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Title: ESTABLISHING A TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING JOURNEY IN PHYSIOLOGY FOR ACTIVE CITIZENRY: IMPLEMENTING A HUMANIZED APPROACH IN UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES

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ESTABLISHING A TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING JOURNEY IN PHYSIOLOGY FOR ACTIVE CITIZENRY: IMPLEMENTING A HUMANIZED APPROACH IN UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES

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Transformative learning approaches challenge and change our existing frames of reference, attitudes, beliefs and response towards the world. Collaborative learning exercises enhance social relationships, increase knowledge, personalize large classes and improve assessment outcomes. Moreover, humanizing pedagogies incorporate a critical consciousness of societal inequality and involve a praxis of transformation and action. Therefore, a teaching and learning culture which cultivates humanized, transformative, and critical qualities early in the academic journey is essential for developing well-rounded, competent graduates who are active citizens. This study aimed to establish a transformative learning journey for active citizenry using a humanized approach in undergraduate Physiology (nursing, physiotherapy, dietetics) at Stellenbosch University's medical school. This included icebreaker conversations, reflective learning, using web applications for interactive learning and collaboration, and a collaborative groupwork project, focusing on physiology in everyday life and also presented to high school learners. Student perceptions of a humanizing pedagogy were obtained using a mixed methods study, following ethics approval. Responses noted the benefits of a humanized approach and collaboration for learning and future patient care. Students valued an inclusive, respectful environment, while peer interaction, lecturer behaviour, teaching style and content were noted as key factors contributing to learning. This suggests that lecturers should be mindful of how content is delivered, as well as their attitudes. Creating a respectful, inclusive and stimulating learning environment with opportunities for students to learn more about each other and communities, is crucial in promoting a transformed, humanized learning journey that facilitates knowledge co-creation, collaboration and foster active citizenry.