

IACESA NEWS UPDATE

OCTOBER 2013



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COGNITIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

News Update with news of local and international events of interest to our members.

IN THIS ISSUE

A new season for thinking...

- From the President's desk: Estelle Brettenny Pg 1
- Cog Ed Seminar Feedback: *Risk of Professional Burnout & Compassion Fatigue*: Elsefie Wranz Pg 2
- Review: *The Building Resilience Handbook*: Estelle Brettenny Pg 4
- Research Update:
 - *Incorporating De Bono's Thinking Hats into Preschool Education*: Dr Stef Esterhuizen Pg 5
- Related organisations: IACEP: Prof Mary Grosser Pg 6
- Upcoming learning opportunities Pg 7
- A little inspiration Pg 8
- New contact details for IACESA Pg 8

MESSAGE FROM THE IACESA PRESIDENT - ESTELLE BRETTENNY

Dear IACESA Members

The spring season is full of transformations. The temperature gets warmer, plants and flowers are budding into lush, green plants and the days are longer. Spring may have its drawbacks for some people with fluctuating allergies in the changing of seasons, but overall it is a positive season of new beginnings...in weather, but also in self-awareness to take care of ourselves or to start making plans for the new year in our family life, job or other work related activities.



"Spring is the time of plans and projects."

— [Leo Tolstoy](#), [Anna Karenina](#)

It is important to take stock of your own life, job or organization from time to time. This is one of the projects of IACESA for the near future.

IACESA has been and still is a leading professional organization in the development of cognitive

education in Southern Africa and will be 21 years old in 2015. IACESA however needs to redefine its scope, vision and role regarding cognitive education in SA in order to be pro-active, relevant and to deliver a realistic service to its members.

Like many of us, IACESA has many plans for the near future, but like most of us, IACESA Board Members also have serious time constraints that affect their ability to put all their plans into action. It takes time to reflect, 'to sort things out', to formulate new or revised plans, to make informed decisions, and to implement these plans.

Despite the fact that an incredible amount of information about cognitive education and the development of thinking skills is available in books, articles, on the internet, or via training, the realistic infusion of thinking skills into a school curriculum, and especially in the SA school curriculum, remains a topic of debate.

What is the best route to follow? What is the best starting point? Should whole school training of teachers be done? Should training focus on intrinsically motivated teachers? Must the development of thinking skills be adapted for children at different levels of cognitive functioning or learners with barriers to learning? Who has knowledge and skills about the

The Risk of Professional Burnout and Compassion Fatigue - Prof DJ Louw

On 28 August we had our second Cog Ed seminar for this year. Once again, we chose, unknowingly, a cold, rainy night for this seminar. We really tested our members' resilience and their motivation to support IACESA. The topic of the second seminar linked very closely with our previous Cog Ed seminar on Resilience by Dr van Vuuren.

adaptation of thinking skills programs and approaches and can conduct training re this? Can international thinking skills approaches be used in SA or must they be adapted? What locally developed or adapted thinking skills programmes are available? Should we focus on developing thinking in learners or developing thinking in teachers or both? What role does the learning material play in making thinking possible? What research results about the infusion of thinking skills into the SA curriculum are available? Which organizations can provide training and support? How does a school decide which organization to use for training?

IACESA strives to examine such questions critically and to disseminate information, knowledge and skills to its members...but more about this in the next News Update.

Enjoy the current News Update with feedback from the last Cog Ed Seminar, a book review about *The Building Resilience Handbook*, a brief research update from North West University, information about related organizations and upcoming learning opportunities.

Estelle Brettenny

IACESA President 2013-2015

☎ 082 430 7956 ✉ estelle@brettenny.co.za

Prof Louw, our speaker, was the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, President of the International Academy of Practical Theology and is currently the President of the International Council on Pastoral Care and Counselling.

He introduced his talk by cautioning us that caregiving may become a burden and caregivers are often traumatized by the demands in their profession. Overexposure to this trauma can result in the healer becoming psychologically

exhausted and “spiritually ill”. This results in spiritual stress and eventually infiltrates the caregiver’s framework of meaning, resulting in compassion fatigue.

