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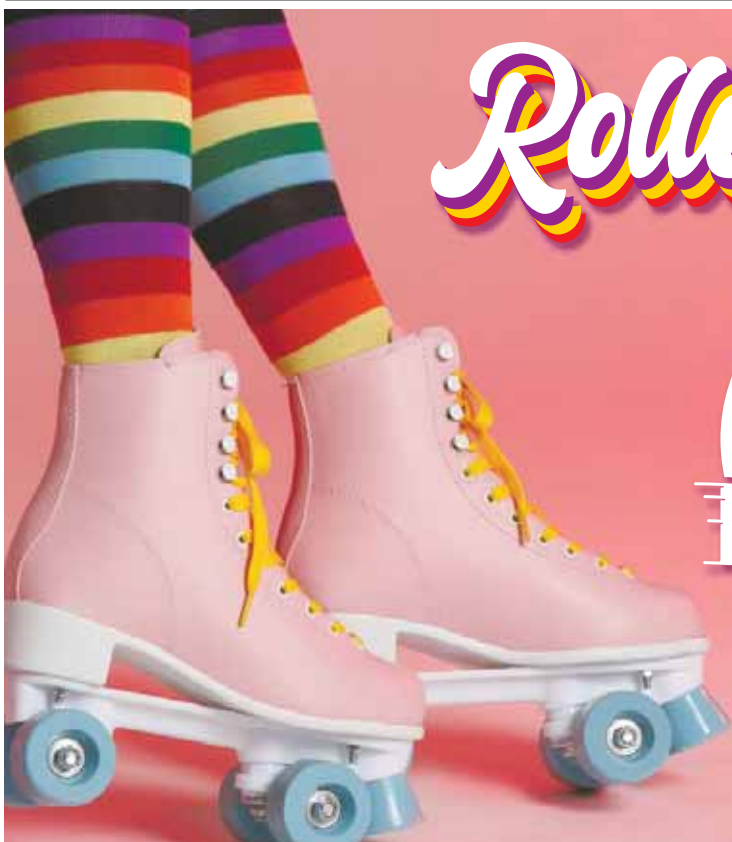
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CONSTRUCTIVELY
WITH CONCERNS

THE ART OF DEBATE

ENGAGING IN
RESPECTFUL
CONVERSATIONS



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THE ART OF DIALOGUE:

DEBATE AS A TOOL FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS



IN THE DYNAMIC WORLD WE INHABIT, one of the most vital abilities we can equip our young minds with is the power to engage in effective and respectful conversations. The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a beacon of moral courage, has exemplified this through his dedication to fostering dialogue and understanding among diverse voices. His legacy reminds us that it's not about winning an argument, but about creating an environment of mutual understanding, empathy, and respect. This is where the principles of debate can be a beacon of guidance.

LISTENING WITH INTENTION:

At the core of any fruitful conversation lies the art of active listening. When children are engaged in debate, they're taught to truly hear and absorb the opinions of their opponents. It's a skill that is equally essential when they find themselves amidst difficult discussions, allowing them to understand and respect differing perspectives.

SEEING THROUGH OTHERS' EYES:

By stepping into the shoes of varied viewpoints during a debate, children can develop a heightened sense of empathy. It empowers them to approach challenging conversations with an open mind, ready to consider and address the concerns of others.

EXPRESSING WITH CLARITY:

Debate, by its nature, teaches the value of clear, logical communication. It allows children to organise their thoughts effectively, enabling them to articulate their feelings and opinions with clarity and confidence during challenging discussions.

RESPECTING DISAGREEMENT:

Through debate, children learn the art of disagreeing respectfully. It shows that we can hold different opinions, yet maintain a dignified decorum and respect for each other, crucial attributes for any difficult conversation.

Participation in school debate clubs can provide an ideal setting for children to hone these skills. With proper guidance, they can learn to navigate through complex arguments while maintaining a respectful tone, preparing them to engage in constructive discussions in everyday life.

The goal is not dominating the argument but instead fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding. Encouraging your child to join a debate club or practicing constructive debates at home can be a powerful tool in nurturing these fundamental life skills.

