

Message From The IACESA President



~ Mary Grosser ~

Dear IACESA Members

The composer and lyricist, Irving Berlin, said *“our attitudes control our lives. Attitudes are a secret power working twenty-four hours a day, for good or bad. It is of paramount importance that we know how to harness and control this great force”*. The recent mass protest action regarding study fees at the different universities in the country, often resulting in destructive behaviour, mirrored the lack of, and foregrounded the importance of, cultivating good attitudes, dispositions or Habits of Mind among our students at school. The protest actions made me realize how important the work is that IACESA still has to carry out and how far away we seemingly are in South Africa from equipping students with the competencies to become smarter at thinking and smarter at behaving. There are good reasons for enhancing competencies to both think and behave smarter. This can help to contain violence and aggression in favour of behaviour based on reducing impulsivity, respect for others, problem-solving guided by self-control and creative and critical thinking, and listening with understanding and empathy. The history of humankind will always involve conflict, and schools cannot ignore the fact that competencies to think and behave more smartly should be reinforced in order to benefit human and societal flourishing. Parents and schools in South Africa are seemingly struggling alone with this complex and important task. We as IACESA members and supporters should therefore promote and support the intentional teaching of competencies to think and behave more smartly with vigour and rigour, to prevent bad behavioural habits from infecting an entire group of people. Let us strive to make this one of our aims for 2016!

In this edition of the News Update, we structure our contributions under four headings, namely Special Interest Topics, Practical Strategies to Teach Thinking, Research Articles and IACESA Activities/Events. As Topics of Special Interest we include contributions related to Language and Cognition for the elderly, how to effect High Performance Learning, a continuation of a discussion about Dyslexia and a reflection of Cognitive Education in Nigeria. The section on Practical Strategies to Nurture Thinking, focuses on the importance of including design thinking principles into teaching,

the value of enquiry-based learning for nurturing thinking and how the use of a computer game could provide an informal learning opportunity that stimulates thinking.

As part of our regular features, we report on the successful discussions that took place at the CogEd seminars held in Cape Town and Gauteng, respectively. We also announce a number of new training opportunities and events for 2016. Please diarise these exciting events!

We want to urge all our members again to visit our IACESA Facebook group, and take part in the discussions, or watch some of the informative video clips we have uploaded there. We recently uploaded video clips documenting the interesting views of UK-based Prof. Deborah Eyre on how to achieve High Performance for all learners, as well as feedback from two schools that have been part of the Schools as Thinking Communities Project at the NWU, Vaal Triangle Campus.

I wish you all a relaxed and blessed holiday, and look forward to receiving feedback and suggestions for our next News Update, which will be available during March 2016.

Please feel free to submit any comment or contribution for the News Update to

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Happy reading and cognitive greetings!

Mary Grosser (PhD)

IACESA President (2015-2017)

The IACESA News Update aims to update readers about current IACESA activities, draw attention to relevant research and generate debate. Please note that the opinions expressed by contributing authors do not necessarily reflect the views of IACESA.