Introduction to the Course/Syllabus Curriculum Checklist

Midwives and aspiring midwives of color* and others who are underrepresented have been advocating for equity in midwifery education long before the creation of this checklist & the accompanying web-based resource. With that in mind, this resource aims to amplify the voices and perspectives of these important and all too often ignored members of our community and serve as a living repository for the transformative ideas and tools necessary to bring about equity and social justice in midwifery education and training.

Department/Program or School-wide Suggestions:

- Encourage faculty to use this checklist to help them revise their courses/syllabi & apply the checklist to the entire curriculum as well
- Consider the possibility of paying a stipend to have diverse advisors help review curriculum
- Use the Equity Agenda Guideline for Midwifery Education & Training Programs to guide the actions of your institution's/program’s change team efforts
- Encourage each instructor to create their own syllabus statement equity and social justice
- Develop a religious holiday policy & acknowledge if the schedule is based on Christian holidays
- Consider course evaluation question(s) specifically asking about inequity and racism
- Ensure adequate orientation to mission & equity/antiracism/social justice commitments/statements for new faculty & staff and ongoing trainings for faculty, staff & admin
- Ensure that the library has a copy of Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice (Adams & Bell, 2016) available to loan, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Suggested Activity for Individuals: Make a Commitment to yourself. What will you do to help infuse equity and social justice into your curriculum/classroom in the next 1 month, 3 months, 9 months and 12 months? Be specific and realistic. Choose at least one thing to do for each time period. Ideas:

I will:
- Make specific adjustments to my syllabus (list them)
- Create your own syllabus statement regarding equity and social justice
- Use one or more curriculum checklist(s) to evaluate my syllabus
- Sign up for racial equity tools or other similar resource and read within a week of it arriving
- Watch relevant webinars or videos
- Join a local community group such as the Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites
- Meet with a colleague to share ideas & learn together
- Learn more about a local or national organization working on social justice
- Follow someone on social media who can help me learn more

Resources:

- Extensive Web Resource for Midwifery Educators: https://www.equitymidwifery.org/
  - See the ‘Social Justice’ section of this page:
  - Curriculum Tools: https://www.equitymidwifery.org/curriculum
  - Books, articles and more: https://www.equitymidwifery.org/facultystafftraining
  - Climate & the Hidden Curriculum
- Critical Consciousness: https://www.equitymidwifery.org/criticalconsciousness
- Power & Privilege: https://www.equitymidwifery.org/power-privilege
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<th>Topic/Potential Areas for Improvement</th>
<th>Description/Things to Consider</th>
<th>Notes to self</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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| Noticing Who is Given Expert Status  | • Consider who has been set up as the “experts” on the topics taught  
• Consider who has written required reading materials. Are they all white? Mostly white? Acknowledge if no other options  
• Diversity of guest speakers to balance perspectives, ideally paid for their time |               |           |
| Focusing on Strength & Resilience, Not just Disparities/Inequities | • Tone and language regularly emphasize the strength & resilience of communities and individuals especially when examining inequities  
• Convey the concept of inequities rather than disparities  
• Consider tone and focus when discussing sensitive topics ie. GDM Risk in indigenous populations displaced from traditional foods vs genetics  
• Strengths-based interventions  
• Consider activities that increase motivation and hope by fostering a growth mindset |               | https://www.equitymidwifery.org/healingresourcesfocusingonstrengths |
| Reconsider Content and Highlight Diverse Resources | • Acknowledge historical realities that impact experience ie. Legacy of enslaved persons being forced to feed white babies their milk  
• Consider Including the “Lived Experience” of pregnant/PP families  
• Consider adding “Recommended Reading” if unsure about requiring it |               | https://www.equitymidwifery.org/curriculum |
| Enabling Students to see themselves in the course/curriculum content & establish a sense of belonging and connection | • Values Affirmations exercise  
• Consider allowing students to pick projects or assignment topics  
• Are any communities invisible in your course/curriculum content?  
• Evaluate how your course/curriculum contributes to students’ sense of belonging especially for first generation and non-majority students  
• Options for group work ie. Having students work out a problem as a group, having students “teach” each other a concept, taking quizzes in groups, exchanging ideas in pairs or triads  
| Emphasizing Community Connections | • Highlight national, regional & local organizations run by and working with/for diverse populations ie. Sister Song, NLIRH, NAABB, NBMA, etc  
• Assignments encourage connection such as interviews, research, etc |               |           |
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<th><strong>Considering implications for vulnerable/resilient populations or those on the margins</strong></th>
<th>• Assess whether your course/curriculum content considers implications/impacts for vulnerable/resilient populations (of pregnant/PP families) or those on the margins such as racial/ethnic/religious minorities, refugees, immigrants, those living in medically underserved rural or urban areas or persons who are hungry, homeless, mentally ill, incarcerated, low income, LGBTQI2S, disabled, etc.</th>
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| **Assessing Terminology/Language** | • Person first language including regarding obesity, diabetes and Down Syndrome  
• Avoid co-opting language ie. “pow wow”  
• Gender-inclusive language (Syllabus, power points, worksheets, etc.) |
| **Reconsidering the Content of Questions Posed & Case Study Examples** | • Avoid stereotyping  
• Consider who is given visibility in your case examples  
• Consider impacts on some of the most vulnerable (and yet resilient) pregnant/birthing/postpartum persons |
| **Assessing methods of Evaluation** | • Anonymous mid-quarter feedback option  
• Course/curriculum evaluations that specifically ask about whether students perceive racism or other differentisms and if content seems relevant to diverse communities they hope to serve, etc.  
• Examine your course’s/curriculum’s methods of evaluating student learning and competency and consider the limitations of multiple choice only  
• Consider creating a structure that encourages revisions, redos, second tries, frequent specific feedback, consistent support  
• Consider standards-based grading (no penalty for early on failures, just need to master the content by the end of the term  
• Consider some deadline flexibility vs 100% strict and inflexible |
| **Allowing for Diversity of Expression & Reactions** | • Evaluate the type and diversity of reflections you invite from students ie. journaling, etc  
• Consider allowing students to request alternate readings and related assignments if assigned reading triggers undue stress for them as a result of their cultural background  
• Consider if any topics in your course/curriculum might warrant a “trigger warning” or acknowledgement of need to turn off camera, leave, say stop |
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Checklist Items</th>
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| Adopting Inclusive Excellence in Assessment | - Expand options for response format beyond writing, ie, student choice: power point, short essay, voice recordings, videotaped role play, webpage, etc  
- Offer synchronous classes/Live Sessions if distance education  
- Assessment Early and often, but not necessarily with a penalty attached and adding study guides as needed due to help counter the underperforming educational system that results from institutional racism |
| Mapping Student Demographics | - Check that everywhere that states/Provinces are referenced, that the US/Canadian Territories also acknowledged as existing  
- Consider including articles relevant to the demographics and/or interests of the students you will be teaching ie. postpartum support related to race/ethnicity, country (or parents’) of origin, religious minorities, LGBTQI2S, Deaf persons, incarcerated persons, etc |
| Addressing all Learning Styles & enabling students to recover lost bandwidth | - Consider including a Learning styles assessment  
- Include audio-visual resources  
- Offer synchronous class options (if relevant)  
- Reference relevant poetry, art, song  
- Small group work  
- Gamification  
- Activities that require movement  
- Consider employing strategies that enable students to build self-efficacy ie. seeing a peer succeed at a task, using verbal persuasion and affirmations, reducing stress and anxiety, using collaborative, conceptual, and creative pedagogies |
| Reviewing content for cultural appropriation | - Examine course/curriculum content for cultural appropriation ie. smudging, etc |
| Crafting a Syllabus Statement | - Consider crafting a syllabus statement or revising your teaching philosophy to set the tone for your classroom environment and demonstrate that you value and respect difference  
- Highlight what you want your students to know about your expectations regarding creating and maintaining a classroom space where differences are respected and valued  
- Consider directing students to campus resources for further support ie. academic, psychosocial, peer, quality advising, mentorship, safe spaces, etc |


