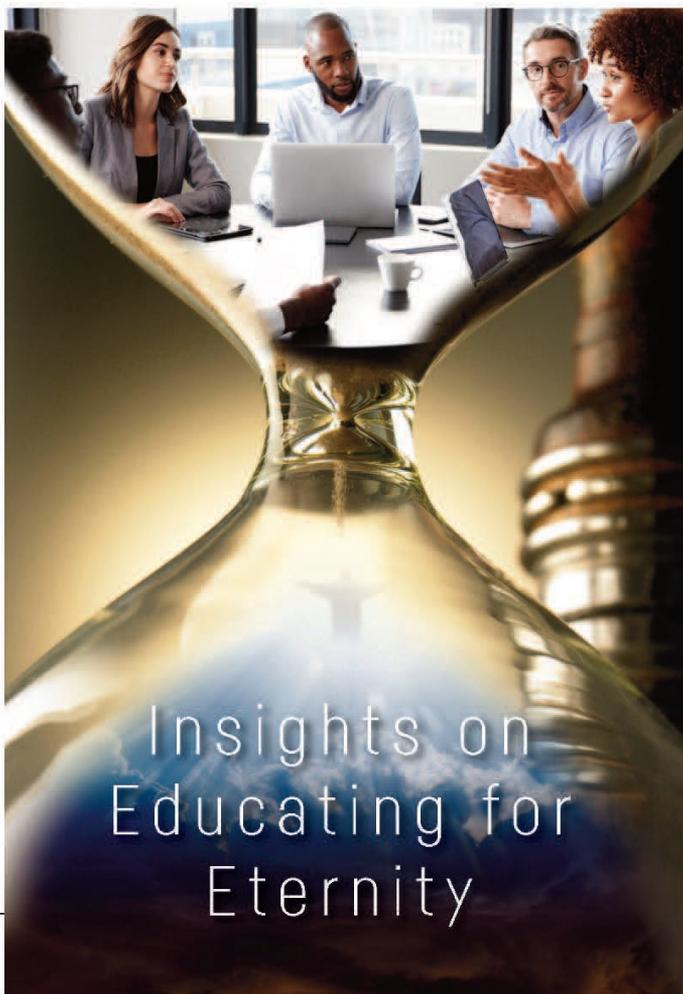


ADVENTIST EDUCATORS SPEAK:



Insights on
Educating for
Eternity

**ADVENTIST
EDUCATORS SPEAK:**

*Insights on Educating
for Eternity*

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on behalf of the
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INTRODUCTION

Remember that first meaningful conversation with a mentor colleague? Or, that stimulating conversation with a small group of educators during a breakout session at a professional development conference? Productive conversation can be powerful, transformative, and energizing. We set out to create a space for this type of interaction when we launched Adventist Educators Blog in 2017. We envisioned a “digital staff room”—an online space for conversations that would inspire interaction among Adventist educators globally. Educators would dialogue using online blogging tools and enlarge their perspectives through freely accessible continuing education.

Adventist Educators Blog publishes reflective blog posts from Adventist educators transnationally. These insights represent the diversity of Adventist educational contexts. By 2020, more than 180,000 people visited the blog website. Contributors are Seventh-day Adventist educators who work in a range of environments, from large university campuses to rural schools, each one sharing reflections and practical ideas for what works best and what matters most for Adventist educators called to the ministry of educating for eternity.

This collection shares select blog posts that showcase Adventist faith at work in diverse educational spaces. Through concise, practical posts representative of the diversity of settings where Christian education takes place, educators write on 12 thematic areas: philosophy and mission; Christian growth; curriculum; assessment and evaluation; instruction and teaching; learning; sustainable leadership; professional development; school environment; communication and cooperation; reflective practice; and best practices. Each theme represents a core standard for Adventist education.

Posts in this collection can also be read online at adventisteducators.org in most languages using an online translation tool. We invite you to read, share, and join the conversation by selecting the “view blog post online” link at the end of each entry. We hope that the busy teacher or administrator will find the content applicable to their educational ministry. Above all, we hope you will be inspired, encouraged, and energized as you read.

The Adventist Educators Blog Editorial Team

PHILOSOPHY & MISSION

Having a clear view of our philosophy and mission as Adventist educators is essential. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as the philosophy of Adventist education, faith integration, and qualities of Adventist education and Adventist educators.

HOUSE OF GOD AND GATE OF HEAVEN

Andrew Mutero, East-Central Africa Division, Kenya



Just like Jacob, we are apprehensive and uncertain of the future. What is the future of Adventist education? What about our schools? Where do we get much-needed resources?

One of our major strengths as Adventists is a unique philosophy of education that seeks to develop a whole person physically, mentally, and socially in a world where education has a strong bias for only mental development. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been called at such a time as this not only to *preach* the third angel's message but also to *teach* the message.

We are reminded of Jacob, who faced fear and an uncertain future. [Genesis 28:11](#) says that Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. He was running away from his brother Esau, who he had betrayed, and who was seeking revenge, and he was afraid for the future. In this time of uncertainty, Jacob stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there he put it under his head and lay down to sleep" ([Genesis 28:11](#)).

But in a moment of despair, sometimes a dream comes! Jacob had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it" ([Genesis 28:12](#)). Majestic ambassadors of God were conducting business between heaven and earth. Most encouraging to Jacob, there above it stood the Lord" ([Genesis 28:13](#)). At the top of every stairway in life stands the Lord. We can trust him with our future.

This dream was all grace. Jacob was not seeking God—he was fleeing the consequences of his deception. He was not expecting grace, yet the vision and the voice of God bore only assurances. Jacob could never go beyond God's keeping. It was grace that had brought Jacob safe thus far, and grace would lead him home.

What can we learn from Jacob's experience? At today's crossroad, we must:

Have a dream for our Adventist schools. The Lord is sitting on his throne on our side, and the angels are there to minister to us and connect us to the throne of God.

Wake from our sleep and think, paying close attention to our schools and our dream: When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it” ([Genesis 28:16](#)).

Recognize and admit that surely the Lord is in this place,” and sometimes we may not be aware of it” ([Genesis 28:16](#)).

Declare in reverence, How awesome is this place!" Could our schools become the house of God and the gate of heaven in our communities?

Just like Jacob, we are apprehensive and uncertain of the future. What is the future of Adventist education? What about our schools? Where do we get much-needed resources? The Lord is assuring us today: I am with you and will watch over you whenever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. . . . I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” ([Genesis 28:15](#)).

The Lord is in our Adventist schools, and we sometimes are unaware of it. Every Adventist school ought to be a house of God, the gate of heaven,” the place where every child, every man, and every woman can come face to face with God through the Ladder who has been sent down from heaven, Jesus Christ Himself.



[View blog post online](#)

TRANSFORMATIONAL TEACHERS

John Issa, Middle East and North Africa Union, Lebanon



Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith. [Hebrews 13:7](#)

For the past two decades, extensive research on transformational leadership has underlined its importance in many areas, both on the macro and micro levels.

As Seventh-day Adventist educators and leaders, we are to be very observant and cognizant of what we do in our schools and classes. We know that now more than any time before, the obligations put on the shoulders of teachers are weighty and sacred. Students come into our classrooms seeking more than just a good teacher. Many of them come with an expectation to find a friend or even a parent.

If we as teachers aspire to have our classrooms be tools that can create a positive transformation in the lives of our students, then we ourselves must be in constant touch with our God. He is the only Source to draw from that can empower us to move toward a hopeful future that emphasizes a God whose love is eternal and personally invested. He is the only Source that will help us fulfill our role in preparing others to live joyfully and to know, love, and serve God, even as we anticipate Christ's return and the end of sin and all its horrible consequences.

Our commitment to our beliefs and values should inspire all students, who will see that we are not afraid to call sin by its name and that our faith in God is the only source of comfort in an increasingly evil world.

As committed Adventist teachers, if we have not prioritized facilitating spiritual transformation in our students, we ought to reconsider our calling. While we may never know the full extent of the impact of our intentional integration of faith in the classroom and our interactions with students, our commitment should consistently allow God to work through us to transform our students into strongholds of heaven's values.

Ellen White says that the salvation of students will be the highest interest of Christ-following teachers. As an Adventist teacher, have you chosen to

be accountable to God for your impact on each student? We have the privilege and responsibility to uplift Christ's upside-down kingdom and values through our words and actions in today's secular world.



[View blog post online](#)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Gideon Petersen, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Madagascar



Our mission is not primarily about economic development or overcoming oppression. Our focus is redemption, developing our students to their full potential in Christ.

As a cross-cultural church planter for 17 years in rural Africa, I discovered that mission service is often limited to short terms and viewed as professional development. Both issues are a consequence of the widespread mindset that workers serve for a specific time instead of focusing on a task or making missions a career. Serving at an institution of higher education in one of the poorest countries in the world, I find myself more aware of the effects of these mindsets. Universities are places to train leaders and research ways to build capacity for their constituency. To achieve these goals, universities need qualified and experienced professionals. Yet, in a developing country, it is often difficult to attract mission-minded workers who are professionals willing to contribute to the long-term mission of the Church. The good news is that every worker, professional or not, can choose to contribute to the mission.

