HUMANIZING LEARNING: RECLAIMING CONNECTION IN CLASSROOMS

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A very warm welcome

Welcome to our co-creation room

Objectives

Define the core principles of humanizing learning and their relevance and application

Reflect on their own professional identity and well-being to identify personal sources of vitality and engagement that can directly enhance teaching practice.

Agree on one practical, actionable strategy to foster a more inclusive, caring, and connected classroom environment that sees and values the *whole student*.
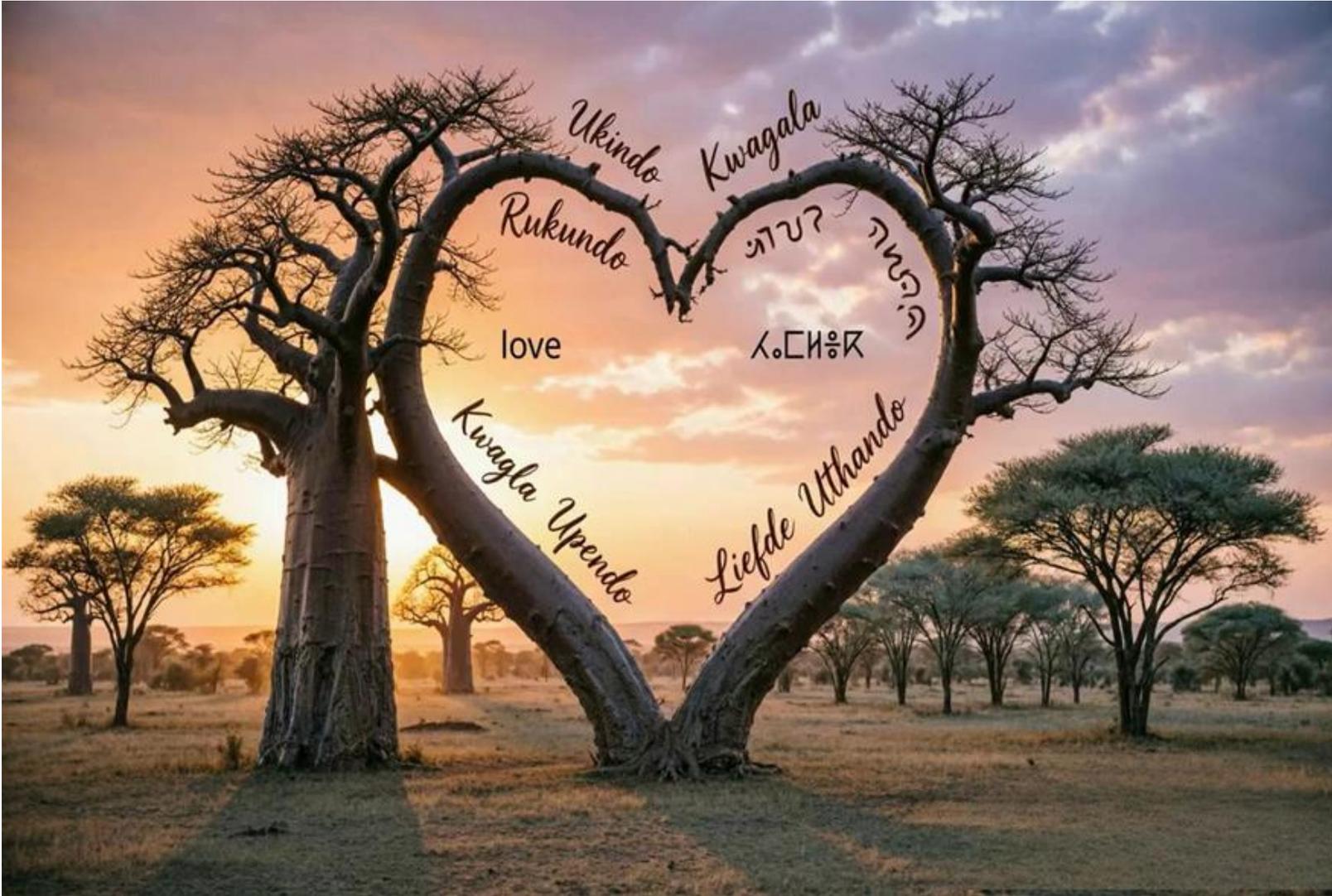
Objectives

