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Philosophy of societal impacts for nanotechnology: a pedagogical approach

ABSTRACT. Methods for teaching the societal impacts of high technology are discussed in terms of the learning outcomes delivered to students and the approach taken by students to reach the learning outcomes. Clear relationships between the effort undertaken by students in completing a task and the manner in which the task contributes to the final grade of the qualification are shown. The manner in which the material is delivered is also investigated, and it is shown that peer review and essay-style examination questions have produced a shift in the thought processes of the students commensurate with the intended learning outcomes of the teaching exercise. It is also acknowledged that increased pressure from external sources may make the teaching of such material easier: cohorts of students are becoming more tuned to the concerns of society as a whole.

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