



Liebfreund, M. D., & Wrenn, M. (2022) Group membership and talk quality in University Book Clubs. *Journal of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 3, 1-15.

CONCEPTUAL AND EVIDENCE BASED RESEARCH ARTICLE

Group Membership and Talk Quality in University Book Clubs

Meghan D. Liebfreund¹, Melissa Wrenn²

¹mliebfreund@towson.edu, Department of Elementary Education, Towson University.

²wrennm18@ecu.edu, Department of Elementary Education and Middle Grades Education, East Carolina University.

Abstract

A critical issue in teacher education is supporting pre-service teachers in their ability to understand and support diverse learners. This study examined the discussions pre-service teachers engaged in during book clubs about multicultural literature to determine how we, as educators, can support discussions that can lead to participants deepening their understandings of the texts and considering multiple perspectives. The research question addressed how group composition in the book clubs influenced the quality of talk surrounding multicultural children's literature. Specifically, we sought to examine if student discussions were more complex when they included university faculty and staff. The discussions included 39 participants (students = 26, faculty = 9, staff = 4). The groups that included faculty and staff with students, compared to student-only groups, engaged in higher quality discussions in all areas examined. These include cooperation and collaboration, reason and logic, information and evidence, and perspectives and voice. Implications are discussed for using book clubs as a pedagogical tool to support teacher education around complex issues of diversity and inclusion in our classrooms.

Keywords: Book clubs; pre-service teachers; multicultural children's literature;

Introduction

As students at all educational levels become more diverse, university educators continue searching for ways to build relationships with students and cultivate responsive practices at the university that can move out and influence P-12 educational settings. This quest is driven, in part, by the need to educate and retain diverse teachers at the university level. Another key factor for teacher educators is the need to graduate future teachers who understand the importance of using dialogically responsive practices (e.g., student-centered talk; considering multiple perspectives) in the classroom to support diverse learners. We argue that university book clubs create a context in which responsive practices can be modeled and experienced in ways that expose participants to multiple perspectives and a deeper exploration of themselves and others. This study describes research that centres on university student, faculty, and staff participation in university book clubs as they discussed multicultural texts.

Responsive Practices

Relationships and discourse are cornerstones of responsive practice in education. Three decades ago, Noddings (1988) urged teachers to adopt an ethic of caring and be attentive to each student as a whole person. Inherently, many university faculty adhere to this philosophy and enjoy building positive relationships with the students in their classrooms. Empirical data stresses the importance of such interactions. For example, university students report higher motivation to meet with faculty who are approachable and demonstrate a caring attitude (Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010). Millennials, in particular, seek relationships and affirmation from their professors (Palmer, O’Cane, & Owens, 2009).

Faculty who desire to facilitate engagement beyond the traditional power-dynamics associated with higher education may find university book clubs a means of fostering community and collaborative meaning making (Weaver & Qi, 2005). Researchers emphasize the importance of student-centered learning in university settings (Cavanagh, 2011; Mulryan-Kyne, 2010), yet historically, the nature of classroom talk has reflected an initiate-respond-evaluate (I-R-E) format, which limits students’ contributions both in quantity and quality (Cazden, 2001). Book clubs offer a space for students to drive the discussion, talk freely, and build upon one another’s comments in ways that are natural (Proth, 2018). The ability to collaborate with others and share knowledge are mainstays of book clubs (Beach & Yussen, 2011) and university classrooms.

As part of the discursive nature of book clubs, members bring various perspectives to the discussions (Bakhtin, 1981). Empirical studies stress the need in teacher education for pre-service teachers to develop understandings of diverse perspectives and students (Barnes, 2006). Book clubs provide an avenue for exposing future teachers to multicultural issues while at the same time helping them gain a deep level of understanding of these issues and the ability to converse about these complex topics (Mensah, 2009; Mosley, 2010).

The role of the teacher educator remains critical in helping preservice teachers develop an attentiveness to multicultural literature (Davis, Brown, Liedel-Rice, & Soeder, 2005), yet teacher candidates often do not have an awareness of this type of literature (Iwai, 2013). When teacher candidates read and explore multicultural children’s literature, their textual knowledge and cultural diversity awareness grows (Iwai, 2013). Teacher candidates may develop a rich understanding of multicultural issues through interactions situated in book clubs that support the development of relationships and elevated discourse. These book clubs have the potential to increase teacher candidates’ responsive practices and abilities to work successfully with diverse students and families.

