

Advancing Science through Diversity and Inclusion in the Editorial Process: A Case Study

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Science clearly benefits from diversity and inclusion. Still, women and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds within the United States are underrepresented across the scientific spectrum, including in academic, editorial, and scientific leadership positions. This case study details how the editors of one journal, *The Clinical Neuropsychologist (TCN)*, created and implemented a strategic plan to increase diversity and inclusion on its editorial board, among ad hoc reviewers, and in manuscript submissions. The outcomes to date, future directions, and a call to action to other scientific journals and publishers to actively foster diversity and inclusion are discussed.

Introduction

In 2015, Dr Yana Suchy became the Editor-in-Chief of one of the oldest journals in the field of neuropsychology, *The Clinical Neuropsychologist (TCN)*. *The Clinical Neuropsychologist* was established in 1987, second only to *The Journal of Clinical Neuropsychology* (founded in 1979, currently known as the *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*). Thus, it is noteworthy that Suchy was the first female Editor-in-Chief of this journal, joining only a small handful of women who served as editors over the past 30 years of all English-language neuropsychology journals.

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Indeed, although the field of clinical neuropsychology is about 55% female,¹ in 2016, women comprised fewer than 20% of editors of 15 prominent English-language neuropsychology journals and only about 30% of associate and consulting editors.²

When she first took over the journal, Suchy had many initiatives in mind, and an increase in representation of women and individuals from diverse backgrounds on the editorial board was one of them. To give credit where credit is due, Suchy was inspired by another woman, Dr Kathleen Haaland, who in her role as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* greatly increased the representation of women on that publication's editorial board. However, Suchy's vision went beyond solely increasing the number of women on the board. Specifically, she launched a well-informed, scientifically based, and comprehensive strategic program to (1) expand the journal content with a particular focus on encouraging the submission of manuscripts that dealt with culture, gender, and diversity; (2) improve scientific reporting practices in general and with respect to gender and culture in particular; and, last but not least, (3) inclusion and diversification of the editorial board.

With these goals in mind, Suchy was well aware that culture and gender both constituted fields of science in their own right and that scholars and advocates within neuropsychology devoted their scientific and professional careers to such topics. Additionally, as any editor is well aware, the job of processing manuscripts and assigning them to issues is complex and time consuming enough that little time is left for special initiatives. Wanting to do justice to her vision, Suchy decided that the best way to reach her goals was to delegate their implementation to experts in the field. To that end, she created a journal department that specifically focused on culture, gender, and diversity (Culture and Gender in Neuropsychology Department [CGND]) and appointed recognized and well-respected experts in the field as editors.

The collaboration between the editor-in-chief and the CGND has begun to show concrete outcomes. By consulting with the CGND editors, Suchy was able to identify