Christian universities are part of a larger trend in Africa. [Joel Carpenter](#) notes that Christian institutions of higher learning have mushroomed across Africa.¹ This follows the secular trend across Africa. It is through universities that societies can develop effective leaders and professionals. The mission of Christian educators in these areas is different from the mission of secular educators, however.

Our mission is not primarily about economic development or overcoming oppression. Our focus is redemption, developing our students to their full potential in Christ. We focus on holistic education that allows the student to grow emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally.

Here the role of teachers is vital. Christian teachers need to take time to be with the student. [Lokkesmoe and Medefinde](#) point out that Jesus was attentive to the individual.² Although he spoke to a crowd, he demonstrated an interest in individuals. Jesus listened deeply and intently to pose questions that would challenge individuals to reach their potential. To do this, he needed to be authentic. Because we seek

to develop transformational leaders who can use God's principles to be agents of change for God's glory, Christian higher education is about who we are with others. Transformational leadership is learnt in the way students are treated each day, such as by treating each student fairly, not showing favoritism, and patiently guiding students who struggle because of disadvantaged backgrounds.

This requires Christian educators who understand poverty but can see beyond the boundaries generated by Satan, educators who will step out in faith and lean on the One who has promised never to abandon the righteous ([Psalms 37:25](#)). Universities in developing countries need educators who can transform students by shaping their characters to honor God. The world needs a glimpse of Jesus in this century more than ever. This is our reason for being.



[View blog post online](#)

INTEGRATING DEVOTIONALS AND LESSON CONTENT

Sherry Hattingh, South Pacific Division, Australia



I wanted to integrate faith and learning more while still achieving the learning outcomes for the class. In order to change my devotional approach, I embarked on a new way of planning for the devotional.

While teaching pre-service teachers, I always began my classes with a [devotional thought](#) and prayer.³ These devotional thoughts were meaningful and to the point, allowing me to share Jesus with my students before we continued with the class. Although this was good, I felt like there was a greater opportunity to reach out to my students during these first few minutes of class and make them think critically about the devotion throughout the class time and beyond. I wanted to integrate faith and learning more while still achieving the learning outcomes for the class.

To change my devotional approach, I embarked on a new way of planning for the devotional. To teach my students how to integrate faith in their own classrooms, I needed to model this by implementing best practices. So, I began a new devotional approach utilizing an adapted version of the [curriculum cycle](#): I do (teacher models), we do (teacher and students practice together), and you do (students do independently).⁴

I begin by planning my class period, and then I search through the Bible and other Christian resources for material related to aspects of the class topic. This approach allows me to use the devotional to introduce one aspect of the class topic. Then I continually refer to the devotion and demonstrate to my students how it linked to the lesson topic throughout the class period.

This approach has changed several things for my classes:

- The devotion is relevant and applicable to the lesson content.
- My students arrive to class on time, not 5 minutes late. The devotion is part of the lesson topic, and they don't want to miss out on the information.
- Because the devotion is embedded throughout the class and is repeated, my students experience and discuss the connection

with the topic and the integration of faith and learning. They learn by observation how to embed faith into lesson material, a skill they will need when they begin their own teaching.

- My students leave class with the devotional thought and class topic integrated. The students tell me they continue to discuss the devotion outside of class. One student shared that she shares the devotion with her family in the evening. Another group of students meets later in the day to discuss the class, and this discussion usually results in a Bible study because of the devotion. Interestingly, a few non-Christians have been part of these out-of-class groups, and they are now actively asking questions and engaging in the devotional discussions.

Implementing this change has required intentional planning and critical thinking; however, the extra effort is yielding [transformative learning](#) and success in integrating faith and learning in my classes.⁵ Making a short devotional link to the current learning in each class can be very helpful for bringing our Christian faith into our classrooms.



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A FAITH FOR TODAY: SAVING THE PLANET

Oystein LaBianca, North American Division, USA



We who were commissioned to be stewards of God's creation are failing miserably. We are destroying what God created and said was very good.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). With these words, the Creator summed up his sentiment about all that he had made and done. Today you and I are destroying what he made and declared good. We:

- Pollute the air to the point that millions of people must wear face masks.
- Make large portions of the world’s oceans uninhabitable for coral and fish.
- Stand by as rates of extinction of other living species skyrocket.
- Deplete soil fertility by applying large amounts of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Turn vast swaths of the jungle into range lands for producing hamburger beef.
- Cage millions of chickens, pigs, cows, and other animals to supply meat, eggs, milk, and skins for our mass consumer societies.
- Contaminate pristine waters and landscapes with the pollutants and wastes produced by our factory farms, fast fashion, insatiable addiction to fossil fuels, and quest for more material goods.

We who were commissioned to be stewards of God's creation are failing miserably. We are destroying what God created and said was very good. Our sheer number and way of life impact the Earth's finely tuned regulatory processes. While the media warns about climate change, scientists use a more ominous term to describe our impact on Creation: the Anthropocene, a period when human activity has become the dominant force impacting climate and the environment.

Many young people are calling for immediate and drastic action. I hear them, and they welcome someone in a position of some modest influence listening. As I teach at a Seventh-day Adventist institution, I

remind my students of their cultural DNA as Adventists and how this relates to the current crisis. Specifically, I remind them that:

- Our calling is to be stewards of God’s creation. This is our God-given mandate: to be mindful of our impact on the lives and habitats of other creatures; to take good care of the Earth.
- As the Psalmist says, one purpose of Sabbath-keeping is to acknowledge that the Earth and all in it are the Lord’s. The Sabbath also is a time to get off the treadmill of rampant, unbridled consumerism and instead enjoy fellowship with others and communion with God’s creation.
- We are champions of a healthy diet and lifestyle - nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, fresh air, rest, and trust in God - NEW START for short. We can’t be champions of this way of living if we fail to care for our environment. The most important thing we can do is follow a plant-based whole foods diet. We are blessed to have this diet as part of Adventist cultural DNA.
- We see ourselves as part of God’s family above all else, regardless of national or racial, or ethnic boundaries. We celebrate this every five years when we gather for our General Conference. Such an outlook is crucial for addressing the challenge of the Anthropocene, as the forces unleashed by our modern way of life know no such boundaries.
- Our worldwide system of churches, K-12 schools, universities, and community services organizations are desirable vehicles for making a difference. I challenge students to organize their institutions into becoming transition communities—places where everyone works together to learn, share and apply best practices from our faith tradition that can make a huge difference for the environment where we live.

Lastly, I remind students that, despite the dire situation, we have the assurance that God is in charge of our lives and our planet and that our calling is to do the right thing by his Creation.



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INTEGRATING FAITH INTO TEACHING

Clive Malcolm, Trans-European Division, United Kingdom



As teachers, we can draw inspiration from the examples [Jesus] gave us to help students achieve success in all areas of their lives.

If God is an integral part of your life, then your faith is integrated into your teaching by default. When you accept Jesus as your Saviour, your faith becomes a part of your deoxyribonucleic acid – your DNA, or if you prefer, your spiritual DNA. You cannot contain it nor hide it even if you tried, which explains why Jesus said, “A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.” Note that Jesus said this after telling his followers, “You are the light of the world” ([Matthew 5:14](#)).

Whether you work in a secular or faith-based school, one way or another, your relationship with God will be reflected in the way you talk and interact with students and colleagues. I have had people approach me to ask, “Are you a Christian?” Whenever I say yes, they respond, “I thought so.” My students often ask the same question, and they seem content and reassured when I say, “Yes. I am a Christian.” I find this quite fascinating and often wonder what is going through their minds.

Being a teacher means you are under constant observation by your students. They watch your every move, and they are witnesses to all your idiosyncrasies. If you are in doubt, ask your students to impersonate you. You might be surprised by what you see and hear. Because students watch us so closely, the real test comes during those days when things do not go to plan, when you are having a bad day. Does your light continue to shine during those moments?

Such situations underline the importance of starting each day with a prayer. Integrating faith into teaching begins at home before you step out of the front door. It starts with prayer, thanking God for life, health, and strength, and asking Him to give you the wisdom and determination to help your students learn more each day, improve and excel academically, and even find a purpose in life.

Integrating faith is also about giving that little extra to add value to your students' experience. I spent many years in the industry before becoming a teacher, so I share relevant experiences connected to the topics covered in the students' textbooks to illustrate valuable lessons from

everyday life. A student came to me after class one day and said, "I like those little anecdotes you tell during the class. I find them helpful. Whatever you do, please don't stop telling them." I discovered those little anecdotes added value to my students' classroom experience.

While Jesus was on this earth, he was the master teacher who did all he could to build up people's faith and self-confidence through words and action, and he continues to teach us today. As teachers, we can draw inspiration from the examples he gave us to help students achieve success in all areas of their lives.



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INTEGRATION OF FAITH, LEARNING, AND WORKING

Athanase Rutebuka, East-Central Africa Division, Ethiopia



Integration of faith and learning is not an isolated activity belonging in a classroom alone.