In addition to developing responsive practices, book clubs at the university level contribute to teacher candidates' perceptions of literacy and teaching. For example, in a study of book clubs at three colleges, researchers found that, after participating in a series of 4-5 book club sessions, teacher candidates had positive feelings toward reading and were more optimistic about their roles as future teachers of literacy (Bixler, Smith, & Henderson, 2013).

The research highlighted discusses the influence book clubs may have on relationships and multicultural awareness. Like other researchers (i.e., Flood & Lapp 1994; Iwai, 2013; Mensah, 2009; Mosley, 2010), we believe university students, in particular future educators, should negotiate the meanings of multicultural texts through discussion. However, we argue that clarification is needed to demonstrate how book clubs can be organized in order to increase discursive quality among participants. Research identifies differences among book clubs based on their participants. For example, Burbank, Kauchak, and Bates (2010) found distinctions between preservice and in-service teacher book clubs. The conversations of preservice teachers focused on the practical and technical aspects of teaching while practicing teachers moved beyond logistical discussions to a deeper reflection and examination of their beliefs about schools and classrooms, as aspects of institutions that intersect with the diverse areas of society. Engaging teachers with different levels of experience may have benefits, and more research is needed in this area. Therefore, the current study addresses the following research question:

How does group composition (student-only vs. student/faculty/staff) influence discussions of multicultural text in university book clubs?

Theoretical Stance on Book Clubs

The book clubs created in this study align with transactional reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) and dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981). Rosenblatt (1978) maintains that reading is a unique lived experience through which the reader transacts with text for various purposes, often within a single reading or a single text across time. Readers generate meaning with the text via their lens of the world, which is shaped through their lived experiences. Each transaction may result in a different understanding or, as she calls it, a poem. The context or group in which a reader engages with a text may influence the meaning making process as well as the meaning constructed. Ultimately, the reader, text, and context come together in a transactional event or experience in which meaning is dynamically constructed.

Understandings about text are often constructed within interpretive communities (Fish, 1980). Fish specifically refers to written responses, yet his position that "the ability to interpret is not acquired; it is constitutive of being human" is applicable to how readers might respond in book clubs (p. 172). By nature, readers offer interpretations of texts, which may be challenged and changed by other readers of the same text. Similarly, Bakhtin (1981) proposes discussions of texts are living, social phenomena through which every comment "brush[es] up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness" (p. 276). Through social interactions around text, discourse breeds discourse and creates meaning making potential. This potential is then turned into meaning making through expanded discursive interactions (Halliday, 1978). In this transition from thoughts in one's head to discussion, individuals use their personal experiences and immediate application of social constructs to create meaning that, in turn, influences the meaning making of others.

Based on our theoretical stance that reading and meaning making are influenced by diverse perspectives in communities of readers, we designed the book clubs in this study to be small in size and led by the group members (Daniels, 2002). We aimed for these book clubs to become co-constructed spaces in which individuals shared personal responses to literature and developed multicultural awareness through individual and social interactions with text (Flood & Lapp, 1994).

We hypothesized that membership in the university book clubs would provide a sense of community and the opportunity to hear diverse perspectives (Porath, 2018). In particular, we sought to see how talk quality might manifest itself across book clubs of differing types of members—students only and students/faculty/staff.

The Research Study

This study was conducted at a southern university in a small city. Approximately 20,000 students attend this university, and 82% identify as White, 10% as Black, 2% as Hispanic, and 1% as Asian. University students who attended classes in the College of Education, Psychology, and Counseling Building were invited to participate in a multicultural children’s literature book club. Faculty and staff who worked within the College of Education were also recruited.

Participants

Altogether, 39 participants consented to participate in this study (students = 26, faculty = 9, staff = 4). Participants were mostly white and female, reflecting the dominant demographic of teachers in classrooms today. Students were generally in their sophomore year of school with most majoring in education. Faculty members were all from the College of Education and represented a variety of disciplines. Staff members held administrative positions within the College of Education.

All participants completed a pre-survey to collect demographic information. Participants were randomly assigned to student-only and student/faculty/staff book club groups. At the onset of the study, we constructed student, faculty, and staff book clubs to have two student members, two faculty members, and one staff member. Student only groups were designed to have six students. Due to attrition, not all groups had the number of members that were assigned, and some groups were combined for the second book club meeting. However, participants did not move from one type of book club to another (i.e., all participants in student-only book clubs stayed in a student-only book club).

