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Two for the Price of One: A Work-Family Activity that Enhances Graduate Student Teachers' and Undergraduate Recipients' Learning

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ABSTRACT. This paper details experiential and active learning activities at two levels. The first level, a graduate-level course on Work and Family, had students create a lesson plan on work and family, spillover, and conflict and include an active learning component within various undergraduate-level courses already offered. This assignment allowed the graduate students to grow in their knowledge of work and family and advance their teaching scholarship—the second level involved undergraduate courses. The undergraduate students in the various classes that received the work and family activity were also able to enhance their understanding of the topic in an active learning environment. An evaluation component enhanced the graduate students' research understanding.

Keywords: experiential learning, active learning, teaching, work and family

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Two for the Price of One: A Work-Family Activity that Enhances Graduate-Student Teachers' and Undergraduate Recipients' Learning

Issues surrounding work and family (also known as work-life balance) are increasingly important for individuals, prompting research and policy work on this topic (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). In 2020, 40% of students enrolled full-time in college had jobs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). College students can expect to experience work-family issues while attending college and in the future as they enter the workforce. This article addresses the need to provide timely information on work-family within family-based courses and share teaching and assessment strategies for the Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) classroom. The aim of this article is to share a two-tiered teaching strategy on work-family issues, developed initially in a graduate seminar and extended by graduate-level instructors into undergraduate courses at a large university. The project integrates experiential and active learning approaches. In this paper, we share graduate students' experiential learning in developing course content for the undergraduate classes they taught and the active learning experiences in which the undergraduate students participated while learning about work and family conflict. In this paper, we share the graduate students' experience developing the activity and describe the systematic evaluation of the undergraduate students' learning.

Experiential and Active Learning

Experiential learning (EL) involves using experiences and reflections to enhance learning on specific subjects (Kolb, 1984; Kolb et al., 2000). EL is especially useful for students studying topics that easily relate to real-life experiences. It can come in many forms, including internships, service learning, field trips, and other techniques (Yale Center for Teaching and Learning, 2018). The student gains real-world experience, and in the case of long-term field placements, the business or non-profit gains a worker who has fresh ideas and knowledge in the content area. Active learning (AL), collaborative learning, and problem-based learning are all learning strategies in which students actively engage with course material alone or in groups and, in some cases, attempt to solve a real-world problem (Yale Center for Teaching and Learning, 2018).

Research on experiential and active learning has shown that students who engage in such activities tend to perform better than students receiving only lectures, including scoring higher on tests (Burch et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2014; Ruhl et al., 1987). Students who have engaged in EL have found greater success in job placement (Helyer & Lee, 2015). Students tend to rate EL more positively than traditional classroom learning (Burch et al., 2014; Lumpkin et al., 2015). In addition to garnering positive student evaluations, EL is also related to improving students' perception and awareness of specific content areas (Bradford et al., 2016). Faculty who have used EL in their classrooms report higher test scores, increased enrollment in EL-based courses (Sojka, 2016), and a decreased failure rate for the course (Burch et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2014). Research has also found that students who have engaged in AL tend to have better attitudes, increased motivation, and improved skills retention, thinking, and writing (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; McKeachie, 1972). However, not all students will enjoy being active with the content. For some students, a traditional lecture and listening learning format is preferred. Findings in different settings are not necessarily replicable, and measured improvements can be small (McKeachie, 1972; Prince, 2004). However, overall, the complaints or concerns are few relative to the benefits and measurable outcomes of experiential and active learning (Prince, 2004).

Work and Family

We briefly review research on work and family issues to add context to the teaching and learning activities. Work provides opportunities and constraints that affect people's time, relationships, finances,

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and goals. Conflict easily arises from the interaction between work and family (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Coltrane, 2000). Contemporary literature has focused on stressful work, including books such as *The Time Bind* (Hochschild, 1997), *The Time Divide* (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004), and *Weaving Work and Motherhood* (Garey, 1999). These books document that North American families struggle with issues related to their use of time, conflicts between partners around time and work issues, and the ways that work and family interconnect in their lives. Coltrane's (2000) review focuses on the uneven division of household labor between men and women. Whereas this difference has lessened, women still perform more household work than men. As more women than in previous generations are in the paid workplace, the interconnection of work and family is especially prevalent when dealing with household tasks. Recent reviews and research continue to show a gender gap in household chores, especially chores deemed as more feminine (Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020; Syrda, 2023). Lyness and colleagues' (2012) review of work-family issues in multiple countries found that workers' ability to control their schedule was the most important factor for job satisfaction and work/family conflict. Bianchi and Milkie's (2010) ten-year review of work-family research found that some of the most central topics were related to work-family balance, conflict, and policy issues. It is important to note that each of these areas is experienced differently by workers in different social classes and jobs and by people in different family configurations.

