

# Educational Alliance Building

By Cynthia Chrisman, MPH, CCH and Linda Morse, MBRCP(H), CCH, RSHom(NA)

**A**s two long-time practitioners in the homeopathic community, we have a proposal to put before you. We have reflected continuously on the survival of homeopathy in the USA. Under the tutelage of Henny Heudens-Mast for nearly twenty years, we have watched homeopathy expand as an institution. Having been concerned about the growth and change needed by our profession, we have wondered how to cultivate a cohesive institutional leadership.

We believe that the maturation of a profession, distinct from the personal growth of the professional, depends on alliances developed through “co-creative” communication—a non-hierarchical framework for leadership and systems change. Before we explore this innovative process, it will be helpful to distinguish between educational versus political alliances.

*A political alliance* creates the collective strength necessary to move a profession as a whole into the policy and law-making arena.

*An educational alliance* formalizes the structure necessary to create and mobilize a cohesive group of professional members into active participation. Our profession may be better served when our educational alliances are more firmly understood and established. We propose to focus on educational alliance-building because our interest lies in acknowledging and supporting the growth of a formalized structure of professional homeopathic education.

We were fortunate to discover a prototype course for professional collaboration and institutional change that can enhance the creation of educational alliances. Otto Scharmer of MIT and his colleagues at the Presencing Institute ([www.presencing.com](http://www.presencing.com)) facilitate this online course. They teach U.Lab, a free international edX course based on Otto Scharmer’s and Katrin Kaufer’s ground breaking book, *Leading From The Emerging Future: From Ego-system To Eco-system Economies*. For them, a structure of awareness and attention determines the pathway along which a situation unfolds. They teach

“presencing” as an emerging movement of deep innovation and renewal in organizations, society and self. The technique of presencing ultimately works through a collective opening of the mind, the heart and the will. U.Lab teaches leadership principles to counteract the fixed idea that an institution has one truth, one agenda or one identity. They assist institutions to emerge into the future through their real potential for change ([www.presencing.com/principles](http://www.presencing.com/principles)).

The growth of our profession into a viable institution in its current stage of development is due to our predecessors’ hard work and dedication. The accreditation awarded to the Council for Homeopathic Certification (CHC) in July 2017 is a notable achievement among many in our educational community. However, without a sustainable system of collaborative leadership (including the standard checks and balances), the number of professional homeopaths will dwindle and our collective power may never gain the traction necessary for survival. The solidarity we establish with each other as professionals requires continual cultivation if we are to deepen our commitment to greater organizational participation and change. We recognize that many of us rely

on our inner circles of mutual support to sustain us as sole practitioners who predominantly work in isolation. But how do we pull together a homeopathic survival kit to cultivate and build alliances?

Long-established health-related professions like ours typically function through three distinct branches of self-governance. These branches form a kind of three-legged stool: higher education, clinical training and professional practice. Taken together, they regulate the ethical and professional activities of trained and qualified professionals in order to ensure the quality of services rendered by them to the public. Every profession attempts to harmonize diverse yet interrelated functions, as we must, too. Successful educational alliance-building between the following three distinct, yet equally important branches necessitates a covenant to collaborate for the sake of the future institution of homeopathy:

## THE TECHNIQUE OF PRESENCING ULTIMATELY WORKS THROUGH A COLLECTIVE OPENING OF THE MIND, THE HEART AND THE WILL

1. The academy—to monitor community-established standards of higher education.
2. The board of examiners—to assess primary education and clinical skills of the professional practitioner through a national standardized exam.
3. The professional associations—to strengthen and advance the education and protection of those certified by a board of examiners.

We have been enrolled in the U.Lab course for the last two fall semesters. During this time, we have followed the course and seen global participation grow to over 50,000 members. We feel the course prototype has enormous potential if it could be applied to educational alliance-building in the homeopathic profession. We are eager to share our insights and those of our homeopathic colleagues who have followed the course and applied the U.Lab co-creative process to professional leadership. This year, a larger number of homeopaths have committed to attend the 2017 fall semester U.Lab course. In the next issue of the *American Homeopath* we will share our findings on how to effect profound institutional change in a detailed article. It will describe our interviews and field notes on how to integrate U.Lab principles with educational alliance-building goals.

We are impressed with the positive results that non-homeopathic communities in Scotland, South America and China have achieved. Our colleagues in the Washington State Homeopathic Association (WAHA) are also integrating the U.Lab process. WAHA board member Patricia Kay, MA, CC, CCH, concurs with us that the U.Lab process parallels homeopathic practice.

Our article in the next issue of the *American Homeopath* will show how “presencing” applies a vocabulary familiar to homeopaths. The method parallels homeopaths’ use of a

remedy. Homeopaths use the simillimum at the minimum dose to respect the capacity of the vital force to correct itself. The U.Lab approach offers participants a reflective learning process to minimize the tensions between resistance to, and capacity for, organizational change.

We hope the U.Lab process will inspire homeopaths to come together on behalf of homeopathic educational alliance-building. In the future, this would ideally be at the national level. Can the profession open up and chart a new path of awareness and increased participation? With this self-clarifying tool, our homeopathic community could overcome challenges and move into the future with positive resolve.

We encourage you to check MIT’s U.Lab website throughout the upcoming year for updates.

U.Lab online community website:  
[www.presencing.com/](http://www.presencing.com/)

To enroll in the free U.Lab edX course: [www.edx.org/course/u-lab-leading-emerging-future-mitx-15-671-1x-0](http://www.edx.org/course/u-lab-leading-emerging-future-mitx-15-671-1x-0)

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