

The CRA's 2022 Distinguished Teacher-Educator: Dr. Stephen Aaron

What do you believe are the qualities of a good educator?

A good educator has the following qualities:

1. Listens to the student and decides what they may need to be better, and is a good coach.
2. Has a good grasp of his/her field, but at a conscious level; has a conceptual framework.
3. Can empathize with the student; knows when they are afraid, frustrated, tired.

From where do you think your passion for medical education stemmed?

My passion for medical education came from having good teachers. Over the years, there has been a change in emphasis from a focus on the teacher, to a focus on the learner. You hear less about "I told them that," to documenting that "they have looked after that." From syllabi to entrustable professional activities (EPAs).

What are some of the highlights and challenges you have experienced thus far in your career?

Highlights include leading the change from a traditional curriculum at the University of Alberta Medical School to a problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum; creating a clinical skills program for medical students; and being involved in building a new medical school and rheumatology program in Nepal.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date?

Getting a phone call from a student or resident who confidently diagnoses or treats a patient using physical exam tools or principles they learned from me.

Can you recall a teacher in your own past who inspired you and directed your own course into education?

Dr. A. M. Edwards (Buzz), who taught me during my first year of clinical clerkship; He cared about students and pa-



tients. He was immensely curious, and he was always having a wonderful time doing this.

More recently, you have been active in advancing arthritis care in Nepal and in First Nations communities. In Nepal you helped initiate the first training program in rheumatology. Can you tell us more about your work in Nepal as well as First Nations communities here in Canada?

In Nepal, they had only two rheumatologists, working at the same public hospital; we put together an entire resident training framework based upon the Royal College standards, recruited two Internal Medicine grads, and they have since graduated.

The clinics in the First Nations communities have been less sustainable; the problems there cannot be

solved simply by moving the standard health care system to the reserve.

It is noted time and again that there is a disparity in access to quality healthcare for First Nations groups. Why does this gap in access continue to exist and what steps must be taken (by government and leaders) to eliminate this gap?

I'm not competent to give a good answer; the literature on health outcomes says that wealthy, well-educated patients do better no matter what disease you talk about. I suspect that unless you address education, poverty, and social inequity, nothing we do within the health care system itself will make a marked difference.

As a respected teacher-educator, what would your advice be to a prospective rheumatologist?

Make sure that you explore the breadth of rheumatology before you subspecialize. I see that many centres have very highly specialized clinics amongst which the rheumatology residents rotate; there is something to be said for being flexible enough to move on short notice from rheumatoid arthritis (RA) to systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) to mechanical joint or tendon disease.

If you weren't a rheumatologist/teacher-educator, what other career path might you have chosen?

I might have been an architect or a mathematician.

If you had an extra hour in the day, how would you spend it?

I would spend more time in the garden.

You are marooned on a desert island, what book would you like to have on hand with you?

If Wikipedia were a book, I'd take that.

Stephen Aaron, MD, FRCPC

Professor,

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WELCOME TO THE RHEUM

Welcome to the following new CRA members:

Razan Al Yaarubi, Toronto, ON

Hafsah Al Azem, Calgary, AB

Fatema Alkhamees, Vancouver, BC

Kawthar Abduldaem Alsulami, Ottawa, ON

Shamma Alzaabi, Vancouver, BC

Jason An, Toronto, ON

Keltie Anderson, Saskatoon, SK

Megan Barber, Calgary, AB

Karen Beattie, Dundas, ON

Michael Buchanan, Prince George, BC

Glynis Byrne, Kingston, ON

Shane Cameron, Winnipeg, MB

Michael Catarino, Montreal, QC

Matthew Chan, Saskatoon, SK

Audrey-Anne Couture, Montreal, QC

Mojtaba Dabaghjamanesh, London, ON

Molly Dushnicky, Toronto, ON

Evelyne Gendron, Quebec, QC

Kaien Gu, Winnipeg, MB

Fares Kalache, Montreal, QC

Wassim Karkache, Ottawa, ON

Alexandra Kobza, Calgary, AB

John Krakovsky, London, ON

Andrew Kwan, Toronto, ON

Timothy Kwok, Markham, ON

Malcolm MacKenzie, Toronto, ON

Greta Mastrangelo, Toronto, ON

Haonan Mi, Thornhill, ON

Dalal Mohammad, Vancouver, BC

Anton Moshynskyy, Saskatoon, SK

Oscar Mwizerwa, Toronto, ON

Tripti P. Papneja, Brampton, ON

Gilda Parastandehchehr, Montreal, QC

Mary Purcell, Halifax, NS

Patricia Remalante Rayco, Toronto, ON

Micol Romano, London, ON

Cassandra Schulz, St. Mary's, ON

Teresa Semalulu, Hamilton, ON

Shreyasi Sharma, Saskatoon, SK

Hao Shen, Montreal, QC

Cheuk Hei (Keith) Tam, Richmond Hill, ON

Milica Tanic, Toronto, ON

Karine Toupin April, Ottawa, ON

Stefanie Wade, Vancouver, BC

Yanzhu Xu, Burnaby, BC

Alan Zhou, Scarborough, ON