The integration of faith and learning provides an opportunity to share our faith in all classroom disciplines. This endeavor has been primarily left to classroom teachers. As Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Editor-in-Chief for *College and University Dialogue*, says, all teachers need to develop their capacity to achieve the redemptive purpose of Adventist education and to model Adventist values and lifestyle.”⁶ However, I believe that Adventist and non-Adventist faculty or staff working in an Adventist educational institution is a teacher.

Integration of faith and learning is not an isolated activity belonging in a classroom alone. Learning takes place both in and outside the classroom, so all school employees need to show faith integration daily in their work areas so that what students learn in the classroom can also be observed and experienced outside. It's about integrating faith with learning and with working. An unknown writer once argued: If you don't practice what you preach and don't practice what you teach, then what you preach and teach will not reach; it's just a speech.” Thus, the integration of faith and learning should go beyond an individual's efforts to encompass the entire institution's workforce.

The administration should support the practice of faith and learning and apply the principles of the Bible in their operations; rules and regulations should be fair, just, and applied equally and consistently. Employees and students should be treated without discrimination or favoritism. Disciplinary actions should be redemptive and equitable. The administration should also create a physical environment conducive to the integration of faith and learning. The décor of all building facilities and the campus landscape should reflect our faith in such areas as cleanliness, order, and harmony.

Both faculty and staff are open books that all readers, including students, read. As good as praying, reading a Bible passage, or sharing our faith in all classroom subjects is, this will not go far enough in students' lives if faith and learning are not integrated into the faculty and staff members'

own lives. Therefore, our work ethic and lifestyle matter very much. They see what we do and try to imitate the qualities we show. According to Randall Sorenson, "Faith integration ... is caught, not taught" ([2010](#)).⁷ Students catch more what we do than what we say.

Integration of faith, learning, and working also mean hiring employees who espouse the Adventist faith or support Adventist principles. According to Beardsley-Hardy, Knight has once asked: "What is Christian education without Christian teachers?"; "What is Adventist education without Adventist teachers?"⁸ Beardsley-Hardy argues that "The data shows that we also need systems and deliberate efforts to increase, where needed, the percentage of Seventh-day Adventist teachers who work in the system. The past 14 years show a clear downward trend for primary, secondary, and tertiary teachers. We increasingly employ people of other faiths or no faith at all."⁹ Having Adventist teachers in Adventist schools is an important factor for faith integration.



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INTEGRATED SERVICE: A VISION FOR ADVENTIST ECEC

Sandra Ludlow, South Pacific Division, Australia



Adventist early childhood education and care centres offer unique opportunities for communities of education, care, relationship, and mission to flourish.

Adventist early childhood education and care centers offer unique opportunities for communities of education, care, relationship, and mission to flourish. Conference ministry departments, pastors, school chaplains, school counselors, and Christian teachers can work together to serve and minister to the families and children who attend our childcare centres. By so doing, they have long-term opportunities to engage in a unique type of friendship ministry that supports the wellbeing of families and spreads the gospel to parents and children. Many of these families are unchurched and will never attend an Adventist church. The daily contact that early childhood educators have with parents, children, and their extended family members can support family wellbeing, spiritual awareness, Biblical knowledge, values, and faith formation in ways that the other ministries are less able to achieve.

Adventist daycare services can be viewed as integrated services of ministry, education, and care. Indeed, Christ-like living, communicating, discipling, teaching, healing and serving operate at the core of our philosophy and practice. All who work at the centers can engage in a ministry of teaching that allows them to be the "salt of the earth" ([Matthew 5:13](#)). They can permeate their local community with Christian values, well-being, and a Christian worldview. This view of early childhood education and care moves beyond the integration of faith, learning, and care. It includes a broader view of Christian education and the ministry of teaching that harnesses the opportunity for a transformational missions approach by incorporating several areas: social justice, education for life as well as eternity, and family and child spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, creative and social well-being.

To accomplish this, centers must establish new partnerships with church entities such as family ministries, health and well-being ministries, education, and evangelism. We should spend time together to understand each other's unique mission and programs. Discover the needs of the families currently enrolled in your center and creatively

explore possibilities for working together to meet these needs. Part of this process is exploring respectful ways to introduce the gospel to unchurched families and engage in service projects that can help the local community flourish. Such partnerships will empower each entity to take an active role in the early childhood education and care centre and its mission.

The work of Pratt ([2014](#))¹⁰ indicates practices that can help achieve this new vision for Adventist early childhood education and care. He speaks of intergenerational events, parent education, family service opportunities, and the celebration of memorable events. The approach that emerges from this type of community of practice could involve a wide variety of initiatives and events.

Programs of this nature would see Adventist education and care centers joining with various church entities to operate beyond normal education hours in a ministry of education, care, and service. This integrated service vision would promote resilience and wellbeing in families and the community. It would expose a broader cross-section of the local community to a Christian worldview and the good news of salvation. What possibilities can you see for this type of approach to early childhood education and care in your community?



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THE SOCIAL ROLE OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Douglas Menslin, South American Division, Brazil



Adventist education sees learners as a whole, capable of acting and deciding for themselves what they consider important in their lives in the context of society and its values, and this includes spiritual formation.

True education goes beyond the accumulation of cognitive knowledge, preparation for the world of work, self-knowledge, and effective competition within the environment. Adventist education sees learners as a whole, capable of acting and deciding for themselves what they consider important in their lives in the context of society and its values, and this includes spiritual formation.

Understanding the human being through the development of the whole being - including spirituality - is no longer exclusive to those involved with religion but is also essential for those who seek a differentiated education for their children. It is at this point that Adventist education can participate in the formation and information process of today's society.

Four pillars make Adventist education a strong ally of a society focused on the holistic development (moral, ethical, social, physical, and spiritual) of the human being:

- **Restoring students to God's image.** Adventist Education stands out because, in its curriculum, the image of God is present every day, in all activities. Students are educated in a way that promotes the development of body, spirit, and soul, moving students toward resembling the image of their Creator.
- **Developing character following immutable principles.** True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquisitions, but above instruction, it appreciates capacity, above capacity goodness, and above goodness, character. The world does not need individuals of great intellect so much as a noble character. It needs people whose ability is directed by firm principles.
- **Stimulating self-improvement based on social development.** Selfishness has taken from the hearts of children and adolescents the feeling that it is important to contribute to family and society.

The current generation no longer wants to assume any responsibility towards others. It is the role of the family, the church, and the school to teach adolescents and young people the importance of living not to be served but to serve.

- **Encouraging wise decision-making.** Adventist education does not see its students as competitors to each other. It does not seek to prepare children and adolescents for an unbridled search for the fittest or the strongest. It looks at the student as someone capable of developing within his or her capacity and, through it, being fit to make decisions that will make a difference in their lives and those around them.

That is why Adventist education stands out from other educational programs. Its mission is to contribute to a society that seeks something better for students who are still in training and need to receive a broader, deeper, and more complete knowledge.



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PHILOSOPHY FOR WHAT?

Thalia Silva, South American Division, Brazil



The educational philosophy must be both personal and collective. This is a constant challenge for any educational system and becomes greater when it comes to a Christian education system.

A teacher says to a colleague: "I am here to teach Mathematics, not to teach values or to concern myself with matters of a spiritual nature. After all, I am here to make money!" Does this statement have anything to do with the philosophy of education?

A teacher observes that a student is cheating on an assessment. Does their decision on how to act on this fact have anything to do with the philosophy of education?

For both situations, the answer is yes! The most common acts in the daily life of a school show the basic beliefs that underpin the institution. In the same way, the worldview of educators underlies their actions even when they are not consciously thinking about it.

We often departmentalize philosophy as something abstract, ethereal, for the privileged few who spend their time "philosophizing" as opposed to the pragmatists who "make things happen."

However, whether we are conscious of it or not, we have been "philosophizing" since we acquired the capacity to consider the abstract, reflect, and seek meaning. We search for meaning in life and develop along with it our set of beliefs, values, purpose, and self-knowledge.

Those who choose to work in education need to develop the ability to reflect on philosophy in the context of educational phenomena. If you work in a Christian institution, you need to know the Christian vision that underlies the educational philosophy. This vision will derive from the Bible, and most Christian schools systematize the assumptions of the educational philosophy that guides them.

Still, a philosophy of education is only realized in proportion to how it is reflected in the exercise of education. In other words, a teacher's practice reflects his or her philosophy, so the teacher needs to internalize an educational philosophy for it to materialize. In selecting and developing educational practices, they need to harmonize with the teacher's beliefs.

These, in turn, must be shared with the educational community where the teacher carries out their activities.

The educational philosophy must be both personal and collective. This is a constant challenge for any educational system and becomes greater when it comes to a Christian education system. The goal of all managers and leaders should be: To have the institution's educational philosophy shared and experienced by all educators.

But how can this goal be achieved? Here are some tips helpful for Christian schools:

- Take time to reread systematically the philosophical assumptions of the Christian education your school has adopted.
- Ask yourself these questions frequently
 - What is education?
 - Why do we educate?
 - Who do we educate? (Human nature)
 - Who educates? (Teacher Profile)
- Create opportunities to exchange views and reflect with colleagues.
- Constantly examine educational processes and practices in the light of basic philosophical beliefs.
- Faced with a dilemma, choose a solution that strengthens the redemptive purpose of education. Ask: Will this decision allow the student to be restored to the image of God? Will this decision promote independence or dependence on God?