The Book Club

In this study, the term book club refers to small groups of people discussing the same text. Book club members met to discuss two multicultural texts, *brown girl dreaming* (Woodson, 2014) and *I Am Malala: Young Readers Edition* (Yousafzai & McCormick, 2014). Both texts are autobiographical and written for children. The book clubs met to discuss *brown girl dreaming* (Woodson, 2014) in quiet rooms at the university. At the end of the session, participants received a copy of *I Am Malala: Young Readers Edition* (Yousafzai & McCormick, 2014) and returned three weeks later for a second book club meeting in the same setting. The sessions were audiotaped and transcribed. Altogether, nine transcripts were collected; two were omitted from analysis due to attendance at the sessions (i.e., no students present; no faculty present).

In order to facilitate the book clubs, we provided each group with a discussion protocol (see Figure 1). The protocol was intended to allow group members to introduce themselves, have time to reflect on the readings prior to discussions, and provide flexible support for promoting talk. Our intention with the protocol was to embrace the dialogic nature of the book club by encouraging members to share personal reflections from the text and use the members’ own thoughts and questions as the starting point for the group discussions. However, we recognized that members may need support, so we also provided open-ended questions related to the three common themes of the texts—equity, education, and families.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways did the narrator's childhood reflect the issues of the Civil Rights movement?
2. How does this text promote equity and diversity?
3. How are the families represented in this text? What similarities and differences did you notice between the narrator's family and your own?
4. Describe the qualities of a good teacher. How did the narrator demonstrate those qualities?
5. What are the main themes of the text? How do they relate to the struggles in education today?

Figure 1: Discussion Questions Note: Question 1 was adapted from www.readwritethink.org

Data Analysis

We conducted a microanalysis of nine transcripts using the Academic Discussions Assessment Matrix (ADM; Elizabeth et al., 2012). Seven were from *I am Malala: Young Readers Edition*, and two transcripts were from discussions of *brown girl dreaming* (Woodson, 2014; Yousafzai & McCormick, 2014).

The ADM is a useful tool for those seeking to evaluate discussion quality because it allows researchers to gauge talk quality using factors widely accepted as components of academic discussions: a) cooperation and collaboration, b) reason and logic, c) information and evidence, and d) perspectives and voice (Elizabeth et al., 2012). Each of these factors is ranked on a scale from one to four using the categories clearly defined on the rubric for each component.

The ADM was created for evaluating classroom discussions that support students with engaging in discourse to meet academic objectives. In this context, discourse becomes a pedagogical tool (Mercer, Wegerif, & Dawes, 1999) in which the teacher guides students towards a shared, and often correct, meaning. This purpose may cause the ADM to support discourse that leads to integration and assimilation of viewpoints that may reiterate the exclusion of minority voices. This may limit its ability to identify different forms of interactions. In addition, the ADM does not examine some essential aspects of discussion, including body language and length of utterance. While some critics suggest (Alexander, 2019) the ADM may not acknowledge different truths in the way that a more nuanced examination of dialogic pedagogy would, we believe the ADM is a meaningful tool to meet the aims of this study.

We employed the following rigorous, multi-step analysis process for each transcript:

1. Each researcher read through each transcript and wrote annotations in the margins.
2. Each transcript was divided into segments. Segments were defined as periods of talk about the same issue. Most often, these segments were determined by the discussion protocol, but participants did deviate from the protocol occasionally. For the first transcript, we determined segments together. After that, we used established rules to segment the transcripts and reached 100% agreement on all segments.
3. Each researcher coded each segment independently using all four indicators of the ADM.
4. We met to compare our individual analysis and discussed all discrepancies until 100% agreement was reached.
5. We assigned the discussion a holistic score for each ADM indicator based upon the final scores for the individual segments.

This process was repeated until all transcripts, including 39 segments of talk, were analyzed in accordance with the ADM (Elizabeth et al., 2012). In order to ensure reliability, we looked back at previously coded data and compared it to newly coded data. In each instance, we maintained 100% agreement that the coding was accurate.

After the microanalysis was complete, we compared all the holistic scores for each criteria and transcript. We noted distinct differences among the groups. Then, we randomly selected segments from the student-only groups' original transcripts and compared them to similar segments in the student/faculty/staff groups. We reread these transcript segments and discussed differences between them. This secondary level of analysis supported the findings from the microanalysis conducted with the ADM.