STEPS FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATION

PRIORITIZE ACTIVE LISTENING:

Make sure to genuinely absorb what the other person is saying before crafting your response. It's perfectly okay to pause for a minute while you process everything that has been said.

ASSUME GOOD INTENTIONS:

When engaging in a conversation, assume that the other person has good intentions. This promotes a positive and open-minded dialogue.

CLARIFY MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

If something isn't clear, don't make assumptions. Instead, ask questions to understand better. We don't always express ourselves perfectly the first time.

CONFIRM YOUR UNDERSTANDING: Summarise their point in your own words to ensure you've accurately captured their perspective.

FOCUS ON COMMON GROUND: Try to identify and emphasise the areas you agree on.

Use these guidelines to make your discussions more productive, respectful, and focused on achieving mutual understanding.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY FOR CHILDREN: NURTURING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



PLAY forms a fundamental part of childhood and it goes beyond mere amusement and enjoyment. It is a natural and instinctual behaviour that plays a crucial role in a child's development, contributing to their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. In today's fast-paced and technology-driven world, it is essential to understand and uphold the significance of play in a child's life.

FROM the earliest stages of life, play serves as a primary means through which children learn about the world around them. During play, they explore, experiment, and make sense of their surroundings, helping them develop essential motor-skills and co-ordination. Simple activities like building blocks, crawling, or jumping rope foster physical development, laying the foundation for a healthy and active lifestyle.

Play more so acts as a catalyst for cognitive development. Whether a child is engaging in imaginative play, solving puzzles, or playing games, they exercise their brains, enhancing their problem-solving abilities, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Play further encourages curiosity, enabling children to ask questions, seek answers, and develop a thirst for knowledge that extends well beyond the confines of the classroom.

Emotionally, play provides an outlet for children to express themselves freely. Through play, they can process and communicate their feelings, fears and desires in a safe and non-threatening environment. Pretend play, for instance, allows them to step into distinct roles and work through complex emotions. Additionally, playing with peers teaches important emotional skills such as empathy, co-operation, and conflict resolution, fostering the development of healthy relationships.

Socially, play is the cornerstone of learning how to interact with others effectively. It provides opportunities for children to practice essential social skills like sharing, taking turns and communication. Engaging in group play helps children develop a sense of belonging and teamwork, building

the foundation for future collaborations and friendships.

Furthermore, play creates an inclusive space where children of diverse backgrounds can come together, promoting acceptance, and understanding.

As parents and caregivers, it is vital to recognize the value of play and provide children with opportunities for unstructured playtime. This means allowing them to explore, experiment, and create independently without a rigid agenda. It might be tempting to enrol children in multiple structured extracurricular activities, but they also need the freedom to engage in spontaneous play.

Today, unfortunately, as technology continues to dominate modern life, screens are increasingly drawing children away from physical play. While technology can offer educational benefits, it should not replace traditional playtime. Striking a balance between screen time and active play is essential to ensure a child's well-rounded development.

Play is an integral part of childhood that should not be undervalued. Its multifaceted benefits, encompassing physical, cognitive, emotional, and social aspects, make it a critical component of a child's growth and development. By encouraging and fostering a play-friendly environment, parents and caregivers can equip children with the skills and experiences that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Let us cherish and protect the magic of play, for it is through play that children discover the joy of learning and grow into confident, well-rounded individuals.



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REPORT CARD ANXIETY: HOW TO CONSTRUCTIVELY DEAL WITH PERFORMANCE CONCERNS

As we get closer to the end of the term, students and teachers alike are looking forward to a well-deserved break. Unfortunately, this time may also come with a lot of feelings of anxiety over report cards and, more specifically, a student's performance. However the report card should rather be viewed as a wonderful opportunity to take stock of where your child is at. This information in return can be used to as the baseline for setting realistic goals for the rest of the academic year.

Students may dread report cards and parents may be disappointed, frustrated and even angry with the lack of progress at times. However, the way in which a parent responds to a report card can have a profound impact on the child's mental health, self-esteem, confidence and motivation, and any response should therefore be well-considered and calm.

