, n = 44) and the RMP course group (n = 63). *The Openness to Diversity Scale* (ODS; Pascarella et al., 1996) contains eight items that measure student enjoyment of, and the importance of, courses and experiences that introduce them to different cultures, values, ideas, and perspectives. A sample item is, "Learning about people from different cultures is a very important part of my college education." Seven items were combined to create our Variable 1: Openness to Diversity. Cronbach's alphas for the CDDC and RMPC groups were .91 and .99, respectively. A single item from this measure, "I plan on being involved in advocacy for others," was analyzed separately as Variable 2: Plans to Advocate.

The Scales of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) measure awareness of societal attitudes and cultural influences related to race discrimination and empathy toward individuals who experience racism (Wang et al., 2003). Items from this measure were combined and adapted to create three variables. Variable 3: Acceptance of Cultural Differences contained eight items, sample item, "I feel uncomfortable when I am around a significant number of people who are racially/ethnically different from me"; all similarly worded items were reverse coded so that higher scores reflect greater acceptance. Cronbach's alphas were .69 (CDDC) and .70 (RMPC). Variable 4: Awareness of Racism contained four items, sample item, "I am aware of how society differentially treats racial or ethnic groups." Cronbach's alphas were .87 (CDDC) and .78 (RMPC). Seven items similar to the Awareness of Racism items were created to measure Awareness of Sexism (Variable 5). One sample item from this scale was, "I am aware of how society differentially treats males and females." Cronbach's alphas were .87 (CDDC) and .84 (RMPC). All OAAP variables were measured with a 5-point Likert scale.

Results

Knowledge of Diversity Topics

To test the hypothesis for within-group changes in diversity knowledge, paired sample t-tests were used to analyze the change in beginning to semester-end student-reported knowledge of childhood diversity topics. Each CDD group showed statistically significant increases in knowledge of all 18 diversity topics (Table 1). Cohen's D effect sizes ranged from 0.82 to 3.94.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, t-tests, and Effect Sizes for Child Development Diversity (CDD) Course Students' Reported Beginning and End of Semester Knowledge of Childhood Diversity Topics.

Knowledge of . . .	Semester Start *M/SD*	Semester End *M/SD*	*t*	*Cohen's D*
Cultural Influences				
Group 1	3.07 / 1.66	6.89 / 0.65	-14.28***	-3.03
Group 2	1.84 / 0.89	5.66 / 1.12	-21.00***	-3.78
Group 3	3.83 / 1.65	5.19 / 1.06	-5.07***	-0.98
Gender Influences				
Group 1	3.00 / 2.05	6.68 / 1.09	-10.68***	-2.24
Group 2	2.04 / 1.09	5.67 / 1.26	-18.18***	-3.08
Group 3	3.67 / 1.57	5.29 / 1.04	-5.72***	-1.22
Ethnicity/Race Influences				
Group 1	3.69 / 1.67	6.68 / 1.11	-10.31***	-2.11
Group 2	1.98 / 1.16	5.51 / 1.31	-18.90***	-2.85
Group 3	3.56 / 1.67	5.05 / 1.22	-4.79***	-1.02
Socioeconomic Influences				
Group 1	3.36 / 1.63	6.47 / 1.37	-10.99***	-2.07
Group 2	2.44 / 0.99	5.98 / 1.14	-16.65***	-3.32
Group 3	4.12 / 1.60	5.26 / 1.15	-4.14***	-0.82
Economic Influences				
Group 1	3.50 / 1.91	6.37 / 1.48	-10.53***	-1.68
Group 2	1.89 / 1.13	5.70 / 1.29	-16.40***	-3.14
Group 3	3.50 / 1.58	4.90 / 1.32	-5.03***	-0.96
Poverty Influences				
Group 1	3.42 / 1.68	6.79 / 0.91	-11.94***	-2.49
Group 2	1.89 / 0.95	5.89 / 1.19	-21.10***	-3.72
Group 3	3.95 / 1.61	5.33 / 0.98	-5.76***	-1.04
Child Trafficking				
Group 1	2.70 / 1.81	6.78 / 0.92	-13.55***	-2.84
Group 2	1.09 / 0.97	5.67 / 1.33	-21.13***	-3.93
Group 3	2.14 / 2.03	4.86 / 1.28	-8.62***	-1.6
Child Soldiering and Modern Wars				
Group 1	2.00 / 1.82	5.69 / 1.88	-11.04***	-1.99
Group 2	0.89 / 1.01	5.58 / 1.27	-19.08***	-4.09
Group 3	1.65 / 1.60	3.93 / 1.49	-7.92***	-1.47
Risk Factors				
Group 1	2.43 / 1.83	6.37 / 1.48	-12.27***	-2.37
Group 2	1.62 / 1.05	5.11 / 1.03	-18.39***	-3.36
Group 3	2.62 / 1.81	4.57 / 1.04	-6.95***	-1.32
Protective Environments				
Group 1	2.12 / 1.57	6.03 / 1.74	-16.31***	-2.36
Group 2	1.84 / 1.11	5.47 / 1.22	-15.61***	-3.11
Group 3	3.05 / 1.94	5.24 / 1.27	-6.30***	-1.34
How Advocacy Protects Children				
Group 1	1.37 / 1.61	6.37 / 1.48	-16.11***	-3.23
Group 2	1.52 / 1.25	5.16 / 1.29	-12.42***	-2.87

