



Globalizing the Core Curricula in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

Bruce Fried, PhD²; Margaret Bentley, PhD¹; Gretchen Van Vliet, MPH¹; Michael Park, MPH²; Peyton Purcell, BA³

¹Office of Global Health, ²Health Policy and Management, ³Health Behavior and Health Education, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

Background

GOAL: To introduce and reinforce the centrality of a global perspective in public health research and practice by:

- Integrating global content and perspectives in core courses required of all master's degree students in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.
- Developing and renewing faculty members' understanding of global public health applications and increasing faculty comfort with global content

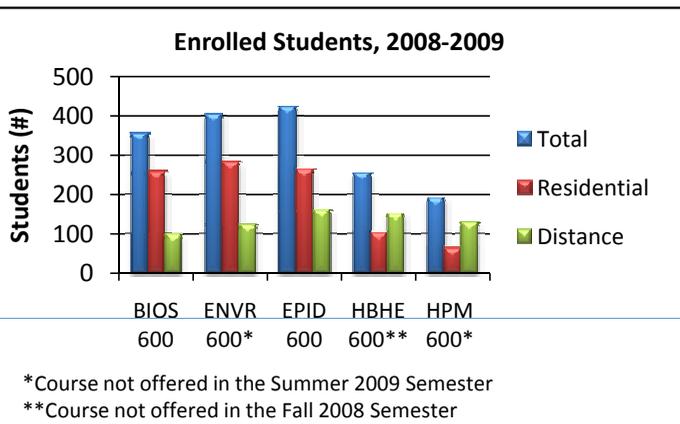
This initiative is part of a broad transformational effort to enrich public health students' understanding of the global context of public health at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

PROJECT FOCUS: Enriching rather than supplementing course content through use of:

- cases from other countries and cultures to illustrate global applications
- datasets from different countries to familiarize student with global health issues and the opportunities and limitations of global health research
- multicultural examples to illustrate how programs and interventions need to be adapted to the unique circumstances of the community or country

COURSES TARGETED (both residential and distance):

- Biostatistics (BIOS)
- Environmental Sciences and Engineering (ENVR)
- Epidemiology (EPID)
- Health Behavior and Health Education (HBHE)
- Health Policy and Management (HPM)



Methods/Process

TIMELINE: January to June, 2009

PROJECT COORDINATION:

- Bruce Fried, PhD, Associate Professor, Health Policy and Management (project director)
- Margaret Bentley, PhD, Associate Dean for Global Health and Professor, Nutrition
- Gretchen Van Vliet, MPH, Director, Office of Global Health
- Mike Park, MPH, PhD student, Health Policy and Management (research assistant)

WORK TEAM FOR EACH COURSE:

- Course instructors
- Other faculty members from the department with global expertise and interests
- Department research assistant
- Students
- Project director
- Project research assistant

The extent and approach to globalizing core courses varied, but in all instances, globalizing a course included the following components:

- Identifying global elements of the disciplinary area to capture global roots and implications
- Examining current course content and methods to identify existing use of global health content and opportunities for enhancement
- Reviewing resource materials (Internet, journal articles, cases, bibliographies, texts, public documents, and media) and consulting with colleagues who teach global health courses
- Developing a teaching plan to include objectives and methods for integrating global perspectives in the course
- Identifying resource requirements and developing support materials
- Revising each course syllabus and implementing the revised courses
- Creating methods to sustain currency of global applications

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:

Teams worked closely with health science librarians to learn methods to compile global health resources to ensure currency and sustainability. We are exploring strategies to enhance faculty development and competency in global content.



Global Health Fair, Michael Hooker Research Center Atrium, UNC

Results

The team worked with the five departments to identify the global elements of each disciplinary area to capture global roots and implications for core course revisions, enhancements, and modifications. Results from Biostatistics illustrates types of global applications developed during the project.

Discipline	Strategy	Comments	Ease of implementation
Biostatistics	Using global data sets to illustrate basic statistical principles in sampling, and hypothesis testing. [note that global data sets may refer to non-US data and/or data illustrating country or cultural variations]	Need to identify relevant data bases that meet instructional requirements.	Moderate amount of work required to identify data sets that meet instructional needs
	Utilizing lectures on ethical issues in global health research (e.g., clinical trials in developing countries)	Need to identify reading material and/or lecture content and examples.	Simple; materials easily available
	Using statistical results in the global context. For example, in addition to using global data to apply principles of hypothesis testing, students will discuss how data and research findings are used in different global contexts.	Supplementary course instructors may be used.	Moderate; requires that faculty have the ability to convey and illustrate such concepts as clinical vs. statistical significance
	Incorporating global health readings as part of homework, class activities, midterm and final exams.	New reading material, assignments, and student assessment materials are required	Moderate and continuous

Discussion

Each department took different strategies to examine the current course content, identify applicable global health resources, and revise course content.

COMMON THEMES/APPROACHES:

- Recognition that students must understand public health in the global context to fully appreciate public health issues in the U.S. and North Carolina
- Need to increase options for using student assignments to illustrate and reinforce the global context
- Need to expand array of global case studies for use in class and group discussions
- Using global content to illustrate core public health methodologies
- Utilizing knowledge and experience base residing in faculty members and students

NEXT STEPS:

- Student evaluation of courses and revisions made as needed

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