Three areas within the work and family literature became the primary focus for creating the undergraduate course topics: spillover, work-family balance, and work-family conflict. Spillover is the participation in one domain (family/work) affecting participation in the other (Pleck, 1995). There are both positive (the two activities mutually enriching each other) and negative (one activity detracting from the other) concepts of spillover. Work-family balance is an equilibrium between experiences in the work and family domains (Kumar & Janakiram, 2017). Public and private attention has been paid to issues of work-life balance. Such attention can be seen in venues as diverse as advice columns and legislation. In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which guarantees 12 weeks of unpaid family leave in companies with at least 50 employees. This illustrates how government policy can attempt to address work-family issues. A comprehensive policy still needs to be improved to create a balance between work and family, as conflicts between these areas stem from rather ordinary challenges (Silbaugh, 2004), including ones not covered under the FMLA. Lastly, work-family conflict is a major concern for adults, especially those who have children (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010), have lower incomes or one-adult headed families (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010), have a job with more authority and pressure (Glavin & Schieman, 2012), have young or disabled children, and are women (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).

The Graduate Class: Designing the Course Activities

The present project was incubated in a graduate class on work/family at a large public university in the southwestern U.S. The work/family topic had been requested by three graduate students (authors) as it was not typically offered in the department. A reading course was developed by a professor (author) who researched work/family. The three graduate students and professor met weekly during a three-hour time block each week throughout a semester to discuss the readings and ideas for assignments and reflect on their learning. As each university's curriculum is different, we note that work/family content was not a stand-alone class at our university but was dispersed across several courses in the department. EL techniques were used in this graduate readings course on work/family.

Graduate Student Reflections on the Project

The EL project was devised collaboratively by the graduate students and faculty instructor as the culminating class project. We, the graduate students, were assigned several classic books to read, as well as contemporary sources (Table 1). Because we were involved in teaching undergraduate courses, we gravitated toward a project that could be useful in our teaching assignments (a meta-example of experiential learning). One of us taught a career class for the College of Human Sciences (HS), which was required for all its undergraduate students. One of us taught an intimate relationship (IR) class for HDFs. The remaining student was not teaching but found another professor (who stayed on the project to offer methodological and statistical advice) willing to let her incorporate the material into their policy and law class taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Table 1

Material Used in the Graduate Level Readings Course

Reading Type	APA 7 Reference
Book	Garey, A. I. (1999). <i>Weaving work and motherhood</i> . Temple University Press.
Book	Hochschild, A.R. (1997). <i>The time bind</i> . Henry Holt.
Book	Jacobs, J.A. & Gerson, K. (2004). <i>The time divide</i> . Harvard University Press.
Chapter	Pleck, J. (1995). Work roles, family roles and well-being: Current conceptual perspectives. In G. Bowen & J. Pittman (Eds.), <i>The work and family interface: Toward a contextual effects perspective</i> (pp. 17-22): National Council on Family Relations.
Journal Article	Bianchi, S. M., & Milkie, M. A. (2010). Work and family research in the first decade of the 21st century. <i>Journal of Marriage & Family</i> , 72(3), 705-725. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00726.x
Journal Article	Coltrane, S. (2000). Research on household labor: Modeling and measuring the social embeddedness of routine family work. <i>Journal of Marriage & Family</i> , 62(4), 1208-1233. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.01208.x
Journal Article	Grzywacz, J. G., & Marks, N. F. (2000). Reconceptualizing the work-family interface: An ecological perspective on the correlates of positive and negative spillover between work and family. <i>Journal of Occupational Health Psychology</i> , 5(1), 111-126. https://doi.org/10.1037//1076-8998.5.1.111

We worked together and independently on developing this project. Together, we identified the aforementioned three content areas that were found to be a common theme in the work-family literature: spillover, work-family balance (with ties to family policy), and work-family conflict. Independently, we each took one topic and gathered more literature to enhance our understanding. The student teaching the career class chose spillover as a theme, while the student teaching the IR class chose work-family conflict, as interpersonal conflict was already covered. The third graduate student used work-family

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balance as a way to tie into family policy. Each of us developed a short lecture and an original activity that involved problem-solving or experiences in real-world issues (ameliorating family spillover in the workplace, addressing work and family conflict in an interpersonal relationship, or developing policy) to incorporate into our respective undergraduate classes. Together, we discussed the lecture material and activities and offered suggestions to one another. We used one regularly scheduled class period to discuss ideas and then worked independently. A second class time was used to share our final ideas and develop an assessment plan. During the third class time, the group finalized the development plan, survey, and IRB proposal. The professors were also present during these discussions to offer wisdom on the lecture content and activities.

In addition to designing activities, we conducted literature reviews on survey creation and assessing student performance, as well as support for the activity/content, to evaluate the effectiveness of the class activities. Three articles were identified as models to create a survey to assess support for the activity amongst undergraduate students (Anderson et al., 1994; Holmes, 2008; Segrist & Nordstrom, 2008). We developed general evaluative items and independent assessments specific to our respective classes. Using a scale of 1 (definitely no) to 9 (definitely yes), sample items included: *I enjoyed learning about work-family issues*, and *The lecture increased my appreciation for (work-family issues, spillover, policy)*. We sought and obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to implement the project and assessments.

This project grew beyond the semester as we learned from actively conducting research. We noticed that our topics and activities touched on concepts covered in several classes. For example, since the policy and law course was only offered every few years, we looked for ways to incorporate that learning activity into other classes. As the research on the effectiveness and student support of the activities continued, some modifications were made. The opportunity for a control group became available when the grad student teaching the IR class was given multiple sections during a semester.

This paper reflects additional graduate student experience on this project. All graduate students involved in the readings, designing the undergraduate experience, and developing the assessments share their experiences throughout the paper. The reflection addresses their experiences and enjoyment of this process.