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Knowledge of . . .	Semester Start *M/SD*	Semester End *M/SD*	*t*	*Cohen's D*
Group 3	1.86 / 1.83	4.57 / 1.21	-10.52***	-1.75
How Advocacy Supports Resiliency				
Group 1	1.70 / 1.45	6.16 / 1.65	-14.05***	-2.87
Group 2	0.84 / 0.82	5.27 / 1.21	-21.60***	-4.29
Group 3	1.46 / 1.40	4.32 / 1.46	-11.49***	-2
UN Convention on Rights of Child				
Group 1	0.50 / 0.95	4.84 / 2.15	-12.77***	-2.61
Group 2	0.44 / 0.72	4.93 / 1.30	-20.91***	-4.27
Group 3	0.76 / 1.05	3.57 / 1.35	-12.12***	-2.32
Diverse School Experiences				
Group 1	2.93 / 1.87	6.58 / 1.24	-11.53***	-2.3
Group 2	1.52 / 1.21	5.59 / 1.13	-18.37***	-3.48
Group 3	2.98 / 1.97	4.86 / 1.28	-6.28***	-1.13
Children's Working Conditions				
Group 1	2.08 / 1.66	6.49 / 1.33	-13.69***	-2.93
Group 2	1.02 / 0.97	5.56 / 1.31	-20.05***	-3.94
Group 3	1.69 / 1.30	4.67 / 1.24	-12.05***	-2.35
Diverse Family Experiences				
Group 1	3.24 / 1.83	6.89 / 0.65	-6.87***	-2.66
Group 2	2.00 / 1.30	5.53 / 1.12	-11.70***	-2.91
Group 3	3.56 / 2.04	5.15 / 1.04	-4.95***	-0.98
U.S. Children's Experiences				
Group 1	2.12 / 1.63	6.26 / 1.57	-12.65***	-2.59
Group 2	1.49 / 0.95	5.32 / 1.20	-16.83***	-3.54
Group 3	3.02 / 1.81	4.81 / 1.23	-6.24***	-1.16
Sociocultural Definitions of Childhood				
Group 1	2.36 / 1.72	6.14 / 1.67	-12.20***	-2.23
Group 2	1.73 / 1.08	5.64 / 1.14	-18.06***	-3.52
Group 3	3.17 / 1.74	4.81 / 1.38	-4.73***	-1.04

Notes. Group 1 $n = 38$, Group 2 $n = 45$, Group 3 $n = 44$; ***p < .001.
Scale: 0 = none to 7 = I have a comprehensive, complete understanding of this topic now and can explain it to others.

In testing for between-group differences, semester-end mean scores for these 18 diversity topics were analyzed for the three CDD groups and the one RMP group. A series of one-way Welch ANOVAs were conducted to determine if knowledge of these topics was different for the four groups: CDD Group 1 ($n = 38$), CDD Group 2 ($n = 45$), CDD Group 3 ($n = 44$) and RMP Group ($n = 63$). There was heterogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances, for all topics but one ($p = .000$ - $.040$). All of the one-way Welch ANOVAs were statistically significant. Post hoc analyses using the Games-Howell post hoc criterion indicated significant differences between the CDD and RMP groups; all of the mean scores for the RMP Group were statistically significantly lower than the mean scores for all 3 CDD groups (Table 2).