I would like to share some tips that you as parent can follow to reduce Report Card Stress:

1. **Seek to understand the Report Card** and what it is telling you. Pay attention to any additional information provided. Students receive an effort rating for each subject along with their subject mark. If the grades are below expectation, but the teacher communicates that your child is making a real effort, then there will be academic improvement over time.



2. **Contact the subject teacher** to discuss the progress and to gain further insight. Subject teachers spend a lot of time observing your child's focus, behaviour and approach to the subject.
3. **Attend Parent-Teacher Meetings**, but also feel free to get in touch whenever the need may arise.
4. **Put the results in context.** Praise the good results and understand that in some learning areas, it may require more patience for continuous development.
5. **Talk it over with your child**, but make sure you listen more than you

talk. Their feedback is essential.

6. **Take action** where necessary. The relevant Grade Head, Deputy Principal (Head of Academics), or subject teachers are all available and can offer expert intervention strategies. Should your child's school have a College counsellor, as we have, they will also be a great resource to you and your child.

Then, if academic improvement is required, you can start by looking at your child's routine and programme. Making changes to small things can yield big results, for instance:

- Limiting screen time and/or removing distractions.
- Checking your child's organisational skills.
- Providing a quiet study environment.
- Establishing homework times and a routine.
- Celebrating accomplishments, even the small ones.
- Setting realistic short-term and long-term goals.
- Emphasising that your child's social life should fit into their study schedule – not the other way around – especially during examination time and the periods leading up to assessments.

Should you see that your child is exhibiting signs of anxiety around their results, help them deal with it by:

- Preparing thoroughly, avoiding procrastination and consulting with a teacher for help – ask questions in class and take advantage of homework consultation. In the Abbots College system you can,

for instance, also call teachers after school hours.

- Reminding them that grades are important, but that it's also important to keep a perspective on things and not get despondent.
- Helping them draw up and stick to a study schedule.
- Reminding them to take short breaks.
- Assisting them to think positively.



By Ivan Horn, Principal: Abbots College Rondebosch – www.abbotts.co.za



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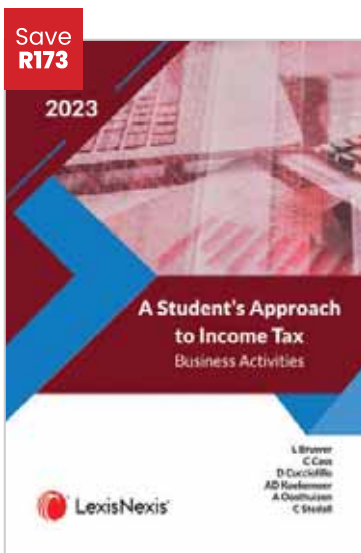