Prof Louw noted that researchers are of the opinion that compassion fatigue, compassion stress, burnout, secondary victimization and vicarious victimization are all related. The fact remains that the experience of trauma affects all the people involved, including their support systems. He argued that it is very difficult to differentiate between compassion fatigue and burnout, the two terms are interrelated and both refer to reaction and attitude.

He continued to explain to us that people in helping professions and especially caregivers, think they suffer from burnout and even burn-up due to “bad stress”. To clarify this, it may be meaningful to consider the following questions:

- Is compassion fatigue **burnout**? A variant of emotional depletion? A kind of overloading within the demand/duty system resulting in the wish: *I want to quit*?
- Is compassion fatigue **pathology**? The depleted self (failure and being incompetent) exposed to irrational self-blaming: *I am a failure* (masochism)?
- Is compassion fatigue **vicarious trauma** (secondary traumatic stress)? A kind of identity-crisis and disorientation due to emotional over-exposure?
- Is compassion fatigue **spiritual exhaustion**? Acknowledgement of our personal limitations within the realm of commitment, taking into account our belief system, our vocation and our moral framework.

Prof Louw is of the opinion that all above mentioned cases are interrelated. But, warns that compassion fatigue entails more than merely emotional or physical exhaustion.

He summarized the three concepts as follows:

- 1) **Burnout** and **burn-up**: refer to overload and over demand due to *quantity* – too many demands at the same time with the attempt to try harder.
- 2) **Compassion fatigue** refers to overexposure due to *quality* – it is an acute awareness of the transience of life, the intensity of human suffering and the helplessness of the sufferer.
- 3) **Vicarious traumatization** refers to over-identification due to a sacrificial ethos - an attempt to replace and to suffer on behalf of the other without clarity or direction and eventually becoming the victim.

The speaker continued to explain that caregivers should acknowledge that compassion fatigue is a normal reaction to the suffering of the other in the attempt to help. He added that one should always be investing in a process of continuous healing. In order to achieve that successfully one should address the following personal needs:

- Ensure that you have an adequate **support system (personal & professional)**: a safe space to express your feelings.
- Join a **professional support / supervision group**: professional feedback and scientific discussion, mutual evaluation with peer researchers in your field
- **Regular debriefing** within a team approach.
- **Group counseling** (weekly basis) for mutual pastoral caregiving.
- **Solitude**: a place and space to ponder, reflect and philosophize on the meaning and purposefulness of life.
- To move from competition to **compassion**
- To rediscover the **spiritual realm** of the helping profession: compassion as a spiritual entity (being function), not merely as emotional investment.
- Take care of, and be kind and generous to yourself – have a 'Kit-Kat-break', do

something else (different) that you will enjoy - vacation, recreation, spoiling yourself with 'me-time'.

- To revisit existing paradigms (patterns of thinking embedding philosophies of life) in order to create an **accommodative stance** in life: what you can change you change by setting new goals; what you cannot change, you need to accept.
- To undergo a **paradigm shift**: move from 'Mr. /Mrs. Fixit' to 'Mr. /Mrs. Support-them' (helping is to be there with....) Be available and supportive, but don't try to fix everything - move from *doing* functions into *being* functions.
- Maintain resilience, a non-anxious presence, gracious patience and courage; concentrating on *being* – functions.
- Develop a sense of humour combined with continuous reframing.

Prof Louw concluded that compassion fatigue is actually a yearning for wholeness due to a temporary failure within the realm of a long-term vision and caring strategy. One can actually say that compassion fatigue develops as a by-product of the failure to “see” the “bigger picture”.

Teachers, psychologists, therapists, nurses, and support staff are all actively involved in the helping professions. We need to take care of ourselves to be in a position to efficiently take care of our learners, patients and clients.

