



*This newsletter carries news of local and international events of interest to our members.*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ELSEFIE WRANZ

**Dear IACESA Member**

A few months have passed since our very successful IACESA conference in February. The past few months have not been without excitement.

We had to tie up the loose ends of the conference, we scrutinized the feedback of our delegates and made mental and physical notes of recommendations for future conferences and we witnessed the birth of Thinking Schools South Africa – the new not for profit company that will guide and support schools in SA towards a whole school ethos of thinking. Please read Louis Benjamin's article (the coordinator of TSSA) elsewhere in this newsletter.

IACESA wants to emphasize again: Our mission statement is to place the development of effective thinking, learning and quality teaching in the forefront of the quest for human and economic development in South Africa. We envisage that our duty towards this mission is to equip educators and professionals with the required knowledge to enable them to provide learners and adults with learning, thinking and metacognitive skills. When we work with learners we should always be aware that they function within a system – that system often being a school, a family and the community. Learners' ultimate goal should be to successfully negotiate an academic curriculum. Our specific role in a learner's life should be that of a guiding educator and according to the words of Brigham Young – *Education is the power to think clearly, the power to act well in the world's work and the power to appreciate life.*

To function in the world's work in the 21st century is a challenging task for any educator and learner. Educators and professionals, in partnership with parents, have an obligation to teach thinking across the curriculum – we have to put thinking inside the learning process and not on top of it – as an add on. The ultimate goal for the young adult leaving school should be to "act in the world's work". To be successful at that, he needs to be critical of, creative in and caring about the world's work.

(continued...)

Learners need to be prepared for that, not only to think, but to become a life long learner, functioning with creativity, making critical choices and judgments and having a caring disposition.

We have a new secretary – Mrs Christa Krige. We welcome Christa to IACESA and hope that her journey with us will be one of happiness and full of surprises. Christa is a born and bred Capetonian. She loves the sea and travelling. She has been working with students and the University Stellenbosch Faculty of Health Sciences since 1994 and loves every minute of what she is doing. Prior to this position, she was the personal assistant of the Head of the Department of Anatomical Pathology. She sees her engagement as the office coordinator of IACESA as an extension of her work within the academic environment. Please refer to the new contact details of IACESA.

We had to say goodbye to Mrs Erica Wiener, who for years has been the very competent and “ambidextrous” office coordinator of IACESA. Erica was the left and right hand of the organisation and handled the administrative duties of IACESA very competently. She has rendered a very valuable, dedicated and loyal service to IACESA and we are sad to let her go. Erica has taken on the position of Office Executive for Thinking Schools SA.

**Elsefie Wranz****IACESA: President 2011 - 2013**

**Our new  
contact details**

The Secretary

**IACESA**

Christa Krige

Faculty of Health Sciences

University of Stellenbosch

**TYGERBERG CAMPUS**

Tel: 021 900 3260

Tel: 0822557049

Fax: 0862708111

SMS: 0822557049

E-Mail: [iacesa@polka.co.za/](mailto:iacesa@polka.co.za)

[cjk@sun.ac.za](mailto:cjk@sun.ac.za)

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**IACESA'S NEW EXECUTIVE and BOARD MEMBERS - 2011 to 2013**

- **President: Elsefie Wranz**
  - **Immediate Past President: Dr Anita Worrall**
  - **President Elect: Estelle Brettenny**
  - **Hon. Secretary: Mandy Kowarski**
  - **Hon. Treasurer: Dr Louis Benjamin**
- Rabia Edries**  
**Professor Lena Green**  
**Professor Mary Grosser**  
**Christa Krige**  
**Lilian Lomofsky**  
**Sharon Moonsamy**  
**Les Osler**

**Welcome to our new Board members:****• Rabia Edries:**

Rabia Edries, born 12-12-1982, was educated at Sans Souci Girls High in Cape Town. Teaching and learning has always been the focus for Rabia. She completed her B.Ed Foundation Phase degree at Cape Technikon in 2004. She taught as a Foundation Phase class teacher at Kirstenhof Primary until 2009. Rabia also completed her B.Ed Honours degree at UWC in 2009. Her interest in developing learners' thinking skills stemmed from her teaching of Problem Solving in Numeracy and has grown from there. She is currently studying towards her M.Ed, with the focus on Thinking Schools as a whole school approach. She believes that developing thinking skills is of utmost importance for children to be able to be effective learners and members of the global community. Rabia is also currently a Learning Support teacher, based at St George's Grammar School in Cape Town. She will be managing and editing the IACESA 'News Update' newsletter and the IACESA website.