Methods

This study assesses the student support for work-family related lectures and student activities. Specifically, we use a quasi-experimental design to compare the effectiveness of the activities for promoting learning and increasing students' interest in the topic of work and family among students who received a work-family related lecture versus students who received a lecture and interactive activity. This content was delivered in five separate courses over several semesters (in different sections of the courses) to achieve a larger sample size. The later design of the project allowed for a comparison between two conditions of delivery of work-family content: delivering content only versus delivering content plus activity. One course also included a pre-test and post-test design to assess student learning of the content.

Participants

Due to concerns about anonymity and the student-instructor relationship, no demographic information was collected at the time of data collection. However, we include the overall demographics for each course (See Appendix). The majority of students at this university are 18-24, and during the years this project was conducted, the percentage of undergraduates in the College of Human Sciences

(home to HDFS) who were White declined slightly from 79-71%, whereas the percentage of Hispanic students rose from 11.6-17%. There are few students over the age of 30 and fewer who are Black taking these courses. The majority of students in the HDFS program are female.

Table 3

Distribution of conditions by course type (control conditions in italics)

Course Types	Conditions					Total
	Policy (P+A)	<i>Policy</i> (<i>P-Only</i>)	Communication (P+A)	<i>Communication</i> (<i>P-Only</i>)	Spillover (P+A)	
HSS					4 sections (<i>n</i> = 245)	<i>n</i> = 245
FLAPP	1 section (<i>n</i> = 9)					<i>n</i> = 9
FAM	1 section (<i>n</i> = 36)					<i>n</i> = 36
PID	1 section (<i>n</i> = 36)	1 section (<i>n</i> = 22)				<i>n</i> = 58
IR			5 sections (<i>n</i> = 137)	2 sections (<i>n</i> = 60)		<i>n</i> = 197
Total	<i>n</i> = 81	<i>n</i> = 22	<i>n</i> = 137	<i>n</i> = 60	<i>n</i> = 245	<i>N</i> = 545

Note. P+A = Presentation plus activity; *P-Only* = *Presentation Only*; HSS = Professional Capstone Human Sciences Seminar; FLAPP = Family Law and Public Policy; IR = Partnering: Development of Intimate Relationships; PID = Prenatal and Infant Development; FAM = Contemporary Families

Five undergraduate courses with multiple sections were utilized to deliver the activities (see Table 3). Within these five courses, three content themes were delivered: (1) Work-Family Spillover, (2) Policy, and (3) Communication/Conflict. The Professional Capstone Human Sciences Seminar (HSS), a required course for juniors and seniors across the College of Human Sciences, is designed to help students transition from college life to work and has a large enrollment. Family Law and Public Policy (FLAPP), a mixed enrollment course for graduate and advanced undergraduates, is designed to inform students about policies and laws impacting families. However, because FLAPP was a small class with only ten students, Contemporary Families (FAM) and Prenatal and Infant Development (PID) were added to the study. Both FAM, geared towards mid-level HDFS students, and PID, with a similar student make-up of HDFS majors from freshmen to seniors who are typically focused on an Early Childhood Education degree, had medium-sized enrollments. Partnering: Development of Intimate Relationships (IR) is geared towards second-year students but is open to all levels and typically has primarily mid-level HDFS students. The IR class had a medium-sized enrollment and was taught in seven sections. Across the 15 sections of all these courses, 545 students participated in this study. When

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multiple sections within the same course were available, one or more sections received their information in a Presentation-with-Activity (P+A) format. One or more of the other sections received theirs in a Presentation-Only (P) format to serve as a comparison group. Otherwise, a given course received only the P+A format (Table 3).

Procedure

The methods to deliver and assess the content were multi-method due to the exploratory nature of the inquiry and the wish to investigate various possible teaching methods. In each class, students received a 15-minute lesson about work and family life, focusing on work-family conflict. Lessons and activities were tailored to the regular class content to fit with the course. In the HSS and IR classes, the graduate students were the instructors of record, so we conducted our respective lessons and activities. For the FLAPP class, two graduate students appeared as guests to co-present and conduct the activity. Activities for the two courses (FAM and PID) added in later semesters were conducted by the graduate student teaching those courses. All courses assessed the activity via self-report.

The IR class included a pre-and post-test about content and a comparison group. The pre-test included four questions before the lecture or lecture plus activity. The post-test included the same four questions at the end of the class. Three questions were multiple choice, and one question was true/false. The multiple choice questions included a definition question for work-to-family conflict, a question about the percentage of women and men who had experienced conflict between work and family (available before class in an assigned reading), and a question from the previous lecture about perception checking during conflict. The true/false question about couple and family therapist training related to work-family issues addressed new information introduced during the work-family lecture.

The HSS course focuses on career planning; thus, the lesson concentrated on spillover within work-family conflict. In the FLAPP, FAM, and PID classes, the lesson addressed work-family policy, including the FMLA, as a means of reducing work-family conflict. We used Bogenschneider et al.'s (2012) Family Impact Analysis checklist, which focuses on work-family balance. In the IR class, the content emphasized couple communication and conflict resolution around work-family issues.

