

Implementing Innovative Pedagogy and a Rainbow Curriculum to

Expand Learning on Diversity

Steven W. Sumner, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Economics
University of San Diego

Sandra Sgoutas-Emch, PhD
Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences
University of San Diego

Lisa Nunn, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
University of San Diego

Evelyn Kirkley, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Theology and Religious Studies
University of San Diego

A mixed methods approach analysis examines the impact of incorporating diversity education focusing on sexual diversity at an independent, Roman Catholic university, a site where Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ) individuals face discrimination, harassment, and homophobia. The analysis demonstrates the positive impact of incorporating the sexual diversity education implemented in a cluster-course approach using common learning experiences and outcomes. In comparison to the beginning of the semester, by the end of the semester students were better able to articulate and implement culturally sensitive language, express an understanding of marginalization of sexual minorities as well as discuss heterosexual privilege.

Scholars argue that education and increased awareness of the struggles of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ¹) population are critical towards building a society that both tolerates and embraces this community (Case & Stewart, 2010; Rogers, McRee, & Arntz, 2009; Yep, 2002). It is widely recognized that schools are sites of intense homophobia, discrimination, and hate crimes directed at LGBTQ students, staff, and faculty (Fine, 2011; Gortmaker & Brown, 2006; McCarty-Caplan, 2013; Woodford, Silverchanz, Swank, Scherrer, & Raiz, 2012). A 2010 Campus Pride National College Climate Survey conducted by the Q Research Institute for Higher Education found that in the United States, roughly twice as many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer (LGBQ) respondents experienced harassment on

¹ The acronym LGBTQ will be used generally in this paper to reference the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer community. In specific instances alternative acronyms may be used when only a subset of this community is being studied or referenced.

campus as compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Of those experiencing harassment, 83% of the LGBTQ respondents stated that harassment was based on sexual identity compared to only 12% of their heterosexual counterparts. The situation on campus for transgender/gender non-conforming respondents was also unwelcoming (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). K-12 and college classrooms are often described as spaces where both students and teachers feel it is risky to reveal their non-conforming sexual identities (Horvitz, 2011; Kissen, 2002). At our institution, current climate surveys point to similar issues. The 2009-2010 Diversity Learning Environment Survey developed by Higher Education Research Institution (HERI) and conducted at our institution indicated that LGBTQ students rank our institution as more “hostile,” “intolerant,” “sexist,” “conservative,” and “impersonal” than do their heterosexual counterparts (University of San Diego, Institutional Research and Planning, n.d.). Additionally, our institution received 2.5 out of 5 stars on the 2011-2012 Campus Pride LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index (Campus Pride, 2012).

Although in higher education, definitions and application of diversity and inclusion may differ in the curriculum, it is commonly acknowledged that the purpose of these courses is to expose students to potential biases and prejudices that they and society may hold and to allow an opportunity for reflection and change (Airton, 2009; Grauerholz, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Sedgwick, 1988). For example, curricular/co-curricular programs focusing on racial/ethnic diversity have been shown to be positively associated with student learning outcomes such as intergroup attitudes (Lopez, 2004); racial prejudice and intergroup understanding (Chang, 2002); attitudes toward campus diversity (Springer, Palmer, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996); critical thinking skills (Laird, Engberg, & Hurtado, 2005; Pascarella, Palmer, Moye, & Pierson, 2001); cognitive and affective development (Astin, 1993); and changes in the way white students read, consider, and research issues raised in class, and collaborate on class projects (Alger et al., 2000). While they have a narrow definition of diversity, Littleford (2013) found that 40.2% of students surveyed from a medium-sized Midwestern university reported that it was important or very important for instructors to include diversity issues in their courses. Students felt that diversity education would help prepare them to work in a culturally diverse workplace as well as gain more awareness and understanding of people from backgrounds that may be different than theirs.

At our institution, students are required to take a course that explicitly engages issues of diversity. However, this requirement only includes courses that focus on race and ethnicity; it does not include courses that focus on sexual diversity. The accreditation body for our institution specifically pointed out the narrow focus of our diversity requirement and recommended that we expand the definition. This exclusion along with the fact that the institution highlighted in this paper is an independent Roman Catholic university, motivated a group of faculty (the authors of this study) to design a cluster of courses that would directly address sexuality as a diversity issue. These faculty members implemented a novel approach in their courses that included a combination of common learning outcomes and experiences focused on sexuality as a diversity issue. The intentional design of the cluster facilitated the examination of the impact on attitudes and learning of incorporating diversity education into the curriculum that focuses on sexuality as the diversity issue. Dessel,

Woodford, Routenberg, and Breijak (2013), Case and Stewart (2010), Case, Hensley, and Anderson (2014), and Waterman, Reid, Garfield, and Hoy (2001) all provide examples demonstrating the positive impact of LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum on learning and/or awareness of the LGBTQ community. Additionally, GLSEN (2013) found that attending a K-12 school with a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)-inclusive curriculum is related to a less hostile school experience for these students. Importantly, LGBTQ students are not the only ones who benefit from inclusive curriculum; heterosexual students benefit as well through an expanded understanding of LGBTQ persons and their struggles against homophobia, heterosexism, and genderism (Guess, 2011; Hubbard & De Welde, 2003; Munin & Speight, 2010; Nunn, Sgoutas-Emch, Sumner & Kirkley, 2016; Simoni & Walters, 2001).

Addressing the topic of sexuality as a diversity issue requires innovative teaching that engages students in the course material in a deep and meaningful way. Waterman et al. (2001) showed that based on student ratings, guest speakers, movies, lectures, and giving presentations were assessed to be more effective teaching strategies for discussing sexual diversity than textbook readings and viewing other students' book presentations. In another example, Nunn and Bolt (2015) found that asking college students to wear a rainbow bumper sticker for 24 hours fostered 'deep learning' on heteronormativity and heterosexual privilege. Many students experienced discomfort wearing the rainbow sticker and articulated in self-reflection papers they were surprised by their own reactions. Although many heterosexual students thought of themselves as supporters of the LGBTQ community, they felt anxiety and fear over the possibility that people would see them as gay or lesbian themselves. Students rated the rainbow sticker activity positively in terms of helping them recognize heterosexual privilege, helping them empathize with others who hold minoritized sexual identities, and for helping them recognize how homophobia influences conformity to heterosexual norms. Taking this evidence into account, the authors designed their courses to include a variety of common learning experiences.