**• Les Osler:**

Lesley Osler, born 25-12-1945, was educated at Epworth High School in PMB. She majored in English, Drama and History at UCT and completed her Post Grad Teacher Qualification through UNISA. Les has taught English and History at both Primary and High School. She moved to Colesberg in 1987 and started the Hantam Community Trust in 1989. Website: [www.hantam-trust.org.za](http://www.hantam-trust.org.za). Les is the Project Coordinator of The Hantam Community Education Trust in Colesberg. She is enthusiastic about cognitive education and ensures that IACESA is aware of the contexts and needs of rural schools.

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## The IACESA Conference 2011

The Conference in Cape Town in February 2011 was organized in collaboration with the Hantam Community Education Trust, which contributed generously to its cost via a grant from the British Lottery Fund. The involvement of the Hantam Community Trust and some of its teachers offered IACESA and the conference delegates valuable insights into the ways in which cognitive education can be brought to schools in rural areas.

This was complemented by the overall theme of the conference which was the notion of a Thinking School. Professor Robert Burden, Director of the Cognitive Education Centre at the University of Exeter, UK, explained the rationale for Thinking Schools and the criteria by which a Thinking School can be recognized. Research internationally has shown that cognitive education initiatives by individual teachers, although successful in a particular classroom, tend not to become a part of the school culture and are frequently not sustainable. One proposed way forward is to focus on whole school involvement, strongly led and managed by an individual school community. Becoming a Thinking School is not a practice imposed from outside, but a vision that is chosen by the majority of school stakeholders, who make a long term commitment to its realization. The criteria involved are not all academic, but reflect attention to critical, creative and caring thinking applied to all aspects of school life. It became apparent that there is no one right way to be a Thinking School, although helpful guidelines are available.

Becoming a Thinking School involves active attention to cognitive education and IACESA was able to showcase at the conference three of the programmes that have been developed to assist schools and teachers to teach children to think more effectively. These were: *Thinking Maps* (developed by David Hyerle), *Habits of Mind* (developed by Art Costa, and represented at the conference by James Anderson), and Reuven Feuerstein's *Mediated Learning* approach, all of which elicited considerable interest from schools. Some members may recall that another such programme, Philosophy for Children, featured at our 2009 conference. It is IACESA's intention to continue to investigate different ways of 'teaching thinking' and to provide regular updates regarding the latest approaches and research findings.

In addition to the above theories and frameworks the conference was enlivened by attention to context. The 'big picture' of education in South Africa, and in the Western Cape in particular, was dramatically sketched by Professor Brian O'Connell from the University of the Western Cape and by Dr Mamphela Ramphele. Equally important were firstly, the presentations by local teachers from a range of contexts, who provided the down to earth details of how their schools were addressing the task of becoming Thinking Schools; and secondly, the presentation of some relevant local research findings.

One important outcome of the Conference was the establishment of Thinking Schools South Africa (TSSA), a not for profit company that works closely with IACESA and with Thinking Schools International to promote and support Thinking Schools in South Africa. The input from Dr Louis Benjamin in this News Update provides further details regarding TSSA and its achievements to date.

The success of the conference, which was attended by 211 delegates, can be attributed not only to the intrinsic relevance of the topic, but also to the careful planning and committed work of Dr Anita Worrall, then President of IACESA, and her conference committee. Despite the fact that the Cape weather did not permit the planned social event – a sunset cruise – there were many opportunities for networking and the renewal and strengthening of existing connections and friendships. Do not miss our next conference!

**Professor Lena Green**

## Thinking Schools South Africa (TSSA)

### *Investing In A Thinking Generation*

Thinking Schools South Africa (TSSA) was established following a very successful IACESA National Conference in Cape Town earlier this year. While IACESA is committed to the general promotion and development of cognitive education, TSSA focuses specifically on providing the structures, services and support needed for developing a whole school approach to the development of thinking. The two organizations could thus be regarded as interrelated in many respects and the hope is that they will both assist to strengthen the cause of cognitive education in South Africa.

The last few months have been frantic for TSSA. A not-for-profit company was formed, a board of directors appointed, and partnerships with local and international stakeholders negotiated. TSSA is associated with an international Thinking Schools movement through its connection with Thinking Schools International. TSSA also established a formal link with Professor Bob Burden of Exeter University (UK), recognized as the founder of the International Thinking Schools movement and Professor Lena Green of the University of the Western Cape. Such a link makes it possible (should it be requested) for schools that have joined the network to be formally evaluated and to receive accreditation as a Thinking School.

TSSA's first training event for Thinking School Coordinators was run in Cape Town and Johannesburg during May-June. The training was attended by 25 teachers who represented 20 Institutions located in 5 Provinces. There was also a delegate from Botswana who attended the training. Teachers came from a range of government, private and special needs schools as well as one farm school. The training offered delegates insights into the transformative process of becoming a Thinking School. The innovative field guide *'Growing A Thinking School'* provided a variety of visual and other thinking tools to map and plan their journeys. The training was highly successful with much positive feedback. See examples below: -

- *'How carefully crafted and thoughtfully designed this training was'*
- *'Discovery that thinking, interacting, discussing makes one feel excited about learning'*
- *'The resource pack and examples can be used immediately'*
- *'Excellent presentation and materials – the openness of the process, not too prescriptive, but enough guidance'*
- *'The experiential and the planning combined with the theoretical underpinnings of why we are doing/thinking about specific things'*
- *'It is very exciting to know that there are many tools available and choosing the best one for our schools is crucial ...'*
- *'Wonderful opportunity to have two days to think intensively about introducing the concept at my school ... the interaction was important'*
- *'I have learnt a number of graphic tools to help plan and manage change'*
- *'Love the idea/opportunity to be an agent of transformation in my school'*
- *'A greater conviction that this is the right way forward for equipping our students for the future'*

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TSSA will shortly be making contact with school coordinators to follow up on the next steps of their journeys towards becoming thinking schools. A core group of consultants will start working with schools to guide them in this process. Consultants have recently returned from the UK where they received extensive training and practical exposure to the Thinking Schools model. A number of new schools, institutions and other organizations have also expressed interest in the idea of Thinking Schools. It is also exciting that North West University has plans to start a Thinking Schools Faculty in its School of Education Sciences.

The thinking schools movement has just begun and we hope that TSSA will play a positive role in facilitating this process. TSSA looks forward to creating meaningful relationships with you as we provide the support and services that you require on your journey.

### Dr Louis Benjamin

TSSA Coordinator

**Tel:** 021 686 8463 (Administrator)

**TeL:** 021-797 9110 (coordinator)

**Cell:** 084 857 8763 (coordinator)

**Email:** [louisben@iafrica.com](mailto:louisben@iafrica.com)

**Email:** [thinkschools@mweb.co.za](mailto:thinkschools@mweb.co.za)



Getting started at the TSSA  
Coordinator training in Cape Town

### Forthcoming TSSA Events:

#### Habits of Mind Workshop

- Module 1
- Dates: Fri 16 + Sat 17 September (Herschel School, Cape Town), Saturday 10 + Sunday 11 September (Roedean School, Johannesburg)
- Presenter: James Anderson (Australia)
- On-line Registrations: <http://www.basicconcepts.co.za/tssa.htm>
- Enquiries: Erica Wiener, Tel 021 686 8463 / [thinkschools@mweb.co.za](mailto:thinkschools@mweb.co.za)

**Note: Members of IACESA receive a 20% discount.**

#### Thinking Schools SA Blog

- Do you want to join our blog community?
- Send your email address to [Thinkschools@mweb.co.za](mailto:Thinkschools@mweb.co.za)

#### Thinking Schools SA Website

- Under construction



Delegates at the Thinking Schools International Network UK. From the left: Martin Bell from the UK; Vanita Dogra from India; Carla Carvalho from Brazil, Dr. David Hyerle from the USA

## ***Changing Concepts of Cognitive Education***

**Dr Anita Worrall, Immediate Past President, IACESA**

Since taking over as President of IACESA from Lena Green in Feb 2009, we in IACESA have experienced a tsunami change in our concept of cognitive education.

From the founding of the organization in 1995 we had identified with the notion that learners of all ages can be assisted to become more efficient in their thinking and learning if they can be assisted to reflect on their thinking processes and taught how to expand and manage them. This has been our mission in IACESA. This notion has since been supported by neuroscience. Research has shown structural changes in the brain as a result of learning, giving demonstrable credence to Reuben Feuerstein's theoretical model of structural cognitive modifiability.

### **Why the need for Cognitive Education?**

The advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the uncertainties created by the global economy convinced more and more people that schools need "to prepare people who know how to act when faced with situations for which they are not specifically prepared". Increasingly educators recognize that teaching content is not enough, schools need to impart entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. Howard Gardner in his book **Five Minds for the Future (2008)** writes that mastery of a discipline is still vital but so is ethics, respect for others, the ability to connect ideas and to synthesize, as well to create - "the future belongs to those organizations, as well as to those individuals, who have made an active, lifelong commitment to continue learning". (pxviii)

Since 1995 IACESA has retained a steady number of members, and has held conferences every two years, in various centres within South Africa. Many of us became trainers in various models of teaching thinking: Instrumental Enrichment, Bright Start, Cognet/CEA, Philosophy for Children, and more recently developed programmes such as Louis Benjamin's Basic Concepts and Estelle Brettenny's Learning Health, among others. These approaches to teaching thinking were offered to teachers and other professionals, who in turn would go back and teach in their classrooms or in their practices, but, generally, with no support from the Head of the school and with no follow up. Naturally, the original enthusiasm often waned and the teaching and learning suffered. Clearly, teaching individual teachers, who then go on to teach their classrooms, without the support from the rest of their colleagues, was insufficient to make an impact on the school.

### **A Change in Thinking**

Some four years ago we introduced in Cape Town the concept of Cog Ed Seminars, a once-a-term seminar dealing with various topics in cognitive education. At first only 16 people attended. The numbers gradually increased and we saw a change in interest.

The major change occurred when Professor Bob Burden, on visiting Cape Town in February 2010, spoke on the new movement in cognitive education - the Thinking School. On visiting St Cuthberts School for Girls in New Zealand, he had realized why it was that cognitive education as it was previously formulated was not working.

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Gil Hubble, the Head of St Cuthberts introduced him to their model for cognitive education, namely a whole school approach, where everyone from the Head down, the Board of Governors and the parents, talk and practice cognitive education. She also introduced him to a programme called Thinking Maps, authored by an American educator, David Hyerle. This is history. They are now close associates.

Gil Hubble is now travelling the world as a school consultant and Prof Burden, having established the Cognitive Education Centre at Exeter University and being convinced that only through a whole school approach can cognitive education succeed, forged links with like-minded educators in the UK and elsewhere. The Thinking Schools movement took off in the UK, where more than 200 schools have been already been accredited by the University of Exeter.

On listening to his talk, IACESA members present were encouraged. A few of us on the IACESA executive attended the National Thinking Skills Conference in June 2010 and reported to a later Cog Ed Seminar. This was even better attended than the previous one.

In November 2010 I was invited by Sharon Moonsamy to address a group of educators at the University of the Witwatersrand on our forthcoming conference, Thinking Schools – The Journey, which was due to take place in February of this year. More than 40 educators were present from schools and universities around Johannesburg. I was amazed at the interest, but also at the fact that many of these schools were already on their way to becoming Thinking Schools.

The Conference (reviewed elsewhere in this Newsletter) was an enormous success. There were more than 240 delegates from many schools around the country. It was clear that the Thinking School, where the entire school community is committed to encouraging thinking and reflection and to promoting independent learning, **is an idea whose time has come**. In South Africa we sense the urgency for transformational change. We need to develop a strategy for achieving our vision and to do this we need to work as a team.

It was a privilege to have served as President in such exciting times and I wish the incoming president, Elsefie Wranz a similar experience as the journey towards Thinking Schools moves forward.

**Dr Anita Worrall**

## **COG ED SEMINAR 17 AUGUST 2011**

Topic: CAPS – the new Curriculum  
 Speaker: Genevieve Koopman  
 (Directorate of the Curriculum Development office)  
*Venue and time to be announced*

**Book now!**

*Diarise now!*

**COG ED SEMINAR 2 WILL TAKE  
 PLACE ON 19 OCTOBER 2011**

## 2010 COG ED SEMINARS

The Cog Ed Interest Group, a task group of IACESA, organized four seminars during 2010. The seminars were hosted at different schools in the Southern and Northern Suburbs of Cape Town and were attended by between 65 to 85 people per seminar. The first seminar was hosted by Reddam House in Green Point, the second one at Herschel Senior School in Claremont and the last two at Kenridge Primary School in Durbanville. The willingness of these schools to host the seminars and to organize the tea/coffee is appreciated by the IACESA Board and all the seminar participants.

We were very privileged to have Professor Bob Burden, Emeritus Professor of Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Exeter in the UK, as our first presenter on 24 February 2011. The title of his presentation was, "*Not just Thinking Children but Thinking Schools.*" Professor Burden explained why so many thinking skills initiatives either peter out or simply fail altogether. He made it clear that the problems does not always lie within the programmes themselves but that the obstacles to successful implementation, of any programme to teach children how to think and learn, were almost entirely systemic. Literature and studies on school effectiveness and school improvement also provide ample evidence for this finding. The answer to solve this dilemma lies in the concept of *The Thinking School*. Professor Burden defined the concept of a Thinking School and outlined some basic steps in becoming a Thinking School by referring to 14 criteria. These criteria were selected very carefully as they are also used as criteria for accreditation of a Thinking School, currently done via Exeter University in the UK. Thinking Skills Approaches commonly used by schools in the UK were highlighted too. Professor Burden's presentation was very stimulating and created a growing interest under participants to learn more about the journey of becoming a Thinking School.

The second seminar gave Cog Ed participants a glimpse of the journey towards becoming a Thinking School. Former teachers from St Peter's, a Preparatory School in Rivonia, were invited in May 2011 to share their experiences with us in a presentation called, *Creating a Thinking School: The Story of St Peter's*. The three ladies (Debby Evans, Sue Garner and Geraldine Duffield) entertained us with a very lively presentation of how they were introduced to the notion of developing thinking, how they started the process at St Peter's and how they managed to do some training of teachers. They referred to various programmes/approaches they used at St Peter's and demonstrated via practical examples how this could be implemented with learners. Through this presentation it became clear, for many people in the audience, that it is possible to develop thinking in a school system.

Seminar 3, in August 2011, focussed on *A Report Back from the National Thinking Schools Conference in the UK - What works?* Dr Anita Worrall and Dr Louis Benjamin had the privilege to attend the conference and provided feedback of some of the highlights of the conference. The last seminar of the year was held in October 2011 and aimed at providing information about *Thinking Skills Programmes and Resources – Training options available for potential thinking schools*. Participants received a detailed handout with information about available approaches & training options and Dr Lena Green highlighted the key tenets of each approach in a power-point presentation.

The Cog Ed Task Group and the IACESA Board would like to thank all participants for attending the 2010 seminars.

**Estelle Brettenny**

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