Activity 1: Spillover

In the HSS class, the instructor delivered a lecture on work-family spillover, time management, activity, and assessments. This class only received the P+A condition, which included a group activity. As this class focuses on career readiness, the purpose of this activity was to help students see that no matter how career-ready they might consider themselves, family life spills over into work life and vice versa. The activity goals were to show that family composition impacts spillover and contributes to work-family conflict and that time management is essential. This approach allowed students to become better aware of issues they may face and provided them with tools and understanding to apply to their own lives.

Given the class size of roughly 100, students formed groups of about 10. Each group received a handout with potential family configuration elements (i.e., intimate relationship status, parental status and age of children, work shift, partner's work shift, and children's activities). For example, one family might be a single parent who works the night shift and two children under 10, with one child involved in after-school activities. Another family might be newlyweds who work different time shifts with no children. Each group of students discussed the potential effects of the "family makeup," paying special attention to work-family spillover, conflict, and time management. To guide students in this discussion, activity facilitators provided each participant with a handout that listed some possible challenges and

assets that the different family configurations could experience, organized by each of the three work-family topics (spillover, conflict, and time).

Activity 2: Policy

The second activity, focusing on public policy, was presented in three different courses. This activity originated in the FLAPP class. Two graduate students worked together to present and run the activity. In the later semesters and other courses, only the graduate student teaching those courses presented the content and activity.

The purpose of this activity was to enhance students' understanding of public policy and how policies in one area of life can influence another. This activity would be relevant for a course that addresses family policy, including one's family and communities, social contexts, including poverty or family economics, and prenatal and infant development in light of the FMLA (United States Department of Labor, 2008). In FLAPP, students briefly reviewed the material from their previous class meetings on creating policy (e.g., Family Impact Analysis, Bogenschneider, 2006; and passing bills through the legislature). In the FAM and PID classes, the discussion centered on having a newborn or sick child, the strain it would put on families if not protected by FMLA, and the burden that is created because pay is not protected under this policy. All students received basic statistics on the percentage of working mothers and findings about the percentage of mothers and fathers who report feeling conflict, stress, and strain because of their work and family roles. The lecture drew attention to Bogenschneider's (2006) concept of Family Impact Analysis, namely that policymakers will often consider a proposed policy's economic or environmental impact but rarely consider its potential impact on families. In the activity condition, students were divided into groups of three or more and provided large sheets of paper and markers. Students then worked in their groups to create a workplace policy that facilitates individuals in meeting family obligations. Students were asked to pay special consideration to the family-impact analysis and to address how their policy met the main tenets of the analysis. After 10 minutes of working together, each group presented their policy idea to the class. Students were allowed to ask questions and provide feedback for each policy. The researchers discussed how each policy idea was similar to or went beyond the FMLA.

Activity 3: Work and family conflict

The third activity took place in the IR course. The graduate student teaching this course presented the information and activities in all sections over the various semesters. This course covers communication and conflict in relationships, but usually without a specific focus on work-family spillover and related time-management issues. The lectures, presented within a one-week timeframe, included communication in intimate relationships, relationship conflict, and conflict-resolution communication skills. In addition to these topics, one class period focused on work-family issues, including definitions, statistics of work-family conflict, the role of time management regarding work, an article featuring marriage and family therapists' perspectives on work-family issues, and a role-playing activity for those sections receiving it. Students completed a pre-test before the lecture, which covered material from a previous communication lecture, a question from the reading, and two new content questions that would be presented. One of the new questions was more obvious (What is work-to-family conflict?), while the other question about marriage and family therapist training was unlikely to be guessed.

A role-playing activity that addresses work-family conflict was included in this course. After the presentation, the students then divided into pairs. The student pairs were assigned a specific conflict scenario that included work and family. These conflicts stemmed from time management and

communication issues. Students were assigned specific communication skills as detailed in two different textbooks, including the pillow method (Adler et al., 2005), perception checking, I-statements, XYZ statements, paraphrasing, and Markman and colleagues' (1994) Speaker-Listener Technique (Miller & Perlman, 2009), to use in resolving the conflict. After completing the activity and writing a one or two-sentence response to what they did, the students completed a post-test with the same questions from the pre-test.

The activity's goals were to provide students with practice in utilizing communication tools and conflict-resolution skills. Thus, students gained an understanding of work-family conflict and practiced communication skills that positively impact relationships, with the hope that having practiced the skills, they would become more comfortable using them in their relationships.

Measures

Self-Report: Undergraduates' evaluation of the activities

A nine-item self-report measure was created based on three different articles (contact the first author for a copy of the measures). We utilized Segrist and Nordstrom (2007) in designing evaluation questions that included student support of the activities and whether participants would recommend that the instructor utilize these activities again. We utilized Holmes (2008) in developing the questions regarding the effectiveness of the activities for promoting learning and increasing students' interest in the topic of work and family. We also used Anderson et al. (1994) to develop questions about improved understanding, awareness, and appreciation. The questions we developed asked students to rate on a nine-point Likert scale their judgments about effectiveness, increased awareness, fun, and support for these activities/presentations (the latter was tailored to whether the class received a P-only or P+A lesson). Higher scores (9 = definitely yes for items such as "The activity was effective for learning about work-family issues") indicated greater endorsement of positive features of the activities. All participants completed the nine-item self-report measure regardless of class or activity.