What then is the philosophy of education? To give meaning to all the activity that takes place in a school.

George Knight, reflecting on this, stated, "Only when teachers clearly understand their philosophy and examine and evaluate its implications for daily activity in an Adventist setting can they hope to be effective in achieving their personal goals and the goals of the schools they teach."¹⁰

A Christian school without a clearly understood and implemented Christian philosophy becomes a dangerous contradiction. After all, philosophy makes all the difference!



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THE EDUCATION OF JESUS

Gerber Hernández, Inter-American Division, Honduras



Jesus' school was in his humble home at the feet of Mary. He learned to read from the Holy Scriptures.

When I was in Santa Barbara, Honduras, in some public offices, I read a phrase: "Education changes our lives." Meditating on that phrase, I thought of this one: "True education forms character into the likeness of Jesus Christ."

It was said of Jesus, our greatest example: How does this man know letters, not having learned them? No man has ever spoken like this man!" ([John 7:15, 46](#)). Everyone marveled at the level of his wisdom, even though he never attended a formal school. So how did he learn? He learned at the humble feet of Mary, his mother, and his teacher.

What is education? In the book *Education*, Ellen White says: "It is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual faculties. It prepares the student for the joy of serving in this world, and for a higher joy provided by wider service in the world to come."¹² I don't think there is a more well-rounded or accurate definition than this.

True children of God are educated to serve, and by selfless service, they develop the character of the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ. Those who say they know him must walk as he walked. As Jesus said, "And I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done" ([1 John 2:6](#) and [John 13:15](#)).

Since Jesus is our example, we can learn from His life. In which school or university did Jesus study? Were there educational centers in Jesus' time? Why didn't Jesus receive His education in the schools of the rabbis?

Jesus' school was in his humble home at the feet of Mary. He learned to read from the Holy Scriptures. He learned from nature, the first book for our education, and through the daily tasks and responsibilities, he had to fulfill at home and in his father Joseph's carpenter shop. Jesus was excellently educated and knew his mission well, as did his contemporary John the Baptist. Both had a clear purpose for living and were willing, if necessary, to give their own lives to fulfill that purpose. Jesus received an excellent education.

On the other hand, traditional education had blinded the leaders of the people and the people themselves. They believed they were great because they had studied in the seat of Moses; they had their titles and recognitions, but they did not have the most important thing, which was to walk humbly with their God, to do justice, and love mercy ([Micah 6:8](#)). They were brought up to be arrogant, proud, and ambitious. They longed for fame and recognition in the society. They were blind, wretched, miserable, and poor, even though they thought they were rich ([Revelation 3:17](#)).

As Adventist institutions, we have at times moved away from God's design for education. If, as God's children, we choose to follow God's textbook, the Bible, and the counsel of inspired writings, our educational institutions throughout the world and at all levels can be truly outstanding. We can become a truly exalted people with the riches of true knowledge in all the areas that matter for our salvation, the salvation of our families, the salvation of our churches, and the salvation of our communities.



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JESUS, OUR HOME

Isaac Llopis, Inter-European, Spain



We must show our students Jesus' way of living in connection with others, thinking of the weak and the needy, a life of success not based on authoritarianism but on altruistic service.

The world is full of pain and misunderstanding, and our students are immersed in it. We are finding more and more cases of students living in difficult homes situations; students who have needed to play adult roles and feel suffering first-hand before their time.

Therefore, the school often has to be an emotional home for them, and that only happens by claiming Jesus as the true home so that with a stable foundation, there will be a meaning beyond the suffering ([Matthew 7:24-27](#)).

To move toward Jesus is to enter into the opposite of one's own ego: it is to get out of oneself, to live off-center from one's own problems and desires, to give space to the other, and to serve him and strive to make our heart his home. Jesus invites us to step beyond our ego and become fully human. We, the teachers, must express and model this message in order to serve every student.

The problem is that we often take a different direction from that proposed by Jesus. What in the Gospel was compassion, we sometimes transform into mere morality, which is a much simpler way of regulating and controlling the other, but in doing so, we lose part of the divine in the transformation. In contrast, when a human being is compassionate, whether he is a believer or not, he manifests God.

Jesus produced a turning point in first-century religiosity. Although he did not create a new religion, he did produce a radical shift in the point of encounter with God. At that time, God was found in the temple, but Jesus showed that God is found in the street, houses, courtyard, and anywhere goodness abounds ([Matthew 25:35-40](#)). God is not a temple; he is much more than that; he is a house.

The Gospel is a call to be a movement. Therefore, we cannot allow the fact that the school and the church are institutions to reduce this

movement at the human level. It is very urgent to remember how Jesus understood our mission and Christian education.

What is essential, what is the home in our faith, is Jesus in first place, not the institutions. Institutions, churches, and preachers come and go, but it is "Christ alone," as Luther would say, that supports our mission.

We must show our students Jesus' way of living in connection with others, thinking of the weak and the needy, a life of success not based on authoritarianism but on altruistic service. Young people are very sensitive to the Christian message, and our mission is to ensure that they get the core of Jesus into their hands so that they can decide freely for themselves to make Jesus their home.



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CHRISTIAN GROWTH

To fulfill our mission and lead students to Christ, each educator must have a strong relationship with Christ. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on teacher spiritual growth, understanding redemption and discipleship, connecting with God and the school family, and learning from Jesus as Master Teacher.

SALVATION IS HIS ULTIMATE GOAL

John Issa, Middle East and North Africa Division, Lebanon



“And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

[Acts 2:21](#)

As a student, educator, and later a parent, I always felt anxious when final grade reports were given out. Each role presented challenges dealing with what was to come next.

As a student, I felt that I deserved higher grades based on the amount of work I had put into my studies. As a teacher, I often worried about whether a student's grade was fair and indicative of the work and effort invested by the student. As a parent, I felt restless as I waited for my children to bring home their grade reports.

To arrive at fair grade reports, teachers use different assessment techniques and procedures to build and evaluate student performance and competence and help the teachers determine whether a student should be eligible for promotion to higher classes. In God's eternal school, in His refining of the human character, our merciful Lord uses whatever possible means to help us come to a deeper understanding of ourselves, even as He provides all necessary for our salvation.

Every student needs to be exposed to a variety of assessment techniques to help them utilize their strengths and progress through increasingly complex lessons. While the student's responsibility is to work hard and to trust the teacher to provide quality learning experiences, teachers are never happy when any of their students do not make it to the next level. They will always feel that they could have done more to see the student make more progress.

Similarly, when we choose to follow God's teaching, God eagerly accompanies each one of us personally, step by step, in our daily lives. We read in [Isaiah 45:22](#), *Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.*”

Several educational systems around the world forbid schools from failing students when they are still in the primary level classes. God's intention for us human beings is that we all pass because the sacrifice on the cross has completed the greater part of the homework.

Salvation is a gift for all, from the Master Teacher who values each student equally and sacrificed lavishly to pass the ultimate test each student could never earn alone.



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DISCIPLESHIP IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD

Erik Carter, North American Division, USA



*As educators, we are not called to draw a following to ourselves.
We are to point people to Jesus through our actions and words.*

Today, more than ever, believers are looking for ways to hold their fragmented lives together and remain faithful to God. Our lives are lived piecemeal, not whole," writes [Jonathan R. Wilson](#).¹ Wilson continues,

The disagreements that we have are difficult to resolve because we cannot locate them within some coherent position or community. We do not live in a world filled with competing outlooks; we live in a world that has fallen apart."²

Like our culture, the church is also fragmented. According to David Trim, Director of Archives, Statistics, and Research at the General Conference, 1 in 3 members has left the church in the last 50 years. Furthermore, the ratio of people lost versus new converts is 43 per 100. That's approaching 50%!³

If fragmentation is a description of our reality, then something is amiss in our daily church experience.

Why are people opting out? Apparently, it has less to do with doctrinal disagreements than with helping people through life's challenges. Marriages are falling apart; some are struggling to find work or cope with the loss of a loved one. Many are left feeling they lack a community that really cares about them in their everyday lives.

Adventists are good at preaching, baptizing, and teaching all that Jesus commanded as mandated by the Great Commission in Matthew 18. The tremendous worldwide growth of the church from a little group in the United States to a global church of more than 18 million members is proof of that. There is room for improvement, however, in placing our preaching, baptizing, and teaching in the context of discipleship. Perhaps this is where part of the fragmentation problem resides: our lack of embodying who we are as disciples of the Lord Jesus, first and foremost.

Curiously, in the New Testament, the word "Christian" is only mentioned three times, while "disciple" occurs over 300 times. A disciple is one whose primary goal is to apply the kingdom of God into every aspect of

one's life to become like Christ and help others. Being disciples overcomes our tendency to partition our days into the sacred and the secular.

If we look to the Gospels for a discipleship model, we learn that Jesus did the calling and not the other way around. As educators, we're not called to draw a following to ourselves. We are to point people to Jesus through our actions and words. We have the profound opportunity to connect our students into a community of discipleship, where real problems in real life are addressed together. People are treated not as they are but as who they can become as a disciple of Jesus Christ.



