

Why Grade R Educators Are Critical In Improving the South African Education System?

*'Grade R Seminar'
Western Cape Department of Education
(March 2013)*



Dr. Louis Benjamin

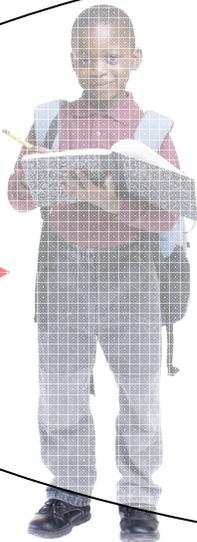
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How much support do these children/learners require?

Pre-school phase



School phase



THE IMPORTANCE OF GRADE R AND THE ECD PHASE

“ 90% of all brain development occurs by the age of five. If we don't begin thinking about education in the early years, our children are at risk of falling behind by the time they start Kindergarten.”

Robert. L. Ehrlich

HOW WOULD YOU TEACH THESE CHILDREN?



PHOTO 1

HOW WOULD YOU TEACH THESE CHILDREN?



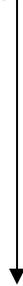
PHOTO 2

HOW WOULD YOU TEACH THESE CHILDREN?



- These children look like they are thriving
- These children look alert
- These children seem engaged and interested
- The children seem content
- These children look like they are learning

In the same way?



NO!!!



- These children look like they experience some dev. difficulties
- These children look a little confused
- These children seem vacant/not present
- These children do not look like they are learning

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

- Background
- Culture
- Religion
- Language
- Socio-emotional
- Socio-economic
- Life experience
- Educational experience
- Material resources

PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL LEARNING





22
1

Are There Special Ways To Teach So That Children Learn In Grade R?

Children who come to educative experiences with very different familial experiences need approaches which

reflect an understanding of these differences!

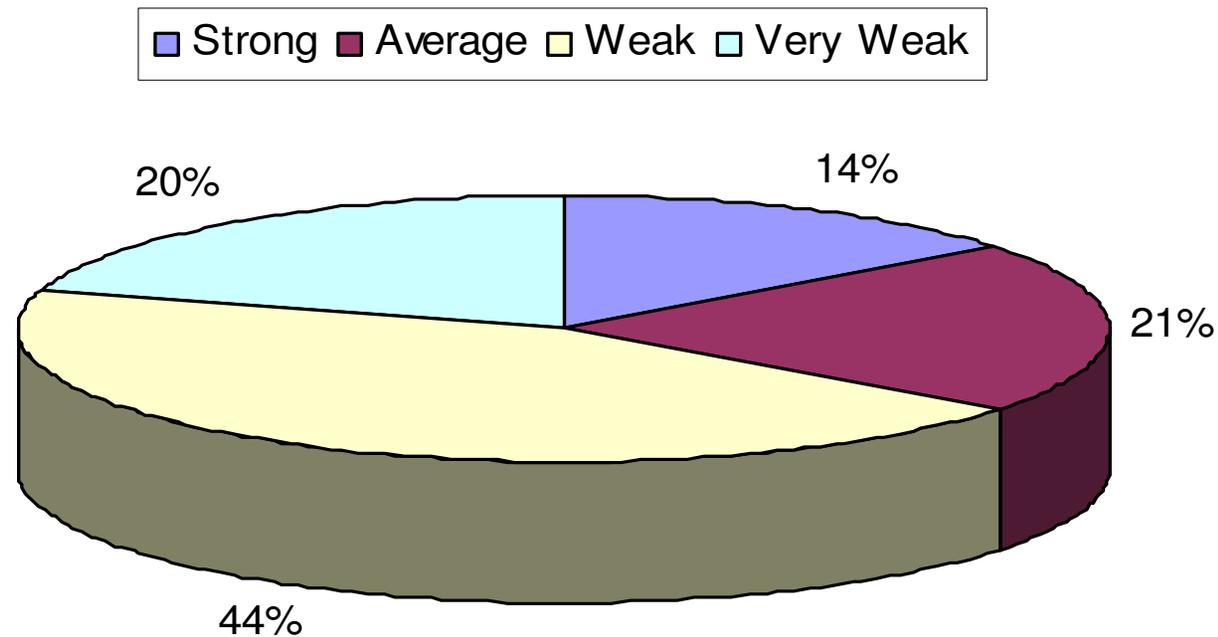
Are There Special Ways To Teach So That Children Learn In Grade R?

What do the curriculum documents say about children who come from different backgrounds in Grade R?