Results

ADM Results

Results of the ADM indicate that, overall, the quality of the discussions for the student/faculty/staff group were higher than that of the student-only group. As depicted in Table 1, the student-only groups' individual and overall discussion scores were consistently either a 1 or 2. In contrast, the individual and overall discussion scores for the student/faculty/staff groups were consistently a 3 or 4.

In the following sections, we discuss each of the four areas of the ADM for each group using representative discussion excerpts. We intentionally selected excerpts from only one text, *I Am Malala*, and put discussions from each group side by side as groups discussed similar topics. This will assist the reader by making the comparisons of the discussions more consistent and seamless.

Cooperation & Collaboration

Cooperation and Collaboration focuses on participants' contributions to the group, with participants building upon and integrating ideas together scoring at the high end of the continuum (Elizabeth et al., 2012). For this area, the student-only group scored an average of 1 across the nine transcripts. This means that the majority of group members ignored or did not take up the contributions of others in favour of their individual conclusions. This is illustrated by the excerpt in Table 2 for takeaways.

Table 1: Overall Scores on the ADM by Group and Book. Note SO = Student-only; SFS = Students/Faculty/Staff.

Criteria	I Am Malala					Brown Girl Dreaming		Overall	
	SO 1	SO 2	SFS 1	SFS 2	SFS 3	SO 1	SFS 3	SO	SFS
Cooperation & Collaboration	2	1	3	4	3	1	3	1	3
Reason & Logic	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3

Table 2: Takeaways Segment.

Student-only 2, Segment 1	Student/Faculty/Staff 2, Segment 2
<p>Gina: “What was y’all’s questions that you [?] that came to mind?”</p>	<p>Jenny: “But going back to what you said, Dr. Jones, I thought another thing that was just super eye-opening to me was the fact that whenever she got shot she wasn’t even wearing her headdress.”</p>
<p>Lilly: [Cough] “Um, mine was um what will she do next? Like she is pretty powerful and all that she’s changed for the world so I’m wondering if she is gonna like try and conqueror something else.”</p>	<p>Dr. Jones: “Yeah.”</p>
<p>Gina: “Um-hum.”</p>	<p>Jenny: “Like, I thought that was just like so crazy that she wasn’t even wearing that. Cause that was like immediately like well we know who she is.”</p>
<p>Lilly: “Like, besides women’s rights for all the work she’s done and in it already. For education.”</p>	<p>Dr. Jones: “And then how the other family members, you know the brother just happened to walk...”</p>
<p>Gina: “Yeah.”</p>	<p>Dr. Smith: “Well you talked about a supernatural surrounding on her...”</p>
<p>Becca: “Yeah, I agree. That’s probably [?] I would. Um, well, that’s what I kind of have written down, too. So.” [Sigh]</p>	
<p>Gina: “Yeah. Okay, so the next one.”</p>	

In this segment, Gina shared a question, asking the group what they thought Malala would do next. The other students responded with “Yeah” and “I agree...That is kind of what I have written down, too,” and then moved onto the next discussion question. Here, Gina’s topic and question were essentially ignored, and peers chose not to elaborate on her response. As a result, participants in student-only groups tended to leave the discussions with conclusions based on their own personal ideas and feelings that they brought to the discussion. In order to have a meaningful discussion, all group members must support this type of work.

In contrast, the student/faculty/staff group scored a 3 in this area. This means they were able to build on the contributions of group members to come to a group consensus. In the Takeaways excerpt for this group, the members discussed Malala being shot when she was not “wearing her headdress.” Several group members recalled what other members said previously to build on the contributions of others and work towards a group stance. This illustrates active listening and a willingness to put individual views aside to build a collective, group understanding of the text.

Reason & Logic

Reason and Logic addresses participants’ approach to evaluating ideas, ranging from ignoring new ideas at the low end of the continuum to offering counterevidence to debate ideas at the high

end (Elizabeth et al., 2012). Overall, the student-only group scored a 2 in this area, meaning they tended to accept ideas without critical analysis or logical critique. In the Families segment in Table 3, this type of discussion is evident.