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Table 2

One Way ANOVAs with Post Hoc Tests for Knowledge of National and Global Childhood Diversity Comparing Child Development Diversity (CDD) and Research Methods Psychology (RMP) Groups.

Variable	CDD Group 1 *M / SD*	CDD Group 2 *M / SD*	CDD Group 3 *M / SD*	RMP Control Group 4 *M / SD*	*F* (3, 99.89)	*p*	n^2	Games-Howell HSD
Cultural Influences	6.89 / 0.65	5.69 / 1.12	5.19 / 1.06	3.73 / 1.62	73.25	.00	.45	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3
Gender Influences	6.68 / 1.09	5.67 / 1.26	5.29 / 1.04	3.79 / 1.75	35.03	.00	.37	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3
Ethnicity/Race Influences	6.68 / 1.09	5.51 / 1.31	5.10 / 1.25	3.66 / 1.64	41.07	.00	.38	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3
Socioeconomic Influences	6.47 / 1.37	5.98 / 1.14	5.26 / 1.15	4.19 / 1.78	20.75	.00	.27	3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
Economic Influences	6.37 / 1.48	5.70 / 1.29	4.90 / 1.32	3.77 / 1.66	25.59	.00	.30	3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
Poverty Influences	6.79 / 0.91	5.89 / 1.19	5.33 / 0.98	4.08 / 1.52	44.03	.00	.40	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3
Child Trafficking	6.79 / 0.91	5.67 / 1.33	4.86 / 1.28	2.03 / 1.66	117.21	.00	.64	2, 3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
Child Soldiering and Modern Wars	5.76 / 1.85	5.58 / 1.27	3.90 / 1.48	1.85 / 1.66	66.59	.00	.52	3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
Risk Factors	6.37 / 1.48	5.11 / 1.03	4.57 / 1.04	2.84 / 1.75	41.77	.00	.47	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3
Protective Environments	6.05 / 1.72	5.47 / 1.22	5.24 / 1.27	2.94 / 1.74	36.15	.00	.39	4 < 1, 2, 3
Advocacy Protects Children	6.37 / 1.48	5.16 / 1.29	4.57 / 1.21	2.38 / 1.66	57.49	.00	.51	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3

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Variable	CDD Group 1 *M / SD*	CDD Group 2 *M / SD*	CDD Group 3 *M / SD*	RMP Control Group 4 *M / SD*	*F* (3, 99.89)	*p*	n^2	Games-Howell HSD
Advocacy Supports Child Resiliency	6.16 / 1.65	5.27 / 1.21	4.32 / 1.46	1.73 / 1.59	79.12	.00	.57	2, 3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
UN Convention on Rights of the Child	4.84 / 2.15	4.93 / 1.30	3.57 / 1.35	0.87 / 1.33	97.40	.00	.57	3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
Diverse School Experiences	6.58 / 1.24	5.56 / 1.14	4.86 / 1.28	2.87 / 1.84	50.96	.00	.47	2, 3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
Children's Working Conditions	6.49 / 1.33	5.56 / 1.31	4.67 / 1.24	1.95 / 1.78	77.64	.00	.59	2, 3 < 1 3 < 2 4 < 1, 2, 3
Diverse Family Experiences	6.89 / 0.65	5.53 / 1.12	5.14 / 1.03	3.06 / 1.85	86.14	.00	.52	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3
US Children's Experiences	6.26 / 1.57	5.31 / 1.18	4.81 / 1.23	2.90 / 1.84	35.31	.00	.40	2, 3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3
Sociocultural Def. of Childhood	6.16 / 1.65	5.55 / 1.21	4.81 / 1.38	3.29 / 1.84	27.19	.00	.34	3 < 1 4 < 1, 2, 3

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Associations Between Diversity Knowledge and OAAP Variables