Elsefie Wranz
Immediate Past President

Book review: The Building Resilience Handbook

Book Information:

Author:	Rod Warner
Publisher:	Rod Warner & Associates
Publication Date:	2012
ISBN number:	978-0-620-52943-3
Paperback:	313 pages (R250)

This book is aimed at any person who wants to become more resilient or to help other people to become more resilient in the face of adversity and challenges such as retrenchment, unemployment, providing for a family when you are struggling to find a job, illness of a loved one, work/academic stress or family issues. The focus of the book is to help people to understand the concept of resilience better, to learn how to turn adversities into growth experiences in order to bounce back and live a life of fulfillment and joy...in other words, to become more resilient. In the process of trying to understand the concept of resilience better, the author did a thorough search of academic literature on resilience, but he did not find the kind of information that he was looking for: information that could help ordinary people. He decided to undertake his own study of how ordinary people deal with day-to-day adversities, disappointments and trauma. This enabled him to identify seven constructs of resilience which he later reframed as the principles and steps of resilience. He then developed practical exercises to enhance resilience and presented his knowledge and skills in the form of workshops to assist other people to develop their resilience. The Building Resilience Handbook contains information presented at workshops and stories of coping and thriving as told by people who attended the workshops.

Brief Summary of the Content of Book:

Part One (Chapters 1 to 3) provides background information about resilience: how it works, some myths about resilience, and the research of the author which led to the identification of the principles and steps of resilience. It also includes a questionnaire that can be used to assess your own resilience. Part Two (Chapters 4 to 10) provides detailed information about the seven principles of resilience. Each principle is described in a separate chapter with exercises to enhance your own resilience in that specific area.

Part Three (Chapters 11 and 12) is divided into two sections: Building resilience in teams in the work place and building resilience in children. Practical exercises are included to help children to cope with the variety of challenges they face daily at school or at home. As each of the chapters is designed to be self-contained, one can start at any place in the book; this is a great advantage for busy people who might not be able to read the whole book in a short period of time. The Resilience Principles, or attributes needed to be resilient in the face of adversity, are simple but powerful. The Building Resilience Steps are in the form of four easy key questions that you have to ask yourself when your emotional and physical wellbeing is threatened by adversity.

Comment on the book's relevance to Cognitive Education:

The Resilience Handbook is not only a helpful resource for teachers, parents, psychologists, therapists and older learners who want to become more resilient or who want to help

RESEARCH UPDATE: Incorporating De Bono's Thinking Hats into Preschool Education

As part of the Thinking Schools Project at North-West University Vaal Triangle Campus, the principal of Roshnee Preschool in Vereeniging, approached us (Prof Mary Grosser and myself) with regard to improving the thinking processes of the learners in her school. After investigating various strategies, the school decided on incorporating De Bono's Thinking Hats into the school's curriculum for 2013. We presented the staff and parents with information on how we planned to integrate this strategy into the academic work and the everyday lives of the children in the preschool. Some of the parents sponsored Thinking Hats for each of the classes in the school (See illustrations). All staff members

others to become more resilient; it is also extremely helpful for persons interested in cognitive education. The Resilience Principles and The Building Resilience Steps can, for example, be linked to the Affective Motivational Tools of Learning in the Cognitive Enrichment Advantage Model/CEA (Greenberg, 2000) or to certain Habits of Mind (Costa and Kallick, 2009). The practical exercises and application tools can be used to help learners to 'Find Inner Meaning' or to be more 'Goal-Directed' (Affective-Motivational Tools of Learning in CEA Model) or to 'Persist' better and to 'Think Flexibly' when facing challenging tasks (Habits of Mind).

References:

- Costa, A.L. & Kallick, B. 2009. Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind. Victoria, Australia: Hawker Brownlow Education.
- Greenberg, K. 2000. Cognitive Enrichment Advantage. Skylight Training and Publishing, USA.

Reviewed by:

Estelle Brettenny (B.OT; M.OT; PDME)

were trained in the application of the Six Thinking Hats.