METRO CENTRAL EDUCATION DISTRICT

A Test of Basic Concepts Knowledge: Grade 1, 2008

(25 schools, n = 942)



Guide to interpret total score:

21-24 = strong

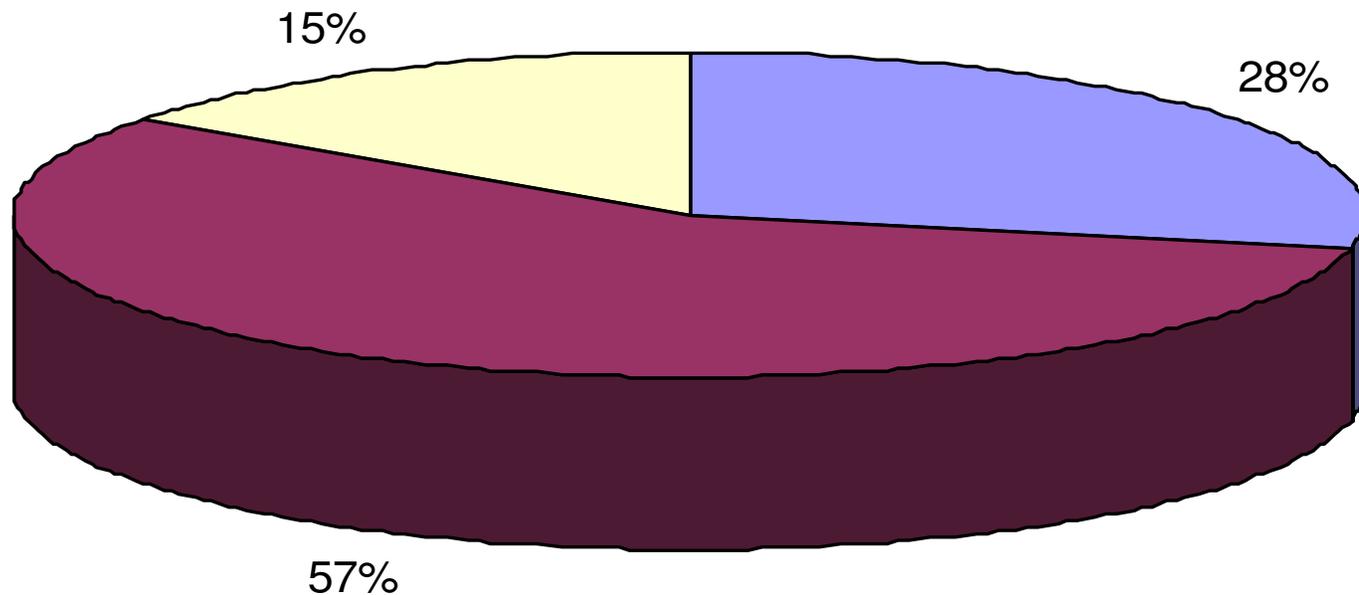
18-20 = average

11-17 = weak (intervention recommended)

0-10 = very weak (intervention recommended)

IKWEZI, SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT UNIT

TEST OF BASIC CONCEPTS KNOWLEDGE: BASELINE DATA FOR GRADE 1 LEARNERS, 2010 (8 SCHOOLS, N=300)