Means scores for CDD Group 3 with RMP Group were compared on the five OAAP variables: 1) openness to diversity, 2) acceptance of cultural differences, 3-4) awareness of racism and sexism, and 5) plans to advocate. CDD Groups 1 and 2 did not complete these measures. Thus, group comparisons were restricted to CDD Group 3 and RMP Group. None of these independent sample t-tests showed significant mean differences between the two groups, suggesting similarity in group means between the CDD and RMP groups: Openness to Diversity $t(103) = -.82$, $p > .41$, Acceptance of Cultural Differences $t(101) = .10$, $p > .93$, Awareness of Racism $t(103) = -.07$, $p > .94$, Awareness of Sexism $t(103) = -.76$, $p > .45$, and Plans to Advocate for Others $t(103) = -.61$, $p > .55$. Although the two groups showed no significant differences for these variables, significant group differences were revealed when the correlations between knowledge of the 18 childhood diversity topics and the OAAP variables were analyzed.

CDD Group 3 showed statistically significant, stronger, positive correlations between Openness to Diversity, Acceptance of Cultural Differences, Awareness of Racism, Awareness of Sexism, and Plans to Advocate and the following diversity topics: Cultural Influences, Ethnicity, SES, Economic Influences, and Poverty compared with the RMP group. Only one topic, Knowledge of Children's Working Conditions, was not correlated with one or more of the OAAP variables. In contrast, for the RMP Group only two of the correlations between knowledge of childhood diversity topics and the OAAP variables were significantly correlated (Table 3).

Table 3

Correlations Between Child Development Diversity (CDD) and Research Methods Psychology (RMP) Groups Knowledge of Childhood Diversity with Openness to Diversity, Acceptance of Cultural Differences, Awareness of Sexism and Racism, and Plans to Advocate

Variable	Openness to Diversity CDDC/RMPC	Acceptance Culture Diff CDDC/RMPC	Awareness of Racism CDDC/RMPC	Awareness of Sexism CDDC/RMPC	Plans to Advocate CDDC/RMPC
Cultural Influences	.43** / -.06	.34*/ -.05	.47** / -.04	.46**/ -.05	.42** / -.05
Gender Influences	.37** / .09	.16 / -.02	.25 / .20	.29* / -.14	.29* / .09
Ethnicity/Race Influences	.42** / -.05	.30* / .10	.38** / .07	.41** / -.18	.48** / -.05
Socioeconomic Influences	.52** / -.08	.29* / -.12	.38** / -.01	.34* / -.08	.58** / -.08
Economic Influences	.46** / -.06	.27* / .12	.38** / .03	.35* / -.03	.47**/ -.06
Poverty Influences	.48** / .09	.34* / .01	.52** / .06	.47** / -.22*	.50** / .09
Child Trafficking	.20 / .08	.28*/ -.09	.28*/ .12	.25 / -.13	.28*/ .08
Child Soldiering and Wars	.27* / .10	.11 / .06	.11 / .11	.10 / .11	.28* / .10
Risk Factors	.58** / -.13	.21 / -.02	.33* / .09	.35* / -.11	.38** / -.12
Protective Environments	.25 / .00	.09 / .09	.12 / -.00	.09 / -.14	.24 / .02

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Variable	Openness to Diversity CDDC/RMPC	Acceptance Culture Diff CDDC/RMPC	Awareness of Racism CDDC/RMPC	Awareness of Sexism CDDC/RMPC	Plans to Advocate CDDC/RMPC
How Advocacy Protects Children	.27* / -.10	.20 / .12	.31* / .02	.31* / -.08	.27* / -.09
How Advocacy Supports Resiliency	.12 / -.06	.08 / .12	.16 / .08	.15 / -.02	.25 / -.04
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	.28* / -.09	.14 / .10	.19 / -.11	.22 / -.10	.24 / -.08
Diverse School Experiences	.38** / .15	.21 / -.03	.26* / .09	.33* / -.11	.07 / .17
Children's Working Conditions	.10 / -.06	.00 / -.03	.03 / .03	.05 / -.12	-.02 / -.05
Diverse Family Experiences	.20 / .15	.10 / -.05	.25 / .25*	.25 / -.07	.24 / .17
US Children's Experiences	.30* / .02	.03 / .17	.21 / .21	.20 / -.07	.24 / .03
Sociocultural Definitions of Childhood	.21 / .12	.09 / .19	.08 / .04	.18 / -.01	.16 / .13

Student Perspectives of Pedagogy in the CDD Course

Student written responses discussed aspects of the CDD course that contributed to the knowledge of childhood diversity, perceived value of this knowledge, and intended civic and social actions (Table 4). For question 1, "Which reading and assignment were most helpful in understanding children's diverse experiences?" the majority of CDD course students (69%) reported that the required reading of a non-fiction book about a child was most impactful. Students selected among 17 books that described children's experiences associated with social class, child abuse, autism, sex trafficking, as well as becoming child soldiers, combat wives, slave laborers, and refugees (Appendix A).