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JESUS, MASTER TEACHER: THE CASE OF NICODEMUS

John Wesley Taylor V, General Conference



Jesus took time for individual students and personalized instruction, and he was accessible and available to students.

What do you see when you observe Jesus, the teacher? Consider His interactions with Nicodemus ([John 3:1-12](#)) when Nicodemus came to see him in the night.

First, Jesus took time for individual students and personalized instruction, and he was accessible and available to students. This student came to see Him outside of office hours.

The visit at night also highlights Jesus's sensitivity to the student's needs—in this case, a need for privacy and safety. Nicodemus was afraid to look foolish in front of others. Jesus was also perceptive of the student's deep needs—to know God personally, experience transformation, and obtain eternal life.

Next, Jesus caught Nicodemus's attention. He presented Nicodemus with an anomaly—the puzzling statement that he must be “born again” ([verse 3](#)). It was a startling idea that awakened curiosity.

Throughout the interchange, Christ utilized various effective instructional strategies:

- **Analogy.** Jesus compared conversion to birth ([verses 6-7](#)) and the Holy Spirit to the wind ([verse 8](#)).
- **Connection to prior learning.** Jesus referenced Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness ([verse 14](#)).
- **Comparison and contrast.** Jesus differentiated light and darkness ([verses 19-21](#)), condemnation, and salvation ([verse 17](#)).
- **Transition.** Jesus transitioned from the known to the unknown, from concrete to abstract, and from the physical to the spiritual ([verses 2-3, 6, 8, 12](#)).

Jesus gave the student His undivided attention, built on foundational knowledge, and guided the student to think, reflect, and discover. He referenced relevant Scriptures. He explained and clarified, accepting the student and then calling him to something better.

Jesus didn't only seek a cognitive response. He also delved into the affective domain—addressing love and justice, being and believing. The focus was on God's love ([verse 16](#)). The purpose was for the student to experience salvation and eternal life.

Then Nicodemus abruptly vanished into the shadows. It seemed that perhaps nothing had changed. But the story was not over. When the temple guards sent to arrest Jesus returned empty-handed, reporting, "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the Pharisees retorted, "You mean he has deceived you also?" Then Nicodemus, who was also a Pharisee, asked, "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?" ([John 7:45-52](#)). Nicodemus, so worried about his reputation that he had come at night, now stood up boldly for Jesus among his peers.

Nicodemus's final appearance happened at the darkest moment. Many of Christ's believers were cowering in fear, trying to hide. But when Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to request the body of Jesus, He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night.... Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen" ([John 19:38-40](#)). At the most difficult time to be identified as a follower of Jesus, Nicodemus came forward and declared before the world that he was a believer.

Nicodemus met Jesus, the Teacher, and he was changed.



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JESUS, MASTER TEACHER: THE CASE OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

John Wesley Taylor V, General Conference



He is available, accessible. When the student arrives, Jesus takes the initiative.

To walk in the footsteps of Jesus as educators, we must carefully trace His footprints. One instructive moment is His interaction with the woman at the well ([John 4:5-26](#)).

The student was a marginalized person. She was a woman, which meant that she was excluded from certain privileges. She was also a Samaritan, an ethnic minority demeaned by the Jews. Finally, she was of flawed reputation, ostracized by her own community. The fact that she came alone to the well at noon rather than in the morning or evening when the women would typically gather to socialize reveals that she was scorned by the village women.

Jesus, the Teacher, sits near the well. He is available, accessible. When the student arrives, Jesus takes the initiative and asks, "Could you give me a drink?" It is a request that the student can readily fulfill. The request helps the student feel valued and provides an opportunity for service. Further, by asking for water, Jesus arouses interest. "How is it," the student asks, "that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" ([verse 9](#)).

Notice also that Jesus begins with water, the student's present interest. But then He inserts an anomaly: "Anyone who drinks the water that I give will never be thirsty again" ([verses 13-14](#)). In so doing, Jesus transitions from the known to the unknown, the concrete to the abstract, the physical to the spiritual, and the immediate to the eternal.

When the student asks for this water, Jesus instructs her to go get her husband. It is an opportunity to witness, to share her knowledge. It also involves active learning. In the dialogue that follows ([verses 17-24](#)), Jesus moves from the student's immediate need, water, to her deep needs of self-worth and positive relationships. He knows the background, needs, interests, and dreams of His student.

Jesus also resolves the student's misconceptions by clarifying concepts, in this case, her beliefs regarding worship—helping her see that worship is not defined by a place but by a spiritual experience ([verses 20-24](#)). Finally, Jesus delivers direct instruction, declaring, "I AM the Messiah!" ([verse 26](#)). Through it all, the purpose is for the student to know God and experience His saving power. The lesson focuses on hope and transformation.

What were the outcomes? Here is the rest of the story.

The woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah? They came out of the town and made their way toward Him.... And because of His words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world'" ([verses 28-42](#)).

The student becomes a believer, a witness, and a disciple-maker. All because of her encounter with the Teacher and the life-changing effect of a single lesson.



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JESUS, MASTER TEACHER: INSTRUCTIONAL THEMES

John Wesley Taylor V, General Conference



Walking in the footsteps of the Master Teacher, we should take care to emphasize these themes of His teaching in our classrooms.

There are many themes in Jesus's teaching that are significant for teachers, including using Scripture, distinguishing the important from the trivial, recognizing the "big picture," emphasizing service, and looking to the future.

The Role of Scripture

In His teaching, Christ often used Scripture. He used it in a variety of ways, including to:

- **Initiate thought.** "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" ([Luke 10:26](#))
- **Clarify connections.** "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone'?" ([Luke 20:17](#))
- **Expand concepts.** "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." ([Matthew 5:27-28](#))
- **Understand the past.** "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." ([Luke 24:26-27](#))
- **Present a call to action.** "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of robbers.'" ([Mark 11:17](#))

Distinguishing the Important

Christ also focused on distinguishing the essential from the trivial. "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat," He counseled, "or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.... Seek first God's kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well" ([Luke 12:22-31](#)). He warned the teachers and religious leaders not to lose focus on what truly mattered ([Matthew 23:23](#)).

Recognizing the Bigger Picture

A group of Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. In His response, Jesus placed the matter of divorce in the context of God's purpose for humanity ([Mark 10:2-9](#)). Similarly, Christ clarified that anger is a form of murder, that lust is adultery, and that one should not repay evil with evil ([Matthew 5:21-44](#)). In each instance, Christ wanted His listeners to glimpse the larger picture.

An Emphasis on Service

Through His teaching and His own life, Christ emphasized service (e.g., [Matthew 23:5-12](#); [Mark 9:33-35](#); [John 13:12-16](#)). Jesus reminded his disciples to serve: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" ([Matthew 20:28](#)).

A View to the Future

While Christ did not ignore the value of the past or present, He also highlighted the significance of the future. In the gospel commission, Christ instructed, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations," then added, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

Walking in the footsteps of the Master Teacher, we should take care to emphasize these themes of His teaching in our classrooms.



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EDUCATOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH: CONNECTING REDEMPTION AND EDUCATION

Heinz Schaidinger, Inter-European Division, Austria



“In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one” (White, [Education](#), 30).⁴

Since these words have been written, many an educator has endeavored to grasp the meaning of this phrase. How can the work of education and the work of redemption possibly be one?

We are redeemed from our sins through God’s loving forgiveness. We confess our wrongs and beg for reconciliation, and God answers by accepting us into his Kingdom. Because God has forgiven us, we act according to His will, which changes our hearts and our behavior. We learn about God’s will by spending time with Him, and His presence in our lives changes us – by beholding we are changed.

Because we have been changed by God’s forgiveness and our connection with him, we act towards our students like God acts towards us. We have experienced God, the ultimate educator, and we follow His example, for he has shown us how it is done. When children are unruly or difficult, we accept them with loving forgiveness, for God is our example. Redeemed educators share their own redemptive experience with their household, their children, and their students.

Students who are dealt with in a way that reflects God’s love and forgiveness understand the love of their educators, and this encourages the students to follow their example. When educators spend time in loving companionship with those who are entrusted to them, their students will naturally try to imitate them. By showing our students a model of God’s redemptive power, we encourage them toward their own connection with God and toward behavior that reflects that connection. Thus, the best educators will always try to imitate God’s redemptive pattern in their own efforts in the classroom.

It is my deep conviction that realizing the connection between redemption and education is an essential catalyst for the spiritual growth of educators. By understanding this connection, we become aware of our sacred responsibility of saving young people’s lives for eternity by pointing our students to the love and care of our Heavenly Father through

our own example. Recognizing this responsibility leads us to practice redemptive education and to share our heritage of divine presence and forgiveness with the next generation. By behaving in this way toward our students, and toward everyone we encounter, we act according to the word of Jesus himself: I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" ([John 13:34-35](#)).



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TIPS FOR THE FIRST YEARS OF TEACHING

Jenelle Popot-Raddie, South Pacific Division, Solomon Islands



It is our privilege as Adventist educators to be involved in preparing students for life here and for the life to come.

Geography has always fascinated me, so it was not surprising that I became an Adventist teacher of geography in the Solomon Islands. Still, my first day teaching my Geography class was nerve-wracking. Now, after 13 years of teaching, I look back on my first day and smile. It was not that bad after all. For those who are just beginning to teach, here are a few tips for surviving those first few years of teaching.