Addressing the topic of sexuality as a diversity issue requires innovative teaching...

Integrative learning in the form of multi-disciplinary courses was also an essential part of the learning experience for the students enrolled in the cluster courses. In an issue of *Peer Review* (Carey, 2013) on capstone and integrative learning, the editor highlights the importance of providing students in higher education with opportunities "to integrate, synthesize and apply knowledge" (p. 4) as essential elements for deep and meaningful learning experiences. An example of such an opportunity is to have students take a cluster of courses from different disciplines around a theme such as Food or Social Justice. These cluster courses are becoming more common in higher education with institutions such as Boston University and Portland State University offering some form of cluster classes.

Along with cluster courses, others have outlined the importance of developing common learning assignments and rubrics in transforming learning outcomes into measurable and achievable outcomes (Goomas & Weston, 2014). The definition and measurement of diversity outcomes are difficult and therefore, any technique that helps to bring this vague, abstract concept to a more concrete and

measurable outcome is an important tool in higher education. Furthermore, diversity requirements are prevalent across the nation with many schools requiring some form of diversity coursework as part of the general education curriculum (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2016).

Finally, it is important to note that the majority of studies cited thus far were done at secular institutions of higher learning. The literature on LGBTQ curricula in religiously-affiliated institutions is scant (Rockenbach & Crandall, 2016). As mentioned previously, our university campus is an independent Roman Catholic institution, which throughout its history has at times supported the LGBTQ and ally² communities and at other times, hesitated, for fear of violating or transgressing official Catholic teachings and offending alumni and potential donors. As a result our courses were among the first focused explicitly on sexual diversity and the first to measure student learning and attitudes related to sexual diversity. Developing this curriculum took several years and required a clear rationale aligned with our Roman Catholic mission and values as to why such courses should be included in the curriculum. We obtained the approval of not only our departments but also the Deans of our respective schools, a step unnecessary for a less controversial subject. This approval was requested in part due to the concern that alumni or donors may protest the inclusion of these courses as inappropriate for a Roman Catholic institution. To our knowledge no complaints were lodged.

To contextualize the current study further, our student population differs from that at a secular university. Compared to state universities in the area, our students have a higher percentage of Roman Catholic backgrounds. Approximately 50 percent of our student body identifies as Roman Catholic, with at least 25% of the student body having attended Catholic secondary schools. Anecdotally, many of our students identifying as Catholic are baptized but not confirmed, meaning their relationship with the Church may be tenuous at best. Many of our students identify as Republican, have wealthy socio-economic backgrounds, and entered college immediately after high school at 17 or 18. Some families undoubtedly send their children to our university because it is small, values-based, and provides many student resources, and we are perceived as an *in loco parentis* campus. At the same time, the students who self-selected our courses indicated a high level of interest in sexuality as a diversity issue; they were familiar with LGBTQ vocabulary (80.95%), were personally acquainted with at least one LGBTQ person (84.71%), and believed LGBTQ people should have the same rights as heterosexuals (89.29%). Therefore, despite being a university affiliated with an institution historically unfriendly to the LGBTQ community, our students indicated they were not.

Teaching these courses at the university, we highlighted Catholic teachings on homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and gender fluidity. We presented pro- and con- perspectives on most issues, to be both as balanced as possible and also in alignment with our university mission and values. While the courses may look slightly

² At our university, the term ally (as used by the campus safe space allies program) refers to someone who validates and supports members of a community, regardless of whether or not they belong to that community.

different from how the same courses might be taught at a secular university, we offer this study as a means of approaching sexuality as a diversity issue in both secular and religiously-affiliated institutions. The intentional design of the courses incorporated two common identical learning outcomes in all courses, provided common learning experiences that allowed students to be exposed to sexual diversity issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives, and encouraged students to explore the intersectional nature of identity. The intention was that the unique design of the courses would advance students' recognition and understanding of different sexualities and gender identities and increase empathy toward such diverse communities.

There are three main purposes to this study. First, to analyze whether exposure to LGBTQ curriculum in the cluster courses impacts student perceptions about the LGBTQ community and attitudes toward sexuality. Second, to assess student learning as it pertains to sexuality as a diversity issue. This was accomplished by developing rubrics with criteria that aligned with two common learning outcomes focused on sexuality as a diversity issue. Finally, to examine how the common learning experiences contributed to students' perceptions of their own learning towards LGBTQ-themed topics.

Method

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the university, and students had the option to opt out of having their data included in the study.

Common Learning Outcomes and Learning Experiences

In order to assess whether the courses provided students with opportunities to learn how sexuality fits within the realm of diversity, the faculty who taught the cluster courses developed two common learning outcomes for all courses. Rubrics were developed (on a scale of 1 = *Missing* to 5 = *Advanced*) to align with these learning outcomes (see Appendix A). The learning outcomes (LO) were the following:

- 1) Demonstrate the application of sophisticated, culturally sensitive vocabulary when discussing sexual diversity that expresses not only appreciation of differences but cultural empathy for and awareness of the social marginalization and political disenfranchisement of sexual minorities. **LO1**
- 2) Critically examine the intersections of sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and age within the contexts of power relationships that lead to systemic inequities. **LO2**

Students participated in four common learning experiences designed to address one or more of the criteria developed for student learning. These included an LGBTQ awareness workshop, a transgender speaker, a tour of the local "gayborhood," and a documentary film on same-sex couples (see Appendix B for details). Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered to assess learning using surveys (measuring attitudes about sex and LGBT individuals), a questionnaire (to assess

students' experiences and perceived learning from the courses) and four reflective essay prompts (see Appendix C).

Participants

Participants for the study were all undergraduate students ($N = 85$) from a private, independent Roman Catholic institution, representing 82.5% of students enrolled in one or more of four cluster courses designed to emphasize sexuality as a diversity issue. Faculty teaching the courses were all part of a learning community that focused on researching the theme of sexuality and developing linked and multi-disciplinary cluster courses. The four courses included *Explorations in Human Sexuality* offered by the Department of Psychological Sciences, *Out of the Closet and into the Business World* in the School of Business Administration (Economics/Business), *Sexuality and Borders* in the Department of Sociology and *Homosexuality and Christianity* in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. All courses are elective; however, the Christianity and Homosexuality course is one of many Theology and Religious Studies courses that may fulfill a graduation requirement.