Reading personal accounts from children had a powerful learning effect. Olivia[1] wrote,

> I really enjoyed the book I read for [the paper]. I think it helped me the most in understanding the extremes of children's experiences in my own country and illustrated resiliency and risk factors perfectly. It's one thing to learn that children can be resilient, but you often think, how? Well, this story depicts how. I like to know what children are going through, but I especially like knowing they're overcoming pain.

Similarly, Jack wrote about his selected book, which describes the experience of child soldiers in Africa, this way: "Honestly, the book I read was the most impactful for me. It just connected with me, maybe because it was about a group of boys rather than girls, but it was just the most powerful piece I've read." Students appeared fascinated, sometimes horrified by the personal accounts of the lives of children in some books. Many expressed disbelief or astonishment that children's lives could be so difficult or

[1] Student names are pseudonyms.

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different from their own experiences. For some, knowledge gained from reading their book was linked, at least in some way, to intended social action. Marina wrote,

> I think the book report [paper] helped me understand how different kids' lives are. I never really thought about child soldiers until I read about girls abducted in Uganda [and forced to become combat wives]. Now I know more about it, I can get involved.

Survey Question 2 asked, "Which documentary was most interesting or helpful in increasing your knowledge of children's diverse experiences?" The largest percentage of students (53%) indicated that the documentary *Waiting for Superman* about inequality within U.S. public schools had the strongest impact. Many students expressed shock and concern at the poor quality of U.S. public education compared with other countries and the high risk of failure or dropout rates within U.S. schools. Some students identified personally with this topic, as they had attended similar types of schools. Beyond expressing discouragement or anger about these conditions, some students described the need for change. Joseph described it this way, "understanding what some of the waste is in our school systems helps [me] to better understand what needs to change. Helping individual children is key because our country is falling behind in the global economy."

In describing the clarity provided by viewing documentaries in class, Rosina offered this comment:

> When we discuss issues that are so foreign to us or say statistics that are so massive, it is hard for people to relate to them, especially coming from America. The video [*God Grew Tired of Us]* helped me see what it is really like.

Similar comments were offered by other students, including Sarah, who wrote,

> I thought all of these documentaries were incredibly interesting. This class can definitely benefit by watching more of these types of videos/movies. They really put the statistics and concepts we learn in class into perspective. We get to see the impact on children.

Watching documentaries aroused strong emotions in many students. This was linked to awareness of advocacy organizations and their own desire to engage in social actions. Lizet wrote,

> *Half the Sky* was the most interesting to me. I even went home that night to watch the whole documentary. This really opened my mind; I had no idea that it was this bad for so many females in developing countries. This makes me want to be more informed and advocate for these women!

Similarly, Raquel wrote, ". . . the documentary [*Half the Sky*] showed various women and organizations that help out to be an advocate for the individuals in their community."

In terms of student perceptions of effective, impactful curriculum delivery (Question 3), the majority of CDDC students (86%) reported that lectures and class discussions of required readings were the most informative. Lia wrote, "I think lectures were first because they sparked a lot of group discussions which enforced the concepts of diversity and experience just within our own classroom." The written assignments were also highly ranked; 71% of students indicated that the two papers were helpful in increasing their knowledge. Alex put it this way, "I thought that both papers helped me the most because it required me to do further research and comprehension of a topic, rather than just read a story or passage or even listen to it in class."

