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Use of a Living Document to Facilitate Critical Engagement with Social Justice for Undergraduate Audiology and Speech-Languages Pathology Students

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Use of a Living Document to Facilitate Critical Engagement with Social Justice for Undergraduate Audiology and Speech-Languages Pathology Students

Abstract

Although pedagogy focused on social justice, power, and privilege have been included in teacher preparatory programs for a number of years, such topics are much newer and relatively unexplored within the context of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) preprofessional programs. This reflection provides information on use of a living document assignment to encourage undergraduate CSD students to grapple with these difficult topics (e.g., privilege, oppression, social justice, allyship) early in their professional careers resulting in benefits for the students, their future clients, and the field of CSD.

Keywords

communication sciences and disorders, social justice, privilege, undergraduate curriculum

Cultural competency and responsiveness have been critical components in the field of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) for a number of years (Ellis & Kendall, 2021; Preis, 2008) and are required in the 2020 Standards and Implementation Procedures for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology published by the Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (2018). Graduate programs are responsible for ensuring that their students demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of cultural competency and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) per standards set forth by the Council on Academic Accreditation for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (e.g., Standard 3.1.1B: Professional Practice Competencies - Cultural Competence, update from 2020); however, individual programs and curricula may vary with how these are implemented. There is clearly a trend in the field of CSD to pursue and value training in DEI at the graduate level and for practicing professionals, but little is known about implementing these topics during undergraduate training.

This paper is designed to share and reflect on our current practices with pedagogy related to topics of social justice. These practices were designed for the students of the deaf education program and have been extended to include undergraduate CSD students. This document is designed to provide a description of how we established an approach for students to become reflective practitioners in areas related to social justice.

We feel that there is a lot to be gained by starting DEI training early in a professional's career (i.e., at the undergraduate level) as has been advocated for by Petty and colleagues (2017) for pre-health students. In their study, pre-health students who engaged in DEI-related coursework were more likely to consider structural and cultural factors when presented with clinical scenarios than students who participated in a more traditional pre-health type undergraduate degree. A similar critical examination of structural and cultural factors is important in assessment and intervention in CSD as well.

Although a number of programs, both in CSD and other health professions, have incorporated DEI topics, there have been a number of critiques that these approaches to cultural competency may not result in measurable changes in knowledge and practice (e.g., Ellis & Kendall, 2021; Mahendra & Visconti, 2021). Ellis and Kendall (2021) further argue that graduate CSD students often leave their training programs with little understanding of the concepts of “diversity” and “culture” and how these concepts can affect their service provision as professionals. The contradiction is striking: although instruction and continuing education is required in areas related to cultural competency, there is a lack of awareness and application of social justice within the field of CSD. Some researchers use the presence of a counseling course during CSD programs as a metric of social justice – that it encourages students to have a more reflective attitude toward individuals with different cultures, experiences, and perspectives. We will consider this suggestion further as we discuss other ways in which social justice topics can be successfully incorporated into CSD curricula.

Further compounding this problem is the significant lack of diversity and representation of marginalized groups within the field of CSD. ASHA's 2021 Member Affiliate Profile reports the racial and ethnic composition of certified ASHA constituents (American Speech-Language Hearing Association, 2022). We focus here on the subset consisting of audiologists, speech-

language pathologists, dually-certified, audiology assistants, and speech-language pathology assistants. Table 2 from the document indicates that 5.4% of certified constituents report their ethnicity is Hispanic and 7.4% of certified practitioners report that they are a member of a racial minority group (American Speech-Language Hearing Association, 2022). The vast majority of speech-language pathologists are white females while estimates of the ethnoracial composition of the United States indicate that approximately 38.4% of the population belongs to an ethnic or racial minority group (ASHA 2022; United States Census Bureau, 2020). This mismatch in the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the CSD professionals with the high level of diversity in the clients they serve means that programs in CSD must be deliberate in educating students about issues related to diversity, cultural competence, anti-oppressive practices, and social justice. With carefully designed curriculum, healthcare fields have been shown to successfully incorporate pedagogy in cultural competence in fields with predominantly non-diverse healthcare preservice providers (Romanello & Holtgreffe, 2009).

