Evaluating Nursing Coursework for Biased Content

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Abstract

Bias-free content in nursing education prepares students to provide equitable care. The process of assessing content promotes the dismantling of systemic bias in healthcare advancing social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Unfortunately, there are no published studies to guide the evaluation of nursing curricula for the presence of bias. This innovative project aimed to identify bias in a course and develop a structure to guide the wider evaluation of the curriculum to identify and remove biased content. A modified version of the Upstate Bias Checklist (UBCL) was applied to a 15-week, 3-semester hour pre-licensure, graduate-level nursing course. Bias was noted and an effective tool to guide evaluations was identified.

Purpose

➢ Ensure graduate students are equipped to provide equitable care to patients from diverse backgrounds.
➢ Embrace the opportunity to begin to dismantle the history of systemic bias in healthcare (Ripp & Braun, 2017; Tsai et al., 2016).
➢ Advance social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion within health professions, goals which are endorsed by the American Associations of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).
➢ Encourage academic leadership and faculty to examine bias in all communications.
➢ Provide a structure for faculty to evaluate content in all coursework.

Methodology

The Upstate Bias Checklist
➢ Developed by Dr. Amy Caruso Brown at SUNY Upstate Medical University
➢ UBCL is set up in a survey format in REDcap
➢ Designed for faculty in medical and healthcare professions
➢ Each time the tool is used, responses are recorded
➢ Edited the checklist to record start and end time of each survey
➢ Evaluated every piece of course content in one course 15-week, 3-semester hour pre-licensure, graduate-level nursing course
➢ Analyzed aggregate results of data entered into the checklist
➢ Interviewed Faculty for trends related to conducting evaluations

Results

Frequency of Biases Identified
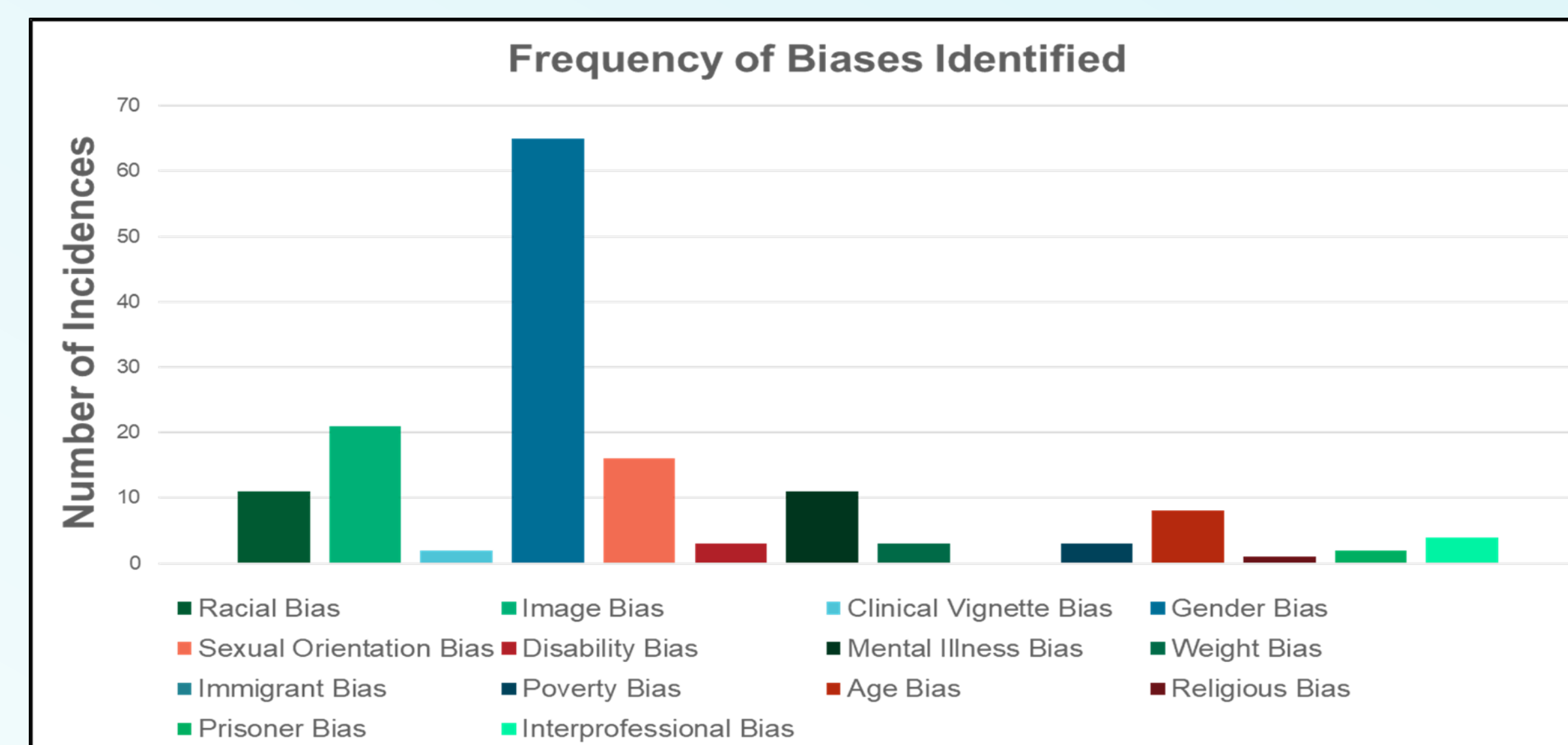
✓ 158 incidences of bias identified
✓ 67 of the incidences were gender bias alone
✓ Gender Bias accounted for 42% of all bias noted
✓ No immigrant bias noted

TRENDS	QUOTES
Concerns about Time	"My main concern would be is the time we put into report individual instances… is it worth all of our time?"
Concerns about Support/Training	"Faculty has been in this mode for so long that it feels like starting over, whereas students are learning the proper terminology the first time."
Concerns about Judgement	"My top concerns are: will I do it right? And what does right mean? The world is changing so quickly that I feel like I can't keep up."
What will the data be used for?	"I just want to know what is going to happen with all of this information. Is it going to show up in my evaluation? And if it does, how do I do well?"
Can we combine tasks? 360 Plan, Essentials, Biased Language	"Somehow all of this needs to be coordinated. I don't want to go through the same course over and over again looking for different things."
Only want to evaluate and report on things I can change	"I have colleagues all over the country. I ask people from all over the country to do lectures. I can control what I write and say, but I don't have control over those expert lectures."
This is IMPORTANT!	"I think we've been so far behind on this in healthcare and medicine for many years."

Average Time Spent Evaluating Course Content
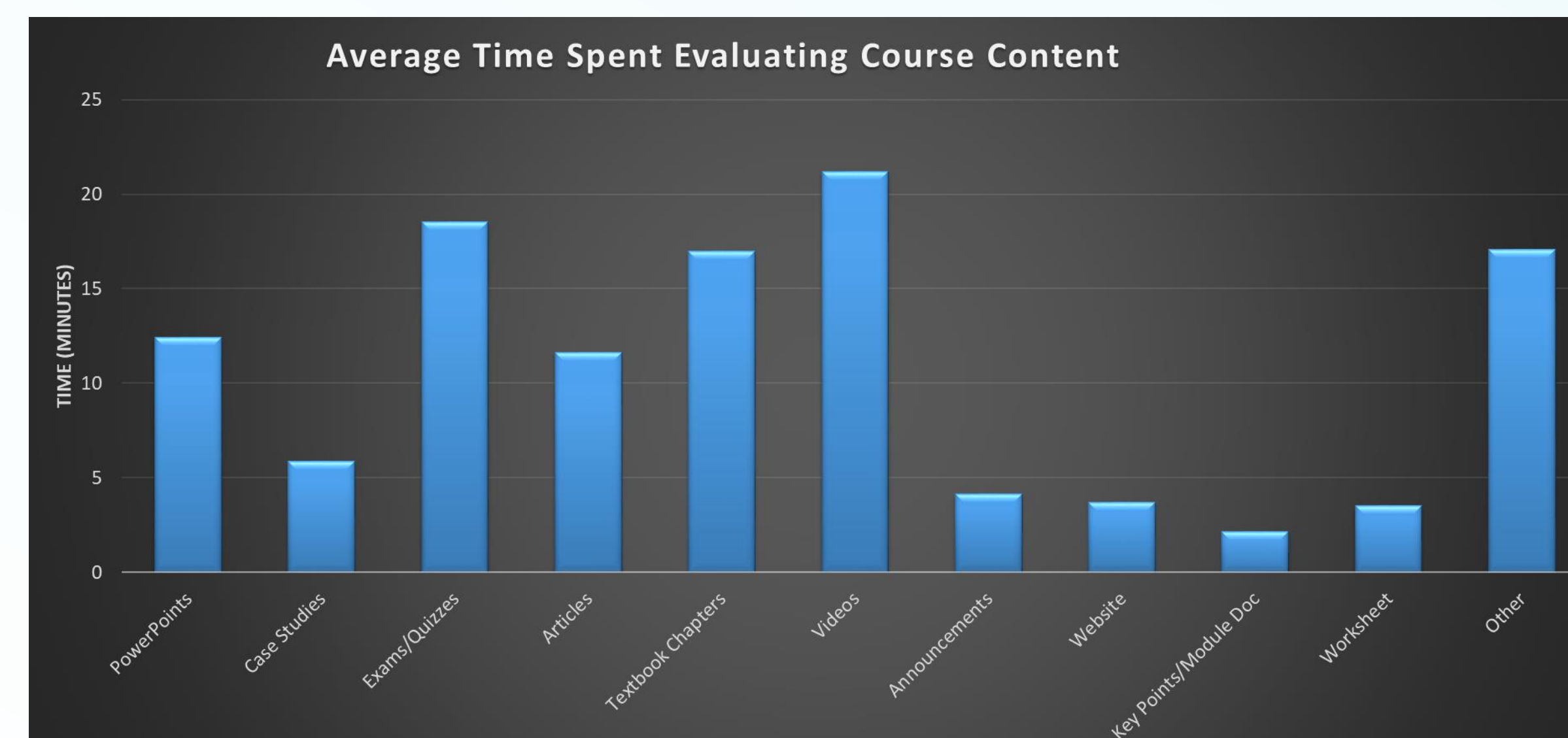
✓ 248 Pieces of Course Content Evaluated
✓ 40 Hours spent Evaluating
✓ Shortest=Module Documents
✓ Longest=Videos

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Conclusion

• Biased content exists in nursing curricula.
• Most of the content can be evaluated quickly and efficiently.
• Evaluation aids in identifying and editing biased content to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
• Faculty concerns should be considered when developing timelines, assigning resources to the effort of evaluation and communicating findings within and outside the organization.

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