



# EDUCATION THROUGH THE LENS OF EQUITY: TRANSFORMING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

VIBHUTI ARYA<sup>1</sup> AND DAVID STEEB<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH SCIENCES, NY, USA

<sup>2</sup>UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ESHELMAN SCHOOL OF PHARMACY, NC, USA

**OBJECTIVE:** Using the theory of transformative learning, students and faculty both engage in dialogue to better understand social determinants of health and foster a space to unpack their own experiences and implicit biases.

**DESIGN:** Using Mezirow's principles of transformative learning, PharmD students are asked to engage in critical self-reflection while also examining public health programs and policies through the lens of equity. A mixed-modal approach, including walking tours, semi-structured discussions, and guided assignments are used as tools to aid in the students' self-reflection.

**RESULTS:** Students were able to understand systemic oppression by critically reflecting on the negative health impacts experienced by patients. This understanding helps students identify ways to mitigate the negative health outcomes on their patients. PharmD, law, and medical students will now engage in a newly formed health equity teaching collaborative to explore the intersection of legal and health matters, such as mass incarceration and the ethics of global immersion. Through this, students will be able to engage in a collaborative process to explore innovative solutions and ideas to improve health equity.

**CONCLUSION:** The theory of transformative learning can be used to help students transition from cursory self-reflection to higher self-awareness and individual impact. We plan to survey students from this cohort one year post-graduation to assess impact of their experience on their practice, and further utilize this collaborative teaching approach to inform new partnerships.