The students in the IR course were asked to provide a statement on the back of their worksheet that included what they learned and how they intend to apply communication and conflict resolution skills in their own lives. These were assessed globally and quantitatively as students only wrote a sentence or two.

Pre/Post Test: Assessing Student Learning

Only one class utilized the pre-test/post-test format. Students answered four pre-test items related to the work/family content before the lecture or lecture plus activity and after to assess learning. Two questions specifically pertained to work-family conflict: one about therapists' knowledge of work-family conflict, which was covered during the work-family lecture, and one about communication, which was covered in a previous lecture. After the lecture and/or activity, students completed the post-test to assess their learning of the concepts.

Results

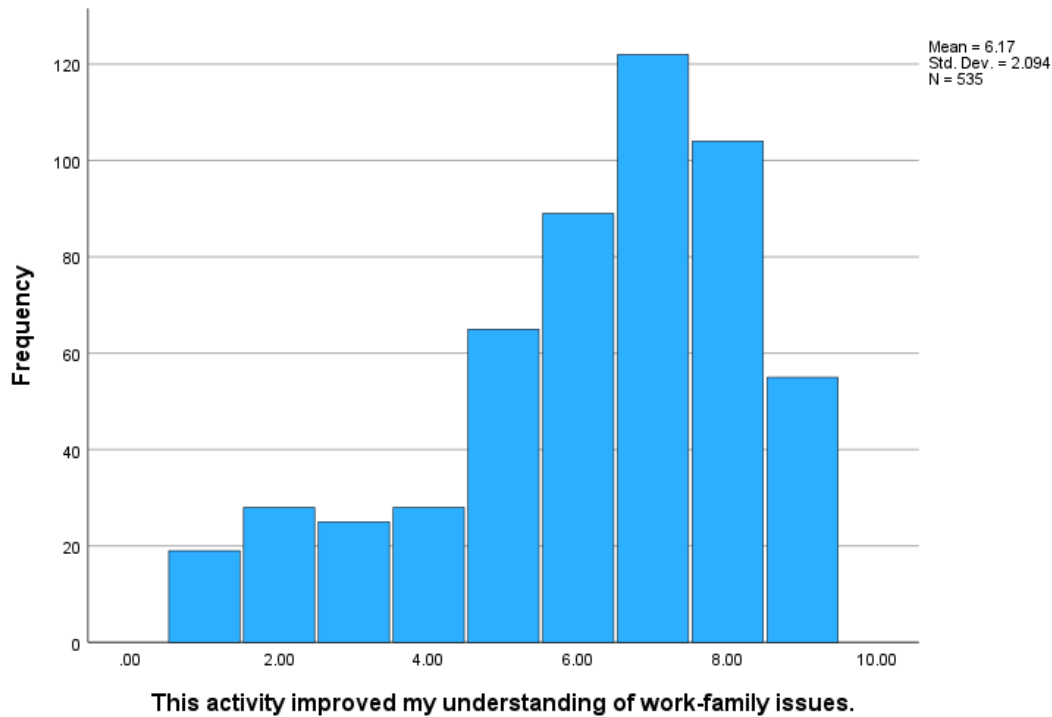
Preliminary Analysis

Data were screened for skewness and missing data. Ten students reported numbers on the scales that were not valid, and therefore, their scores were deleted from the data set. All evaluative items exhibited significant skewness; as exemplified in Figure 1, responses to these items occurred heavily at the high end of the scale, with very few at the lower end (detailed descriptives are available from the first author). The results include how positively students received the material and whether these student

perceptions differed depending on whether they received a presentation or presentation-plus-activity. Lastly, we present findings from a subset of the students (in the IR) who completed a pre-and post-test questionnaire about the knowledge delivered on work and family.

Figure 1

Distribution of responses to item “The activity improved my understanding of work-family issues”



Note. Scores ranged from 1 = definitely no to 9 = definitely yes

Student Ratings

Overall, students rated the presentation-only and the presentation-plus-activity conditions positively. Average ratings across all courses with activity were above the scale midpoint of 5 (Table 4; first column of numbers). The activity in the HSS course was not tested further because it did not have a control condition (i.e., it had only a presentation-plus-activity condition and not a presentation-only one).

Among the activities with a comparison group, the relationship communication/conflict exercise was administered in the IR classes, and the policy exercise was administered in the FLAPP, FAM, and PID classes. Accordingly, we conducted a 2 (activity format: presentation-only vs. presentation-plus-activity) X 2 (activity content: family policy vs. relationship communication/conflict) Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), with the nine evaluative items serving as dependent variables. In the multivariate tests (e.g., Wilkes' Lambda), the effect of format was significant, $F(9, 263) = 2.35, p < .05$, signifying that there was a difference between the presentation-plus-activity (experiential learning) and presentation-only formats. The multivariate tests for the content effect ($p = .087$) and the Format X Content interaction ($p = .253$) were nonsignificant.