Horton-Ikard and colleagues (2009) presented a framework that can guide the design and implementation of a multicultural-focused curriculum. They suggested that instructors must first establish a teaching philosophy that is situated with respect to multicultural education. For example, they believed it is important for students to “develop culturally sensitive attitudes toward all individuals... [and] gain theoretical knowledge and expertise on the impact of sociocultural factors on communication development” (p. 194). One’s teaching philosophy then informs the bidirectional process of defining basic learning objectives, selecting the topics for the course, and implementing instructional approaches, all of which work together to build students’ awareness, knowledge, and skills related to multicultural practice.

Social Justice in CSD

Related to multicultural issues, *social justice* refers the recognition that there is an imbalance in the power and valuation for certain social groups, often those in the minority (e.g., race, class, ethnicity, gender) resulting in specific groups benefitting from increased access to resources and opportunities, and therefore greater privilege. A social justice orientation maintains an active vigilance against these inequities, including recognizing the role of privilege in education and healthcare (Brown & White, 2020; Unger et al., 2021). An important influence on one’s ability to engage with social justice is their positionality as well as conscious or unconscious bias. An uncritical or unconscious habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploitation as the status quo is referred to as *dysconsciousness* (Banks, 2012) which originally applied to racism (King, 1991), and later applied to ableism (Broderick & Lalvani, 2017) and audism (Gertz, 2016). Positionality refers to the social and political context that make up who an individual is and how they relate to the world, including potential biases they hold, whether known or unknown. It creates an individual’s identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability as examples (Ellis & Kendall, 2021). When students have an opportunity to reflect on or become conscious of their own positionality, they are better able to recognize their own biases and privilege and how those interact with their efforts to support social justice (Blanchard et al., 2018). Revisiting one’s own biases and privilege repeatedly as can be done in the context of iterative revisions of a text (e.g., Fertman, 2018) can facilitate critical thinking as well as integration and retention of instructional topics (McLean & Price, 2019). These opportunities for social justice-oriented self-reflection are critical for students in taking ownership of their education and global engagement (Hyter et al., 2017).

While there is a long history of social justice curriculum within teacher education programs (e.g., Blanchard et al., 2018; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Martin & Van Gunten, 2002; Reagan et al., 2016), there is much less published within the field of CSD focused on topics of social justice, privilege, and power (e.g., Ellis & Kendall, 2021; Preis, 2008; Unger et al., 2021). In a recent survey reported by Unger and colleagues (2021), the vast majority of practicing SLPs reported viewing social justice as important to the field. However, most respondents reported that their educational training did not require them to complete a counseling course. The question addressing whether a counseling course was required during their degree program was used by the authors as reflective of the view that “addressing the related humanistic aspects of working with vulnerable individuals and populations is within SLPs’ scope of practice” (Unger et al., 2021; p. 2008). They further elaborated on this connection by reporting that 86.6% of respondents indicated that they incorporate counseling practices into their clinical practice even though the majority report not having training in this area during graduate school. Their view was that counseling is tied to having a more reflective attitude to consider one’s own biases as well as to support the empowerment and self-advocacy for their clients, concepts that are critical to building a social justice lens. So even though practitioners viewed social justice as important in the field of CSD, further work is necessary to understand and establish effective curriculum that supports CSD students’ engagement with social justice. Unger and colleagues (2021) did not specify whether the training was at the undergraduate or graduate school level and graduate students would benefit from having coursework more directly tied to social justice concepts. The field of CSD is in need of increased information from large national surveys inquiring directly about training or educational practices related to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Of the limited prior work looking more directly at social justice-oriented coursework, we will highlight two different approaches to incorporation of DEI coursework, one at the undergraduate level and one at the graduate level.

Preis (2008) described the effects of an elective course for undergraduate CSD majors that focused on cultural diversity in communication. Twenty-four undergraduate students (23 females, all White, age 18-22 years) completed surveys measuring the students’ responses on a 5-point Likert scale designed to measure attitudes (or degree of agreement) toward statements about privilege, bias, diversity, and social justice before and after participating in the class. Improvement in attitudes was measured by increased awareness of social justice, discrimination, personal bias, privilege, by reporting being more likely to step in to help in situations of injustice, and by a more positive orientation towards actions that facilitate social justice (e.g., disagreeing with the statement that “There is little people can do to solve discrimination”). The surveys contained 20 questions that were the same for both the pre- and post-course surveys. During the course, students were required to reflect on their own positionality as well as attitudes towards differences through a number of different activities including a prejudice reduction workshop, simulation activities, class discussions involving white privilege and bias, “first thoughts” writing responses, completion of videos, and a final presentation focused on an “-ism” or a culture that was unfamiliar to them. They were also required to participate in intercultural events where they were in the minority group and analyze the event specifically with respect to the conflict, difference, and uneasiness they experienced. Students’ attitudes towards eight of the fourteen measured areas improved from pre- to post-test, notably in questions addressing white privilege. Items resulting in the largest significance in a one-tailed t-test include how much students agreed or disagree with the following statements: “There is privilege inherent in being born white in the US,” “It is important for students

