



**SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH EDUCATIONALISTS CENTRAL REGION
NEWSLETTER**

May 2015

**Opinions, views and comment expressed by contributors are not necessary the official opinion of
SAAHE.**

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I. MESSAGE FROM SAAHE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE

Dear Friends and Colleagues in Health Sciences Education.

The onset of the cooler temperatures prompted a quick look at the to-do list for SAAHE and as usual the newsletter were neglected too long. But regardless this neglect SAAHE Central Branch is hard at work to create a local and regional network space where health educators and practitioners are able to discuss trends, challenges and solutions that our specific teaching and service environments presents. The academic activities presented through the year are sponsored by SAAHE Central Branch and we invite you to attend these activities to interact with colleagues and contribute to discussion.

The executive team of SAAHE Central Branch would like to thank the management of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Free State and the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, Central University of Technology for their support towards the Central Branch of SAAHE.

Alwyn Hugo
Vice Chair, SAAHE Central

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II. INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS; Academic Activity 11th March 2015

Imagine having an opportunity to create the ideal circumstances for you to learn. A learning environment in which, as Sir Ken Robinson (2010) explains, your senses are operating at their peak; you're present in the current moment; you're resonating with excitement of the experience; where you're fully alive. What would your learning environment be like?

If you were to ask your colleagues or students, however, what they would prefer, it is quite likely that their learning needs would be entirely different. The fact of the matter is that we, as educators, may well be doing the best we can under the present circumstances to create an optimal learning environment to suit our own preferences.

University campuses across the world are becoming increasingly diverse and we are challenged to provide high-quality education and ensure academic success for all our students (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh and Whitt 2010:ix). We are urged to respond actively and effectively to the complexity brought to our classrooms by the representation of various heritage groups, personalities, learning styles, (dis)abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, knowledge systems and fields of interest, to name but a few (Brookfield & Preskill 2005:124; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski 2009:11-12; Kolb & Kolb, 2005:195;

Ntombela 2013:484). Each of these factors has a significant effect on our ways of making meaning. Some students may choose to work quietly and on their own, whilst others enjoy engaging in discussion with one another. Furthermore, in a diverse learning environment, the language spoken in class, as well as the language of the discipline is often foreign to a large proportion of students. Here, collaborative learning activities are most helpful to engage students in the discourse of the discipline thus enhancing their expressive language skills and academic language proficiency (Cummins, 2009: 22-23; van Jaarsveldt and Joubert 2015:19). Together with that, a sense of community, of belonging, will help students to relax and make the most of their learning opportunities.

An inclusive learning environment welcomes diversity in its full sense by integrating various experiences, knowledge and perspectives. Intrinsic motivation is more likely to emerge in an atmosphere of mutual respect where authentic views can be freely exchanged (Ginsberg and Wlodkowski 2009:75) When students and educators alike, feel respected and connected to one another, the integrity of each person is valued and within reason, each person's sense of worth and self-expression are essentially welcomed without fear of threat or blame (Ginsberg and Wlodkowski 2009:34-35; 75). Here, everyone involved can flourish.

Inclusivity is a lifestyle that requires of us to commit to continuous critical self-reflective practice (Ortiz and Patton 2012:12; van Jaarsveldt 2013:8). One of the critical questions I needed to consider was: How do I see *excellence*? I discovered that if excellence is associated with superiority and exclusivity, these will become the values that drive our educational practice (van Jaarsveldt 2011:272). By living such values, the creation of a truly inclusive learning environment will continue eluding us, because they contradict the very essence of inclusivity. Being guided by values or dispositions such as equality, mutuality and humility, however, inclusivity is more probable (Brookfield and Preskill 2005:8-17; van Jaarsveldt 2011:272). We need to consistently evaluate how we are doing and how we can improve what we're doing to enable student learning and their academic success (Whitehead 2008:104). This implies that we need to be willing to give up our way of doing things to be contextually relevant. Then, I believe, we may start succeeding in creating a learning environment in which everybody feels safe, capable and accepted, where we all can thrive.

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Dr. Deidre van Jaarsveldt

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III. CONFERENCE REPORT

Global Addiction Conference 2014

I attended and presented an oral paper at the Global Addiction Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in November 2014. The title of my presentation was; Acetaldehyde production capacity of salivary microflora in alcoholics during early recovery: Results of a preliminary study. Authors: PM van Zyl, G Joubert.