Table 4

Means and (standard deviations) on dependent-variable items for conditions (1-9, higher scores represent greater agreement with items)

Dependent Variable Item (key words)	Overall Mean for presentation plus activity (includes career activities) <i>N</i> = 432	Presentation plus activity in conflict/communication activity (<i>n</i> = 124)	Policy activity (<i>n</i> = 72)	Presentation only in conflict/communication activity (<i>n</i> = 57)	Policy Presentation (<i>n</i> = 22)
Effectiveness	6.08 (1.91)	6.43 (1.68)	6.39 (2.00)	7.49 (1.23)	6.91 (2.02)
Interest	5.31 (2.15)	5.56 (1.90)	6.19 (1.95)	6.70 (1.85)	6.41 (2.26)
Awareness	6.16 (2.07)	6.53 (1.79)	6.60 (1.87)	7.35 (1.54)	7.00 (1.93)
Enjoyment	5.97 (2.06)	6.44 (1.79)	6.26 (1.96)	7.07 (1.61)	6.27 (2.00)
Professional importance	7.11 (2.03)	6.99 (2.23)	6.92 (1.89)	6.72 (2.45)	7.23 (1.80)
Personal importance	6.72 (2.04)	7.02 (1.95)	6.94 (1.85)	6.95 (2.12)	7.09 (1.80)
Improved understanding	6.11 (2.08)	6.77 (1.69)	6.58 (1.87)	7.07 (1.39)	6.95 (1.89)
Appreciative	6.76 (2.10)	6.83 (2.02)	6.86 (1.93)	7.19 (1.63)	7.18 (1.94)
Recommend	6.20 (2.38)	6.72 (2.08)	6.58 (2.07)	7.65 (1.42)	7.41 (2.17)

Univariate tests were conducted using a 2 X 2 ANOVA on the nine dependent-variable items individually to follow up on the significant multivariate finding. These showed the following significant effects of format (degrees of freedom for these F-tests were always 1 and 271):

- On the item ‘The activity was effective for learning about work-family issues,’ $F = 9.99, p < .01$. Participants who received the presentation-plus-activity format, collapsing over content, actually endorsed the activity less ($M = 6.41$) than those who received the presentation only ($M = 7.20$);

- On the item ‘The activity made me more interested in the study of work-family issues,’ $F = 5.76$, $p < .05$. Participants who received the presentation-plus-activity format reported less interest overall ($M = 5.88$) than those who received the presentation only ($M = 6.56$);
- On the item ‘The activity helped me become more aware of work-family issues,’ $F = 5.57$, $p < .05$. Participants who received the presentation-plus-activity format reported less helpfulness in becoming aware ($M = 6.57$) than those who received the presentation only ($M = 7.18$);
- On the item ‘I recommend that the activity be used in future courses,’ $F = 9.41$, $p < .01$. Participants who received the presentation-plus-activity format reported fewer overall recommendations for future use ($M = 6.65$) than those who received the presentation only ($M = 7.53$).

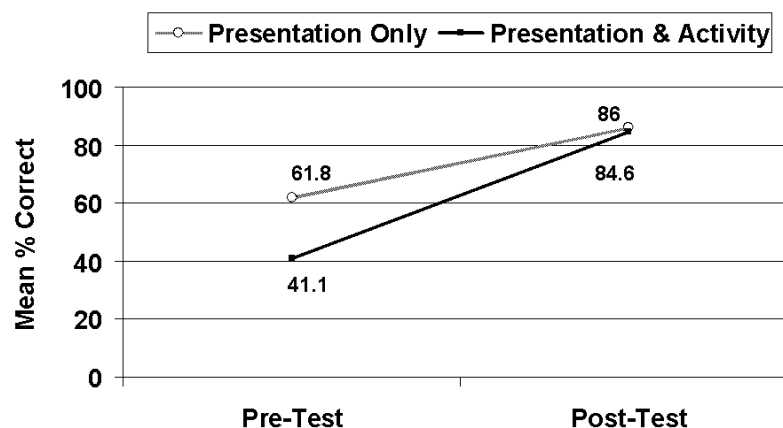
The students in the IR class included written statements on what they learned and how they intended to apply the learning in the future. Students were asked to write a sentence or two addressing their communication skills. While some specifically said they learned more about and would use I-statements and XYZ statements, others specifically addressed using the Speaker-Listener technique or the Pillow Method without discussing their preference for using them in the future.

Pre/Post for Intimate Relationship Course

In IR ($n = 170$), the pre- and post-test showed increased knowledge for both the presentation-only and presentation-plus-activity sections (Figure 2). A two-way mixed ANOVA was conducted, featuring timing (pre- vs. post-test) as a repeated/within-persons variable and activity condition (presentation-plus-activity vs. presentation-only) as a between-persons variable. Analysis showed significant main effects for timing, $F(1, 178) = 222.8$, and for activity condition, $F(1, 178) = 17.1$ (both $p < .001$). As shown in Figure 2, performance means were generally higher in the post-, as opposed to pre-test, condition, and in the presentation-only than the presentation-plus-activity condition. However, the interaction between timing and activity was also significant, $F(1, 178) = 18.3$, $p < .001$, consistent with the sharper rise from pre- to post-test for the presentation-plus-activity condition than for the presentation-only condition. On the post-test, performance was essentially equal in both conditions, whereas on the pre-test, the presentation-only group scored far higher than the presentation-plus-activity group.

Figure 2

Pre- and post-test scores for partnering course comparing presentation-only and presentation-plus-activity on the dependent measure of knowledge.



