



Thinking Schools South Africa Quarterly Newsletter

Welcome!

This is the third issue of the TSSA newsletter for 2024. For three-term schools, I hope you had a good break, and for four-term schools, your break is just around the corner. We are heading into the final stretch of the year, so all the best with whatever that entails for you.

I spent the August long weekend in Cape Town, where Elmarie Petersen, subject advisor with the Western Cape Education Department and a TSSA trainer, and I gave a two hour workshop to 75 science and social sciences teachers at the GIFT workshop at the Iziko museum. This workshop was sponsored by the European Geosciences Union, and the theme was 'Exploring Antarctica'. After the workshop sessions, we headed off to the Two Oceans Aquarium, where we dissected the holdfast (the root base of the kelp plant) to find all sorts of small sea creatures. What a wonderful way to build curiosity!

I have been invited to speak at the SAPA (South African Principals Association) Annual Conference in Johannesburg on 13th September. I will be sharing the stage with two other speakers on the topic "Innovative Teaching Methodologies and Strategies for the Classroom of the Future". I intend to discuss how we can help students develop the skills and character they'll need over their lifetimes in a world with fast-changing technologies. Chris Dede, Harvard University, states "The current curriculum and high-stakes tests often prioritize fostering skills at which AI excels, such as reckoning skills involving calculative prediction and formulaic decision-making. However, AI cannot easily replicate human judgment, which is a deliberative thought process that is flexible and contextual based on experiential knowledge, ethics, values, relationships, and culture." Up to now, knowledge has been the dimension that is mainly developed and measured in schools. However, to prepare students for the 21st century, another 3 dimensions (Skills, Character, and Metalearning) are of equal importance. Skills develop the 'how we know what we know', and involve critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills; the character dimension develops 'how we behave and engage in the world', so leadership, curiosity, courage, resilience, and ethics; and the metalearning dimension deals with 'how to reflect and adapt', and includes the growth mindset and metacognition. TSSA events deal with many of these aspects; come and find out more by registering for the James Nottingham webinars, the Trevor MacKenzie webinar, or a face-to-face workshop with Susannah Cole on Building Curiosity through Productive Puzzling.

I hope to meet some of you at our upcoming events or at the ISASA Deputy Heads Conference.

Dr Sonja Vandeleur

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Webinars

TEACH Brilliantly Webinar Series

James Nottingham

After the hugely successful webinar series presented by James Nottingham in May, in which he spoke about student engagement, enhancing student efficacy and celebrating progress, James has agreed to run another series of two webinars for TSSA in September. Sign up now to take advantage of the special offer!

9th Sept: Can Growth Mindset Really Help My Students?

16th Sept: Teaching Students How to Use Feedback Effectively

Time: 16:00 - 17:30

Cost: R1100 pp per webinar

Special offer: 10% discount for both webinars

Network Schools: a further 5% discount

James is creator of the Learning Pit and author of 12 books on teaching and leading. In 2006, he set up Challenging Learning, an independent consultancy group. He has worked closely with professors Carol Dweck (Growth Mindset) and John Hattie (Visible Learning), and since the pandemic, he has returned to what he loves most: giving keynote speeches, leading practical workshops & webinars, and working longer-term with schools.



[REGISTER BY CLICKING HERE!](#)

[Find out more here!](#)

Network Schools Webinar

Trevor MacKenzie: Inquiry Based Learning



Date: Thursday, 12th September

Time: 19:30 - 20:30

Cost: R750 pp; free for Network School members

[REGISTER BY CLICKING HERE!](#)



TSSA is a non-profit organisation dedicated to empowering schools to develop a culture of critical, creative, and collaborative thinking, fostering independent lifelong learners and problem-solvers. We promote thinking skill strategies that integrate easily with classroom practices through webinars, roadshows, online courses and conferences. Take a look at what is on offer in the months to come:

SPRING ROADSHOW WITH SUSANNAH COLE BUILDING CURIOSITY THROUGH PRODUCTIVE PUZZLING



Do you want your students to be critical, creative, and innovative thinkers? Come and find out how to get your students on the path to becoming deep thinkers by being able to adapt to new situations, solve complex problems, and stay resilient in the face of challenges at the Spring Roadshow 2024. With Susannah Cole, co-author of "Flexible Mindsets in Schools: Channeling Brain Power for Critical Thinking, Complex Problem Solving, and Creativity", you'll explore how grappling with challenging concepts not only stimulates cognitive engagement but also fosters resilience and deepens understanding. Don't miss out on this opportunity to unlock the mysteries of productive puzzling and unleash your student's cognitive potential!

Dates and Venues

- 7th October: Roedean School (SA), Johannesburg
- 9th October: Springfield Convent, Cape Town
- 11th October: St Andrew's Preparatory, Makhandla
- 14th October: St John's D.S.G., Pietermaritzburg
- 16th October: Uplands College, White River

Time

8:30 - 15:00

Cost

R1595 pp for TSSA Network School members
R1875 pp for non-Network School members

SPECIAL: 4 for the price of 3!

[Find out more here!](#)

[**REGISTER BY CLICKING HERE!**](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS



International Conference on Building Cultures of Thinking

Herschel School, Cape Town: 9th & 10th May 2025
Kingsmead College, Johannesburg: 13th & 14th May 2025

The aim of this conference is to intentionally promote essential thinking skills as well as inquiry-based teaching and learning, so that teachers are able to implement these and ultimately improve student outcomes. It is the small shifts with what we do in the classroom that can lead to powerful changes.

COST: R3 200 pp

R2 720 pp for TSSA Network Schools and students

REGISTRATION: Opens on 1st October

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: Sign the expression of interest to get priority booking.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Mark Church is currently a consultant for Harvard Project Zero's Making Thinking Visible and Cultures of Thinking initiatives. Mark works throughout the world with schools that wish to create cultures of thinking in their classrooms. He believes in the difference teachers can make for students when they strive to make thinking visible, valued, and actively promoted as part of their every-day experience.



Trevor MacKenzie is an experienced teacher, author, keynote speaker, and inquiry consultant, who has worked in schools around the world, including Australia, Asia, North America, Europe, and South Africa. His passion is in supporting schools in implementing inquiry-based learning practices. Currently, Trevor is an inquiry practitioner as a teacher with the Greater Victoria School District in Victoria, Canada.

[EXPRESSION OF INTEREST](#)

[FIND OUT MORE HERE!](#)

ARTICLES AND TALKS OF INTEREST

Teaching With Digital Games in Elementary School

Edutopia, 28th August 2024



Apps like Kahoot, Blooket, and Quizizz offer valuable feedback about what students are learning while teaching them useful skills.

[Click here to read the article](#)

How School Leaders Can Support Student Voice and Agency

Edutopia, 16th August 2024



Administrators can empower students to take a hands-on approach to learning by creating opportunities for them to make meaningful decisions about their school.

[Click here to read the article](#)

Plagiarism and Student Use of AI Tools

Teacher, 26th August 2024



Ease of access to generative AI raises ethical and practical considerations for educators. And where to next?

[Click here to read the article](#)

Best-reviewed Tutor-time Activities

TES, 12th August 2024



Top-rated tutor time activities to help you make form time valuable for both you and your students

[Click here to read the article](#)