Question 4 asked, "What was the most important thing you have learned from this course?" The majority of students (55%) indicated knowledge gained of U.S. and global childhood diversity. Jack wrote, "Honestly, just opening my eyes to all the global problems involving kids. I didn't know a lot coming into the class, but I'm leaving with a lot." Other categories provided by students included: (a)

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problems and challenges children experience (27%), (b) multiple sociocultural influences on children's development (28%), and (c) the importance of advocacy, programs for children, and becoming personally involved (24%). Increased global awareness was often coupled with social responsibility; Nicole wrote, "We need to be advocates for children everywhere. Every child should have adequate living, education, and family life." Kristiana commented, "It really made me want to be more involved in helping and volunteering and advocating for children's rights around the world." Additionally, 18% of students indicated gratitude and increased perspective-taking were important course-related outcomes. McKenna wrote, "It makes me so grateful for what I have and makes me take a step back and realize what's important."

Table 4

Student Responses to Child Development Diversity (CDD) Course Materials, Assignments, and Pedagogical Approaches

Questions and Answer Options	%*	Student Written Comments	Student**
Q1. Which class readings helped the most in understanding children's experiences?			
Nonfiction book about Child(ren)	69%	"I loved the book *I Am Nujood* which I read for Paper 2. It was fascinating and eye opening to hear Nujood's story In her own words and to contrast her childhood with my own."	Nicole
		". . .not only did I get to read about another child's experience from another part of the world, I was able to comprehend and feel her emotions of this hard time in her life by reading and writing about it"	Jessica
Articles	38%	"I believe many of the articles made me realize how current these issues are. It showed me that these problems are not things of the past, but still very relevant"	Eric
		"The articles we had to read for the quizzes really opened my eyes to all the trafficking, attachment, war on children, etc. Each of those taught me important facts on things that I didn't even know existed."	Khanis
Textbook Chapters	12%	*Topics cited by students:* Children and Modern War, Social Policy, School, and Work	
Q2. Which documentary was most interesting or helpful in understanding children?			
		"I think all of the information was eye opening. I especially enjoyed the videos. Although some of the information was depressing because of the conditions, it was so interesting."	McKenna
God Grew Tired of Us (Documentary on Lost Boys of Sudan)	26%	"God Grew Tired of Us was touching because it brought me back to Mexico where I recently aided in building two houses. One of the Hispanic mothers said, 'I felt like God forgot about me'."	Michael

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Questions and Answer Options	%*	Student Written Comments	Student**
Waiting for Superman (Documentary on U.S. Public School System)	53%	"Understanding what some of the waste is in our school systems helps [me] to better understand what needs to change. Helping individual children is key because our country is falling behind in the global economy."	
Half the Sky (Documentary on oppression of women and girls in the developing world)	39%	". . .when we discuss issues that are so foreign to us or say statistics that are so massive, it is hard for people to relate to that, especially coming from America. The video helped me see what it is really like."	Rosina
		"It shined a light on a dark realistic topic that I had never heard about. I related to it because I am female-the realities they portrayed terrified me and need to be changed"	Tyler
The Harvest (La Consecha) (Documentary on lives of children who are migrant farm workers in the U.S.)	31%	"The Harvest because it hit so close to home with it being in the U.S. and especially California. It made me realize how little I knew about migrant workers."	Keller
Q3. Which format(s) was/were most effective in increasing your knowledge?			
Lectures	86%	"I think lectures were first because they sparked a lot of group discussions which enforced the concepts of diversity and experience just within our own classroom."	Lia
Required Course Readings	50%	"All the readings and both papers were the most effective in increasing my knowledge about children's experiences globally."	Desiree
Exams	16%	"I feel as though the exams really cemented the information and confirmed in myself that I learned an amazing amount of information this semester"	Taylor
Paper	71%	"I thought the paper helped me the most because it required me to do further research and comprehension of a topic, rather than just read a story or passage or even listen to an in class."	Alex
		[The paper] "was the most effective because it gave me the opportunity to see the lives of other children through a different lens. Reading the book really helped with reflection and writing the paper only made me understand it more"	Sher
Group Presentation	36%	"The group presentations helped me learn about different advocacy programs that I would not have found out about if I did not take this class"	Elizabeth