For the two sections that received the presentation-only condition ($n = 54$), a paired t-test showed a significant difference between the pre and post-test $t(53) = 6.76, p < .001$. In the five sections ($n = 114$) that received the activity as well, there was also a significant difference between the pre and post-test, $t(113) = 17.00, p < .001$. Furthermore, there was a significant difference (independent samples t-test) on the pre-test between the activity sections and presentation-only sections, with the latter being higher, $t(78.82) = 4.96, p < .001$. Post-test scores for both the presentation-only and activity sections were nearly the same. Thus, the activity sections improved their scores by the greatest amount. A difference-in-difference analysis (Warton et al., 2016) tells us that the improvement between pre and post-test for the presentation-and-activity group of 43.5 (i.e., 84.6 - 41.1) exceeds that for the presentation-only group (24.2; i.e., 86 - 61.8) by 19.3 (the difference in difference). The significant timing-by-activity interaction noted above confirms that this difference in difference is itself significant.

Discussion

The origins of this activity began as a graduate student seminar on work-family that morphed into both an experiential learning activity for the graduate students and active learning for the undergraduate students they taught. Experiential learning is beneficial and enjoyable (Burch et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2014). Grades improve, failure rates decrease, and students rate it favorably (Freeman et al., 2014; Lumpkin et al., 2015; Ruhl et al., 1987). Our findings support this previous research on both benefit and student ratings; even though the presentation-only conditions had higher ratings than the P+A, all groups rated the lessons positively.

The learning opportunities for work-family content were two-fold. The original goal was to have a graduate reading class to educate us about work-family content. The testament to the success of this graduate reading course is that we found the material sufficiently important and interesting, so we chose to develop a project that would educate others on this information. We acknowledge that our characterization of the benefits for us draws from informal observations rather than a systematic inquiry. For the undergraduate courses, these students gained a greater understanding of work-family balance and skills in handling work-family conflict issues. Overall, the students received work-family content and liked it. Regardless of whether the students received activities or not, the content was rated positively. Furthermore, the pre-post comparison of topic knowledge showed that adding an activity component strengthened students' knowledge when considering the unusually low pre-test average of the presentation-plus-activity group. Thus, incorporating work-family content into undergraduate-level Family Studies/Human Sciences courses is an active learning opportunity that is enjoyable for undergraduate students and has an overall positive impact on learning.

This paper reports not only the twofold process of experiential and active learning but also the findings of the active-learning activities in the undergraduate courses, as well as the creative activities designed to enhance student enjoyment in the hopes of increasing student retention of the material. A work-family seminar instructing students on the dilemmas they may one day face as a family member and a worker is not typically required to complete a college degree. Because we believe providing students with this information is important, we presented how we adapted this material to other courses, which are more typically part of the curriculum. We found it easy and effective to incorporate work-family conflict information into these undergraduate-level courses in the Human Sciences.

Whereas all evaluation items averaged above the respective scale midpoints, indicating that students perceived the presentations and activities favorably, it is interesting to look at the items in detail. Students in the presentation-only condition rated the presentation as effective for learning about work-family, interest in the study of work-family, and awareness about work-family issues. The items

that did not differ regardless of presentation-only or presentation-plus-activity had to do with learning about work-family, improving understanding about such issues, and appreciating people who have to deal with work-family issues, as well as recognizing that learning about work-family is important to both their professional and personal future. Regardless of format, these items were all rated equally high. This indicates that students see this topic as important to understand and include in their formal education. The ceiling effect may explain the lack of difference between some dependent variable items.

What was randomized was section exposure to the two conditions: presentation-only or presentation-plus-activity (active learning). As it turned out, the sections that received only the presentation performed better than the presentation-plus-activity. This initial difference accounted for the lack of apparent effect for active learning – in other words, we expected active learning exposure to be associated with higher scores, but we had not expected that the class with exposure to lecture only would be so positive, especially given that it was an 8:00 am class. While there was not a significant difference in the post-test for the activity and no-activity groups within the IR classes, both groups did improve in their understanding of work-family conflict, which was the goal of this study. The activity group showed greater improvement than the presentation-only group. It is possible that because the presentation-only group began with an average of 85% correct, a ceiling effect may have been in play. We believe this activity fits our perspective that active learning is an important component of education. For example, in the IR class, by practicing conflict resolution with different communication skills, students were encouraged to interpret and integrate the knowledge they gained (Pratt, 1993). The communication skills taught in resolving the work-family conflict may be skills that can later be integrated into their repertoires and used to resolve future conflicts, whether in an intimate relationship or within a work setting. Since students provided feedback on the activity itself, including what they believed they learned and how they will apply this material in their lives and future careers, this process allowed them to interpret what they learned and provide feedback to the instructor.

Furthermore, within the IR class, the pre-post design is more sophisticated than the cross-sectional comparisons. This component informed us that the exposure to EL mitigated the initial differences between the sections of the courses. The implications of this are that, when faced with students who are not as interested in the material or who are less engaged with the material, employed EL can enhance their learning to be at the level of more proficient students.

