Transforming Curriculum to Be More Inclusive

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Department of Epidemiology, Graduate School of Public Health
EPID 2181: Design and Conduct of Clinical Trials

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Abstract: Inspired by the 2015 Provosts' Diversity Institute for Faculty Development, I altered my course in order to bring awareness on the effects diverse populations on clinical research. This was a terrifying thing to do as my own understanding of the disparities across different populations was still a new concept to me. As I have grown personally and professionally, the way this has impacted my course has developed over iterations of the class. Over the past three years, (Fall 2015, Fall 2016 and Fall 2017) I have implemented the following in my class: 1) added a new objective on the impact of research in diverse populations; 2) updated examples in the lectures 3) updated the homework assignments; and 4) added a new diversity topic requirement to the semester-long project. These changes have been well received by the students as seen in their feedback.

How to Approach Adding Diversity in your Content Area

1. Start with small and easily achievable steps.
    a. For me, this started by changing scenarios around questions without changing substantively any content.
    b. *For example*: changing a scenario regarding components of a hypothesis:
        i. *from*: "A Type 2 Diabetes Study of the Longer-Term Glycemic Effect of Avandamet vs. Metformin"
        ii. *to* "Preventing Health Disparities in Hispanic Youth".
2. Take one step at a time.
    a. Smaller tasks are more achievable/less daunting.
    b. Smaller tasks take less time to prepare.
    c. *For example:* One year I changed the wording of the examples. The next year I changed the homework assignments. Another year I added the diversity requirement for the project.
3. Get together a group of people who support this work. These should be people both *inside* your department and *outside* your department!

Ways to Add Diversity into your Content Area

1. Include scenarios that involve diverse populations in your class examples/homework.
   For example: "[Racial Disparities in Pneumococcal Vaccination in Managed Care](#)"
2. Add a course objective to identify and address the impact of diversity on your topic.
   For example: "Identify and address the unique history and challenges of diverse populations in clinical trials"
3. Add related resources in the syllabus that relate to diversity and your topic. *For example*: the APHA webinar series "[The Impact of Racism on the Health and Well-Being of the Nation](#)". If there are any field-specific groups for diversity, *for example:* [Teaching Statistics with Social Justice.](#)
4. Add a civility in the classroom statement. A [good resource](#) is the Eberly Center at CMU.
5. Add preferred pronouns on a student information profile. I do this by asking a multiple choice question (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, other (space to fill in the blank). [More resources](#) can be found from Bryn Mawr College.
6. Bring current events related to diverse populations into the classroom. Discuss with students how these events may impact your topic(s). For example:
   a. "[How a Gay Marriage Study Went Wrong](#)" New Yorker (2015)
7. Define/discuss with your students what diversity means in your field. For example, diverse students in the classroom, interacting with other diverse researchers, performing research on topics that impact diverse groups, including diverse participants in your studies, etc.

Communication with Students

1. In the first class, I explain that as part of the course we look at the intersection of diverse populations and clinical trial research. I let them know that it is new for me, what has gone over well in the past, and what I'm trying new this year. I emphasize that their feedback helps me determine what directions to take.
2. [Anonymous surveys](#) via Courseweb/Blackboard have provided me with great feedback.
   a. I ask specifically for comments regarding diversity in the classroom, outlining the specific where I want feedback.
   b. This provides ways to update/improve my course.
   c. Student feedback is helpful in justifying/balancing the need for the diversity discussion while still covering core topics.
   d. Share results back with students – this helps them understand that you hear them and allows them to see their peer's comments.

Personal Rewards

1. Keeps the course content fresh and changing.
2. Learning experience for me as well as the students.
3. Focus on items in which I have interest and enjoy.
4. Students appreciate your efforts.