First, teach according to the curriculum standards for each course. Read through the curriculum standards and compare them to the subjects you plan to cover. During my first years of teaching, I relied on the notes of the former geography teacher and only realized after two years that some concepts I had spent valuable time teaching were not included in the curriculum.

Second, understand the content of your subject. Create your own teaching notes in line with your subject's curriculum. When you take the time to create detailed teaching notes, it helps you clarify for yourself what you are going to teach and ensures that you understand the material you are teaching.

Third, persevere in integrating faith and learning. At first, I often omitted the integration of faith and learning in my daily lesson plans because it appeared a daunting task. Upon attending a workshop, I learned that faith and learning could be taught simply by teaching values to students. For example, in geography, students can be encouraged to appreciate God's creation when teaching about conserving the environment. In any class, if you pray at the beginning of class, you are teaching students to put God first in everything they do.

Fourth, appreciate, accept, and love your students. In the early years, I was often distracted and put in little effort in this area. In my sixth year, I started really seeing teaching as my calling and mission. I fell in love with the students. I made more effort to know and understand my students. I learned to appreciate the different characters of each student. Despite

the difficult days, this perspective allowed me to have an awesome experience with my students and be more effective as a teacher.

Fifth, be open for God to use you as an instrument in His service. Although I am not a perfect teacher, I have learned over the years to humble myself and walk with Jesus, and He has used me to reach students. When you allow God to lead and give you purpose in your teaching, you will be surprised at the joy you can find in helping to shape lives for eternity.

It is our privilege as Adventist educators to be involved in preparing students for life here and for the life to come. We have the opportunity to change students' lives. Although there will be difficult days, you can become a more effective teacher, truly enjoy teaching, and reap the joys that it brings by using these strategies.



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GROW DEEP, LIVE TALL

II Mom Kim, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, South Korea



If we are not connected to the source of life at all times, teaching will become simply work rather than a meaningful vocation. Through the example of a tree, we can learn how to be effective and influential educators.

Trees are a constant in our daily lives. There are countless benefits of trees that have powerful influences on humans and nature alike. Trees provide habitat for wildlife, provide food, conserve energy, save water, and even clean the air. Without trees, our life on this earth would be impossible.

I like to use trees as a metaphor for explaining the role of educators. Just like trees, educators provide so much for students and have powerful influences on their lives. As the saying goes, “Teachers plant seeds that last a lifetime.” As an educator myself, I consider my role as a teacher the most valuable and rewarding part of my life. For all educators, being part of a person’s growth process is more exciting than anything else.

The positive influences of trees come with a very important condition: The tree itself must be healthy. If the tree is not in a healthy state, then everything else collapses. So, what does it mean for a tree to be healthy? How can a tree continue to grow in a healthy manner? If a tree is not connected to its source of growth and life, there will be significant problems. That is why the prophet Jeremiah wrote, “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” ([Jeremiah 17:7,8](#)).

There cannot be any kind of growth unless the tree is connected to the source of life. The same is true of educators. If an educator is not connected to the source of life and stops growing, then their positive influence will inevitably fade away. Ellen White emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth: “There can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the growth of character. At every stage of

development, our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose is fulfilled, there will be constant advancement" ([Education](#), 105).⁵

If we are not connected to the source of life at all times, teaching will become simply work rather than a meaningful vocation. Through the example of a tree, we can learn how to be effective and influential educators. Let us be firmly grounded in Christ and continue to grow in order to give. Let's grow deep and live tall.



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THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIP

John Wesley Taylor V, General Conference



*When we create occasions for friendship and spiritual fellowship,
we touch lives for eternity.*

For a student, belonging precedes believing. Through encounters that establish friendship and community, we can connect with students in faith-forming ways.

Availability

Jesus was accessible. He talked with the woman at the well ([John 4:5-42](#)). He joined the wedding celebration at Cana ([John 2:1-11](#)). He traveled to Sidon to interact with a foreigner ([Matthew 15:21-28](#)). He was available for Nicodemus outside office hours ([John 3:1-21](#)). To connect with students, we must first be accessible. Student must sense that we value them, that we have time for them. They should never conclude that we are bothered by their intrusion on our time and activities. After all, they are the reason that we are here.

Conversations

Relationships are built on conversations. Find opportunities to talk with students. Show an interest in their lives. Ask about their background, their interests, and their dreams. Listen carefully to their replies. Many students are longing for someone to care, to understand. Always listen first, then when you speak direct the student toward faith. If the student is discouraged, share a promise from Scripture. If the student has achieved, celebrate together and praise God for His role in the accomplishment.

Prayer

Prayer is a powerful relational strategy. Seek opportunities to pray with and for your students. Prayer transforms lives. A colleague of mine was attending a conference when a young man walked up. He was a student from a few years before, now a professional. "I'm so happy to see you!" he exclaimed. "I have never forgotten you. One day, you noticed that I was worried, and you asked what I was worried about. After we talked, you offered to pray for me. That was the only time during the years I was at the school that someone prayed just for me." My colleague said that it was a bittersweet moment. It was sweet because a prayer which he

scarcely remembered made a lasting impression on a young person's life, but then he wondered how many other students went through school with no one ever praying just for them.

Spiritual Community

Not long ago I was invited to speak at the alumni homecoming of an institution where I had served some years before. Several of my students approached. They said, "Teacher, you taught us so many things, and now we have forgotten almost everything!" I felt a bit disheartened at hearing this. But," they continued, "there is something we will always remember. You and your wife invited us to your home one evening. We ate together, and you shared with us some of your experiences. We have never forgotten." That same homecoming, another two students recalled the Sabbath when we had gone to the mountains together as one of the highlights of their experience. I was surprised, but perhaps I should not have been. Creating community is one of the most effective ways to help students connect with one another and with God.

When we create occasions for friendship and spiritual fellowship, we touch lives for eternity.



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EDUCATORS AS ROLE MODELS

Millicent Ojwang, East-Central Africa Division, Kenya



A teacher's role is to educate and to transmit values through their function as role models.

A role model is a person who inspires and encourages us to live to our fullest potential and see the best in ourselves, someone we admire and aspire to be like, a person whose behavior, example, or success can be emulated by others, especially by younger people. The [Code of Ethics](#) for the Seventh-day Adventist Educators (1997) clearly states that teachers should be role models to their students and the wider society.⁶

A teacher's role is to educate and to transmit values through their function as role models. The teacher challenges learners to engage their minds and think in new ways, as well as encouraging students' creativity and innovative thinking. The teacher shapes the learner's ability to reason. Teachers can serve as role-models⁷ in the classroom by:

- **Practicing humility.** When teachers make bad choices, they should admit that they have made a mistake. This will help convey to students that everyone makes mistakes and encourage them to take responsibility for their actions.
- **Encouraging students to think for themselves.** Despite the many topics that need to be covered, teachers should allow space for students to think for themselves. Let them express why they have taken a certain line of thought. As Ellen White says in her book, [Education](#): "It is the work of true education...to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought."⁸
- **Demonstrating a positive outlook.** White warns that those who analyze the words and acts of others to find fault fail to appreciate the pleasant things in them. Teachers should point out positives before negatives and teach students to look for the good in others so they build a positive outlook.
- **Being personal.** Teachers should share personal beliefs and thoughts with students when appropriate. When I taught about evolution and Creation for the topic "Early Man" in my history courses at Kenyan secondary schools, I openly expressed that I believed in Creation as recorded in the Bible, and this strengthened my students' faith.

- **Being honest.** Whenever teachers make promises to their classes, they should keep them. When they fail to keep one, they should acknowledge it and try to make up for it. This helps students see how to deal with their own shortcomings.
- **Dressing appropriately.** White contends that while the teacher's clothing should be modest and simple, it should be of a good quality suited for service.
- **Using social media tastefully.** Teachers should be wary about mixing on social media with their students. They should also be mindful about what is on their personal accounts.
- **Mingling at potlucks.** Teachers should have meals with students and celebrate their time together. Such forums can also encourage healthy eating.
- **Establishing organization and punctuality.** Teachers should be punctual and adequately prepared to teach. This makes the teacher more effective in delivering the subject matter.
- **Providing guidance.** White affirms that teachers occupy the position of guides and instructors for the youth in molding their minds and character. Continuous guidance and counseling can be critically valuable for students.
- **Mentoring and leading.** Students learn by seeing their teacher take charge and successfully lead them while providing worthwhile information and encouraging them.
- **Modeling an uplifting character and moral values.** Teachers should display behaviors that reflect such moral values as fairness, kindness, honesty, and respect.
- **Upholding the art of worship.** Teachers should actively engage in worship activities with students.

In summary, teachers are role models for their students when they provide real examples and guidance. We as educators should ensure that we model roles that students would want to emulate.



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A COMPASS TO THE LOST

Taiwo Williams, West-Central Africa Division, Nigeria



As Christians, we have been called to live lives of loving service and sympathy to those we consider lost.

Do you find it strange that we often describe others by their defects? "Drug addict," "prostitute," "adulterer," and "thief" are just some of the many horrible descriptions we give to people every day, without realizing the deeper implications of our harsh judgments.