These activities can be utilized in similar courses or adapted to fit most Human Sciences courses at the undergraduate level. These activities are useful and enjoyable for both the instructor and the students. Most importantly, students are gaining an understanding of work and family. If many undergraduate-level courses were to provide a small section on work and family, students would graduate with a better understanding of work and family dilemmas and be better equipped to navigate those dilemmas at work and home.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that the post-test immediately followed the activity or presentation. Thus, it is reasonable that both groups (when a control group existed) would improve and do equally well. Future studies should use control groups in all comparisons and add a longer-term follow-up to assess deep learning and maintenance of any changes in attitude. A second weakness of this study is how the evaluation questions were asked, which may explain why the presentation-only group rated some questions significantly more positively. The presentation-only group rated the topic presentation, whereas the presentation-plus-activity group rated only the activity. It would have been beneficial for the presentation-plus-activity groups to rate both the activity and the topic to permit more

“apples-to-apples” comparisons. In addition, future studies should systematically evaluate the potential benefits to graduate students of translating material learned in their seminars into undergraduate teaching lessons and activities.

Strengths

This study has several strengths. First, although active learning activities are often used in classrooms, systematic evaluations of students’ reactions are not. In addition, the content of work-family conflict was delivered and assessed in multiple courses with different activities. Further, the content area was tailored to the type of course (e.g., work-family spillover for the career-oriented HSS and communication content for the IR class). Thus, students in more than one participating class did not repeat the same lecture and activity. Instead, the units complemented each other and had different foci. Still, other courses had a policy component that required students to evaluate current policies or develop an ideal workplace policy that would positively support family life in the workplace.

In addition to the strengths of incorporating different activities across different courses, the lecture, while informative about work-family conflict, varied its perspective and focus depending on the course. While each class received some basic statistics about working parents and reports of experiencing stress because of work and family, the remaining content varied.

Implications

There are several implications from this study. First, our informal observations suggested that experiential learning at the graduate level may enhance learning and the graduate experience. We encourage further study in this area with formal learning and enjoyment measures. We enjoyed learning about work-family issues and saw them as important content that students at both graduate and undergraduate levels needed to obtain. Such content would provide a greater understanding of work and family interaction, dynamics, and influence, thus, graduate students’ desire and motivation to design the learning activity for both their graduate course and the undergraduate classes. Overall, we believe that we benefitted and grew in our teaching skills, curriculum development, and conducting research. Within the undergraduate courses, our more systematic evaluation revealed that incorporating work-family conflict was effective and well-received. Regardless of the activities, the undergraduate students enjoyed this content and felt it was important for their professional and personal futures. As this is one topic area that strongly impacts individuals in two major realms of their lives, it is an important one that should be covered thoroughly at the undergraduate level. Whether each class adds a small module on understanding the issues involved within work and family or something more elaborate (including multiple class sessions), work and family content should be covered more often within departments that teach family sciences.

A further implication from this study is that planning for course evaluation processes is important when developing new ideas, content, or active learning processes. Planning for a matched pre/post design would have been more efficient and allowed for greater analysis than only having group-level data.

Conclusion

In this article, we described activities and assessments used in undergraduate courses to cover information on work and family while providing context for students to think about applications in careers, policies, and communication and conflict resolution skills. This approach included a graduate-level reading course and training as teachers while delivering content to undergraduate students and enhancing their education and classroom experience. Weaving the content with teaching and

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learning made for a broader learning experience for graduate and undergraduate students.

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Appendix
Student demographic characteristics by course

Student Demographics	Courses and Conditions							Total (N = 770)
	FLAPP	FAM	PID	PID	IR	IR	HSS	
	Policy P+A 1 section (n = 10)	Policy P+A 1 section (n = 61)	Policy P+A 1 section (n = 49)	Policy P-Only 1 section (n = 25)	Comm P+A 5 sections (n = 215)	Comm P-Only 2 Sections (n = 112)	Spillover P+A 4 sections (n = 298)	
Classification								
First Year	0	3	0	---	37	16	0	56+
Sophomore	0	11	22	8	69	37	---	147+
Junior	---	23	18	7	69	31	94	242+
Senior	6	24	9	8	39	27	202	315
Grad/2 nd degree/special	3	0	0	0	---	---	0	3+
Age								
<18	0	0	0	0	0	---	0	---
18	0	0	0	---	26	12	0	38+
19-24	7	50	48	21	179	86	258	649
25-45	3	7	---	---	8	12	35	65+
>46	0	4	0	0	---	---	5	9+
Ethnicity								
American Indian	0	0	0	0	3	---	---	3+
Asian	---	---	---	0	5	---	7	12+
Black or African American	---	6	---	0	21	14	21	62+
Hispanic	---	9	7	4	22	16	25	83+
2 or more	0	0	0	0	0	0	---	---
Non-resident	---	0	0	---	4	0	6	10+
White	6	45	38	20	149	79	235	572
Unknown	0	0	---	0	---	---	---	5+
Gender								
Female	8	47	45	24	173	86	256	639
Male	---	14	3	---	41	26	42	126+

Note. These numbers reflect total enrolled for each course. P+A = Presentation plus activity; P-Only = Presentation Only; HSS = Professional Capstone Human Sciences Seminar; FLAPP = Family Law and Public Policy; IR = Partnering: Development of Intimate Relationships; PID = Prenatal and Infant Development; FAM = Contemporary Families. The total enrolled is reflected across the main category. When --- are used, this indicates there were less than 3 students fitting that category. In order to protect identity in those sections we have used ---.

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