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Questions and Answer Options	%*	Student Written Comments	Student**
Q4. What was the most important thing you have learned from this class?			
Advocacy, programs, becoming involved	24%	"I can help spread awareness about children in need and how I can advocate for them"	Nameeta
		"It really made me want to be more involved in helping and volunteering and advocating for children's rights around the world"	Kristana
CD Knowledge and Multiple influences on children's development	28%	*Topics cited by students:* Parenting, Attachment, Quality of Education, Poverty, Trafficking, Sibling Violence, Social Class, Human Capital Theory.	
		"I have learned from this class [about] child poverty and how it affects many more people that you would think worldwide. It broadened my view entirely and I enjoyed learning about it."	Jennifer
U.S. and Global/diversity of child experiences	55%	"One thing that was most important in this class was learning bout the difference experiences of children on a global level"	Sher
		"Honestly, just opening my eyes to all the global problems involving kids. I didn't know a lot coming into the class, but I'm leaving with a lot"	Jack
Sensitivity to problems/challenges children may be experiencing	27%	"How much childhood trauma can really affect a person later in life"	Colin
		"I never realized how [much] sibling violence existed or how corporal punishment can actually hurt a child developmentally"	Dominique
Personal growth, self-understanding, gratitude	18%	"It makes me so grateful for what I have and makes me take a step back and realize what's important"	McKenna

Note: N = 126. *Percentages do not add to 100% as some students selected more than one category per question. **All names are pseudonyms

Discussion

In this study, hypotheses about group differences in diversity knowledge for CDD and RMP students and associations between diversity knowledge and OAAP variables were examined via responses to quantitative survey measures administered in class. All three CDD groups reported statistically significant increases in their knowledge of childhood diversity topics from the beginning to the semester's end. Most effect size results indicated at least one full standard deviation (SD) unit change, and several were between two and three SDs. The consecutive semester data collection design allowed for the replication of results across CDD groups and time (3-16 week semesters). It provided evidence of increased knowledge of these diversity topics within groups from beginning to semester-end.

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Additionally, correlational findings were positively related to student-perceived diversity knowledge and the OAAP variables. The CDD course objectives are consistent with LEAP Principles of Excellence in providing a framework for diversity/global general education. Course topics do appear to *Engage the Big Questions* (High-Impact Educational Practices, AACU) by exposing college students to information about how age, gender, ethnicity, class, customs, and cultural values shape childhood experience. Comparisons between the three CDD course groups and the RMP course group revealed significantly greater knowledge of these diversity topics for the CDD course groups, as expected. This suggests that the information gained in the CDD course is not typically learned outside such a course.

In contrast, no significant differences were found in scores for students' self-reported openness to diversity, acceptance of cultural differences, awareness of racism, awareness of sexism, and plans to advocate for others (OAAP variables) when the CDD course and the RMP Control groups were compared. Although a psychology research methods course and a child development diversity course are intentionally quite different in content and learning objectives, psychology and child development are both within the social and behavioral sciences. Exposure to some topics (e.g., culture, race, and gender) is likely to occur in courses from both academic disciplines. This may partially account for the similarity of scores for both groups on the OAAP variables. It would be interesting to compare student responses to the OAAP variables in disciplines such as engineering, fine arts, natural sciences, or other fields outside the social sciences which may not focus on these topics.

The pattern of associations between the diversity knowledge variables and the OAAP variables for the CDD course Group 3 suggest linkages between knowledge of national and global childhood diversity and LEAP Principles *Connect Knowledge with Choices and Action* and *Foster Civic*, *Intercultural*, *and Ethical.* Two primary course objectives that align with LEAP High-Impact practices include the development of student global self-awareness and perspective-taking. These course objectives are intended to promote LEAP Principle *Personal and Social Responsibility*. CDD course students were provided with definitions of advocacy and information about agencies and organizations (e.g., UNICEF) whose goals often include protecting or restating the rights of disenfranchised children. Advocacy information was a required component of the CDD course group presentation, and knowledge of advocacy programs for children was assessed on the final exam. Several students commented on their plans to engage in advocacy in the semester-end survey.

Regarding preferred pedagogy, students' qualitative written responses provide compelling evidence that course content increased some students' global self-awareness, intercultural competence, and perspective-taking. Many students were surprised by how difficult children's lives are around the world and in the United States. Prior to this course, many reported having no knowledge of children's involvement in war, sex and drug trafficking, slavery, child labor in developing countries and their own, and the impact of levels of poverty locally, nationally, and globally. Many were unaware of how salient gender and social class, and other types of intersectionality are in determining children's opportunities and life circumstances.

