

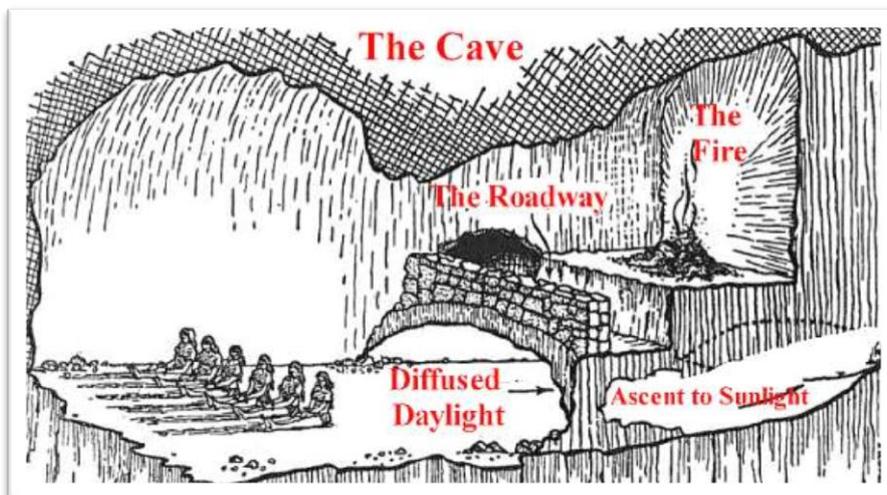
LETTER OF THE PRESIDENT



~ Mary Grosser ~

A recent opportunity to attend a lecture on Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, that forms part of his work the *Republic*, left me with a firm belief that IACESA has to rigorously and relentlessly pursue avenues to create an increasing and growing awareness among all stakeholders in education about the importance of the explicit teaching of thinking to all learners.

In the Allegory of the Cave, people bear a resemblance to chained prisoners or puppets in a cave, unable to turn their heads. They can only see the wall of the cave in front of them. Behind them is a burning fire, and between the fire and the chained prisoners is a walkway/roadway where other puppets are walking and talking. The chained prisoners are unable to see those walking behind them and only notice their shadows on the wall in front of them, and hear the echoes of their voices.



Confronted with the picture of the cave and the chained and walking prisoner puppets, my mind's eye recalls the existence of still too many inflexible, South African classroom-caves. Classroom-caves, where minds of numerous learners who need to be prepared for the daunting challenges of the 21st century, are still chained to predisposed, often flawed knowledge and beliefs; trapped in a dark environment where the status quo is not questioned. To me, the cave then becomes a metaphor for classroom realities with fixed, outdated paths without sunlight. More than ever, IACESA and its members need to join hands in promoting the intentional teaching of thinking to enable learners to escape the darkness of classrooms and question the shadows reflected on the classroom walls.

The regular IACESA News Updates is one avenue that IACESA uses to create awareness and disseminate knowledge about the importance of, as well as guidance about how to go about teaching thinking explicitly. In this edition of the News Update, we structure our contributions under four headings, namely *Special Interest Topics*, *Assessment for Thinking* and *IACESA Activities/Events*. Under *Topics of Special Interest*, we include contributions related to: Metacognition and the learner: Strategies for better academic functioning, thinking and learning, The reading brain, Three myths about the brain, and a workshop on Six Thinking Hats presented to parents at the Roshnee Pre-School in Vereeniging.

The section on *Assessment for Thinking* focuses on a follow-up article about the practical implementation of assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning, as well as a contribution that highlights the importance of feedback during assessment.

As part of our regular features, we report on the successful discussions that took place at the Cog Ed seminars held on 27 May at the North-West University, Vanderbijlpark.

We also announce a number of new training opportunities and events for 2016 and 2017. Please diarise these exciting events! Please take time to look at the exciting line-up of key-note speakers for the 2017 IACESA conference. Remember to submit your abstract for a conference presentation by **15 July 2016**. Online registration for the conference and booking of accommodation can be done by visiting the IACESA website: <http://www.icesa.co.za>

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.

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.

Thank you for your membership and support, which will enable us to plan exciting training events for the rest of the year. May your third term be enriched with success. I look forward to receiving feedback and suggestions for our next News Update that will be available during September 2016.

Please feel free to submit any comment or contribution for the News Updates to mary.grosser@nwu.ac.za

Happy reading and cognitive greetings!

Mary Grosser (PhD)

M Grosser

IACESA President (2015-2017)