Highlights of the conference

- The conference covered several themes related to drug abuse and the treatment of drug addiction. The first day was mostly spent on discussing drug policies and the influence of these on the population. The discussion was chaired by Prof Dartiu da Silveira (the co-chair of the conference and host). Prominent contributors to this discussion included Dr Luciana Boiteux (Professor in Criminal Law at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) and Prof Sidarta Ribeiro (Professor in Neuroscience and Director of the Brain Institute of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte).
- Dr Boiteux analysed the drug laws and policies and concluded that the state acted in a paternalistic fashion towards drug users, either through criminalizing users or declaring them as patients needing treatment and reintegration into society. Criminalization is problematic because it may introduce measures that are more hazardous to the individual's health than the drug use itself, leads to stigmatization and discrimination, and Human Rights violations. Incarceration is expensive and counterproductive.
- Prof Ribeiro sketched the historical background of prohibition and the schism that was created between the medical and legal status of drugs with the prohibition of cannabis. He described cannabis as being unfairly classified as an addictive drug, while it in fact has lower addiction potential than alcohol and nicotine. He discussed the medicinal effects of cannabis and the effect on neuronal plasticity demonstrated in rats. Prof Ribeiro wants to promote the discussion of the potential benefits that cannabis may hold for society and supports the legalization and regulation of all drugs of abuse.

International drug policy trends were reviewed and the following trends were presented:

- The general movement towards decriminalization and legalization, especially marijuana.
- Harm reduction rather than abstinence-only interventions
- Treatment of addicts within or outside the medical paradigm.

Other highlights in the conference can be clustered under trends in drug use, trends in treatment and medical issues in treatment.

Trends in drug use

- Speakers from Brazil highlighted the growing trend in crack and cocaine use, leading to increased hospitalizations on the one hand (Souza, Brazil), yet on the other hand these drugs users tend to have higher medical needs, but low utilization of services (Dr Marcelo Cruz, Brazil)
- Ms Bianca Blanch (Australia) reported on a benchmarked method for tracking misuse of prescription drugs.
- Mr Elvio Bono (Brazil) presented a profile of drug use among juvenile offenders: Cannabis was used by 72% of juvenile offenders and this was the most prevalent drug of abuse in this population.
- Ms E. Bragiato (Brazil) presented a profile of drug use among women: alcohol>crack,cocaine>cannabis> benzodiazepines > solvents and opioids > stimulants
- Dextrometophan abuse (Daniel Garay (USA)

Trends in medical treatment

- Cannabis use in cocaine addicts for self-induced harm reduction (Ms Ingrid Tartakowsky, Chile)
- Use of psychedelic drugs ayahuasca and ibogaine in treatment of drug dependence (Dr Luís Tófoli, Brazil)
- Opioid agonist substitution in recurrent alcohol use disorder (Dr Albrecht Ulmer, Denmark)
- Nalmefene in dual diagnosis alcoholics (Dr Giovanni Martinotti, Italy)

An absolute highlight here was the lecture on Pharmacological treatments of Alcohol Use Disorder by Prof Icro Maremmani from Italy.

Medical issues in treatment of addictions

- Co-morbidity of psychiatric disorders (Prof Nusa Segrec): higher in persons with family history of suicide, previous suicide attempts and imprisonment
- Low effectiveness of interventions and need for evidence-based interventions (Dr Constance Scharff)

Meaning and Value of the Visit

The conference was definitely different from the previous Global Addiction conferences, even though the main themes were very similar. I think what touched me the most was the urgency of the matter for many of the speakers who live in countries that are under the control of drug cartels. The helplessness of the populations affected. Although I am more traditionally inclined and more conservative than the general thrust of the discussion, I became intensely aware of the tyranny and the oppression that people in these countries are subjected to. It seems as if many of speakers believe the problems in their country will be lessened if the war on drugs is ended. I however doubt whether this will in fact solve anything. I am of the opinion that the war on drugs should be taken to the real promoters of the trade and that it needs a strong simultaneous investment in the development of local populations.

The more scientific part of the conference was the main reason why I attended, however. I am proud that I could present my work to a group of specialists in the field of Addiction research. I am thankful to the organizers for allowing me an oral platform with 20 minutes time allocation and also had fruitful individual discussions with researchers from Denmark, Britain and the USA. I think that my presentation was rather unique in the spectrum of topics at the conference: the organizers put it under the theme of "Alternative approaches and comparisons in alcoholics". The presentation was attended by about 30 people and was followed by a lively discussion. I am especially thankful for the inputs of Prof David Nutt from the UK in this regard.

The discussion enriched my thinking about the project and lead to further investigation into my data on my return to South Africa. An initial draft article that was under consideration by the International journal *Alcohol* for publication at the time was subsequently expanded with additional data analysis. The article was since accepted for publication. Following the encouraging comments of experts at the conference and reviewers of the journal, I intend to expand the original project in the new year.

Dr. Paulina van Zyl
Department Pharmacology
University of the Free State

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IV. SAAHE CENTRAL REGION

Annual report April 2014 to March 2015

I sincerely thank the committee members for a year of dedicated service to the SAAHE community. A special word of thanks to Dr S Kruger who assisted with secretary tasks while Dr D Mtyongwe was on maternity leave. Congratulations with the baby girl who recently turned one year. In 2014 the committee held 6 management meetings and presented 3 academic activities.

1. SAAHE National

1.1 Council meetings

Two council meetings were held, one meeting during the SAAHE Conference hosted by the UKZN region 26 June 2014 and on 03 February 2015 at the Intercontinental Hotel, OR Tambo airport.