In this segment, Becca commented that she feels it is important to discuss ways Malala’s life contrasts with that of her brothers, yet she offered little evidence from the text to support her view. Gina and Lilly just agreed by saying, “Right” and “Yeah.” Then Gina shared how the birth of a female child differed from that of a male, and Lilly moved the discussion to a new topic. Gina did not quite address what Becca was hoping to discuss. Overall, peers agreed and layered on what was stated by other group members but did not build and extend on their ideas. Members offered few reasons for their claims and ideas, and peers tended to accept this input without requesting or requiring additional reasoning.

In contrast, the student/faculty/staff group had an overall score of 3 in this area, meaning they depended on evidence. In their segment, Robin expressed concern that if she lived in the context of

Table 3: Families Segment

Student-only 2, Segment 2	Student/Faculty/Staff 3, Segment 2
<p>Becca: “... like her brothers obviously didn’t have to deal with the same kind of stuff she did.”</p>	<p>Robin: “I would have definitely been a goner, and I would have been married.”</p>
<p>Lilly: “Right.”</p>	<p>Ms. Parker: “Yeah, I think I would have been married off when I was twelve. You know I don’t think I would have been encouraged I guess comparing them to my family, but yeah I thought that was interesting.”</p>
<p>Becca: “And their school was like exclusive and stuff.”</p>	<p>Robin: “Yeah I think comparing them to my family I have never been encouraged either..., so I didn’t really have any similarities with her because I never had that...”</p>
<p>Gina: “Yeah.”</p>	<p>Dr. Nelson: “I can see more similarities that liken more the extended family, and the people talking in the kitchen...”</p>
<p>Becca: “So I feel like that’s something we could talk about cause it’s like, um, you know, it’s kind of important. And just to contrast between her life and then her brothers.”</p>	
<p>Gina: “Yeah it’s such a difference cause I know that it talked about how whenever a girl is born into a family instead of a man...whenever she was born her father was so proud and rejoiced and totally was like ecstatic when she was born, while most other people wouldn’t be.”</p>	
<p>Lilly: “Um, let’s see.” [group moves on to next question]</p>	

the text, she would have been “a goner” who was married without consent at a young age. This thread was continued by Ms. Parker, who introduced the idea of comparing her family to Malala’s. Comparing families continues to be woven through the next several exchanges, which is different from the student-only group who moved on at Lilly’s comment, “Um, let’s see,” instead of delving into a deeper discussion of families.

Information & Evidence

Information and Evidence focuses on participants’ expectations for accurate and relevant information from group members. At the low end of the continuum, information may be unrelated to the topic with participants jumping to conclusions; whereas, at the higher end of the continuum, participants are building meaning together based upon multiple sources of reliable, accurate information (Elizabeth et al., 2012). Overall, the student-only group scored a 2 in this area, meaning they provided and recounted information often without challenging its importance and relevance to the topic (see Table 4).

In the Teacher Qualities discussion segment, students quickly shared the attributes of a good teacher that they thought Malala illustrated. Students stated these without citing any verifiable textual evidence and group members were quick to accept the input of peers without questioning the validity or desiring verifiable information to support the assertions.

Table 4: Teacher Qualities Segment

Student-only 1, Segment 4	Student/Faculty/Staff 2, Segment 1
<p>Willa: “Smart. She was smart.”</p> <p>Amy: Oh goodness, yes.”</p> <p>Susan: “Very knowledgeable.”</p> <p>Amy: “Yeah she definitely knew what she was talking about. Like the passionate thing definitely. “</p> <p>Susan: “Yeah.”</p> <p>Amy: “Like she had had—like I don’t know how to say this. Like I can think about it but I don’t know how to just ☐ like she just—um. Like she was determined and like there was nothing that was going to change her mind.”</p> <p>Willa: “Ambition?”</p> <p>Amy: “Yeah, ambition, there you go. That is the word.”</p>	<p>Jenny: “...Not the same school, separate but equal but it really wasn’t—it wasn’t equal at all because no child had the same access to the same education.”</p> <p>Mr. Williams: “And she was just advocating for girls to be able to you know get an education in school.”</p> <p>Jenny: “And for her to be so young and still be like that just so strong about it is so impressive. Cause I mean for you to be young but still be like that willing to take that chance, it really shows that her parents put like so much effort like we’re really trying to give you a good education. They really supported her about it.”</p> <p>Dr. Smith: “What if they hadn’t?...”</p>

The student/faculty/staff group scored a 3 in this area, meaning they shared relevant information and expected that group members would make contributions based on accurate information from the text. In the Teacher Qualities discussion segment for this group, members discussed the quality of advocacy that Malala depicted in the text. Here, group members shared relevant textual information that clarified the input and opinions they provided. In contrast to the student-only group, members shared clear evidence from the text that support how and why Malala advocated for equal school rights for boys and girls.