■ very weak ■ weak ■ average-strong

TELL YOUR FRIEND WHAT YOU SEE

COLOUR

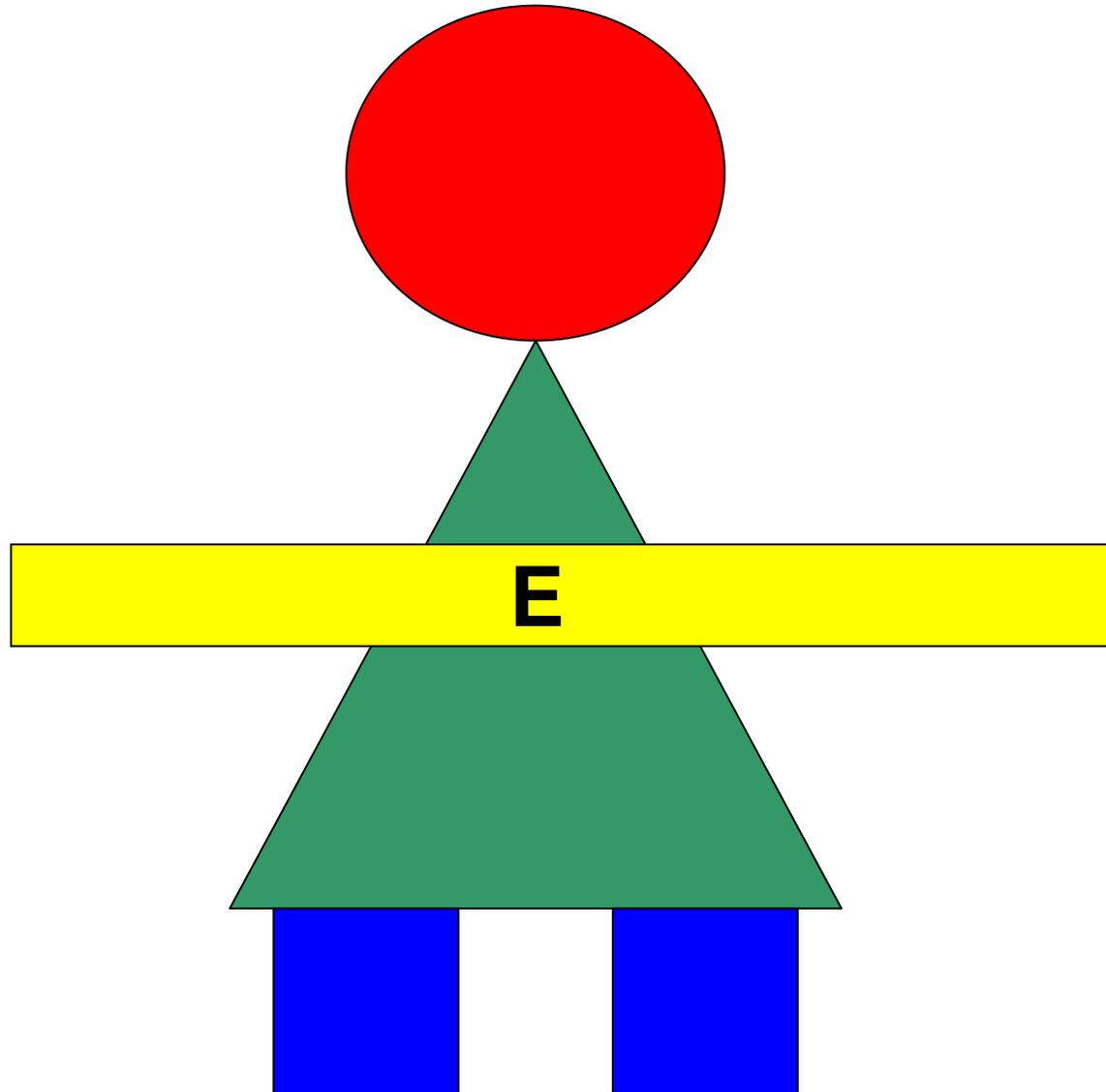
SHAPE

SIZE

POSITION

NUMBER

LETTER



mediator

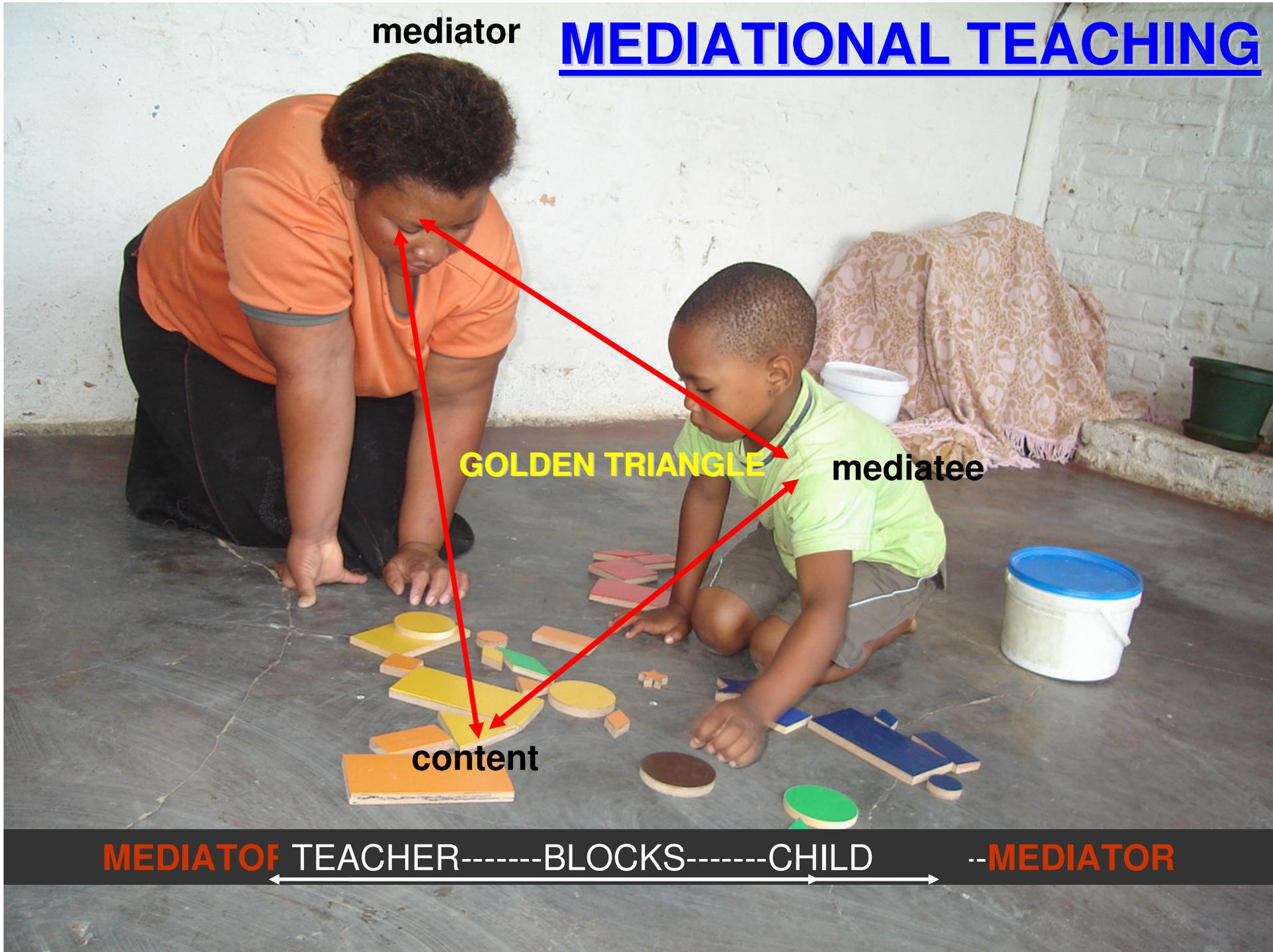
MEDIATIONAL TEACHING

GOLDEN TRIANGLE

mediatee

content

MEDIATOR TEACHER-----BLOCKS-----CHILD **--MEDIATOR**



CONTENT OF THE BASIC CONCEPTS PROGRAMME

HIGHER ORDER CONCEPTS

COLOUR

SHAPE

SIZE

POSITION

NUMBER

LETTER

LOWER ORDER CONCEPTS

RED
YELLOW
GREEN
BLUE
BLACK
BROWN

CIRCLE
TRIANGLE
RECTANGLE
SQUARE
DIAMOND
STAR

BIG
SMALL
BIGGER
SMALLER
MEDIUM
MIDDLE

LEFT
RIGHT
TOP
MIDDLE
BOTTOM
UP
DOWN

MORE
LESS
1,2,3,4,5
1ST , 2ND
 $3+4 = 7$
 $7-4 = 3$

A,B,C,D,
... X,Y,Z
CAPTIAL
SMALL
LETTERS

Are There Special Ways To Teach So That Children Learn In Grade R?