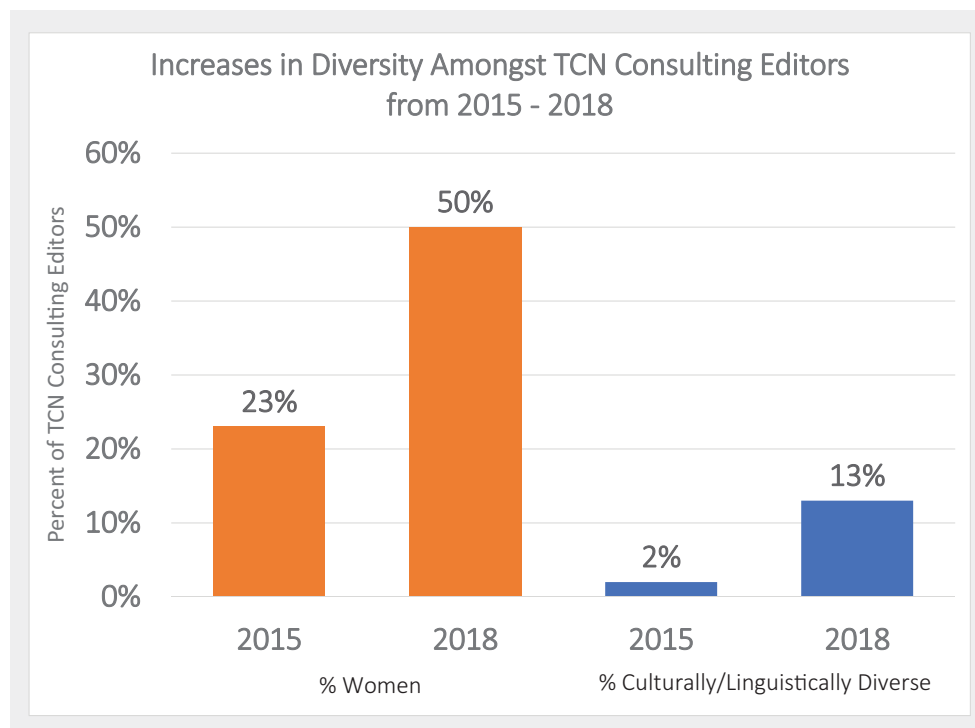


Figure 1. Prevalence of consulting editors on *The Clinical Neuropsychologist (TCN)* editorial board from 2015–2018.

individuals within the field who would be appropriate candidates for the *TCN* editorial board, thereby increasing its gender equality and diversity. Consequently, although in 2015, only 23% of *TCN* consulting editors were women and only about 2% were individuals from diverse backgrounds, by 2018, these numbers increased to 50% and 13%, respectively (Figure 1). These accomplishments have been recognized by the *TCN* publisher (Taylor & Francis), and in 2017, Suchy was invited to present a poster about the journal's efforts at the publisher's yearly "Scholarly Summit" in Washington, DC. Furthermore, in 2018, *TCN* published its first special issue on gender and career advancement in clinical neuropsychology (volume 32, issue 2). These accomplishments are encouraging, yet we are well aware that more can be achieved over time. The remainder of this article outlines the development of the CGND and its successes to date as well as additional planned steps and goals to support and further enhance the culture and gender initiatives initially envisioned by Suchy.

The Culture and Gender in Neuropsychology Department Overview

The CGND was initially conceived in 2016. Today, it is led by two department editors, Drs Monica Rivera Mindt and Robin Hillsabeck, who are experts in cultural and gender topics,

respectively, in neuropsychology. The mission of the CGND is to advance science, empirically based practice, editorial leadership, and professional development as they relate to culture and gender and to provide a safe environment and a transparent process for promoting discussions of diversity and inclusion and how they intersect within the field. In terms of process, the CGND editors work closely together in service of the department's missions. Moreover, they typically meet with the editor-in-chief on a bi-annual basis to review progress and coordinate future initiatives and communicate regularly between in-person meetings.

Ongoing Initiatives and Outcomes

To advance science and empirically based practice, the CGND prioritizes research that is inclusive and demographically representative of the populations being studied to help neuropsychologists better understand how culture and gender affect disease courses and progressions on the one hand, and neuropsychological services on the other. To this end, the CGND's first (and ongoing) strategic initiative was diversifying the journal's content to make it more representative and inclusive in two ways: (1) preparing special issues on topics pertaining to culture or gender or both and (2) soliciting articles for regular journal issues on culture- and gender-related themes. As noted earlier, *TCN* published its first special issue on gender and career

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advancement in clinical neuropsychology in 2018. This special issue included articles addressing the gender pay gap, gender differences in professional identity and career satisfaction, the lack of women in leadership positions, and potential reasons for the leadership disparity.³ *TCN* is also slated to publish a special issue on normative data for a comprehensive battery of neuropsychological tests for Spanish speakers. An example of diversification of journal content can be found in *TCN*'s final issue of 2018 (volume 32, issue 8), which features 3 articles that provide scientifically driven, practical guidance for conducting neuropsychological evaluations with culturally diverse individuals, including transgender adults and ethnic-minority populations in Western Europe.

To advance editorial leadership, the CGND's second ongoing strategic initiative is to provide editorials on gender, cultural, and linguistic diversity. This is important because a key factor for initiating and sustaining editorial and scientific change is clearly communicating and contextualizing the relevant issues to the field. The CGND editors both contribute to these articles and solicit them from leaders in the field. The inaugural CGND editorial⁴ focused on the development of the CGND and highlighted this innovative approach to diversifying science and scientific publication.