Consent to participate in the study was received by 97 of the 107 (90.7%) unique students that originally enrolled in the courses. Four students were enrolled in two courses concurrently. Out of the 97 students who provided consent, one student was auditing the class and did not complete all assignments, and three students dropped the course. Only participants that had both pre and post survey scores and reflection prompt scores were included in the analysis resulting in an additional eight students that were dropped from the analysis. Therefore, the final data analysis was completed for 85 of the students. Table 1 shows the participation rate across the four classes. Gender was the only piece of demographic information that was collected and the sample was comprised of 62.4% female, 36.5% male and 1.2% other. Additionally, at the end of the semester the participants' final course average grades were recorded. The average grade across all classes was 87.48% with a standard deviation of 6.91 percentage points.

Procedure

All students enrolled in the courses were invited to participate in the study. Only data from 85 students who signed the consent form were included in any analysis.

During the first lecture period, students were given a packet which included the questionnaires, pre-essay prompt, labelled scantron forms and the consent form to complete before the end of the class period. Instructors read from a script about the purpose of the study. All packets were returned to the instructors and then handed to the research assistants who coded each student's name to ensure confidentiality. All data from students who did not sign the consent form were excluded from the analysis. The instructors did not see any of the survey data until after final grades for the course were submitted. Furthermore, all essay prompts were not analyzed until after names were removed and grades were submitted.

During the semester, reflection essays were collected for the LGBTQ awareness workshop and documentary film as other data measures. The four common learning experiences occurred at different time points across the semester.

At the end of the semester, students were handed another packet with post questionnaires, scantrons and the post-essay prompt to be completed in class. Again, packets were collected and handed to the research assistants.

Questionnaire scantrons were run through a machine that recorded the responses. Essay responses were coded for the criteria developed on the rubrics (see coding below). For the pre/post-essay and LGBTQ workshop reflection essay, the criteria examined included language/vocabulary, recognition and appreciation of difference, empathy, and recognition of social marginalization and political disenfranchisement. The reflection essay from the documentary was coded for intersectionality, understanding power and identifying inequities, and recognition of identities criteria.

Results

Pre-post comparisons. Non-parametric statistics were used to compare pre and post scores on the LGBT attitude and sexuality attitude scales. All essays were coded along a scale of 1 = *missing* and 5 = *advanced* for each of the criteria associated for that particular essay.

Coding of essays. The four faculty members scored the four pieces of student work according to rubrics (scaled 1-5) that were developed to assess our learning outcomes. Each writing task was scored independently of the other three tasks. In order to obtain inter-rater reliability, four essays were randomly selected to be scored independently by each of the four faculty members. A norming session followed in which scores were compared and discussed for each of the criteria and levels within the rubrics.

Each student case was randomly assigned to two coders (faculty members), with each coder sharing an equivalent number of cases with every other coder. Each coder had an equivalent number of cases from each of the four courses. When the two coders' scores differed by more than 2 overall points (out of a possible 15 or 20 points, depending on the rubric), those two coders discussed the case and came to agreement (within 2 points).

The results of this study are provided in three parts. Part 1 considered how the courses impacted students' attitudes toward sexuality and the LGBTQ community. Next the impact of the courses on students' learning by assessing the learning outcomes related to sexual diversity for the courses were considered. Finally, students' perceptions of how their learning was impacted by the common course experiences were examined. A 5% level of significance was used for all statistical testing.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics across Cluster

Course	Participated	Enrolled	Participation Rate
Psychology	17	25	77.3
Economics/Business	19	22	86.4
Sociology	26	33	81.3
Theology and Religious Studies	23	27	85.2
Total	85	107	82.5

Note. The participation rate is calculated as the number that participated divided by the number enrolled less the number that dropped/audited the class).

Attitudes toward Sexuality and the LGBT Community

At the beginning and end of the semester, participants completed a survey to record their attitudes toward sexuality and the LGBT community. Using the Related-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, no statistically significant differences were found on any of the subscales for the Sexuality Attitudes Survey when comparing the pre- and post-surveys. Two statistically significant differences were found in terms of attitudes toward the LGBT community. At the end of the semester students had a more positive response regarding their familiarity with the term LGBT ($p = 0.048$) and their belief in the importance of having LGBT content in all courses ($p = 0.006$). In addition to the non-parametric analysis, we also computed the proportion of students that strongly agreed with a given statement indicating attitudes toward the LGBT community. Participants generally reported a very positive attitude toward the LGBT community at the start of the semester. As seen in Table 2, across all statements except one (LGBT themed content should be included in all courses) more than 80% of participants strongly agreed with the positive LGBT attribute. Furthermore, the percentage of participants strongly agreeing with the positive attribute increased for all of these statements except for the statement that LGBT individuals should have all the same rights as heterosexuals in the United States, which decreased slightly. As shown in Figure 1, the portion of participants that strongly agreed with the view that LGBT content should be included in all courses was considerably lower (42.35%) at the beginning of the semester. As shown in Table 2, dependent paired sample t -tests showed that a higher proportion of students strongly agreed with the idea that LGBT themed content should be included in all courses at the end of the semester than compared to the beginning of the semester with $t(81) = 2.72$, $p = 0.008$, $R^2 = 0.08$. The effect size indicates that this difference was small to almost medium. For all other statements, the differences in the proportion of students that strongly agreed with the given statement were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Additionally, Mann Whitney tests demonstrated there was no evidence of gender differences found for any of the variables measuring the students' attitudes toward sex or their attitudes regarding the LGBT community that we compared in this portion of the study.

Table 2

Percentage of Participants that “Strongly Agree” with the Following Statements

Statement	PRE %	POST %	t-stat (p-value) (df)
Familiar with term LGBT	80.95	93.83	1.83 (0.072) (79)
Know an LGBT person	84.71	95.00	1.49 (0.141) (79)
Comfortable around LGBT	83.53	95.00	1.35 (0.181) (79)
Spend social time with LGBT	82.35	87.65	0.74 (0.459) (80)
LGBT theme in all course content	42.35	53.66	2.72 (0.008) (81)
LGBT same rights	89.29	88.89	-0.63 (0.530) (79)
LGBT legal to marry	82.93	88.61	0.93 (0.357) (76)

Note. Statistical testing was performed at $p < 0.05$.