The story of the prodigal son in [Luke 15](#) shows us that God is very much interested in the lost – He seeks to save everyone. The story of the prodigal son is not just about the son who rebelled and left home, nor is it just about the one who stayed behind. Rather, it is about the unconditional love and open arms of the father, who welcomed both of his sons without hesitation.

[Luke 15:12-16](#) reveals how the prodigal son asked for his share of the father's inheritance, travelled to a far distant country, and squandered all that he had foolishly. When left with nothing, he went to work in a pigsty and even fed from the food meant for the swine. He was all alone!

The brother's reaction to the prodigal son's return helps us gain a bit more insight into the human condition, as we recognize that he had his own flawed motives for staying. Verses 18-31 is where we first see the anger exhibited by the older brother upon the prodigal son's return. His selfishness blinded him to the point that he refused to see the prodigal son as his own brother.

Yet, [Luke 15:20-24](#) presents to us the father's loving response to his older son's abrasive insults. It is this father's love portraying the merciful character of God that can provide us inspiration in this story. As Christians, we have been called to live lives of loving service and sympathy to those we consider lost. The older brother did not understand this and refused to see the daily pain in the eyes of their father throughout the period of his brother's waywardness. In the end, we find that the brother's years of obedience to his father were that of selfish duty, not love.

[Luke 15:17](#) marks the turning point in the life of the wayward son, as he remembers the father's love back home. Such love pulled his broken and wasted life to the point of no resistance, as he made his way back home. We all need to recognize that the people we consider lost may at one point or the other be desperately trying to find their way back but cannot help themselves. The father in this parable depicts the love of God to the lost, sinful man.

Everyone who is lost needs to hear the message of redemption. This goes for those even in the homes where morning devotion is frequent, or who attend weekly Sabbath services. The only time they may deeply understand the message of redemption is in their helpless, lost state.

Therefore, returning the lost back to God is the highest service that we have been called to, knowing fully that God celebrates the return of a prodigal son.



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JESUS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Francisco Ometto Júnior, South American Division, Brazil



When conflicts, illnesses, and relationship problems grow alarmingly in our lives, Jesus encourages us to take a different path.

Whether in the personal realm or the professional, we are all driven by emotions. One of the most effective tools to understand and manage them is emotional intelligence, an idea introduced and explained clearly by Daniel Goleman.⁹ This is a fantastic and transformative way of understanding intelligence.

A great example for us teachers of emotional balance is Jesus. Christ was a complex, well-rounded, intelligent, and balanced man. Historical records make it clear that Jesus caused perplexity in the most influential and cultured people of his time, and even today Jesus' life continues to have an impact.

One day Jesus asked his disciples what they thought of him ([Matthew 16:13](#)). It is interesting to realize that he cared about what his followers thought of him and took the initiative to find out. He was not afraid of this kind of discovery, which is called “self-knowledge” in emotional intelligence theory.

Jesus also showed emotional intelligence through his self-control and steadiness through difficulty. He was a carpenter who used hammers and nails, which in his last moments of life were his worst tormentors. Note that Jesus, knowing that he would die nailed to a cross, was already dealing from childhood with the instruments that would help to kill him, but none of this affected him in the course of his emotional life. This was certainly a paradoxical and powerful test of preparation and anxiety control.

Similarly, Jesus showed these qualities in the moment when Peter denied knowing him three times, just when Jesus was dealing with huge physical and emotional pain, and increasingly close to death. Christ was in a physically and emotionally chaotic situation, with the aggravating factor of being betrayed by one of his beloved disciples.

Jesus showed his self-control and emotional balance by remaining silent and giving only one look at Peter. The disciple realized the greatness of his Master and therefore cried bitterly. Jesus' silence shows the depth of the effectiveness of love and example. Peter changed and came to understand the importance of loving, respecting and understanding each other's weaknesses through empathy, regardless of our differences.

Augusto Cury comments on the meaning of Christ's emotional intelligence and complexity, saying, "I analyzed the intelligence of Christ by criticizing, doubting and investigating the four biographies of Jesus, the Gospels, in various versions. I studied the conscious and unconscious intentions of the authors of his four biographies. The first result is that I discovered that the man who divided the story could not be the fruit of human fiction. He does not fit into the human imaginary. He walked and breathed on this earth."¹⁰

When conflicts, illnesses, and relationship problems grow alarmingly in our lives, Jesus encourages us to take a different path. He invites us to move toward an unprecedented level of emotional, physical and social quality of life. He overflows with self-knowledge, self-control and wants to provide this for us. He wants to help us to reflect and to go beyond the limits we set for ourselves. As teachers, He calls us to an emotionally balanced and happy life. The choice to follow him toward this goal is up to us!



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BEING A TEACHER IN AN ADVENTIST INSTITUTION

Manoa Nantenaina, S Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Madagascar



Adventist educators are people who are always on a mission to advance the Kingdom of God, and their field of mission is in the institutions where they serve.

Teaching is not just limited to the classroom, but continues outside the classroom. It is important to note that teaching also involves the teacher's personal life. The way one behaves is observed and scrutinized by the students, which affects the effectiveness of the knowledge one transmits.¹¹

Adventist educators should be aware that their mission is not just limited to communicating knowledge but also to transmitting Christian values. Adventist educators are therefore full-time missionaries because every moment inside or outside the classroom must be profitable for advancing the Kingdom of God.

Educators have a responsibility to transmit the subject they are assigned to teach, but this should be accompanied by a focus on the importance of faith in Jesus Christ so that students can recognize that the course they are taking is essential for their lives and also for their faith. Therefore, educators must find ways to intentionally transmit the goodness of Jesus in their teaching.

Teaching is not only limited to the transmission of knowledge, but it transcends to the behavior and character of the educator. The way educators behave towards students, colleagues and even at events will have an impact on the education of the students. If educators are not disciplined or do not know how to control their emotions, it affects the students with whom they interact. The influence of educators can reach students in subtle ways.¹²

Adventist educators are also called upon to be good counselors outside the classroom. They should be available to actively listen to those who need counsel and a listening ear. In addition to academic guidance, students need guidance in their personal lives, be it emotional, material or, above all, spiritual. This means that Adventist educators should be spiritually mature and have a good relationship with God.¹³

One of the other great prerequisites that must not be forgotten is that Adventist educators should be people who inspire others. Even if students receive a good amount of knowledge, if they are not inspired to be good citizens of the earth and to focus on the Kingdom of Heaven, it is in vain. Adventist educators must inspire students to always strive for excellence in whatever activities they do. It is important to remember that our Lord is not content with mediocrity, so our institutions should fight against mediocrity as well.

In summary, Adventist educators are people who are always on a mission to advance the Kingdom of God, and their field of mission is in the institutions where they serve. They should always remember that no matter where they are, they are ambassadors of Christ to proclaim his good news with their behavior and character.



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DEFINING A SPACE FOR REDEMPTIVE EDUCATION

Joan Llorca, Inter-European Division, Spain



We need to rediscover our origins and strive to be warm and welcoming families, schools and churches, which foster the daily encounter – personal and collective – with Jesus and live coherently, clearly, and fully the biblical principles on which Adventist education was founded.

Families, churches and schools are all called to educate and redeem God's children. Since Adventist education began, many of our children have been lost in our wake when families, churches, and schools have sailed compulsively, not knowing where they were going or fully understanding the precious cargo they were losing overboard.

As [Lluís Llach](#) said, "The secret is that there are no secrets."¹⁴ The God who calls us to collaborate with him does not hide from us the key to success. Instead, he gives us a loving and coherent message:

"And these words that I am sending you today will be on your heart; and you shall repeat them to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." ([Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#))

Unfortunately, we continue to confuse norms with values, imposition with transformation, and performance with conversion. We must recognize that the more we focus on norms, the more authoritarian and ephemeral the results. Emphasizing values, on the other hand, gives us authority and permanence and encourages the encounter with Christ that makes faith possible.

Families, churches, and schools can be categorized according to their capacity to offer love and defend their values. There are positive and negative aspects for each option:

Warm vs. Cold

- **Warm institutions** emphasize affection, welcome, and personal interest, but can lean toward overprotection and intrusion.
- **Cold institutions** offer respect and freedom, but can also be indifferent and misunderstand the real needs of students.

Conservative vs. Liberal

- **Conservative institutions** have clear values, defined references and clear authority and use austere but profound communication; can drift towards authoritarianism, emphasis on appearances, legalism, meddling and abuse of power.
- **Liberal institutions** have flexibility, spontaneity, naturalness, fluidity and ease, but can resist rules, have relative of values and norms, and use superficial communication.

These categories can also be combined with each other. For example, the cold conservative institution is similar to a military headquarters and a cold liberal institution is like a hotel. We have been trying combinations and repeating mistakes for 155 years, and as a result have sometimes not received our desired results. The more we cling to rules and authority, the more we lose our children, and our children lose. If we give up our essence to appear less radical and arouse less opposition, it works initially, but soon our children find better recreational and social offers and again, we lose our children, and our children lose. We are not called to imprison, nor to entertain, but to facilitate an encounter with Jesus.