Pedagogies of Care, Connection and Belonging: Humanizing Education through Dialogue

and Generosity.

a) Trauma-Informed Pedagogy – Safety and resilience

b) Restorative Pedagogy- Accountability

c) Compassionate Pedagogy – Empathy

d) Place based pedagogy - Connection

What is to humanize learning?

Source: Africa Voices

What is to humanize learning?

- It's about creating learning spaces (whether in a modern lecture hall, Virtual, etc) where every student feels seen and supported to succeed as their whole self. Life-affirming ways of co-creating and living together.
- Not just the most active students

- Not the dominant

- Even the shy ones

- It is intentional

What is to humanize learning?

- Our learners have unique identities, life experiences, and challenges.

- Above the list of students we have for our classes

- How do we then focus on creating positive, caring connections between instructors and students to build an inclusive, equitable, and supportive learning environment that fosters personal agency, well-being, and academic success?

What is to humanize learning?

" When you teach online, it is easy to relate to your students simply as names on a screen. But your students are much more than that. They are capable, resilient humans who bring an basket of perspectives and knowledge to your class. They also bring life experiences"

Quote: Source unknown

What is to humanize learning?

CONNECT FIRST, THEN TEACH

How do we do it?

Sometimes classes are too large?

Yes there is a way to do it

Connecting..

Let's share our experiences, how do you connect with your students? Your first lesson, how does it look like?

I will also share with you my experiences

Connecting..

1. First lesson
2. Expectations
3. Assuring them it is a safe learning space
4. Use mentee for large classes
5. Ask them how the course they are taking connects to their day to day experiences, expectations in the labour market and even to the challenges their societies face?
6. You are giving them hope and showing them you care.
7. Yellow stickers

Starting point….

1. First a reflection of us as lecturers

2. We are human too

3. The posture we take matters

4. Remembers learners see you through the lens of their future. A perfect future for that matter.

Discussion – Break out rooms

1. What makes you feel alive as a lecturer?
2. When was the last time you truly felt that sense of aliveness, engagement, and purpose in your role as a lecturer?

3. What were you doing?

4. Where were you?

5. Is it possible to do more of what makes you feel alive? If yes, what will you do moving forward to stay alive as a lecturer? Because your students need you in your most alive form.

Let's bring our reflections back to our shared practice. We pick emerging themes

Sharing our reflections to co-create authentic belonging and activate potential ourselves

I will capture as we share so the we pick emerging trends.

a)   ………………….
b)   ………………….
c)   ………………….
d)   ………………….
e)   …………………

Students are looking for trust

Source: Africa Voices

As learning is taking place ...

❖ Am I seen and heard?

❖ Is the teacher listening with an open heart, open mind and open will?

❖ Simply put... Students do not only need lessons — they need someone who sees them, protects their dreams, and believes in their capacity to rise.

Current learning system

- ❖ Do they look at learning Systems as Social Architects. Creating the future they want as learners
- ❖ Colonial vs decolonial & humanising learning
- ❖ Critical thinking & agency vs outcome-driven schooling?
- ❖ Community, collaboration & knowledge exchange
- ❖ Political & policy influences on education
- ❖ Education, identity & moral formation
- ❖ *Urgency to rethink & redesign learning systems (part of what we are doing today*

Current learning system

❖ Exam-centred & standardized learning

❖ Theory–practice disconnect

❖ Neglect of socio-emotional & life skills

❖ Outdated paradigms

❖ Conflict & fragile contexts

❖ Loss of purpose of education: why are UG students dropping to do content creation? Can we help them to monetize each course?

