



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COGNITIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA  
**IACESA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
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Essentials for learning and life...

Language...Thinking...Diversity...

### **IACESA Conference Key Note Address**



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#### ***Language-In-Education in South Africa: Some Plain Talk***

This presentation will critically evaluate the contribution of language policies and practices to the poor academic achievement of some South African learners. As the vehicle for cognitive growth, language proficiency plays a central role in education and specifically in the development of literacy. Currently, South African children in some contexts have very low literacy levels. To what extent can this be attributed to the application of language-in-education practices such as using English as the Language of Learning and Teaching when this is not the home language? This question will be interrogated in the light of recent local research findings on instruction in either first or second language. It will be argued that the effects of the specific language of instruction are not straightforward. Amongst the many reasons for the current crisis in the education system, the quality of language and literacy teaching is a significant factor, irrespective of whether the home language or English serve as the medium of instruction or are taught as an additional language. In the final analysis, one of the fundamental aims of education, particularly in a multilingual context should be the development of academic language and literacy. It is only through this development that children can develop the advanced conceptual skills required by the curriculum. The development of academic language involves a focus on educational linguistics, teacher language awareness and language and content – integrated learning. These concepts will be defined and elaborated on.

#### ***What Teachers Need to Know about Language***

This paper will provide practical suggestions on what teachers need to know about language in order to facilitate the development of academic language and literacy skills at all stages of education. Language, academic language and literacy will be defined and the approaches and strategies that can be used to develop the linguistic proficiency underlying classroom success will be discussed. Real lessons will be analysed for language content and cognitive demand. Teaching materials and techniques to address these issues will be presented. The aim of the presentation will be to underline the importance and relevance of educational linguistics for the teaching profession.

**For more information about the conference and registration visit [www.iacesa.co.za](http://www.iacesa.co.za)**