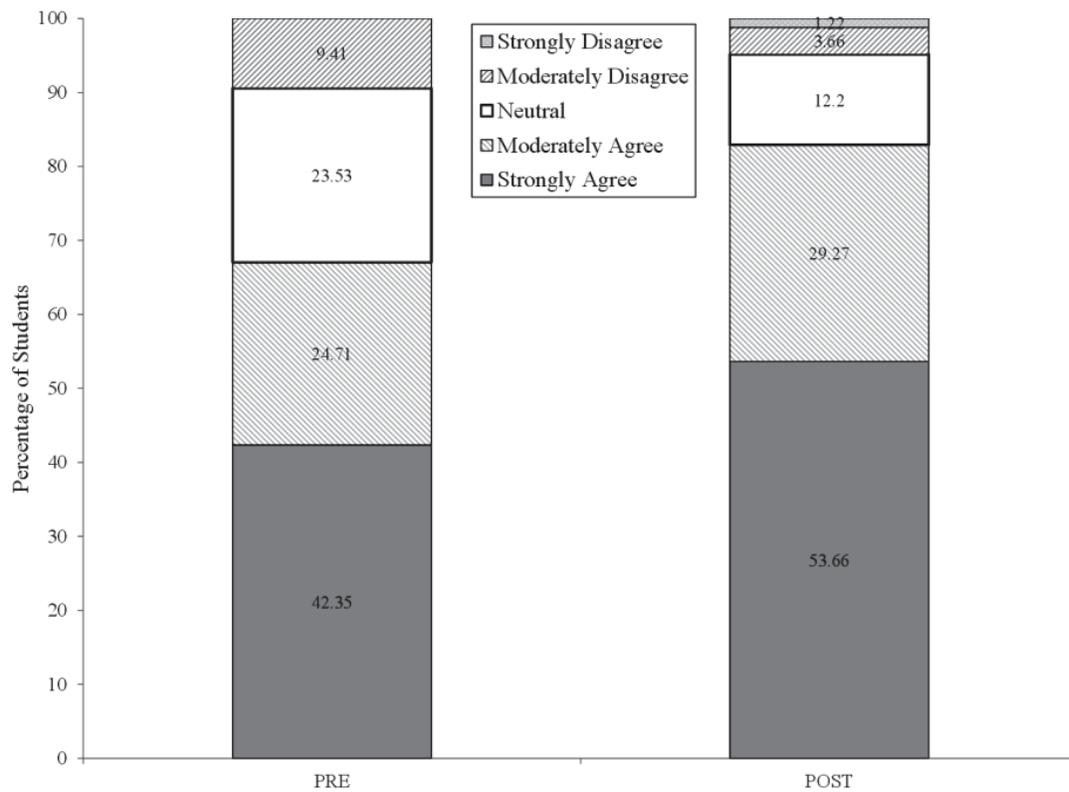


Figure 1. Participant percentage response to statement “Believe in the importance of having LGBT content in all courses”.

Assessing Sexual Diversity Learning Outcomes

To assess student learning during the course of the semester we analyzed the pre and post writing reflections and the LGBTQ workshop reflection according to the four criteria (language/vocabulary, recognition and appreciation of difference, empathy, and recognition of social marginalization and political disenfranchisement) described in the rubric. Figure 2 shows the average score for the pre and post writing reflections (shaded and striped bars) for each of the four criteria. Across all four criteria there was an increase in the average score with the largest difference being for the recognition of social marginalization and political disenfranchisement criteria from 2.28 to 3.12 (out of a possible score of 5). Statistical analysis comparing pre and post measures was completed using Related-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. All analyses showed statistically significant increases at $p < 0.001$ level. Change score calculations (POST – PRE Ratings) showed that a culturally sensitive accurate use of language had the smallest difference ($M = 0.59 \pm 0.92$) and ability to describe relationships between one's sexual minority status and social marginalization and political disenfranchisement showed the largest difference ($M = 0.84 \pm 1.14$). All four component change scores were significantly positively correlated demonstrating these were interrelated concepts. Students also completed a writing reflection following an LGBTQ awareness workshop, which was scored on the same four criteria. As shown in Figure 2, across all four criteria the average score for the LGBTQ awareness workshop writing reflection (unshaded bar) was higher than for either the pre or post writing assignments. Interestingly, the empathy criterion that scored lowest out of the four criteria on both the pre and post reflection essay received the highest average score of the four criteria for the LGBTQ awareness workshop reflection essay.