In February 2013 we conducted a pre-test with the Grade R-learners (See illustrations) to establish their application of different thinking modes. Twenty five learners took part in the pre-test. A well-known story was told to them (auditory) and they also watched a video of the story (visual). The pre-test consisted of 6 sections, namely, White Hat Thinking (neutral and objective); Black Hat Thinking (cautious, careful); Yellow Hat Thinking (positive, speculative); Red Hat Thinking (emotions, feelings); Green Hat Thinking (creativity, new ideas) and Blue Hat thinking (control and organisation of thinking). In each section questions were posed orally to participants in order to encourage them to apply different modes of thinking. The average results were as follows:

Participants obtained 64% in the White Hat Thinking where they had to answer factual questions. In the Yellow Hat Thinking where participants had to look at the positive side of the story, they obtained 75%. In the Red Hat Thinking about feelings and emotions, participants acquired 65%. The Green Hat Thinking which is about generating new, creative ideas, participants acquired 54%. Participants' weakest performance - (43%), was in the Blue Hat Thinking, which expected of them to organise their thinking and to reflect on what has been achieved. In addition, for Black Hat thinking where the participants had to look at the negative aspects of the story and make judgements, they only obtained 54%.

The implementation of the six Thinking Hats is still underway, and a post-test will be conducted during November 2013 to establish growth and development in relation to the application of the different thinking modes. The photographs below reflect the eagerness with which the school and the learners have embraced the Six Thinking Hat strategy.



During the pre-test



Thinking Hats



Road Safety



Black Hat Thinking

Dr Stef Esterhuizen
North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus

The International Association for Cognitive Education and Psychology (IACEP)

The International Association for Cognitive Education and Psychology was founded in 1988 and is a society of professionals from throughout the world who are interested in advancing cognitive education. The organisation brings together persons who have diverse applied and theoretical interests. IACEP welcomes the participation of teachers, therapists, assessment specialists, administrators and research professionals to share in collaborative inquiry or work separately in advancing the goals of cognitive education, assessment and therapy.

The purpose of IACEP is to utilize research and education to:

- advance the cognitive education of children, youth and adults;
- promote, stimulate and disseminate applications of the development, acquisition, and application of logical thought;
- encourage and provide opportunities for the professional growth of individual members;
- inform the public about the practice of cognitive education; and
- advance the standards of education in related areas.

Since 1988, IACEP has held international conferences in locations throughout the world, and many of the IACEP affiliates started hosting regional conferences. IACESA is the regional (Southern African) equivalent of IACEP and maintains links with this organisation.

The Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology (JCEP), published by Springer Publishing, is the official publication of IACEP. The journal presents in-depth articles on theory and empirical research as well as current practice

and effectiveness of cognitive education, cognitive assessment, cognitive rehabilitation and psychology around the world. The journal also reports on research leading to a deeper understanding of how thinking processes, problem solving, attention, perception and memory affect learning, as well as on effective strategies to enhance learning in a variety of educational settings and environments.

On the IACEP website, more information about the IACEP Executive Committee, Conferences, Resources, Events, Membership and the Journal can be obtained. We encourage our IACESA

members to join IACEP. Joining IACEP will enable all professionals who are passionate about cognitive education to extend their cognitive network, knowledge and resource base.

For more information on IACEP, or how to become a member, visit the IACEP website: www.iacep.org or contact Mary Grosser at mary.grosser@nwu.ac.za.

Prof Mary Grosser
IACEP Vice President: Africa
IACESA President Elect

UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

<i>DATE</i>	<i>EVENT</i>
18, 19 & 20 June 2014	IACEP Regional Conference 2014 Budapest, Hungary
19, 20 & 21 February 2015	2015 IACESA Conference Theme to be confirmed Venue: Clock Tower (Pavilion) Conference Centre, V & A Waterfront, Cape Town
TO BE CONFIRMED	IACESA AGM Event early in 2014 Information about this event, as well as venue and registration details will be emailed

A LITTLE INSPIRATION...



“That is one good thing about this world...there are always sure to be more springs.”

— L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea*

NEW CONTACT DETAILS FOR IACESA

Secretariat:

Mrs Elize Heiberg

iacesa2013@gmail.com

Cel: 083 264 7503

Fax: 086 272 2720

www.iacesa.co.za