

# TRANSFORMING THE CLINICAL BACTERIOLOGY CLASSROOM

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## ABSTRACT

Traditional microbiology teaching is based on content-driven presentations. To transform how students engage with microbiology, a teaching approach was devised to motivate students and support deeper learning. By creating interactive and supportive atmospheres in both "lectorials" (lecture-tutorial hybrids) and in the laboratory, using higher-order learning activities, students are encouraged to actively engage, thereby influencing their learning. Multiple opportunities are provided for students to apply principles flexibly according to a given situation or context, to adapt methods of inquiry strategically, to go beyond mechanical application of formulaic approaches, and to self-appraise their own thinking and problem solving. The novel approach of commencing (dry) experimental work during lectorials with subsequent follow-up in the wet lab encourages students to better appreciate the critical linkages between theory and practice. Quantitative and qualitative data generated by multiple student evaluations confirm that this approach strongly influences student learning and engagement in the clinical bacteriology classroom. This provides evidence that this teaching practice assists students to learn, and achieve the standards and benchmarks expected at this undergraduate level. Aspects of this model could also be translated to teaching contexts other than microbiology.

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