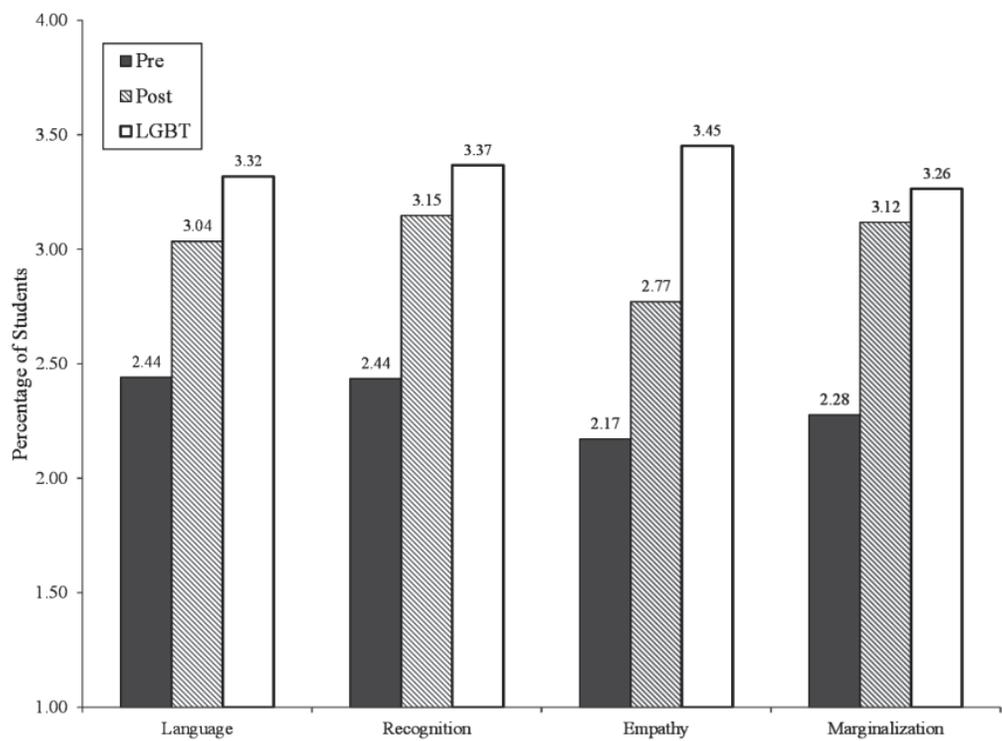


Figure 2. Average scores on rubric criteria for pre/post ($N = 85$) and LGBTQ workshop reflections ($n = 72$).

A different set of criteria were used to assess the documentary film writing reflection. These criteria included intersectionality, understanding power and identifying inequities, and recognition of identities. The mean score for the documentary film writing reflection using the three criteria were 3.56, 4.01, and 3.74 for the intersectionality, understanding, and identity criteria respectively. Overall, students had the most difficult time articulating the concept of intersectionality. Students were best able to analyze the relationships between power and privilege and the resulting inequities.

Table 3

Median Score (out of 10) and Percentage of Students Reporting on the Common Course Learning Experience Assessment (N = 85)

Common Learning Experience	Intersectionality	Vocabulary	Percentage
LGBT Awareness Workshop	9	9	30.6
Transgender Guest Speaker	9	9	34.1
Tour of Local "Gayborhood"	8	8	11.8
Documentary on Same-Sex Couples	9	8	21.2

Note. The percentage represents the percentage of students who reported that particular experience as having the most impact on their learning.

Impact of Common Course Experiences

We were also interested in whether or not students perceived the common course experiences as contributing to their learning. To do this the results of a survey that was completed at the end of the semester by the students was examined (see Appendix D). The students were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (*Not at All*) to 10 (*Very Much*) how the common course experience contributed to their learning (in terms of the two common course learning outcomes). Table 3 displays the median scores related to the two course learning outcomes for each of the four common course experiences as well as the percentage of students who reported that experience as having the most impact on their learning. The median score for the overall experience with the cluster course was 9. For all common experiences, the students with the median score perceived that the experience contributed highly to his or her learning related to the two common course learning outcomes. Furthermore, there was no single experience that was most valued by the majority of students, although the LGBTQ awareness workshop and Transgender Speaker were most impactful on student learning for at least 30% of the students, while the tour of the local "Gayborhood" was most impactful for approximately 10% of students.

In the survey, students were also asked to think about how the common experiences helped them to think about different aspects of their learning related to the

course. Responses, shown in Figure 3, measure how the experiences helped them think about the concepts learned in their course; recognize how homophobia influences conformity to heterosexual norms and expectations for behavior; empathize with people who hold minoritized sexual identities; and recognize some of their own heterosexual privilege. While approximately 10% of the students did not find the common experiences beneficial (strongly disagreed), a much larger majority of students found the experiences as contributing to their learning (agreed or strongly agreed). Overall, over 80% agreed or strongly agreed that the events helped them think about course concepts, recognize how homophobia influences conformity to heterosexual norms and expectations for behavior, empathize with people who hold minoritized sexual identities (e.g. homosexuals, bisexuals, and transsexuals), and recognize some of their own heterosexual privilege.

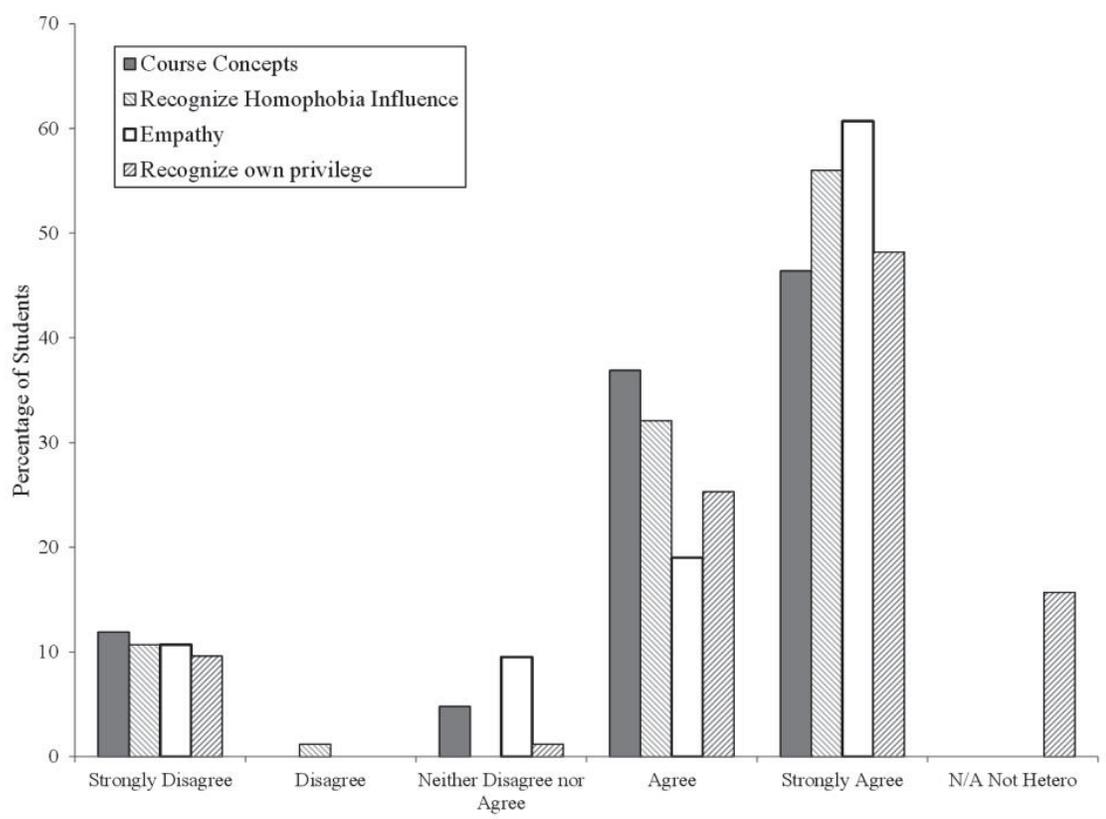


Figure 3. Percentage of student who rated each common learning outcome.