COLOUR

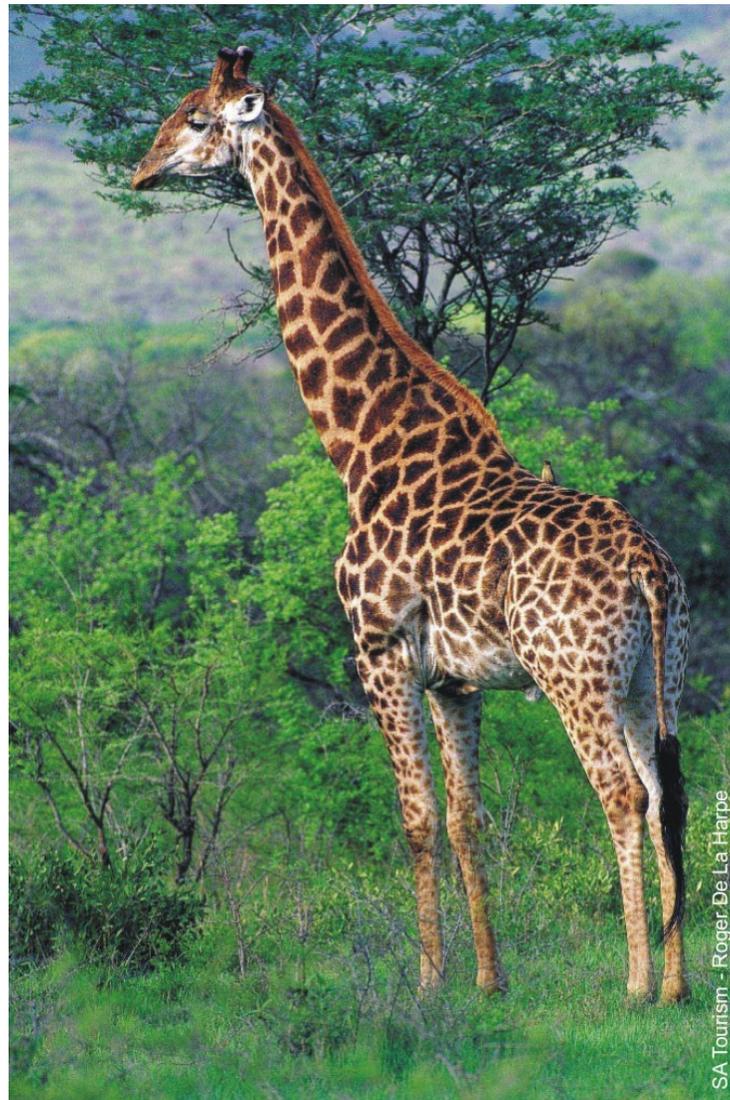
SHAPE

SIZE

POSITION

NUMBER

LETTER



TEACHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE BASIC CONCEPTS PROGRAMME

‘Two of my focus group learners are now able to use full, constructive sentences when speaking in class. They are able to identify and remember the concepts taught to them.’

‘I have a girl called Lifile Vahala who could not speak English at all. After implementing the BCP she has developed some English vocabulary and is eager to speak.’

‘Mu-ain was very slow to complete his work. He is eager to come onto the mat to do the BCP. His speaking and concentration levels have increased a lot.’

‘This has just boosted the learning in the class ... it makes the learning process fun for the learners. I can see ... the vast improvement in the intervention group.’

‘Three of my target group learners are now able to be placed in my second group. (Even with) their language problem they are now able to grasp concepts better.’

‘The learners developed confidence because at first they did not even want to talk in class, but now they can talk ... and also have a (better hand) grip ... (their) motor skills have developed ...’

‘Children respond and participate more freely in other discussions.’

‘My learners’ language has developed. Most of them have become confident and independent ... Learners who were extremely weak have greatly improved and have (moved) up to my first group. Their reasoning and thinking skills have improved.’

TEACHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE BASIC CONCEPTS PROGRAMME

'They are eager to work and they are more at ease to speak and help the slower learner.'

'Learners' minds have opened to perceiving things in detail.'

'Learners started to interact more. Language started to improve ... they are confident to answer questions within the group and classroom.'

'All learners in my class enjoy the programme. Stronger learners help or encourage slower learners. Learners are able to verbalize better. Programme helps with other learning areas.'

'One of my Xhosa learners who could not speak a word of English has now acquired vocabulary through the BCP. I have seen some progress in reading and mathematics with some pupils.'

'Learners who would never talk are now starting to participate (verbally). Introverted learners are now starting to participate in lessons.'

'Some of my learners who are in the BCP ... it has helped them to speak ... Some didn't want to speak, but now they can (and) they are so interested in the BCP.'



THE BASIC CONCEPTS PROGRAMME (BCP)



MAIN MENU

- > Home page
- > Information
- > Programme Materials
- > Current / Past Projects
- > Data Base of Mediators
- > Resources
- > Background
- > Service
- > Contact



**The BCP is an accredited UCT Short Course.
(NQF: LEVEL 6)**

programme for young children (5yrs-8yrs) who experience learning difficulties.

develop the THINKING, REASONING and SCHOLASTIC FUNCTIONING of young children.

promotes thinking skills considered important for success in all school learning areas, particularly reading, writing spelling and mathematics.

programme developed by Louis Benjamin, PhD.

<http://www.basicconcepts.co.za/>

Are There Special Ways To Teach So That Children Learn In Grade R?

‘There is agreement that to have an understanding of developmental psychology, to be able to respond to the astonishing range of the exploratory young mind and to make those responses accessible whilst structuring and extending the next stage of development takes extraordinary talent. Yes, most definitely.’

(2002, Tony Bertram and Chris Pascal)

For More Information Contact Dr. Louis Benjamin

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