

Title: From Teaching to Participatory Knowledge Co-Creation: Cellphilming as a Humanising and Transformative Pedagogy in Teacher Education

Sub-theme: Innovative and Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching

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Presenter: *Dr Veronica Msutwana, Nelson Mandela University*

Abstract

Increased focus on technology-enabled learning experiences in higher education calls for critical reflection about ways in which such technologies could enhance the relevance of learning experiences for students as well as contribute to making these experiences more humanising. This paper reflects on cellphilming, one of the forms of digital pedagogy as a tool for participatory, transformative and humanising pedagogy within an African university context where many students face complex social situations often left marginalised by the prescribed curriculum.

The term cellphilming was coined by Dockney and Tomaselli (2009) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to describe the creation of short video clips using the mobile phone as a means of participating socially and dialoguing. Grounding the discussion in the fields of participatory visual research, humanising pedagogy, and transformative learning, this paper explores how cellphilming as a digital learning approach has been used in Life Skills teacher training as a way of moving away from a content-dominated curriculum that seemed irrelevant and disconnected from students' lived realities. Such an attempt has become necessary since the existing teaching practices seem not to be engaging, relevant or meaningful enough. There exists a need to give students more agency in their learning process by letting them become co-producers of knowledge about their lived realities through reflecting on educational and social issues.

Cellphilming is not merely technology-enhanced learning; rather it represents a transformative pedagogy aimed at establishing epistemic justice in the learning process. The experience of integrating cellphilming into Life Skills teacher education, or any other subject, highlights several important lessons for higher education lecturers. Firstly, meaningful learning is more likely to occur when teaching begins with students' lived realities, identities and community experiences rather than relying

solely on prescribed curriculum content. Secondly, technology is most powerful when it is used to amplify student voice and participation rather than merely deliver information. Thirdly, participatory pedagogies encourage students to move from being passive consumers of knowledge to active co-creators of knowledge, fostering greater ownership, engagement and critical reflection. The process also demonstrates that humanising education requires lecturers to be willing to share authority, embrace uncertainty and learn alongside students. Finally, transformation is not limited to students; lecturers themselves can experience significant pedagogical growth as they shift from traditional knowledge transmission towards collaborative and socially responsive approaches to learning and teaching.

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