to understand cultures of the world,” “It is important to make the world a better place,” and “I have cultural biases.” Most students reported finding the simulation activities, classroom discussions (including topics of white privilege and bias), and attending the intercultural events to be some of the more valuable components of the course.

For graduate students, Young and colleagues (2021) described how they incorporated Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) into a year-long first-year graduate seminar focused on pediatric speech and language clinical knowledge and skills. They described how they use eight modules to define target topics, provide examples, and describe concrete action steps across a variety of areas related to Anti-Oppressive education including bias, systemic racism, inclusion, ableism, cultural competence, and oppression. Students engaged repeatedly with these topics through a variety of media, including lectures, workshops, research articles, clinical simulations, and podcasts. They specifically designed this AOP program to be highly clinical in nature, relating all the discussed topics directly to clinical activities such as ethnographic interviewing for collecting case histories from clients, and choosing intervention materials that are affirming for the client such as with children’s literature. At the beginning of the year, students assessed their own cultural competency and created goals for themselves. Professors and students then came together at the end of the year for guest lectures on topics related to the focus of the AOP program.

Both of the above-mentioned programs describe their approach to implementing social justice and anti-oppressive coursework into CSD coursework. Here we present a sample assignment designed to facilitate self-reflection on themes of power, privilege, and social justice that can be easily included in existing coursework. Meaningful self-reflection is a critical component to Ginsberg and Mayfield-Clarke’s (2021) proposed model of cultural humility. We argue that fostering self-reflection of privilege, power, discrimination, and social justice early in an individual’s educational career (i.e., as an undergraduate student) can result in a more pervasive impact than if such topics were put on hold until graduate school.

Our Use of the Living Document as a Self-Reflection Tool

A *living document* is a document that is ever changing to reflect the most updated information (Shanahan, 2015). The “living” part of the title refers to the fact that it is not a static, “one and done” exercise. Instead, it is revisited through a students’ course or training program, allowing them the opportunity to revise, add to, review, and change their previous expressed opinions. In our program, the “Living Document” is used as a self-reflection tool that provides students with the opportunity to respond to a number of thought-provoking questions and revise them over a period of time as they learn about social justice issues (Lawyer et al., 2020). Table 1 describes the topic areas addressed by the questions in the Living Document. The Living Document was designed to be used in conjunction with other educational tools incorporating social justice topics for deaf education majors (e.g., PowerPoint presentations with representation from various groups’ perspectives, inclusion of diverse materials, and graduate students serving as social justice liaisons to facilitate discussions, check-ins, and exchange of materials). While our program has taken several years to work through modifying and using the Living Document and other various pedagogical tools, Lawyer et al. (2020) is the first publication that details the specifics of how this tool was developed and implemented in our program.

Table 1

The Living Document Topics and Questions Adapted for Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Topic Area	Sample Questions
Power and Oppression	<p>What is oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, ableism, audism, heteronormativity, classism) and what are its causes? What are the factors that create an imbalance of power within a culture?</p> <p>How did power, privilege, and oppression play out in the history of communication sciences and disorders? What about the current state of communication sciences and disorders? What do you think “liberation” means to people of all identities in communication sciences and disorders?</p> <p>What does it mean to be harmed by stereotypes or to be a member of a subordinated group? In what ways can subordinated groups keep the larger cultures aware of their issues?</p>
Allyship	<p>Is it ever necessary to question the status quo? Why or why not? When is it appropriate to challenge the beliefs or values of society?</p> <p>What are the benefits and consequences of questioning and challenging social order? How does conflict lead to change?</p> <p>When should an individual or a group take a stand against what he/she/ze/they believe to be an injustice in opposition to an individual and/or larger group? What do you view as the most effective ways to take a stand against injustices?</p>
Privilege	<p>What is privilege and what are your privileges?</p>
Social Justice	<p>What is social justice and what are your responsibilities to support it?</p> <p>What does power have to do with fairness and justice? Do we have choices concerning fairness and justice? What allows some individuals to take a stand against prejudice/oppression while others choose to participate in it?</p>
Positionality	<p>What is your subjectivity, positionality, and reflexivity to the communities that you serve? What is the potential harm of your presence and involvement in the communities that you serve?</p>

In their description, Lawyer and colleagues (2020) detailed the process of creating a social justice oriented deaf education curriculum. Two graduate students served as the social justice liaisons between the deaf education faculty and the preservice teacher candidates. They focused on building trust and open-mindedness among members of the program in order to facilitate difficult discussions allowing individuals to courageously share their experiences and perspectives. They further emphasized the humility and constant self-reflection necessary to be authentic in these discussions. They constantly sought to check in with one another and hold each other accountable for their words (signed or spoken) and actions. This reflection further emphasized that they viewed this process not as an end goal but as an ongoing process, striving to use “individual and collective power to stand in support of individuals denied equality” (p. 70). It was through this lens of ongoing self-reflection, actively building trust, and working to use their own positions of power in allyship with others that guided the creation of the Living Document assignment. Additional background and details describing the development of this Living Document in our programs can be found in Lawyer et al. (2020). Our manuscript builds on the work described by Lawyer and colleagues by expanding the scope to CSD undergraduate students rather than teacher candidates. We further discuss the benefits of a social justice focus early on in a CSD curriculum, rather than waiting for graduate school.

Like Lawyer and colleagues (2020) did for deaf education students, we used this Living Document assignment in our Foundations of Deaf Education course that is required for all undergraduate CSD majors at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. CSD majors take this course alongside students in the deaf education, educational interpreting, and special education majors, as well as the American Sign Language minor. A course with this diversity of student majors and perspectives is a prime setting for opening up the discussion to topics of social justice and equity. Each student brings their own experiences and knowledge of their major to the table, although it is worth noting that like many similar programs, the majority of our students are white females (averaging between 75-95% of CSD students but varying somewhat by year).

At the beginning of the semester, students (approximately 50-60 students each semester) were presented with a subset of the questions from the entire Living Document to focus on for this specific course (see Table 2). They were instructed to engage with the document repeatedly throughout the semester indicating different entries in some manner (e.g., use of highlighting, different colored text or fonts, use of dates, etc.). We required students to make a minimum of three entries throughout the duration of the course. We encouraged them to space out the entries evenly across the semester but recognized that this may not be the case. We therefore required them to submit a first draft of the Living Document halfway through the semester for a completion grade. Some students produced the minimum three entries while others engaged with the document on a monthly or biweekly basis. We encouraged them to not delete any of their previous entries but rather to add to this document. In this manner, they could review their previous responses, thoughts, and ideas at any time throughout the semester. Students often reflected on previous entries as they engaged with the document throughout the duration of the course. They commented on how they agreed or disagreed with previous comments and added any new thoughts or ideas that arose across the semester.

Table 2

Subset of Questions Presented to CSD Students in the Foundations of Deaf Education Course.

Question Number	Question Content
1	Is it ever necessary to question the status quo? Why or why not? When is it appropriate to challenge the beliefs or values of society?
2	What is oppression (racism, sexism, ableism, audism, heteronormativity, classism, etc.) and what are the root causes? What are the factors that create an imbalance of power within a culture?
3	What is privilege and what are your privileges?
4	What is social justice and what are your responsibilities to support it?
5	How did power, privilege, and oppression play out in the history of Deaf education (or your respective field)? What about the current state of Deaf education (or your respective field)? What do you think liberation means to Deaf people of all identities in Deaf education?

Students submitted the Living Document assignment to instructors twice, once approximately halfway through the semester and once at the end of the semester. Instructors may ask questions to clarify their content or encourage additional elaboration through written comments on the document but do not grade or comment on the “correctness” of their responses. Instructor comments were generally 3-5 sentences in order to encourage further thought and elaboration without coming across as a critique. Students were repeatedly reminded that there are no right or wrong answers. When they inquired about how these will be graded, students were told that instructors are looking for multiple entries and evidence that they have thought about these issues, not for a specific answer. In the instance that student responses were not reflective of a DEI philosophy, instructors left written questions to encourage further thought and also tailored the lectures and classroom discussion to review these topics for additional group discussion. We provided additional examples and personal experiences to help inform the student further about the topic. Thus far, students submitted the document to only the instructors, but we will be trialing peer engagement with these documents in future semesters (anonymized to protect identity as well as encourage honest reflections). It is up to the discretion of the instructor and the design of the course to determine how the Living Document might best integrate with the curriculum.

The Living Document assignment was accompanied by lecture content and discussion questions that provided a foundational understanding of culture, social justice, allyship, equity, and privilege, which aligned with Mahendra and colleague’s learner-centered model of teaching about diversity (Mahendra et al., 2005). The Living Document then provided the structure and impetus for the students to engage further with these topics, reflecting on their own positionality, biases, and perspectives. Students could use what they learned from each other through discussions of their differing perspectives in order to inform their own self-reflections. Discussions engaged students

with social justice topics broadly and also as they specifically applied to culturally-Deaf individuals who communicate through American Sign Language and who historically and through modern times have experienced discrimination as a cultural, linguistic, or disability minority group.

The questions included in the Living Document assignment encouraged students to consider their own background, culture, perspectives, and ideas as they relate to prejudice, justice, and allyship using a self-reflective journal writing approach. This self-reflection exercise was in alignment with the suggestions made by Bradshaw and Randolph (2021) for using writing prompts when implementing multicultural education in CSD (e.g., identify your own cultural assumptions and where they come from, how would those assumptions be likely interpreted by ____). Students then revised the document throughout the course as they continued to learn about and further consider differences in culture, privilege, bias, social justice, and allyship. Blanchard and colleagues (2018) suggested that students' own written self-reflection can facilitate student development. In particular, they argued that helping students understand their own intersecting identities can help them understand their own positionality and privilege. This iterative process has been shown to reflect changes in graduate teacher candidates' attitudes towards social justice (Reagan et al., 2016) and has been implemented in anti-oppressive curriculum for graduate CSD students (Young et al., 2021).

The iterative nature of the Living Document allowed for students to deeply consider their own biases, experiences, and perspectives as a dynamic process across the semester. Terhune (2006) advocated for critical self-reflection that "uncovers and deconstructs inconspicuous beliefs, perceptions, and experiences" (p. 144). She discussed how the process of critical self-reflection (such as what is employed by the Living Document assignment) was an important step toward cultural change in the field of nursing by addressing changes at the individual level of thoughts, values, knowledge, and perspectives. This type of self-reflection work could be presented in a variety of formats, such as a virtual diary, vlog, discussion board posts, or small group discussions. The critical component was for students to have a space to repeatedly consider concepts of social justice, where they feel free to reflect on their own past experiences, grapple with mistakes and biases they have held, and reflect on their own privilege and positionality as it applies to individuals from different cultures and/or language backgrounds. Deaf individuals provided a group that differs in these very aspects from most of the hearing, spoken language users who are in the CSD program.

The implementation of the Living Document could be flexibly adapted depending on the needs of the students and instructor. For our program, the CSD majors made several entries in their Living Document throughout the duration of the semester-long course. Students in the deaf education major engaged with different combinations of the Living Document questions across a number of different courses throughout their tenure at the University of Tennessee. Both approaches to engaging with these topics can positively impact undergraduate students' awareness of and engagement with social justice, including focusing on social justice within one course through repeated interactions with the concepts and also addressing these topics across different courses (Bradshaw & Randolph, 2021). While we have discussed the importance of critical thinking about social justice topics at the undergraduate level, we do not think the utility of the Living Document is limited to undergraduates. If used at the graduate CSD level, the Living Document could be

more focused on CSD populations and students may have more hands-on experiences with clients in order to inform their thinking. We believe the questions are versatile enough to apply to both graduate and undergraduate students but additional questions can be easily incorporated at the discretion of the instructor. The beauty of the Living Document assignment is that it can be adapted to fit within any pre-existing CSD curriculum at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. It can be one of several components of a course focusing on these topics or it can function as a standalone assignment.

Reflections

As instructors, we have used this tool across a number of years. Currently, this course is taught by the two authors of this manuscript (Kristen Secora, a hearing woman, and Dave Smith a Deaf man). We discuss with students our positionality, culture, and privilege. Students often express some hesitancy at the beginning of the semester with engaging in discussions about culture, privilege, and oppression, but begin to be more open to these discussions as we provide more concrete examples. For example, Smith provides examples from his lived experience as a Deaf person of what hearing privilege can look like (e.g., a Deaf person cannot go to any church or movie showing that they want to without arranging for an interpreter but a hearing person can; drive-thrus are designed for hearing people and not Deaf people). Students are able to build on their understanding of power and privilege by learning about how the Deaf individuals were oppressed historically (e.g., sign language was banned in schools for the Deaf; Deaf people were not allowed to obtain driver's licenses or were discouraged from marrying other Deaf people). Students' Living Document reflections often show a shift in their understanding of discrimination of Deaf people as they learn about ways in which the majority hearing culture affects the lives and livelihood of Deaf individuals. In fact, one student reflected that one of the takeaway points they learned through this coursework was, "Privilege always affects the other party in a negative way." Furthermore, one student reflected how valuable the process of grappling with these difficult topics has been for their professional career, "I didn't realize how ignorant I was towards these individuals' feelings or challenges. I wasn't even aware there was a term that discriminated against those who were deaf or hard of hearing, but now I have been extremely enlightened. This course certainly will be useful for my field and further education."

Limitations

This reflection focused on describing the practices we currently use to help support our undergraduate CSD students' understanding and application of social justice principles by focusing on the experiences of Deaf individuals. We recognize that a wider application of diversity, equity, and inclusion is necessary to support a more complete understanding of these topics, while also acknowledging the ongoing nature of this work. We cannot teach students everything they need to know in one semester; however, we believe it is worthwhile to begin these discussions at the undergraduate level and leave it to the discretion of the instructors to implement this tool in a way that best supports their specific students and program of study.

Additionally, we recognize that providing quantifiable data about student and/or instructor outcomes would strengthen our understanding of the utility of this pedagogical tool. Given the nature of assessing semester-long courses, we did not want to withhold sharing about this tool until

we had gathered a sufficient amount of data; however, data collection is ongoing and we will be following this descriptive work with a mixed methods study of student responses. In the meantime, we hope that instructors can take our description of this tool and make experience-based decisions about whether and how to apply it to their own teaching.

Conclusion

We have described how we incorporate the Living Document assignment into a CSD course (Foundations of Deaf Education) to encourage a dialogue at the undergraduate level related to power, privilege, and discrimination as they apply to a cultural and linguistic minority group. The open-ended nature of the questions on the Living Document can be easily applied across various types of CSD coursework including multicultural assessment and treatment coursework, aural rehabilitation, typical or atypical language development, speech-sound disorders, counseling or family engagement courses, and early intervention-focused coursework that prepares students to work closely with families from a variety of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The questions that we have suggested can also be applied in different combinations across a number of required courses within the major sequence (either undergraduate or graduate) to encourage ongoing student reflection through an embedded or infused approach to multicultural and social justice-focused education in keeping with Horton-Ikard and colleagues' proposed pedagogical framework (Horton-Ikard et al., 2009). The Living Document assignment supports the learner-centered model for teaching about diversity for recognizing stereotypes, prejudices, power, and privilege with a space to reflect on how the learner can support a social justice orientation throughout their CSD education and career. Critically, early involvement in social justice coursework and self-reflection is likely to affect the framework with which students approach undergraduate educational experiences, graduate school selection, and also how they engage with graduate academic and clinical experiences into their professional careers. Metzler and colleagues (2018) suggested that instruction at the undergraduate level about racial disparities and how structural factors shape healthcare helps to prepare these pre-health students both for medical school and for their professional practice beyond school. We argue that a similar process of engaging in these topics early for pre-professional speech-language pathology and audiology students can help shape their graduate school experiences (both classroom and clinical experiences) in ways that are culture- and diversity-affirming. Students with these experiences in critical self-reflection can help cultural climate and organizational efforts that Terhune (2006) argued is critical to establish before sustainable increases are likely to be seen in recruiting diverse populations into healthcare fields. The Living Document could be easily incorporated into various types and formats of coursework, including both graduate and undergraduate courses, and could serve as a beginning or additional tool to support more culturally diverse education for all students.

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