

“Creative thinking is like any other skill in life. The more you practice, the better you become. You can train your brain. Just like you can train your muscles.”

Dorte Nielsen, Director of Center for Creative Thinking.

Is *real* learning when children are actively involved in their own learning, researching, debating and collaborating, where lessons are creative and practical? [The Creative Education Foundation's Newsletter](#) (2 Feb 2026): *When You Can't Build a Bridge, Creativity Demands You Stand Your Ground*, discusses the "Creative Climate" - the conditions that allow ideas to flourish. As educators, we aim for the ideal: a calm, collaborative space where conversation helps us think together and discover new ideas. But in a system where so much of our teaching is driven by testing and compliance, creativity is often the first thing we push aside. Ironically, it may be the very tool we need most.

The best teaching and learning come from the disciplined practice of asking better questions, open-ended questions, like ["How might we?"](#), that stimulate conversation, debate and deeper thinking around subject content. Not worksheets completed in silence but rather, minds switched on. Not memorised notes but brave questions. Classrooms where learners research, debate, collaborate and build; where creativity is not a poster on the wall but the engine in the classroom, driving deeper learning.

Helen was very fortunate to attend the 2016 Creative Problem Solving Conference, hosted by the Creative Education Foundation at Buffalo University in New York. It quietly but powerfully reshaped her teaching journey. She also met [Dorte Nielsen](#), the founder of the [Centre for Creative Thinking](#), who has spent [decades researching](#) and teaching creativity as a skill that can be learned, strengthened and applied. Not just a “fluffy extra” or a talent reserved for artists but rather a practical, trainable capacity that belongs in every classroom.

While completing her master's degree, Helen began exploring [Dorte's methods](#) more deeply. The shift was profound! Lessons became laboratories, questions became springboards; her students were no longer passive recipients of information but active architects of ideas. Dorte's tools helped Helen move from *covering content* to *uncovering thinking*. Dorte's work blends cognitive science with hands-on strategies that teachers can implement immediately. She shows us how to help learners connect ideas, challenge assumptions and generate original solutions. In a world that demands adaptability, this is not enrichment; it is survival! Creativity is not a luxury; it is an essential 21st-century skill.

As we look forward to bringing Dorte to South Africa for our future conference, consider this a first handshake; **an invitation to reimagine what learning can look like.**



Coach in the Class

PS: Creativity grows when we give ourselves permission to try.

WEBSITE: <https://www.coachintheclass.co.za/>

[Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

What's available for TERM 2?

GRADE 4: <https://www.coachintheclass.co.za/grade-4-lp/>

GRADE 5: <https://www.coachintheclass.co.za/product-category/grade5/>

GRADE 6: <https://www.coachintheclass.co.za/product-category/grade6/>

GRADE 7: <https://www.coachintheclass.co.za/grade-7-lp/>