Implications for the Design of Diversity Courses

Best practices in higher education include active learning activities that promote metacognition, knowledge construction, and retention (Brame, 2016). In-class small group discussions with written prompts allow deeper and more immediate engagement with specific readings or documentaries. Electronic discussion board posts within the institution's learning management program (e.g., Blackboard Learn, Canvas) provided another forum for students to share their impressions with each other regarding course topics or materials. Diversity courses are intended to foster global self-awareness and identity. For increasingly diverse college students, such courses may facilitate their own gender,

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ethnicity, and cultural identity development (Prieto, 2018; Whitehead, 2019) through exploring these topics.

Providing students with choices can increase engagement and motivation (Parker et al., 2017). In the CDD course, students were able to select partners for the group presentation and in-class activities. For the paper, students selected a book from a list of 17 nonfiction, often autobiographical, books about children's experiences in the United States and globally. Students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to select topics of personal interest. Several participants reported being "unable to put the book down" once they started reading. First-hand accounts of children's experiences that were often quite difficult and different from the students', were powerful and emotionally compelling.

Similar to González et al. (2016), participants in this study confirmed that viewing and discussing documentaries on course topics (e.g., rural poverty, education inequities, trafficking, child migrant farm workers) was an efficacious learning approach. Visual media not only illustrated (sometimes quite intensely) concepts and experiences described in course readings, lectures, and discussions, they evoked, in many students, salient emotional reactions. Emotionally laden experiences tend to have a more substantial, longer-lasting impact on individuals. In this course, viewing injustices, discrimination, and difficulties in some children's lives prompted feelings of social responsibility. Approximately one-quarter of students commented that child advocacy is the most important thing learned from this course.

Although not explicitly provided in this course, service-learning assignments foster greater student engagement and experiential understanding (Aramburuzabala et al., 2019). Course assignments that enable student involvement in local advocacy and volunteer work may be effective in *Fostering Civic*, *Intercultural*, *and Ethical Learning* (AACU, 2020) and personally transformative in the development of global self-awareness as suggested by other researchers (Doucet et al., 2013).

Limitations

Study limitations include the characteristics of the samples and the self-report nature of the surveys. Students in both the psychology and child development courses were predominantly female; thus, findings from this study may not be representative of college students in other majors (e.g., engineering, agriculture studies) or male students. Students self-reported their knowledge of course topics and their Openness to Diversity, Acceptance of Cultural Differences, Awareness of Racism, Awareness of Sexism, and Plans to Advocate for Others (OAAP variables). Self-reported knowledge may not reflect an objective measurement of increased knowledge (e.g., via tests or other assignments); however, consistent with findings from Elicker et al. (2010), student perspectives, rather than instructor perspectives of knowledge gained, are essential in fostering outcomes associated with LEAP Principles *Connect Knowledge with Choices and Action* and *Foster Civic*, *Intercultural*, *and Ethical Learning*.

Another limitation of the correlational study design was the inability to establish whether knowledge, of course, topics increased openness to diversity, acceptance of cultural differences, awareness of racism and sexism, and plans to advocate for others or whether students' current perceptions regarding these constructs influenced their decision to take this CDDC. Data regarding diversity knowledge and the OAAP variables were collected only once from the RMP course; thus, it is not possible to determine how representative responses to a single survey administration are regarding this type of knowledge.

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Conclusion

Despite limitations in the study design, the quantitative and qualitative data from the three groups of CDD course students suggest that an undergraduate, general education, global, and national childhood diversity course can be an effective forum for the development of intercultural competence, multicultural knowledge development, and potential ethical learning, advocacy, and civic engagement. CDD course participants' qualitative responses suggest that students find childhood diversity topics fascinating and express personal connections and understanding of the intersectionality of racism, implicit bias, gender, age, and social class (Nelson, 2010). Additionally, student-selected, first-person accounts gained through readings and media (e.g., documentaries and Ted Talks) appear to be a highly effective method to engage students.

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Appendix A

Book List for CDD Paper Assignment

Ali, N. & Minoui, D. (2010). *I am Nujood, age 10 and divorced.* Three Rivers.

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Carson, B. (1990). *Gifted hands*. Zondervan.

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Jordheim, A. (2014). *Made in America: The sex trafficking of America's children.* Higher Life Publishing and Marketing.

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