Perspectives & Voice

Perspectives and Voice focuses on participants' recognition and respect for different beliefs and experiences (Elizabeth et al., 2012); including perspectives of group members and those of the cultures represented in the texts. Overall, the student-only group scored a 1 in this area, meaning the group members tended to devalue or failed to acknowledge the existence of different opinions or perspectives (see Table 5).

In the segment that focused on Equity and Diversity, the student-only group shared how different the culture represented in the text was from the one they experienced living in the United States. They described the differences like needing a male escort to go to school as "crazy," and shared events from the text that stood out to them as very different. These students seemed to devalue the differing perspectives of the culture since they were seen in stark contrast to their own reality. They prioritized their own reactions, beliefs, and views over those of another culture.

The student/faculty/staff group earned a score of 4 in this area, meaning they promoted and interpreted multiple viewpoints. In this segment, participants discussed bombings and how, for Malala and those in her country, the bombings were at their "backdoor." On the other hand, in the United States, people may be aware of these experiences through TV and other media outlets but remain protected by distance. The sense from the group members was that these experiences were troubling and scary, but they recognized that they lacked the sense of immediacy and danger that Malala and her family may have felt and were in many ways safeguarded from this type of fear.

Discussion of Pedagogical Implications

Across the discussions, the student/faculty/staff groups consistently demonstrated higher scores on the ADM (Elizabeth et al., 2012) than student-only groups. We posit that opportunities for students to discuss rich text in conjunction with faculty and staff provides an optimum environment for a shared meaning making experience.

Moreover, this type of group interaction offers a space in which faculty, staff, and students may build relationships and promote feelings of acceptance and respect. Relationships of this nature are paramount to the success of university students (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001; Komarraju et al., 2010; Palmer et al., 2009), and book clubs that include faculty and staff interacting with students provide a succinct way to elevate cooperative meaning making and the development of important relationships that can lead to increased learning.

Preservice teachers often have little experience with multicultural literature (Iwai, 2013), yet participation in these university book clubs afforded students opportunities to interact with these types of texts and to discuss social issues (e.g., marginalization, women's rights). For pre-service teachers, who are often not racial and ethnic minorities, exposure to multicultural literature in book clubs offers rich experiences in which they can read and reflect upon issues their students may

Table 5: Equality and Diversity Segment

Student-only 1, Segment 2	Student/Faculty/Staff 3, Segment 3
<p>Amy: “It is just all different and ☐”</p> <p>Willa: “Yeah. I thought like even the diversity like going as deep as like male versus female, like talking about like the Taliban and like the school and like how all the little boys were allowed to go to school and like be like the leaders of household and everything. And then she couldn’t even go to school.”</p> <p>Amy: “And she had to have like a male escort to school which is crazy.”</p> <p>Willa: “That story about that like sixteen year old girl like in the street who like got beat or whatever because she went out with like she was sixteen and went out with a guy who wasn’t her husband.”</p> <p>Susan: “Um-hum. Yeah, I read that also.”</p>	<p>Ms. Parker: “...But they were in it. You know? I think that ☐ that’s where their knowledge comes from because it is right there in their backdoor where it is in our backdoor but we have so much other television to watch.”</p> <p>Robin: “Yeah.”</p> <p>Ms. Parker: “You know, we don’t have to watch that. You know, we can watch Nickelodeon or whatever on T.V...but I think that’s, um, what’s wrong with us lacking in some knowledge is ☐”</p> <p>Kelly: “All these different things that we have that distract us.”</p> <p>Ms. Parker: “Yeah.”</p> <p>Dr. Young: “Yeah.”</p> <p>Kelly: “From what we should be doing.”</p> <p>Ms. Parker: “Um-hum.”</p> <p>Robin: “I also feel like by the time we get the information it’s different. Like by the time we get it, it’s like already happened at least half an hour ago and we’re not really sure what’s going on. But the people that are there see it for themselves so they understand it in a different way.”</p>

encounter. This can encourage them to become advocates for their students and proponents of social justice in their classrooms. Participants in the student/faculty/staff groups showed evidence of reflection on their outlook on the world and trying on different lenses when analyzing the issues that affect people around the world. We argue that continued exposure to multicultural texts and engaging book clubs that include faculty, staff, and other students, may help promote multiple viewpoints and multiple truths (Alexander, 2019). In this way, discussions about multicultural text inform current and future dialogic texts.