Using Spearman correlations, there was a small significant relationship between student's final grade in the course and their overall rating of their experience with the cluster, $r_s(84) = 0.22, p = 0.04$. Students who had lower grades rated their experience significantly lower overall. Additionally, significant correlations were found between their overall experience score and the experiences for each of the individual common events, as well as a significant relationship between the overall experience and whether LGBT individuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals, $r_s(79) = 0.24, p = 0.03$. This suggests that the higher a student rated the overall experience, the more likely the student also perceived the individual common experiences as contributing to their learning and the more likely they are to support

that LGBT individuals should have all the same rights as heterosexuals in the United States. These variables were also positively correlated with the average grade in the course.

Discussion

The lack of diversity and inclusiveness on college campuses has been a concern for decades (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, 2007). In that time, evidence has mounted to substantiate the importance of diversity to students' learning and overall college experience (Chang, 2002). Historically, most efforts have focused on identities such as race, ethnicity and gender to define diversity. It is less often that one's sexual orientation and gender identity have been considered. New solutions and interventions are offered in this research with the idea that once implemented, our campuses will be a more welcoming place for all students. Including curriculum that is inclusive of LGBTQ topics and presents the LGBTQ community positively is one method of improving campus climate and educating undergraduate students to the role sexual orientation and gender play as a diversity issue (GLSEN, 2013). In addition, utilizing innovative pedagogical approaches such as cluster course structures and common learning experiences has been shown to enhance student engagement and learning. The purpose of the current study was to examine how the implementation of a cluster of multidisciplinary courses with the theme of sexuality as a diversity issue would impact student learning around two common learning outcomes as well as their attitudes toward the LGBTQ community.

In this study's four-course cluster, no statistically significant differences were seen across the semester with regards to students' sexual attitudes. Considering students' attitudes toward the LGBT community were already fairly positive at the beginning of the semester, it is perhaps not surprising that the scores either did not change or increased only slightly. Because all of the courses in the cluster were electives, selection bias may have played a role. Students enrolled in the courses may have been motivated to explicitly take up issues of sexuality and may have already been avid supporters of the LGBTQ community. Some students were community members themselves. Unfortunately, we did not ask whether students were LGBTQ; therefore, we were unable to do any analysis to see if students who self-identified as LGBTQ had different responses. Interestingly, we found statistically significant evidence that students' familiarity with the term LGBT increased from the first day of class to the last day of class. In addition, students were more likely to agree at the end of the semester that LGBT-themes should be included in all courses than compared to the beginning. This suggests that participation in the cluster courses may increase awareness of the need and importance to have these topics carryover and discussed in other disciplines.

Overall, the data support the implementation of LGBTQ-themed courses in increasing students' understanding, empathy and ability to critically think and write about sexual orientation as part of their identity that impacts quality of life and how society treats a person. Content analysis of the pre/post reflective essays showed that students' scores improved for all criteria of the learning outcomes of the cluster courses. Empathy seemed to be the criterion on which students improved the most as

a result of the LGBTQ awareness workshop. During this workshop students completed a guided meditation spending a day in the life of a gay/lesbian individual. This activity may have elicited a greater sense of empathy than the pre and post writing prompt that simply asked the students to consider a situation about themselves. This finding parallels the results of other scholars that have seen an increase in empathy related to exposure to diversity curriculum (Carrell, 2009; Cole, Rios, Case, & Curtin, 2011).

Of particular interest was how quickly the learning and transition could take place with just one activity. Somewhat surprisingly, students scored higher on the writing reflections for the LGBTQ awareness workshop, which took place on either the first or second day of class, than they did for the pre (and post) writing reflection prompt. However, this assignment was a take-home assignment (due one-week after the workshop) on which the students had more time to reflect and edit their responses. It was clear that scores on the learning outcomes criteria were higher when students were given more time to reflect and may explain why the pre and post essay prompts produced weaker scores.

As for the documentary film experience, many students did not seem to be able to articulate the concept of intersectionality as well as the concepts of marginalization, power, and privilege. This points to the need for better instruction with regard to the tenets of intersectionality and the importance of the concept. Reflecting back on our courses' content, we realize that across all of the courses not enough time in class was spent examining this concept, and we need to change the curriculum to highlight the tenets of intersectionality more intentionally in the future. Students also seemed to confuse ethnoracial identity with national identity, as national identity was a focus of the film, but the prompt listed racial identity as a possible focus for the reflection essay. In the future, we need to explicitly discuss race as distinct from nationality in order to help students more successfully understand the distinction.

As for the common learning experiences, students reported that these experiences were instrumental in their learning. All common learning experiences were rated highly by the majority of students with the Transgender Speaker rating the highest. These experiences seemed to be perceived by the students as being helpful in their learning on intersectionality and use of culturally sensitive vocabulary. In addition, students overwhelmingly agreed that the common learning experiences helped them understand course concepts; recognize the influence of homophobia; feel empathy for sexual minorities; and recognize their own privilege. Correspondingly, the assessment of their learning corroborated the students' self-reported perceptions. Using the criteria developed for the two common learning outcomes to score student work at the beginning and at the end of the courses, ratings on the rubric scale increased for all the criteria including language, recognition, empathy and marginalization. Because both student perception and measures of student learning were aligned, we believe exposure to the common learning experiences had a meaningful impact on the students. Finally, because student learning and not just attitudes and perceptions were measured and because gains were made in all classes

that were part of the cluster, regardless of content, our approach seemed to have improved students' ability to discuss diversity issues as they apply to sexuality.

