



Conference Abstract

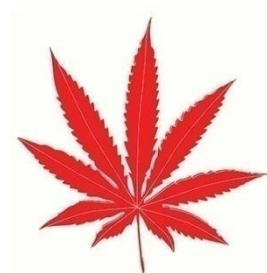
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A Response to COVID-19

International Conference of Pharmaceutical and Medical Sciences

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Faculty of Pharmacy For Girls - Al Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.



Conference Abstract

EMERGING VIRTUAL EDUCATION PLATFORMS AND FOR HEALTH EDUCATION

Mimmie Claudine Watts

African Diaspora Women Summit

ABSTRACT

The emergence of new technologies and the challenges posed to the world by the Covid19 pandemic means academics and students had to move quite quickly from traditional face-to-face, blended, or asynchronous classrooms to almost virtual learning spaces in its entirety. Academics, and in our Case in the State of Victoria, Australia, we had to move to remote /virtual teaching and learning platforms almost entirely. This new paradigm shift presents both opportunities and challenges, though the opportunities in my opinion outweigh the challenges. It presents the opportunity for Universities to redesign their curricula for a global student reach, to expand education frontiers, and to interact, connect, renew, and reinvent education that meets the savvy world of the 21st century. For Africa, this presents an opportunity for a decolonised education curriculum; that might harness the demographic and technological advantages of its youthful population, while at the same time creating collaborative partnerships and opportunities for both learners and academics. My experience of using online teaching virtual platforms have demonstrated the potential that this offers for (higher) education across Africa. It has been twenty years since computers were actively introduced and used in classrooms across the world. The uptake has been modest, while the use for virtual learning has been much slower than initially expected in many parts of the world. A lack of resources has often been cited as the limiting factor. The fear of change coupled with new learnings and upgrades that come with new technologies cannot be overlooked. However, while these new technologies may be considered disruptive, virtual classrooms and innovative technologies should be viewed as a learning enhancing tool. Such a tool utilizes a student centric approach to learning, and why not an Afrocentric curriculum. The academic within such a paradigm becomes more of a facilitator or an expert consultant, rather than the bearer of all knowledge and wisdom.

Corresponding author:
Mimmie Claudine African
Diaspora Women Summit
E: m.labeautenoire@gmail.com

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Speaker's Biography

A/Prof (Dr.) Watts is an experienced leader with a long history in Academia. She is a strategic thinker, advocate, public speaker, Public Health expert and a leader in women's health, gender health and international health with extensive experience serving as a non-Executive Director on Boards. Dr Watts is an Academic at Federation University, Australia, and an associate in the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University, Australia. She was recently recognized with a Multicultural Award for Excellence by the Victorian Multicultural Commission & the Victorian State Government for her service in the Multiculturalism. As an academic at Victoria University for eleven years, she developed and led the Bachelor of Health Science in the College of Health and Biomedicine. She is an Honorary A/Prof in Public Health at Mekelle University in Ethiopia. Her expertise includes women's health, social inclusion, chronic disease prevention and management, health promotion, migrant and refugee health, strategic planning and health policy, curriculum development and teaching research methods. Dr Watts chairs the Australian African Academic Network, and is a Member of the African Science & Innovation Council (ASRIC) with the African Union. She is the convener of the African Diaspora Women Summit.

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