Practical Steps

❖ Communities of Inquiry to share ideas per school or per department
❖ Teaching squares
❖ Co-creating learning activities per cohort
❖ Working with the community: make assignment authentic (AI)
❖ Pedagogy of care and Social Presence
❖ Designing learning experiences where students collaboratively create and improve ideas of value to their community (share Maseno Univ ex)
❖ Foster a welcoming atmosphere (share my experience)

Practical Steps

❖ Foster a welcoming atmosphere (share my experience)

❖ Leverage technology creatively: Use tools for personal, interactive feedback (e.g., video feedback) rather than just automated

❖ Valuing the unique cultural, social, and academic backgrounds that students bring to the classroom and focusing on student voice in learning

❖ Finally, Reflection – what worked, where should we improve

Note from Africa Voices....

- The 21st century has been marked by a crisis of care and belonging.

- Despite our capacity to connect virtually, we find ourselves living in an age of isolation.
- As threats to our planet multiply, belonging enables us to deeply engage with each other, and navigate the complexity we encounter from a place of greater internal stability
- An urgent need for new narratives and deeper connections through care and belonging

So...

❖Connect

❖Co-create

❖Care

Avocado banana Almonds Milk
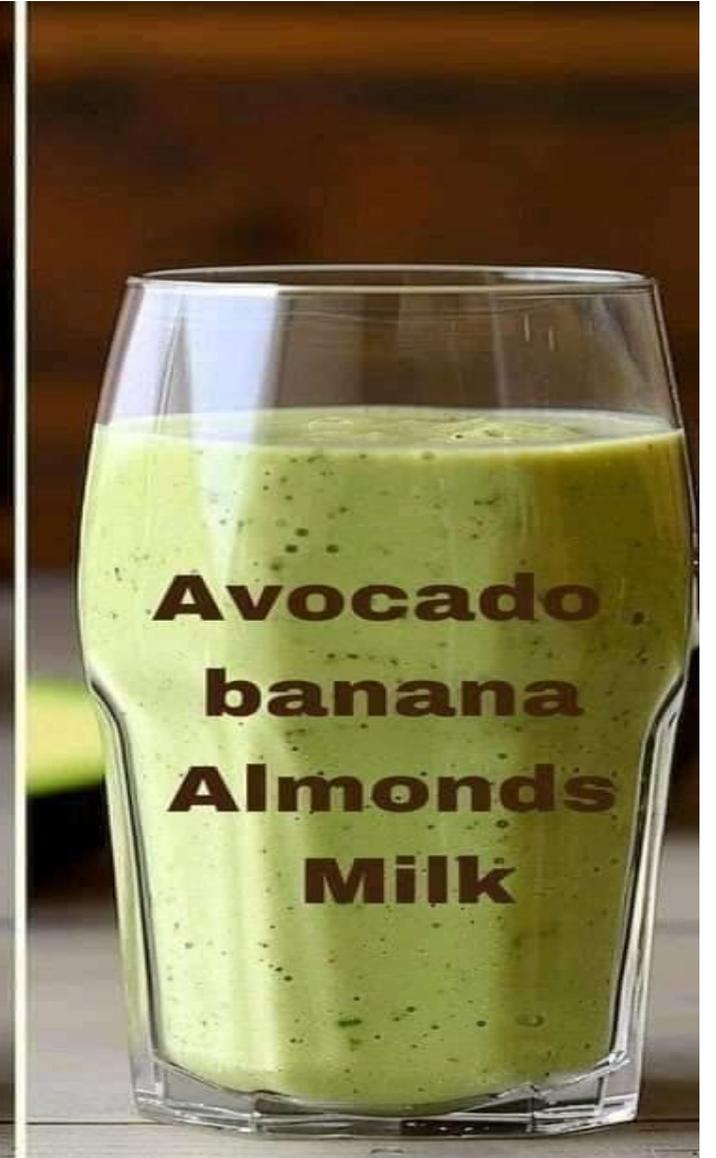
Conclusion

❖ Humanizing learning can positively transform student experiences, improve the culture of academic institutions, and reverberate in our broader communities as well.

❖ Fosters curiosity, collaboration, and continuous idea improvement

UNESCO: the new social contract in education