There are several limitations we should note. Since students were made aware that the courses they were taking were part of an LGBTQ-themed cluster of courses and the courses were electives, students interested in the topic probably self-selected into the courses. Additionally, the prompt that we utilized as the pre-post reflective essay prompt was written with a heteronormative bias and therefore, our LGBTQ students may not have known how to best respond to the essay question. The pre reflective essay prompt brought about the opportunity to discuss with our students heteronormativity in our course content. In the future, a more neutral prompt should be included so that all students are able to respond comfortably. As mentioned earlier, the post essay prompt was given at the same time as student evaluations and many students did not seem to have spent much time writing. It was clear that the LGBTQ awareness workshop and documentary film reflection essays in which the students had more time to reflect produced better quality responses.

The completion of our work on this research project has provided us with the opportunity to consider additional lines of investigation that could be completed in the future. Our analysis suggested that intersectionality was a topic that students had difficulty understanding. Research that provides concrete suggestions for how to better incorporate concepts of intersectionality into the curriculum would be welcomed. Likewise, both bisexuality and transgender issues are oftentimes misunderstood by students and overlooked in sexuality curriculum, so research that specifically analyzes understanding of these topics would help to further improve diversity education and student learning. Finally, our university recently adopted a new graduation requirement that students must complete two diversity courses. Future research might examine whether institutions that require more than one diversity course show stronger student learning results than institutions that require only one diversity course.

Institutions of higher education need to examine how they might improve and support the implementation of expanded definitions of diversity to include sexuality. Furthermore, the research supports using innovative pedagogical approaches such as cluster courses, common learning outcomes, integrated assignments, and common assessments to support student learning and experiences. In the future, institutions planning to implement diversity courses that outreach to identities, such as sexuality, should support the development of curriculum that is multi-disciplinary and innovative in its approach. It is suggested that institutions invest time and effort to design such courses and an equal amount of time to building assessments of student learning which provide a feedback mechanism for continuous improvement of diversity courses in efforts to improve student learning outcomes.

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Appendix A

Rubric #1 Documentary Film on Same Sex Couples Reflection Essay

	5 points	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Rubric	Advanced	Approaching Advanced	Adequate	Minimal	Missing
Intersectionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplary articulation of the concept of intersectionality • Provides concrete, relevant example related to the film • Explains the compounding effects of multiple statuses and how they create a distinctive experience for the Individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of the concept of intersectionality • Provides relevant example related to the film • Identifies compounding effects of multiple statuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally describes concept of intersectionality • Provides an example at least somewhat related to the film • Accurately identifies effects of multiple statuses, but treats them separately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incompletely describes concept of intersectionality • Unclear, irrelevant, or inaccurate example • Incompletely identifies effects of multiple statuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to describe concept of intersectionality • Provides no examples • Unable to identify effects of multiple statuses

Understanding Power and identifying inequities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplary critical analysis of the relationships between power, privilege and the resulting inequities Provides concrete, relevant examples related to the film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical analysis of the relationships between power, privilege and the resulting inequities Provides relevant examples related to the film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides description of the relationships between power, privilege and the resulting inequities Provides examples somewhat relevant to film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incompletely describes the relationships between power, privilege and the resulting inequities Unclear, irrelevant, or inaccurate example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to describe the relationships between power, privilege and the resulting inequities Provides no examples
Recognition of Identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplary articulation of at least two distinct identities / statuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear articulation of at least two distinct identities / statuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear articulation at least one identity / status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incompletely describes at least one identity / status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to describe at least one identity / status

Appendix A cont'd

Rubric #2: Pre and Post Essay and LGBTQ Awareness Workshop Reflection Essay

	5 points	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Rubric	Advanced	Approaching Advanced	Adequate	Minimal	Missing
Language Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophisticated, accurate, culturally sensitive use of language / vocabulary related to sexual diversity (by using inclusive terminology, recognizing fluidity, social construction, not casting group as the "other") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate, culturally sensitive use of language / vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate use of language / vocabulary displaying inconsistent cultural sensitivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete or inaccurate use of language / vocabulary largely lacking cultural sensitivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not display accurate use of language / vocabulary (no evidence of cultural sensitivity)
Recognition and Appreciation of Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophisticated articulation of the differences among sexual identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear articulation of the differences among sexual identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally describes differences among sexual identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incompletely or Inaccurately describes differences among sexual identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to describe differences among sexual identities

Recognition and Appreciation of Difference (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays appreciation for the role differences play in the lives of sexual minorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays some appreciation for the role differences play in the lives of sexual minorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistently displays appreciation for the role differences play in the lives of sexual minorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely lacking appreciation for the role differences play in the lives of sexual minorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not display an appreciation for the role differences play in the lives of sexual minorities
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophisticated articulation and demonstration of the ability to place oneself inside the worldview or experience of members of a sexual minority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation and demonstration of the ability to place oneself inside the worldview or experience of members of a sexual minority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General description of the worldview or experience of members of a sexual minority with some demonstration of the ability to place oneself inside that world view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inaccurate or incomplete description of the worldview or experience of members of a sexual minority with minimal demonstration of the ability to place oneself inside that world view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to describe the worldview or experience of members of a sexual minority and unable to demonstrate the ability to place oneself inside that worldview
Recognition of Social Marginalization and Political Disenfranchisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophisticated articulation of relationships between one's sexual minority status and social marginalization and political disenfranchisement. • Provides concrete, relevant examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of relationships between one's sexual minority status and social marginalization and political disenfranchisement. • Provides relevant examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally describes relationships between one's sexual minority status and social marginalization and political disenfranchisement. • Provides somewhat relevant examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incompletely or inaccurately describes relationships between one's sexual minority status and social marginalization and political disenfranchisement. • Unclear, irrelevant, or inaccurate examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to describe relationships between one's sexual minority status and social marginalization and political disenfranchisement. • Provides no examples

Appendix B

LGBTQ Awareness Workshop. Here Rainbow Educators (a group of students, staff, alumni/ae and faculty who create and present interactive workshops on diversity topics with particular focus on the LGBTQ community) did a workshop for each class separately and focused on three main activities. Culturally-sensitive vocabulary was emphasized in the first part of the workshop followed by an activity that asked students to think about their various identities called "Four Corners". The last activity was a guided meditation called a "Day in the Life" and asked students to imagine what it would be like to be gay or lesbian for one day.