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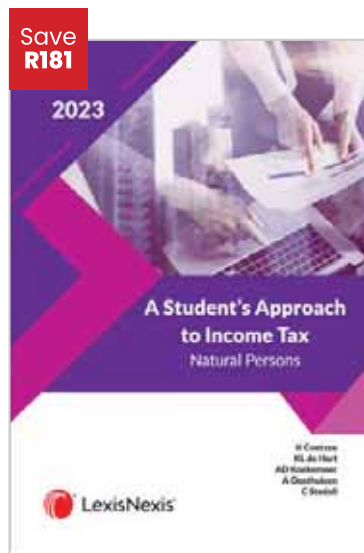
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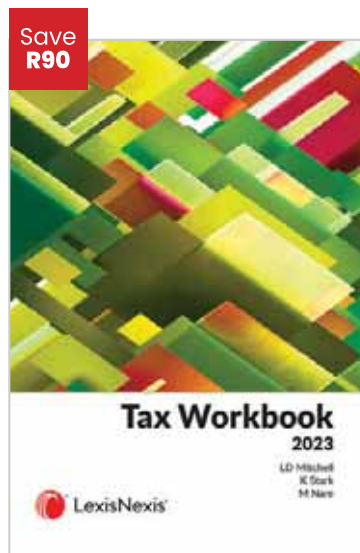
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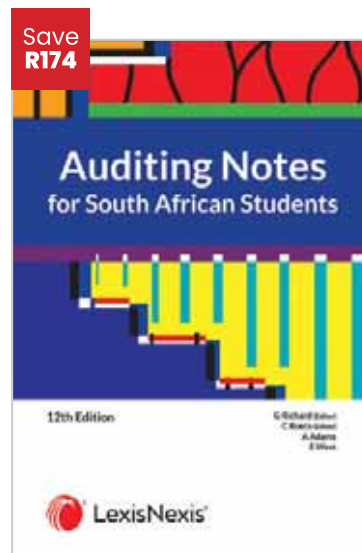
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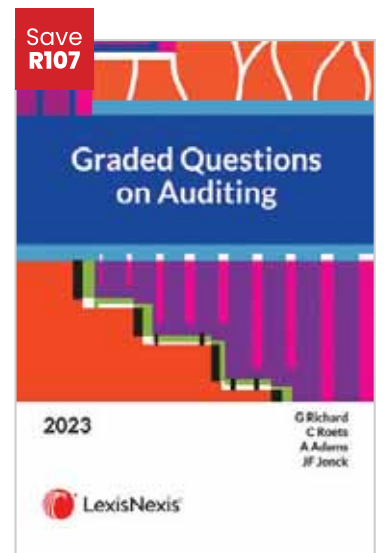
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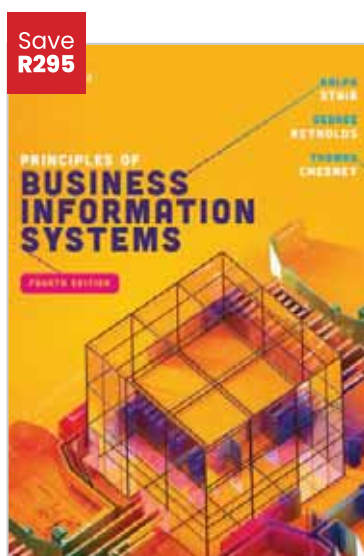
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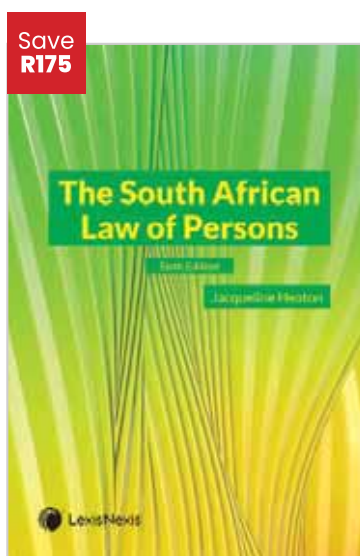
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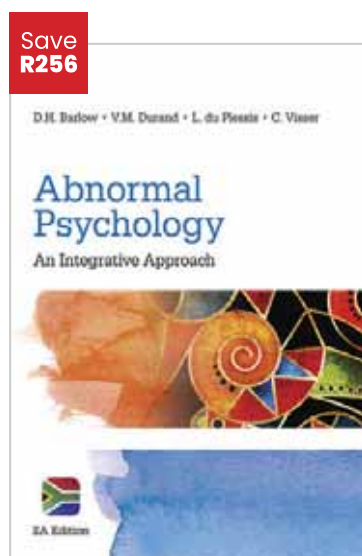
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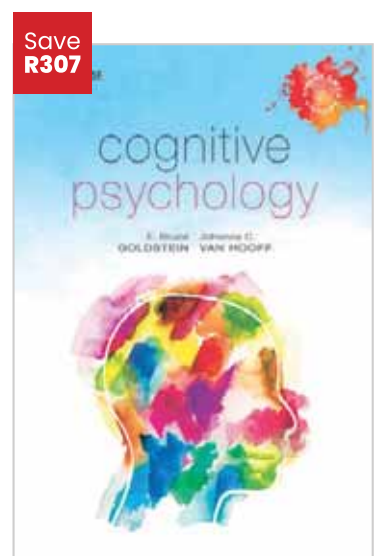
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