

## Four Decades of Food Science and Technology Education in South Africa

Jessy Van Wyk

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Bellville, South Africa

### Abstract

I had the privilege of entering academia in the field of Food Science & Technology (FST) four decades ago. Apart from taking pride in the fact that my chosen occupation is indeed a vocation, the fact that it continues to be a “jobby” remains an endless source of joy. In that context, this presentation will be a structured meander through various aspects of and experiences during the last 40 years as an academic in FST. I will endeavour to contrast the “Then” with the “Now”.

I will cover the growth of FST education in South Africa, notably in terms of numbers of students and graduates and facilities (size and level of sophistication) at some of the universities where FST is offered.

Having shared the pride and elation of 40 cohorts of FST graduates on graduation day, including the milestones of their journey towards that auspicious day, my presentation will include the holy grail to job satisfaction for any teacher, namely the thrill of experiencing a student demonstrating mastery of a learning objective, or, ultimately, Complex Practice.

The changes in Teaching and Learning over this period are considerable, not least of which is the introduction of New Product Development as a teaching tool, but include significant shifts in focus, such as Food Safety, Sustainability, as well as the move towards E-learning and attendant tools, e.g., YouTube videos, Wikis, Chat GPT. Reference will be made to the advances in E-learning analytics as tools to identify At-risk students with a view to proffer interventions. I will also ponder the question: “How does (Post-graduate) research in 2023 compare to that of 1983?”

Four decades ago, “internationalisation” was undreamt of, if not unheard of – today travel abroad, both in the virtual space and the physical world is common, as is exchange of information, students, and staff, as well as other aspects of formal and informal partnerships.

The role of the Food Industry as a partner, as well as that of the Food Bev SETA, TIA, local government agencies and associations, such as SAAFoST will be covered, and homage paid to a few persons who played a pivotal role in my career.

No ramble worthy of the name should be devoid of nuggets of advice. Hence, I will dispense a few such, aimed at present and future academics, as well as students.

I will close with the question: Looking at these developments over four decades, i.e., a period that spans almost half a century, what do we project for the future for FST Education in South Africa?

### PRESENTER BIOGRAPHY: JESSY VAN WYK

Jessy has a PhD in Food Science and is also a Professor of Food Science and Head of Department (Food Science & Technology) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.