Kindly note the following matters:

- N Baird is our web administrator from the Central Region and work on the SAAHE website together with M Rowe.
- The vision and mission document was finalised and the new logo is currently in progress.
- You will receive notice of changes to the constitution to be approved at the council meeting and AGM in September 2015.

1.2 SAAHE distinguished educator award

The criteria for the SAAHE distinguished Educator award was updated. The information will be available on the website (<http://saahe.org.za>). The closing date is 31 May 2015.

1.3 2014 SAAHE National Conference Western Cape

The conference hosted by the Western Cape was successful and well attended. During the conference an annual general meeting was held (27 June 2014).

1.4 2015 National Conference Gauteng

The 2015 SAAHE National Conference is held in collaboration with The Network in Gauteng. Abstract submission closes on 1st of May 2015. Visit the website <http://www.the-networktufh.org/> for more information.

2. SAAHE Central Region

2.1 Financial matters (Prof Gert van Zyl)

The financial statements are supplied as additional document and to be discussed by the treasurer Prof G Van Zyl. The management teams of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State and the

Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences of the Central University of Technology contributes funds annually to SAAHE Central Region. These contributions enable SAAHE Central Region to fund academic activities and sponsor regular symposia for the benefit of regional members.

2.2 Academic portfolio (Dr Lynette van der Merwe)

The following events were held in 2014:

03 February 2014

Clinical reasoning by Proffs Vanessa Burch and Juanita Bezuidenhout

21 May 2014

AGM and Academic activity (Dr L van der Merwe [Smart teaching for fair learning])

12 & 13 September 2014

Ethics and New Learning Symposium with the following speakers; Prof T Verschoor (Social media in medical practice), Prof W Kruger (Ethical dilemmas in student research: an ethics committee perspective), Dr M Labuschagne (Ethics of simulation in teaching), Ms A Welman (Ethical issues in simulation: student safety, confidentiality and debriefing), Ms J Swanepoel (Ethical issues in simulation with paediatric patients) and Mr R Campbell (Patients dying in a simulation: an ethical dilemma or an imperative?)

2.3 Website (Mr Nico Baird)

SAAHE Central Region has a web presence as part of the national web area. Please visit the National web area and follow the link to the Central branch. Newsletters and information specific to the Central region are available and will increase as information is updated. Visit the web site at <http://saahe.org.za/>

2.4 Newsletter (Nico Baird and Alwyn Hugo)

SAAHE distributed two newsletters in 2014. In future all newsletters will be uploaded to the SAAHE website under the Central branch web area. Visit the website at <http://saahe.org.za/>

2.5 Marketing (Ms Jeanette du Plessis)

The invitations for the academic activities were distributed as wide as possible (Faculty of Health and Environmental Science at CUT, Departments of Radiology at Universitas Hospital, MediClinic, Rose Park). Alwyn Hugo assisted with the distribution of the invitations at the UFS. SAAHE committee members appreciate the participation of all who attended SAAHE academic activities in 2014.

3. Conclusion

The SAAHE management committee thank the loyal supporters of events presented in the central region. I also thank the committee members for a year of dedicated efforts to advance the business of SAAHE in the central region.

Prof Hesta Friedrich-Nel
Chairperson SAAHE Central Branch
11 March 2015

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V. SAAHE NEWS

1. SAAHE National Conference 2015

The 2015 SAAHE National conference takes place 12 to 16 September in Gauteng. The conference is hosted in collaboration with the international organisation The Network. Please visit the web site <http://www.thenetworktufh.org/> for all information and abstract submissions.

2. SAAHE Web Presence

The SAAHE web site can be accessed at <http://saahe.org.za/>. The web site has branch specific areas under the link Regional Branches. The newsletters from the Central branch will in future be hosted on this site. Past newsletters will be uploaded as well.

3. Registering as a SAAHE Member

In order to compile a national members database SAAHE National request registration on the web site. Registration is free but it will help to manage a national communication and interest database. Please register at <http://saahe.org.za/register/>

4. SAAHE Distinguished Educator Award

Information on the SAAHE National Council's annual distinguished educator award can be found in the Block link on the national web page. Nominations close on the 31st of May 2015. <http://saahe.org.za/blog/>

5. Academic Activity 27 May 2015



6. Fare Well to one of Central Branch Executives

Nico Baird from the CUT managed the IT portfolio on the Central Branch executive committee for the past two years. Nico is relocating to Gauteng. We wish Nico success in his new venture and hope to see him active in the Northern Branch of SAAHE.

7. Contribute to the SAAHE Central Region Newsletter

All members are invited to present inputs for the SAAHE Central Region newsletter. Contributions may be in the form of an article or a summary of an academic activity. Members may present contributions that were compiled by teams; you do not even have to do it on your own! Contributions may be send to Alwyn Hugo at Gnanaph@ufs.ac.za

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