https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements

DRAFT Syllabus Revision Checklist - Equity in Midwifery Education [www.equitymidwifery.org](http://www.equitymidwifery.org) July 2019 (Updated Dec 2020)
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<th>Integrating Important Concepts</th>
<th>Does your course/curriculum include or take into account at least one of the following? Consider how these concepts might be incorporated in this course &amp; larger curriculum</th>
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|                               | ● Health equity  
|                               | ● Social justice  
|                               | ● Unconscious/Implicit Bias  
|                               | ● Disparities/Inequities/Resilience  
|                               | ● Historical trauma/Cultural healing  
|                               | ● Health literacy  
|                               | ● Reproductive/Birth justice  
|                               | ● Social Determinants of Health (including racism as a risk factor vs race)  
|                               | ● Structural competency  
|                               | ● Structural Violence  
|                               | ● Structural Humility  
|                               | ● Power and Privilege  
|                               | ● Critical Consciousness  
|                               | ● Life Course Perspective  
|                               | ● Weathering Theory  
|                               | ● Why people have a hard time talking about race/racism  
|                               | ● Implicit Bias  
|                               | ● Racial Anxiety  
|                               | ● Stereotype and Identity Threat  
|                               | ● Ally/Accomplice  
|                               | ● Microaggressions and microinvalidations  
|                               | ● Framework for quality apologies  
|                               | ● Multicultural sources of wealth/  
|                               | ● Strengths-based approach  
|                               | ● Cultural Competency vs. cultural humility  
|                               | ● Overcoming Stereotype Threat/Wise Feedback  
|                               | ● Intersectionality  
|                               | ● Growth mindset  
|                               | ● Positive racial climate  |

| Committing to Lifelong Learning | ● Consider what commitments you want to make this term to expanding your fund of knowledge regarding social justice, antiracism, equity in education, etc.  
|                                | ● Consider how you can equip yourself to feel better prepared to address and confront racism and other differences when they rear their ugly head  
|                                | ● Make a plan for revisiting the important concepts listed above and regularly reconsidering how they might be incorporated in each course/curriculum |

*See additional Curriculum Checklists at [https://www.equitymidwifery.org/curriculum](https://www.equitymidwifery.org/curriculum)