In this section, we discuss the importance of the findings in each main area for using the book club experience as a teaching platform to cultivate best practices for aspiring teachers. As teacher

educators, we need to effectively employ book clubs to support preservice teachers to engage in high-quality discourse with their students. We acknowledge that the ADM does not reveal all of the complexities inherent in these discussions, but it does afford researchers a framework for investigating sensitive topics (prejudice, women's rights, poverty, religion, and politics).

Cooperation & Collaboration

The book club experience should support university students with engaging in conversation through active listening and building on the responses of others. This may lead to a book group that creates a shared understand of a text that transcends the individual. This collaborative work will support students leaving the book clubs with new ideas and challenged visions of the world.

As preservice teachers find meaning in these book clubs, they are exposed to an alternate format for classroom discourse that is student-centred. As we teach educators to facilitate this type of talk, we need to model these types of discussions and challenge ourselves and our preservice teachers to move beyond facilitation. By prioritizing participation among both students and teachers, we can shape these discussions in real time. This elevates the importance of collaboration with our students and can promote high-level, reflective talk, allowing all voices to be heard in a shared meaning-making process.

Reason & Logic

Book clubs should engage participants in discussions of ideas and topics generated by members. The student-only groups tended to ignore new ideas proposed by their book club members while the student/faculty/staff groups took these ideas up and frequently discussed and debated them.

This finding indicates that preservice teachers require skills that help them provide responses and feedback that extend the thinking of each other – and most likely students – to break out of the I-R-E patterns that tend to dominate classrooms. Book club discussions have the potential to provide a space for teachers to learn how to be more responsive to others in ways that support mutual learning. As educators of preservice teachers, we need to use book clubs as opportunities to support true discourse in the classroom.

Information & Evidence

The ability to use textual evidence and personal experience to delve into a text supported group members with a deeper understanding of themselves, the text, and important issues. The student/faculty/staff groups' emphasis on grounding comments in factual evidence held all group members accountable to the text, keeping the critical themes at the forefront of the conversation.

As we engage preservice teachers in book clubs, we must require support for their statements that are grounded in the text, their lives, and the world. This in turn may assist preservice teachers with requiring this from their own students. Furthermore, emphasizing textual evidence requires participants to rely upon the text as a valid source of information, which may expose personal biases and help participants require accuracy over conjecture when discussing multicultural issues, an essential skill for future teachers (e.g., Barnes, 2006).

Perspectives & Voice

A primary reason for building these book clubs around multicultural literature was to support the understanding of multiple perspectives inside and outside of the book group. The student-only group tended to support their own individual worldview while the student/faculty/staff group searched to understand the perspectives of group members and individuals in the texts read.

As teacher educators, we should support students with discovering new perspectives and views of the world. Often, a group member that differs from the student norm can support this. By infusing ourselves and others that may have differing perspectives, voices, and textual interpretations, we can assist students with challenging their world view.

Future Research

This study shows promise for bringing together individuals within a community of future and practicing educators. In the future, we should look more deeply at the composition of book clubs and how this influences talk about social justice issues. In particular, the construction of book clubs with different arrangements and types of members would be of interest. For example, the inclusion of current classroom teachers and other community members (i.e, parents, university janitors, students with other majors, etc.) may lead to different types of discussions. This study was limited to two book club sessions, and more longitudinal studies should be conducted to investigate how the relationships among students, faculty, and staff may develop in long-term book clubs. Also, following preservice teachers into the early years of the profession to see the potential impact of book club participation would advance our understanding of the relationship between university book clubs and teacher education. Moreover, investigations into ways that multicultural texts become a part of a teacher's practice may offer insight into developing critical awareness within teacher preparation programs. Future research should include a more critical lens or framework beyond the ADM to investigate discussions.

Conclusion

As we continue to reform practices in education at all levels, the lessons learned here ring true — participating with students raises consciousness across the categories of talk quality. This study found that faculty and staff add value to student book discussions. There may always be the risk of faculty dominating talk; however, when discussions are focused, relaxed, and centred on powerful text, students emerge as equal participants and demonstrate the active participation and elevated discourse around complex topics needed in educational settings.

