



Stanford Lake College

HEADMASTER'S NEWSLETTER - September 2011

Dear All,

Another busy term draws to an end.

We concluded it with yet another highlight: the bi-annual school production, which was an adaptation of the movie *"The Breakfast Club"*. It was an excellent production and was enjoyed by all. The theme was challenging. The pulsating energy and the top-notch contribution by actors, dancers and singers will remain with us all for a very long time.

I would like to thank all who participated in the production and especially our three producers, Mr. Swann, Mr. Mhunduru and Miss Rennie, for the countless hours that they have devoted to the production. It was worth it.

I was very fortunate to attend the annual Independent Schools Headmaster's Conference in Cape Town last week. It was most informative. I would like to give a brief outline of the themes that are currently being discussed in our circles.

The theme was **Design Ahead**.

1. The opening address by Max Price confirmed the high quality of the IEB examinations. According to him there is a 7-8% variance with the state examinations. IEB students excel in their benchmarking tests and 97% of them graduate at universities.
2. There was a heartening talk by Donald Grant, the Education MEC for the Western Cape. Heads of state schools in the Western Cape are upbeat, because they will have to sign performance contracts.
3. Prof Tim Noaks said that in order for us to stay healthy we need to cut out carbohydrates and increase the good fats in our diet.
4. Westley Field (Australia) led two sessions on future schooling. He described technology as a critical friend. He used terminology such as techno ignorant and techno literate and blended learning opportunities, mapping technologies and collaborative learning. He gave many examples why blended learning works. If you access the MLC school website you will see some of their applications.

It is imperative to develop teachers with these blended and technical skills. Our students are ready for them.

GROWING TOGETHER FOR LIFE

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Independent
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5. We watched a video on 16 Habits of Mind, with Art Costa and Bena Kallick presenting a synthesis of the attributes of effective thinkers. They listed managing impulsivity, persisting, listening with empathy & understanding, thinking flexibly, meta-cognition, striving for accuracy, questioning and posing problems, communicating & thinking with clarity & precision, responding with wonderment & awe, finding humour, gathering data through all the senses, transferring & applying old problems to new situations, being good at working in teams, good at remaining open to continuous learning, generating new ideas and taking responsible risks.

6. A prolific blogger, Sarah Britten gave an impressive talk about The Digital Self. The teens of tomorrow are being described as high impact learners. These thoughts have huge implications for our students, schools and life as we know it.

7. Mark Molenaar presented the topic Mobile Teens. It was fascinating listening to him describing RSA teens, their attitudes, lives and use of mobile phones together with some insight into behaviour in the “digital’ space.

8. John Hunt delivered a very good topic: The Art of the Idea, also the title of his best- selling book. He described an idea as a challenge to the status quo.

Hunt gave examples of how people cling to ideas and structures in an organization in such a way that it can’t change. He described sunrise people as idea friendly and noted how many people see the future inculcated in the past. He described them as sunset people.

9. The High School Heads hung on the lips of a psychologist, Dr. Jason Bantjes, as he described the effect of Project Mayhem on the Bishops family. A group of approximately 80 Gr. 12s desecrated the school. He described their behaviour as the “gang state of the mind”. He described the school’s handling of this very sensitive matter and how it has led to forgiveness and reconciliation.

His narrative provided the opportunity for us to discuss and reflect on the themes of leadership/management, pupil behaviour in schools, the nature of teacher–pupil relationships in independent schools and, importantly, the pressure on Heads with the multiple roles we juggle daily and the unconscious group processes that underpin the leadership role.

10. Pieter Dirk Uys concluded our conference with his “You ANC nothing yet”.

Apart from the above, we enjoyed quality time with our colleagues. Gavin Scholefield and Ann van Zyl, two previous heads of our school, send their best regards to their old colleagues and past parents.

I would like to thank the Board for allowing me to attend the annual SAHISA conference.

I have a firm intent to stay healthy and to become a blended teacher.

I would like to thank all of you for your contributions during the past term.

I would like to conclude this edition of my newsletter with a closing remark from John Hunt - It is not about the circle of life, it is about the circus of life!

Enjoy the holidays



Johann Ueckermann
HEADMASTER

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