To advance professional development, the CGND's third strategic initiative was to increase the representation of editors and reviewers from diverse backgrounds and to ensure that all reviewers had the resources and training needed to effectively evaluate diversity and inclusion when evaluating manuscripts. Suchy first asked the CGND editors to identify scholars in the field from diverse backgrounds (gender, culture, linguistics) who could potentially serve on the editorial board. Rivera Mindt and Hilsabeck contacted their networks, surveyed the field, and provided Suchy with a list of possible candidates. Suchy further screened all candidates (ie, investigated their publication records and whether they had been invited and agreed to review for *TCN* in the past). Individuals who appeared to be a good fit for *TCN* were then invited to serve on the editorial board. As a result of these efforts and as cited earlier in Figure 1, over the last 3 years, *TCN*'s editorial board grew two-fold in its representation of women and six-fold in its representation of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. This initiative is ongoing, and the CGND editors continue to actively work with Suchy toward their editorial goal.

Regarding editorial resources for authors and reviewers, *TCN* has developed a "Publication Guidelines Checklist" for authors and reviewers to facilitate the inclusion of important demographic and cultural information that should be routinely reported in manuscripts. The CGND editors also serve as a resource for questions and consultations from editors, reviewers, and authors on gender and culture.

An equally important part of CGND's mission is to provide a safe environment for the discussion of gender and diversity in a transparent fashion. In 2017, Hilsabeck participated in two workshops at national conferences^{5,6} on gender disparities in neuropsychology and strategies to address them; in September 2018, Rivera Mindt presented the goals, missions, and activities of the CGND to the Council of Science Editors.⁷ The CGND also engages in discussions on social media (eg, Twitter, Facebook) and welcomes email contact.

Future CGND initiatives

The CGND is currently working on 3 important new Initiatives. First, in partnership with Taylor & Francis, CGND is developing methods to assess *TCN*'s efforts to diversify the journal's contributors and content. Evaluating progress is important in guiding future strategic efforts to further advance diversity and inclusion. In this effort, we are identifying appropriate metrics and taking care to keep all data aggregated and anonymous. Second, CGND is preparing a survey to better understand the knowledge and training needs of *TCN* editors, reviewers, and authors concerning culture and gender topics pertinent to neuropsychological science. Based on the survey findings, CGND will develop a proposal for educating and training *TCN* constituents using multiple platforms (eg, online training resources, Webinars, individual consultation). Third, CGND is developing a reviewer mentorship program for students and individuals from diverse backgrounds to help them learn how to assess manuscripts and remain involved in the editorial process over time. In the future, the CGND plans to provide training materials on the *TCN* Web site to address subjects such as reducing implicit bias.

Recommendations

The ongoing and future initiatives detailed in this case study can serve as recommendations for concrete strategies that editors can use to advance diversity and inclusion in their own journals. In addition, given the successful outcomes that *TCN* has already achieved in terms of diversifying its editorial board, here are specific recommendations to help others diversify their editorial boards:

- 1. Reach Out:** Actively identify people who are diversity scholars or engaged professionally in advocating diversity and ask them for the names of others they know personally or know of who have diverse backgrounds. Then research and communicate with the scholars to find those who would be a good fit for your board.
- 2. Keep At It:** Practice sustained commitment to diversity to obtain serious "buy-in" from individuals of all backgrounds. This is a long-standing challenge that will require time and active efforts to address.

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3. Leverage Your Resources: Take advantage of educational opportunities regarding diversity. The rapidly changing landscape means that it is easy to inadvertently say or do something that will end up being counterproductive to your goal.

Conclusions

Science benefits from diversity and inclusion.^{8,9} A core path toward this goal is to diversify the editorial process, and the aim of our discussion was to share how one journal is systematically pursuing this goal. Over the last 3 years, *TCN* has increased diversification and inclusion through the dedicated vision and leadership of *TCN*'s Editor-in-Chief, Dr Suchy, the work of *TCN*'s CGND, and partnership with *TCN*'s publisher, Taylor & Francis. Together, these efforts have resulted in the diversification of journal content and the *TCN* editorial board, as well as initiatives to promote increased knowledge and understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion to *TCN*'s constituency and among the broader field of neuropsychology. Based on the results of *TCN*'s efforts over this relatively short time frame, it is clear that diversification and inclusion of the editorial process are tangible and achievable goals. We present this case study as a call to action for other journals and publishers to follow suit and collectively diversify science.

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Resource Nook

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