

Raring to go

Talking about it

DISCUSSION rings or lessons are whole-class times when you talk about different things with your learners. Often the discussion ring ties up with a theme or topic that you have been teaching. It is also a good time to get to know your learners, so encourage them to share their thoughts and ideas.

There are some important points to bear in mind when presenting a discussion ring:

- Try to have real objects to talk about. These could be man-made objects (toys, clothing or household goods) or natural objects (animals, plants and rocks). Pictures and models are second best, but will do if you are not able to get the real thing.
- If you do not have resources and must therefore talk about something, you will need to be very descriptive and make lots of links with objects or situations that are familiar to your learners.
- Try never to tell your learners something they can find out for themselves. Rather, get them to discover things through questioning and investigating with their senses — ie. what the object looks, sounds, feels, tastes and smells like.
- Always make sure that everyone can see the object about which you are talking. You can then call individual learners to use their senses and tell everyone what they have discovered.



- Sometimes it is a good idea to have an object for every learner — eg. a leaf, if you are talking about leaves. Using a hands-on approach, where they actually interact with the objects, leaves the learners with a clear picture of the object in their head.
- Seat learners who need special attention close to you.

By presenting discussion rings like this, you will be using techniques that fit in with what we know about how Grade R learners learn best — ie. ensuring active learning; encouraging use of the senses; working from the known to the unknown; and encouraging learners to express themselves and use language in context.

By really looking closely at things in our environment we can form clear pictures in our head. In particular, children should use all their senses to explore the world. They also learn better through hands-on experiences. As an educator, your role is to ask questions that make learners think and talk.

Questions to guide the observation or study of an object could include:

- What does the object look like? (Think about colour, shape, size, decoration and so on);
- What does it feel like? (Think

about texture, temperature and mass);

- Does it make a sound?
- Can you taste it or lick it? What does it taste like?
- Does it smell? If so, what sort of smell does it have?

Remember to help learners compare each property with things they know — eg. "The colour of this object reminds me of a ripe apple," or "This object smells like a lemon."

This article forms part of our cut-out-and-keep series for ECD teachers, brought to you forthrightly by the Jim Joel Education and Training Fund.

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In-service training programme for Grade R educators

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The Media in Education Trust

Power Parenting

Setting limits

Boundaries give us feelings of responsibility for our own lives, say DR RINA DE KLERK and DR RONÉL LE ROUX

BOUNDARIES allow us to define who we are, where we begin and where we end. They give us a feeling of ownership and responsibility for our own lives. By setting external boundaries, we show people where they stand with us. This means that they know how to talk to, touch and hug you, and that they should not interfere with your decisions. Internal boundaries help you to say "no" to destructive wants and to delay the satisfaction of certain needs. You should also determine what kinds of thoughts you are going to allow yourself — eg. "I will think constructively and will not allow my thoughts to create uncomfort-

able feelings." It is important to communicate your boundaries self-assertively to all those with whom you have a relationship because this brings security and openness to a relationship. This is especially important in the relationship between parents and children. Parents should help little children to shape their boundaries regarding what they may and may not do. At certain times, boundaries may overlap and you will have to reach an agreement. For example, both parties may have boundaries regarding bedrooms. Parents have a right to know what is going on in a child's bedroom, although children have a right



THROUGH THE FENCE: Although they might not admit it, children like boundaries because they help them to stay emotionally within certain limits. Picture: Mike Holmes, The Herald

to privacy. This needs a compromise from both parties. Also, if you experience feelings of disgust, frustration or anger when people make decisions on your behalf or do not respect you, you should set new boundaries or communicate them more clearly. Do the important people in your life really know what you want and what not? Take responsibility for and control of your life and move purposefully in the direction of the goals you have set for yourself.

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"The young can't teach traditions to the old."

Yoruba proverb



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