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**Sample**

My own cultural competency is built on a lifetime of international experiences. I grew up on the Galapagos Islands, later attended high school in Nairobi, Kenya and I now visit my parents annually in Mexico. Growing up surrounded by cultures different from my own, I was encouraged to identify and value both the commonalities and differences of the human experience. As a student, exposure to diverse peoples was instrumental in shaping my worldview and values. To demonstrate how I employ my cultural competency in the classroom I will focus here on my work over the past two years with the UC ABC Biology Undergraduate Scholars Program (BUSP). Based on my experiences teaching college students, I expect the students in a biology classroom at XYZ Community College to be diverse in innumerable ways. My work with BUSP students exemplifies how I approach working with non-traditional students, and is also indicative of what I will accomplish as a professor at XYZ.

The majority of BUSP students come from historically underserved backgrounds, whose educational and economic circumstances limit their academic opportunities. The purpose of BUSP is to help these students develop the skills necessary to succeed as life science majors. I developed and taught a “Bio Boot Camp,” designed to give BUSP students a head-start on content and study skills necessary for the year long introductory biology course they take as sophomores. I designed the course to be intense—we met daily for three weeks—and rigorous, but my priority was to help students enjoy the fundamentals of biology. The students who participate in the Bio Boot Camp come from Anglo, Latino/a, African, Asian and Afghani cultures, and the majority are female.

Growing up overseas, I know what it feels like to find oneself outside the dominant culture. In science the widespread image of a scientist is: an older, white male who works in a lab. This pervasive image may be discouraging for students who do not “fit in” based on their own identities. One of my goals as a biology instructor is to make sure that my students are exposed to the variety of ways that one may be a scientist. To accomplish this goal, my BUSP students met with several scientists from diverse backgrounds who did not fit the scientist stereotype. For example, we visited the UC ABC Botanical Conservatory and met with the Conservatory director, Mr. X. As a former BUSP graduate Mr. X exemplified a successful alternative career as a plant biologist (no lab coat required!). The field trip offered a memorable hands-on experience for students who had little previous practice with plants. On course evaluations many students indicated that this field trip was a highlight for them. Additionally, one student asked to volunteer with Mr. X at the Conservatory.

The BUSP students were of diverse ethnicities but also differed in numerous other ways. I wanted to make sure that during Bio Boot Camp each student had an opportunity to explore areas of science that were personally relevant to them. As I discussed in my Statement of Teaching Philosophy, I gave my students a range of assignment choices to let them identify and explore their own interests. Some students chose to write children’s books about photosynthesis and biodiversity. Others interviewed their parents, many of whom had immigrated to the United States, in order to learn more about the ecology of their ancestral homes. In class, the students explained and discussed their assignment choices, and they peer-reviewed rough drafts. The cross cultural exposure was subtle, but by working together my students learned about one another and also learned about different biological topics.

My awareness and appreciation of cross cultural understanding grows continually. I work to maintain my fluency in Spanish because practicing a second language helps me appreciate the challenge faced by students who are simultaneously learning English and biology. As a mentor and a teacher I try to carefully listen to my students. I strive to set aside my own perceptions of what biological concepts are “easy” or “hard” to understand because these assumptions are based on my cultural and educational background, not that of my students. Finally, I am inspired when my students learn about biology in ways that are meaningful to them. As such, I strive to introduce them to scientists from an array of backgrounds, and support students as they shape their own identities as scientists.

**Sample**

In my research at a local high school, some of my participants indicated to me that they wished to study to be doctors when they grow up. These girls have recently emigrated from Pakistan with their families to escape a life of violence and oppression. Now that they live in the U.S., and have access to education and a stable life, their teachers and I agree that there is no reason why they won’t fulfill their dreams. My research focuses on immigrant learners, in particular, and through my research I have worked with ESL high school students from a variety of backgrounds studying their access to higher education, literacy development, and socialization development. I recognize that these students will graduate from high school still needing English language support and help socializing into the U.S. college environment.

At UC Davis, where I work and study, I teach a variety of students who also have dreams of pursuing a rewarding career. My students may be American-born or foreign-born, upper class or lower class, and/or be diverse in other ways, but they all deserve my full attention and support in the brief time they will be in my classroom. I help my students achieve their dreams by giving them a voice in their own learning and by presenting material from a variety of viewpoints to appeal to as many students as possible. One example is when I teach paragraph structure in an ESL writing course using a series of staged tasks: I first lecture on the subject, then have them write basic paragraphs for peer review based on certain criteria, have them write short research-based reports in a computer lab in which they follow guidelines for writing good paragraphs, and finally present these reports orally to class. Other activities I have employed include having students create and perform dialogs to the class, allowing students to choose their own topics for essays, using various types of media to present material (videos, music, the Internet, etc.), assessing students in a variety of ways (quizzes, multiple choice exams, in-class and out-of-class essays, class participation, etc.), and having students teach each other material with guidance from me. Additionally, no matter the student, everyone seems to enjoy playing educational games. For example, I often play Jeopardy with my students and offer rewards of snacks and/or extra credit to the winning team. Often I have the students take part in developing the questions and in judging the other team’s responses. Regardless of the activity, I make sure as many students as possible have contributed in some way. Furthermore, my teaching style allows me to personally check in with many (if not all) students throughout the class period to confirm their understanding of the material.

During the 2011-2012 school year, I am a part of Professors for the Future, a professional development fellowship program in which graduate and postdoctoral students address issues in academia and beyond faced by graduate and postdoctoral students. Additionally, each fellow must produce a project that benefits graduate students at UC Davis in some way. My project is a workshop series addressing issues of diversity in the classroom titled “Engaging the English Language Learner in the Classroom.” Topics that participants and I will discuss include how to develop effective writing assignments and give appropriate feedback to a diverse student population, how to address cultural differences in the classroom through course material, how to help ESL students integrate into the college classroom, and how to embrace all students’ diversity and to recognize that not all students may understand American social and cultural norms.

My teaching and research experience has fully prepared me to work with a variety of students at UCSD Extension’s English Language Institute. My teaching techniques appeal to students from many backgrounds and successfully help students learn English. Furthermore, my research and teaching experiences have given me a greater awareness of the types of students one may face at any university. Finally, I am prepared to share and collaborate with other instructors (who may be just as diverse as the students) to help them better reach all students.

**Sample**

(An example of a cover letter that incorporates diversity-related elements)

Dear Head of Department,

I am applying for a position as an adjunct professor of mathematics at ABC College. I have been working as a tutor, teaching assistant, and instructor for 10 years, and am eager to continue the challenge of teaching my own courses. I am available to teach part-time starting in Summer 2010.

I believe that the understanding of math is not beyond anyone’s grasp. The basics of mathematical logic and reasoning are ubiquitous in everyday experiences, and my goal in teaching is to emphasize the interrelationships of these with formal mathematics. Above all, math is problem solving. I have a natural aptitude for teaching, and for explaining concepts at an accessible level. I have been told by my students that they appreciate my illumination of topics with which they previously had difficulty, as well as my patience and enthusiasm.

It is my hope to inspire some students to pursue more higher-level math courses, but in general to have as many as possible walk away with the confidence that they can succeed, instead of the feeling that they somehow are inherently unable to think through problems logically. I have experience working with students from a variety of backgrounds, and with a range of goals and needs. I find that each student brings his/her own perspective to the class, and that the group as a whole benefits from the diversity. I also strive to connect what often seem to be abstract and isolated concepts to problems that students have encountered before in more concrete situations. I see myself as more of a facilitator of learning, than a lecturer.

My experience as a Teaching Assistant and a tutor at UC-ZZZ and at [a small women’s liberal arts college], as well as my role as an instructor at YYY Community College and [R1 University], has taught me that the understanding of mathematical concepts is not beyond anyone. Math should not be taught as a class where students simply take notes, solve repetitive problems, and memorize material for an exam. Rather, math should be a discussion, a dialogue about concepts and ideas. I prefer to use the term “solution,” as the thought process and logical progression of steps is as, if not more, important than the “answer.” All paths, efficient or not, must be encouraged in order for students to build their confidence and intuition.

Looking at your course catalog, I am qualified to teach all of the courses listed in your catalog. I am particularly interested in Introduction to Mathematical Ideas (300) and Math Discovery (310), as these are foundational courses for an understanding of mathematics that extends beyond the rote memorization that many students experience in lower level courses. At YYY College, I tried to incorporate these ideas into my Discrete Math class and to give my students an idea of what mathematics is and what mathematicians actually do.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any further questions, I would be happy to answer them.