Transgender Speaker. The speaker was a Female to Male transgender individual who spoke to the students about what life was like for him prior to his transition and how life has changed. The speaker also emphasized culturally-sensitive vocabulary relevant to the transgender community. The speaker event occurred during the course time for the Psychology and Sociology courses.

Tour of Local “Gayborhood.” The tour began at the city LGBTQ Resource Center where students learned about the center and its programs. There was a neighborhood scavenger hunt where students visited businesses and historical landmarks in groups with members of each of the four classes. The day ended at a local gay-owned restaurant with a gay city council member and alumnus discussing his life and politics. This tour occurred during the weekend in which the majority of the students attended.

Documentary Film on Same-Sex Couples. The film followed a bi-national (one partner is a U.S. citizen and the other is a German citizen), gay couple and documented the difficulties they faced while attempting to stay together. The emphasis was on intersectionality. All students were required to view the documentary. Students had an option of watching in a large group setting which was followed by the four cluster faculty giving their perspectives from their specific disciplinary lens. The other option was to watch the video separately.

Appendix C

Surveys

The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (Hendrick, Hendrick & Reich, 2006). This 23-item Likert scale measures individual attitudes about sex. This shortened version was developed from the original multidimensional Sexual Attitudes Scale (43 items; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1987). Subscales include permissiveness, birth control attitudes, communion (communication) and instrumentality.

College Students’ Attitudes toward LGBT Individuals (Johnson & Greeley, 2007). This 7 – item Likert scale measured student’s attitudes toward LGBT individuals including familiarity, gay marriage, and social interactions.

Learning Assessment Questionnaire. This 14-item survey was designed by the faculty to assess students’ experiences and perceived learning from the courses (see Appendix D).

Reflective Essay Prompts. Qualitative data was gathered through four reflective essays that students completed during the course of the semester. Details of the reflective prompts can be found in Appendix E.

Appendix D

Learning Assessment Questionnaire

Please mark the most appropriate answers on the Blackboard Survey Measure.

The Common Learning Activities for the cluster courses (Tour of Hillcrest, Rainbow Educators, Connor Maddocks Presentation, Film “Excluded”) helped me to:

1. Think about the concepts learned in this course
 - a. strongly disagree
 - b. disagree
 - c. neither disagree nor agree
 - d. agree
 - e. strongly agree
2. Recognize how homophobia influences conformity to heterosexual norms and expectations for behavior
 - a. strongly disagree
 - b. disagree
 - c. neither disagree nor agree
 - d. agree
 - e. strongly agree
3. Empathize with people who do not have normative sexual identities, e.g. homosexuals, bisexuals, and transsexuals
 - a. strongly disagree
 - b. disagree
 - c. neither disagree nor agree
 - d. agree
 - e. strongly agree
4. Recognize some of my own heterosexual privilege
 - a. strongly disagree
 - b. disagree
 - c. neither disagree nor agree
 - d. agree
 - e. strongly agree
 - f. Not applicable (I do not identify as heterosexual)

Please rate on a scale of 1-10 (or N/A if you did not attend this event) how much each of the events contributed to your ability to critically examine the intersections of sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and age within the contexts of power relationships that lead to systemic inequities (Learning Outcome on Syllabus).

5. Rainbow Educators
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|------------|---|---|---|-----------|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all | | moderately | | | | very much | | | |

14. On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your overall experience with the cluster course?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not very positive moderately positive very positive

Appendix E

Pre/Post Essay. Students were asked to respond during class to the following prompt at the beginning and the end of the semester:

Reflect on a time (or an experience or an interaction) when you gained privilege or power due to your sexual orientation and discuss why. What do you think would have been different about that experience if you had held a different sexual orientation?

LGBTQ Awareness Workshop Essay. Students were given one week following the LGBTQ Awareness workshop to respond to the following prompt:

How did the Rainbow Educators presentation impact your perception of and knowledge of the LGBTQ community? Please write a one-page reflection paper.

Documentary Essay. Students were given one week following the film screening to respond to the following prompt:

How did the film *Excluded* impact your understanding of the intersectionality between statuses? Select one of the following statuses from EACH COLUMN to discuss in a one-page reflection paper:

COLUMN A

- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Expression
- Gender Identity

COLUMN B

- Race/Ethnicity
- Socio-Economic Class

Steve Sumner joined the faculty of the School of Business Administration at the University of San Diego in 2003. His areas of specialization include macroeconomics, monetary economics, banking and applied econometrics. Prior to his graduate work he spent several years working at the Federal Reserve Board in Washington D.C. He is currently teaching undergraduate courses in business statistics, macroeconomics and money and banking. His primary research interest is in understanding the importance of financial intermediation for the distortion of economic shocks to the real economy.

Sandra Sgoutas-Emch is a professor of psychological sciences and director of the Center for Educational Excellence at the University of San Diego. She received both her master's and doctorate at the University of Georgia and completed a two year NIH postdoctoral fellowship at the Ohio State University. During her tenure at USD, she has also been the director of the women and gender studies program. She teaches courses in health psychology and behavioral neuroscience. Dr. Sgoutas-Emch has research interests in the scholarship of teaching and learning, efficacy of alternative medicine, the impact of stress, and women's health issues.

*Lisa Michele Nunn is an Associate Professor in Sociology at USD. She is also the current President of the Sociology of Education Association. Her research areas include: Sociology of Education; Organizations; Cultural Sociology; Gender and Sexuality; Identity; Visual Sociology; and Social Psychology. Her book, *Defining Student Success: The Role of School and Culture* (2014 with Rutgers University Press), investigates how both schools (organizations) and students (individuals) refine and adapt cultural ideas about academic success, and how this process perpetuates existing social inequality in educational attainment. Her current research explores the ways that first-year college students develop a sense of belonging on different campuses.*

Evelyn Kirkley, PhD, has been teaching at USD since 1995. She is an advisor to PRIDE, USD's organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer, and questioning undergraduate students and allies. She has also served as co-director of the Gender Studies Program and director of the Faculty and Curriculum Development Program. She teaches about the history of Christianity and other religious movements, especially in the United States. Her research focuses on alternative religious movements (often called "cults" or "sects") in the United States and intersections between religion and gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation.