SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
EPIDEMIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY GUIDANCE ON MODIFYING CLASSROOM TEACHING AND COURSE MATERIALS TO REFLECT PRINCIPLES OF EDI AND ANTI-RACISM *

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*This document was created for teaching faculty in the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Washington. Other organizations are welcome to adapt this content for their purposes. Suggested reference: adapted from the University of Washington Department of Epidemiology.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to teaching faculty in the Department of Epidemiology on incorporating principles of EDI and anti-racism in the classroom. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of suggestions nor is it suggested that faculty implement all these suggested ideas; rather we provide several options with the hopes that some will be appropriate for most of our teaching faculty.

While this document focuses mostly on anti-racism, we also highlight other areas that may help instructors move towards a broader anti-oppression framework; we recommend this article by Aqil et al. 2021 to learn more about engaging in anti-oppressive public health teaching. Additionally, this document focuses mostly on the US context, but we acknowledge the global nature of racism, specifically anti-Black racism, as well as colorism; we recommend this article by Bhakuni and Abimbola 2021 to learn more about de-colonization.

This guidance is divided into three sections: (1) Modifying Course Materials, (2) Modifying Classroom Teaching, and (3) Long-term Strategies towards an Anti-Racist Pedagogy. Throughout the document we highlight resources that may be helpful to faculty as they are modifying their courses. At the end of this document we provide full references to all hyper-linked resources, as well as additional resources that may be helpful to faculty. A more comprehensive list of resources, including resources related to addressing xenophobia, classism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, and weight stigma/fat phobia, can be found on the Department of Epidemiology's EDI Canvas Site.

Section 1. Modifying Course Materials

We suggest that faculty evaluate the examples used in class and assigned readings. Some suggestions for modifying course materials include:

- **Incorporate authors/scholars of color and those with marginalized identities** into in-class examples and readings. If you are unable to identify any authors of color, discuss with other colleagues in the field or try a literature review with some additional Google searches.

- Place your course materials in the **historical context** of how methods in the field were developed or how theories and/or knowledge were initially generated and, if applicable, how they have evolved or changed overtime.
    - Example 1: Epidemiologic methods were developed within the positivist (Park et al. 2020) and other traditions of western/European thought. There is little influence of eastern or southern ideological traditions visible in standard epidemiologic methods. Community based participatory research (CBPR), which is rooted in critical theory and began in Latin America, provides one example of an approach to research that takes a non-European approach.
    - Example 2: Statistics have racist origins. The book by Zuberi 2001 connects the development of the idea of race and creation of social statistics.
    - Example 3: Epidemiologic research on racial health inequities has historically been, and continues to be, blind to power-knowledge relationships, and white faculty make capital gains based on research and knowledge they produce about communities different from their own. This excellent commentary by Petteway 2022 describes these concepts.

- Be explicit in the classroom about **how social identities are defined** and why they are included in readings and examples. Many of the social identities we discuss in class relate to race, gender, disability, and body size but there are many other social identities as well. It is also important to acknowledge intersectionality and recognize

the intersecting structures of oppression that affect multiply-identified individuals (see the article by Bowleg 2012 on intersectionality). When you discuss social identities in class, reflect on the following:

- How are social identities being defined?
- Do the identities reflect those described by the participants themselves or are they presented in a different manner?
- What is the referent group for the comparisons between social identities? How does the choice of referent group impact the interpretation of comparisons?
- If reviewing a reading or example about a socially marginalized group, are they presented in a deficit model? If so, discuss how the authors could have presented the paper with a resilience model or consider another example that uses a resilience approach.

For example, when discussing race, reflect on whether race is meant to be a proxy for racism or genetic ancestry or something else. The Boyd et al. post and papers by VanderWeele and Robinson 2014 and Khan et al. 2022 may be helpful in learning more about these ideas, as is this paper by Lett et al 2022 which provides recommendations for conceptualizing and contextualizing race in population health research. Additionally, when discussing race, instructors may wish to explicitly mention how white supremacy created the social/political construction of race and maintains structural racism. The article by Alang et al. 2021 is an excellent resource discussing white supremacy and public health.

When discussing sexual orientation and gender identity in research, you may wish to consult the papers by Patterson et al. 2017 and Tordoff et al. 2022, which discuss best practices for measurement and reporting.

To learn more about the impact of weight stigma and fat phobia, we recommend this article by Campos et al. 2006 as well as these two essays by Marquisele Mercedes and Monica Kriete.

To learn more about ableism, disabilities and disability studies, we recommend this resolution by the Society for Public Health Education, as well as the works by Swenor 2021, Mitchell 2022, and Mingus 2011.

When discussing socioeconomic status, consider addressing stereotypes and stigma around those living in poverty. The reports by Hicks and colleagues and Davis and colleagues are helpful references.

- Use **person-first / person-centered language in class.** For example, instead of saying "HIV-positive person", say "person living with HIV". Note that there are some communities who prefer identify-first language. There are several websites that can be useful resources, including:
  - Radical Copy Editor Person Centered Language
  - BC Centers for Disease Control Language Guide
  - NIAID HIV Language Guide
  - National Network Information, Guidance, and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act

- For any papers or examples you share, **add photographs of authors on slides** to ensure students recognize contributions come from a diverse set of scholars. The photos can be of the first author and/or senior author; this should be done for all papers/examples (including those whose authors are white). Invite students to reflect on how author identities might contribute to the authors' choice of research question, analysis plan, and interpretation of the results.

- **Incorporate examples of work that deal with racism or other systemic issues**. There is an emerging body of evidence that suggests that equity based/social justice examples support student engagement (Lesser 2007). When considering these examples, it may be helpful to consider these equity-related questions:
  - Who conducted the research?
  - Who funded the research?
  - Which researchers had contact with the participants?
  - What populations were studied?
  - How were they selected?
  - What was the role of the community in the research?

- o What types of measures were of interest?
- o What are the differences between the groups being compared (cases vs controls, exposed vs unexposed)?
- o What is the size of the effect?
- o Who appears to benefit and who appears to suffer?
- o Whose values may be implicitly represented or excluded?
- o Do these data offer a vehicle or tool that could be used to help understand or improve social conditions in our present world?

- Incorporate **fonts and formatting** that are easier to read for students with disabilities. This website on universal design and this dyslexia-friendly style guide are helpful resources.

- Incorporate **grey literature** into your course material (e.g., blogs, government reports, newsletters, podcasts). This may be an effective way to center marginalized voices and centers/values knowledge production outside of academe.

Section 2: Modifying Classroom Teaching

There are several evidence-based practices that enhance inclusivity in the classroom. The UW Center for Teaching and Learning has a number of excellent tips and resources on inclusive teaching. Below are a few suggestions for ways to enhance inclusivity in the classroom:

- **Learn about students at the beginning of the quarter**: Using an index card, online survey, private chat on Zoom or a paper questionnaire on the first day of class, faculty can collect information about students' prior knowledge of the course content, relevant educational experiences, and personal experiences that might impact their learning in the course. You can also ask about preferred names, pronouns, and ask students to provide a recording of their name or write it out phonetically so that you are pronouncing names correctly.

- **Gather feedback from students about their experience in the class**: Faculty can conduct a brief survey (which could be optional and anonymous) at various points during the quarter to gauge student learning and perceptions of class climate. A popular method is the **Stop-Start-Continue** method which includes just 3 questions (listed below). When using this method, it is helpful to share a summary or key highlights of the feedback you received with the students, including what changes you plan to make to address the feedback.
    1. What you (the instructor) should start doing.
    2. What you (the instructor) should stop doing.
    3. What you (the instructor) should continue doing

- **Establish community norms or ground rules**. Community norms constitute an agreement that all students agree upon. Deviating from these norms means disrespecting everyone in the class. Have a copy of the norms on hand so that you can refer to it if anyone deviates from the norms, and to show appreciation for adherence to them. You may be surprised at how well students respond to having community norms for the duration of the course. You can create these norms:
    1. By yourself, with minimal input from students (e.g., putting them in your syllabus)
    2. By yourself, with considerable participation from students (e.g., getting input from students on the first day of class)
    3. With students – ask them to create community norms collaboratively (e.g. by asking them what they need from their fellow students and instructor(s) in order to learn effectively)

- **Acknowledge your positionality**. Our perspectives are shaped by aspects of our identity and lived experiences, including our perspectives on public health. You may wish to reflect on and discuss your positionality at the beginning of the quarter and how your positionality has influenced your experiences. It is also important to revisit and reflect on your positionality throughout the quarter. This 2-minute video and short article by Brandy Brown on positionality are excellent resources.

- **Address microaggressions in the classroom**. It is important to review strategies for dealing with microaggressions in your online, hybrid, or face-to-face classroom. The [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) offers resources (including short videos) on this topic. The article by [Sue et al. 2019](#) on disarming microaggressions, the article by [Harris and Wood 2020](#) on responding to microaggressions, and this [Tool for Interrupting Microaggressions](#) are excellent resources.

  Part of being able to recognize and address microaggressions in the classroom is for faculty to recognize and reflect on their own biases, interactions, and behaviors. Consider telling your students that you acknowledge that you may not recognize all microaggressions but that you want students to tell you when they occur and/or report these microaggressions via the SPH bias reporting tool (as per your course syllabus). Follow-up with the whole class to directly address the microaggression that occurred.

- **Provide multiple means for students to meet the learning objectives.** Incorporating active learning techniques is one strategy that can be used to enhance achievement of the learning objectives. These are evidence-based techniques that have been demonstrated to improve learning for all students, but specifically for women and students of color. Including participation in these active learning techniques as part of the students' grades is important (e.g., attach points to participation). Below are a few examples of active learning techniques:

  o **PollEv or Zoom Poll**: Plan stopping points throughout the lecture to ask questions via poll. Polls are an excellent way to gauge students' comprehension of the material that you have already presented (e.g., a poll question at the beginning of class related to the last session's material) or that you plan to present. Faculty can include points for these polls (e.g., points for providing a response to the question).

  o **Think-pair-share**: Pose a question and ask students to think about their response for 1 minute, then turn to the person sitting next to them and discuss for 1 minute, then return to the large group and share. This also works well in Zoom breakout rooms.

  o **Random Call**: [Random call](#) can cause anxiety for students. There are ways to mitigate this. Instructors can allow students to opt-out of the random call list and/or make it clear that "passing" is appropriate. Instructors can also utilize random call only after students have had the opportunity to talk to a classmate before sharing to the larger group. In this latter model of random call, the instructor can ask: "what did you and [classmate] think about this question?" Regardless of the approach, it is important to prepare a random list of students' names for each class period so that the call is truly random.

  o **Small group activities or discussions.** Include small group discussions as an opportunity for students to share with and learn from one another. For example, if there is a reading assigned for a given lecture, faculty can have small groups discuss the paper and come up with a list of key takeaways and unanswered questions.

  o **Minute papers.** At the end of class, have students write: (1) What are the two [three, four] most significant [useful, meaningful, surprising, disturbing] things you have learned during this session? (2) What question(s) remain uppermost in your mind? (3) Is there anything you did not understand?

- **Consider Ungrading:** Ungrading is a way of assessing and reporting on student learning in which students complete assignments but are not graded. The movement toward ungrading is based, in part, in recognition that the US educational system reflects dominant white culture and that grades correlate with racial and socioeconomic privilege; ungrading shifts the power in the educational hierarchy. Ungrading largely takes two forms in practice: (1) individual assignments are not graded but the student is assigned a final grade at the end; or (2) the student does not receive a final grade for the class (e.g., credit / no credit). This [essay](#) and [interview](#) with Susan Blum and this [ungrading FAQ](#) by Jessie Stommel are good introductions to ungrading.

Section 3: Long-term strategies towards an anti-racist pedagogy
Scholars of anti-racist pedagogy have noted that moving toward anti-racism is a process that requires continual self-reflection and action. We do not envision that faculty will make a few changes to their courses and be "done." For

those interested in considering long-term change to their teaching styles, here are some suggestions. This article by Kishimoto 2018 is an excellent resource that informs many of the suggestions in this section.

- **Faculty self-reflection**
  - Engage in ongoing self-reflections related to the intersections of our own positionality, lived experiences and application of anti-racist principles in teaching. There are a number of resources that may be helpful to faculty. We recommend starting with this article by Jamieson et al. 2022 (particularly the table) and also review the Ford and Airhihenbuwa 2010 article on Public Health Critical Race Praxis (PHCRP), which Includes a self-reflection.

- **Develop awareness of social positions, both in and out of the classroom**.
  - Instructor and students should consider and describe their intersectional positionality during class introductions, with a specific focus on how those identities may shape their understanding of epidemiological methods, public health practice, and other class-specific topics. One example of an exercise on the first day of class is for instructors to do a word cloud on Poll Everywhere where students can anonymously send in their identities (e.g., gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, age, ability, immigration status, religion, etc.); this can show the diversity of those in the classroom. The instructor can discuss how the diversity of identities, lived experiences, and intersectionalities can enhance learning for students and the instructors.
  - Because our reckoning with our identity is an ongoing process, inviting students to reflect on this exercise later in the quarter might be interesting, depending on the subject matter of the class.

- **Decenter authority in the classroom and have students take responsibility for their learning process**.
  - Involve students in crafting the syllabus, learning objectives, assignments, and assessments, and include materials suggested by students. One example of this is having the instructor place their syllabus on Google Docs, which allows students to ask direct questions for clarifications. This also permits a more dynamic syllabus where updates are "real time".
  - Challenge the harmful components of the power differential created in the professor-student dynamic by explicitly acknowledging when you are confused or unsure about something.
  - Acknowledge that learning is mutual by including content on race and racism in courses even if you are not fully ready to teach them in the traditional sense, and invite students to lead the conversation. The book by Sue 2015 provides concrete advice for talking about race.
  - Understand what accountability in the classroom looks like, including how to give an apology by Mingus.

- **Teach through a lens of trauma-informed practices.**
  - Trauma-informed teaching starts with an awareness of the trauma that students may have experienced or be experiencing (in many possible shapes and forms). It is important to recognize that trauma can affect students' executive functioning and self-regulation skills. That means they will have a harder time planning, remembering, and focusing on what they need to learn.
  - Instructors can commit to enacting teaching strategies to support and nurture students in their learning journeys. For example, instructors should consider adding content warnings at the beginning of class if appropriate given the material. This webinar by Mays Imad provides an introduction to trauma-informed teaching, as does this short article by Beth McMurtrie.

- **Create a sense of community in the classroom through collaborative learning**.
  - Some active learning techniques can move the class towards collaborative learning, e.g., small group work, "think-pair-share," etc.

RESOURCES REFERENCED IN CDP DOCUMENT (IN ORDER THAT THEY APPEAR ABOVE)

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ADDITIONAL EXCELLENT RESOURCES NOT EXPLICITLY MENTIONED IN CDP DOCUMENT

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Resources on Weight Stigma and Fat Phobia

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Resources on Class Lectures and Discussions

- Jay Howard. How to Hold a Better Class Discussion. The Chronicle of Higher Education. https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-hold-a-better-class-discussion/?cid2=gen_login_refresh&cid=gen_sign_in#2

- NPR story featuring UW Biology faculty members Scott Freeman and Mary Pat Wenderoth: "Are Lectures Racist?"

Resources for Additional Anti-Racist and EDI Pedagogical Training

- CORA (Center for Organizational Responsibility and Advancement) is a professional educational organization committed to training faculty, staff, and administrators to enhance their skills to better serve historically underrepresented and underserved students. Cora offers a number of online professional development courses, including "Course Design for Racial Equity", "Racial Microaggressions", and "Black Minds Matter".