References

- Alexander, R. (2019). Whose discourse? Dialogic pedagogy for a post-truth world. *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal*, 7, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.5195/dpj.2019.268>
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In M. M. Bakhtin (Ed.) *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.) (pp. 259-422). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. [GS SEARCH](#)
- Barnes, C.J. (2006). Preparing preservice teachers to teach in a culturally responsive way. *Negro Educational Review*, 57(1/2), 85-100. [VIEW ITEM](#)
- Beach, R., & Yussen, S. (2011). Practices of productive adult book clubs. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(2), 121-131. <https://doi.org/10.1002/JAAL.00015>

- Bixler, J., Smith, S., & Henderson, S. (2013). Inviting teacher candidates into book talks: Supporting a culture of lifelong reading. *Reading Horizons*, 52(3), 211-304. [VIEW ITEM](#)
- Burbank, M.D., Kauchak, D., & Bates, A.J. (2010). Book clubs as professional development opportunities for preservice teacher candidates and practicing teachers: An exploratory study. *New Educator*, 6(1), 56-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2010.10399588>
- Cavanagh, M. (2011). Students' experiences of active engagement through cooperative learning activities in lectures. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 12(1), 23-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787410387724>
- Cazden, C.B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. [VIEW ITEM](#)
- Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. [GS SEARCH](#)
- Davis, K.L., Brown, B.G., Liedel-Rice, A., & Soeder, P. (2005). Experiencing diversity through children's multicultural literature. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 41(4), 176-179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2005.10532067>
- Elizabeth, T., Anderson, T.L.R., Snow, E.H., & Selman, R.L. (2012). Academic discussions: An analysis of instructional discourse and an argument for an integrative assessment framework. *American Educational Research Journal*, 49, 1214-1250. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831212456066>
- Fish, S. (1980). *Is there a text in this class?: The authority of interpretive communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [VIEW ITEM](#)
- Flood, J., & Lapp, D. (1994). Issues and trends: Teacher book clubs: Establishing literature discussion groups for teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 47(7), 574-576. [VIEW ITEM](#)
- Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as a social semiotic*. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press. [GS SEARCH](#)
- Iwai, Y. (2013). Multicultural children's literature and teacher candidates' awareness and attitudes toward cultural diversity. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 5(2), 185-198. [VIEW ITEM](#)
- Johnson, M.K., Crosnoe, R., & Elder, G.H., Jr. (2001). Students' attachment and academic engagement: The role of race and ethnicity. *Sociology of Education*, 74(4), 318-340. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2673138>
- Komaraju, M., Musulkin, S., & Bhattacharya, G. (2010). Role of student-faculty interactions in developing college students' academic self-concept, motivation, and achievement. *Journal of College Student Development*, 51(3), 332-342. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0137>
- Mensah, F. (2009). Confronting assumptions, biases, and stereotypes in preservice teachers' conceptualizations of science teaching through the use of book club. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 46(9), 1041-1066. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.20299>

- Mosley, M. (2010). 'That really hit me hard': Moving beyond passive anti-racism to engage with critical race literacy pedagogy. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 13(4), 449-471. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2010.488902>
- Mulryan-Kyne, C. (2010). Teaching large classes at college and university level: Challenges and opportunities. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15(2), 175-185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562511003620001>
- Noddings, N. (1988). An ethic of caring and its implications for instructional arrangements. *American Journal of Education*, 96, 215-230. <https://doi.org/10.1086/443894>
- Palmer, M., O'Cane, P., & Owens, M. (2009). Betwixt spaces: Student accounts of turning point experiences in the first-year transition. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34, 37-54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802601929>
- Porath, S. L. (2018). A powerful influence: An online book club for educators. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 34(2), 115-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2017.1416711>
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. [VIEW ITEM](#)
- Weaver, R.R., & Qi, J. (2005). Classroom organization and participation: College students' perceptions. *Journal of Higher Education*. 76, 570-601. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2005.0038>
- Woodson, J. (2014). *brown girl dreaming*. New York: Nancy Paulsen Books. [GS SEARCH](#)
- Yousafzai, M., & McCormick, P. (2014). *I am Malala: How one girl stood up for education and changed the world* (young reader's edition). New York: Salarzai Limited. [GS SEARCH](#)

Acknowledgement: Funding provided by Western Kentucky University