

Discipline by reason and discussion the best: study

REASONING and discussion is the most preferred method of disciplining in schools, a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) study revealed yesterday.

The survey, compiled from data over four years, showed that overall 91% of respondents supported reasoning and discussion and 81% supported giving additional learning tasks as a form of discipline.

While reasoning and discussion was highly rated, this method had also declined from 2003 to 2006.

The sample comprised 4 980 respondents in 2003, 5 583 in 2004, 2 850 in 2005 and 2 904 in 2006. All respondents were 16 and older.

According to the study, physical labour like sweeping was the least

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supported (33%). Corporal punishment by either a teacher or school principal and keeping pupils after school received equal support (51% each).

"Corporal punishment received more support than the other two methods that are construed to cause pain or discomfort, and physical labour like sweeping received the least support," the study said.

The upsurge of violence in schools led to the study on what South Africans think about the methods used in schools for disciplining learners, said the HSRC.

Compared to other race groups, whites were least likely to support reasoning and discussion, while Indians and Asians were four times more likely than whites to do so.

"A closer look at the analysis by race indicates the response distributions for whites and coloureds are somewhat similar, as are those for blacks, Asians/Indians. In relative terms, whites and coloureds tended to lend more support to methods that cause pain and discomfort, than did Indians/Asians and black respondents," it found. – *Sapa*.