Our best choice, then, is to recover and defend the love and principles of Jesus. We need to rediscover our origins and strive to be warm and welcoming families, schools, and churches, which foster the daily encounter – personal and collective – with Jesus and live coherently, clearly, and fully the biblical principles on which Adventist education was founded.



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CURRICULUM

Careful planning of the scope, sequence, and details of our curriculum helps ensure that we cover the material in each course well. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as the purpose of planning, curriculum mapping and design, planning for mastery, applied learning, media literacy, and planning for Christian outcomes.

TRANSFORMATIONAL TEACHING: AN ADVENTIST WORLDVIEW

David McClintock, South Pacific Division, Australia



Rather than being Christians who happen to teach, Adventist teachers aim to teach in a Christian way.

Diverse teams of experienced Australian Adventist teachers recently created subject-specific curriculum frameworks designed to show how each subject can be connected to the foundational worldview from which an Adventist teacher delivers the Australian National Curriculum. Although the frameworks were developed based on the Australian curriculum, it may be useful for teachers in other areas as well. Each framework provides a concise statement of principles, values, and threads that undergird and guide what we consider to be real, true and good. ([Download all frameworks here.](#))

This worldview is shaped and permeated with our belief that Jesus is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” ([John 14:6](#)). As the report says, “A Christian approach to curriculum embraces the fullness of God. . . the Christian faith can and should be rendered in every classroom, in every subject, by every teacher and in the life of the school generally.”¹

We also believe strongly that each teacher must teach from within their own authentic Christian journey and that their experiential relationship with Jesus will permeate all they say and do. Rather than being Christians who happen to teach, Adventist teachers aim to teach in a Christian way. We wish to reveal a God who loves unconditionally. As Blamires says, “To think Christianly is to accept all things with the mind as related, directly or indirectly, to man’s eternal destiny as the redeemed and chosen child of God.”²

Teaching is more than imparting information. Effective Christian teaching creates transformation. It takes [Romans 12:1-2](#) as its focus and tries to nurture a discipleship response to God’s love in the lives of students. The “threads” used in the Values and Action Response sections of the framework are the qualities or characteristics we desire as responses from our students. They help provide cohesion and link the subjects to everyday living. The action responses and values will often overlap in

various subject areas, and will help teachers encourage students to have a discipleship response to God's love.

These documents are intended to be practical and succinct with a clear focus on the transforming role that the Adventist teacher can play in the lives of their students. It contains:

- A challenge to maximize transformative teachable moments.
- An Adventist curriculum overview statement.
- A subject-specific rationale followed by the objectives for that Key Learning Area.
- A section focused on how values and action responses, with appropriate essential questions, can challenge the teacher to maximise an Adventist worldview and seek transformational experiences for their students.
- Three pro forma options for developing units with an embedded Adventist worldview based on the *Understanding by Design* curriculum model created by Wiggins and McTighe.³
- Sample units – for both primary and secondary – that illustrate how to integrate these elements.

George Knight notes in [Educating for Eternity](#) that the essential point that the Adventist educator must grasp is that the teaching of any topic in an Adventist school must not be a modification of the approach used in non-Christian schools. It is rather a radical reorientation of that topic within the philosophical framework of Christianity."⁴

These [Transformational Teaching documents](#) (freely downloadable in Microsoft Word and PDF formats)⁵ are designed to assist teachers in intentionally including an Adventist Worldview in their Learning Areas.



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ADVENTIST EDUCATION: CURRICULUM EMPHASIS

David McClintock, South Pacific Division, Australia



Adventist education presents the required curriculum permeated with the Divine. We cover curriculum in a Christian context.

I was sitting in the office of the Deputy Prime Minister in a Pacific country. He commented that he really valued what Adventist education provided for his country. While we followed the state-set curriculum, and our students sat the country-wide exams, there was something distinctly different about our students. He noted that our students tended to be more balanced in their view of life. Most had a stronger work ethic and left school ready to contribute as reliable citizens. In that same country, I was told that 200 people applied for a position at a Post Office. During his interview, an applicant mentioned he had attended an Adventist school. The manager simply said, "The job is yours," and cancelled all other interviews. The manager was sure that the student's work ethic would be good, and that he would be an honest employee.

I have often wondered about that discussion. Why does Adventist education enjoy such a positive reputation? All schools follow some kind of curriculum. All schools are preparing their students for life after school. All schools have dedicated teachers who want the best for their students.

The reason seems to be the worldview that Adventist education provides. We want our students to view the world from an eternal perspective. We want our students to see all learning is connected to God's desire to include them in His family. We value each student, value diversity, and value the unique gifts and contribution every student brings.

Adventist education presents the required curriculum permeated with the Divine. We cover curriculum, but give it a Christian context. We prepare our students for required assessments and content, but provide a Christian ethos with it. Science classes may present evolution as part of state-required curriculum, but also present the biblical perspective of God as loving Creator.

Our curriculum emphasises more than just learning of content. Because we believe in a God who created beauty and aesthetics, we also encourage the creative arts, so music and art play an important part on

an Adventist school. We also include practical subjects such as industrial arts, home economics, and even agriculture if possible.

Adventist education does not necessarily see big as better. While there are large Adventist schools, there are many smaller schools with multi-grade classrooms. The CognitiveGenesis study of Adventist schools in the United States (2006-2009) found that students in smaller schools achieve as well as those in larger schools, and that students do better the longer they attend Adventist schools.

Why did these Pacific island students enjoy such a positive reputation? Their Adventist curriculum included more than book learning. It prepared them for positive living both in this world and through eternity. It prepared them to be good citizens with a solid work ethic and love for life-long learning. But most of all, the holistic curriculum connected students with a loving God who is the reason for the purpose and positive attitude they exude in their personal life journey.



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EIGHT APPROACHES TO VALUES EDUCATION

Glynis Bradfield, North American Division, USA



Your journey to teaching Christian values and character begins with the first step. Take that step and see where God will take you and your students.

So you've read and heard a lot about why we teach Christian values. But have you wondered how to get started? Have you wished for more ideas on how to do this important work?

The first step to integrating faith and values in teaching, learning, and living is [preparing personally](#).⁶ Spend time alone with God in order to know, love and serve Him yourself. Take time to think deeply and creatively about what the [Adventist philosophy of education](#) looks like in action in your educational ministry.⁷ Also, increase your understanding of human development in order to be able to teach each student at their level. Once you have prepared personally, what are the practical steps you can use to integrate faith into your classroom?

Consider Southern Asia Pacific Division's eight approaches to integrating faith and values in teaching and learning. These eight approaches provide a strong framework for faith integration:

1. Explain the philosophy and rationale of teaching this subject, from a biblical perspective.
2. Create a spiritual atmosphere open to faith and values education.
3. Respect family faith and invite and prepare students to participate in the mission of the church.
4. Inspire values-driven living through telling the stories of model Christian contributors.
5. Add essential Adventist content to required curriculum.
6. Use REBIRTH or another values framework to teach what values take priority.
7. Link topics or themes in the subject(s) you teach to faith and virtues.
8. Use supporting resources and share resources you develop.

Once you have an understanding of the approaches, check out these short [downloadable guides](#) for 10 elementary and 14 high school

subjects.⁸ They provide ideas for practical ways to integrate each of the 8 approaches in specific subjects. Read each approach for your desired subject and consider how you can apply it to your teaching. Note applications for each approach in each subject you teach. Once you are familiar with the suggested approaches and examples in your chosen subject area, integrate these in your teaching plans. Focus on evaluating and updating one area at a time.

Consider inviting other teachers at your school to join you in learning and applying each approach. Collect and record ideas you gain from implementing these approaches. Together, you will be inspired to keep improving so students keep on learning Christian values in all your classes.

When used with required curriculum, these approaches provide a wealth of ideas for teaching Christian values and faith in any setting. The better you are acquainted with these approaches, the sooner they will come to mind when you are teaching or planning for faith-integrated learning.

Your journey to teaching Christian values and character begins with the first step. Take that step and see where God will take you and your students.



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LITERACY STRATEGY SUPPORTING SELF-REGULATION

Elvis Agard, North American Division, USA



Literacy and self-government are powerful assets that can help each student in the future as they spread the gospel.

Educators are always looking for ways to promote literacy and self-regulated learning. Recently, I developed a paper-based format that:

- Engages students deeply in textbook content.
- Is useful across any content area.
- Incorporates research-based literacy and instructional strategies.
- Promotes student choice, responsibility, and scholarship.

I now use it to guide learning in my core subject areas of the middle school. It's relatively easy to implement, but careful planning is the key to its success. As my students got accustomed to its design, they took charge of their learning, truly making me a facilitator of their learning.

Student-Driven Quality Control

The document opens by requiring students to choose a quality control (QC) partner. This teaches social and cooperative skills. The QC peer will provide the first layer of feedback regarding mechanics, completeness, and presentation. Via demonstrations and a simple scoring guide, learners get a vision of what quality looks like:

- 2 points = All parts completed well
- 1 point = Most parts completed well
- Redo = Few parts completed well

Advanced Organizers to Build Schema

Next students are shown an overview of what they will learn. Along with a brief high-impact introduction, they receive a sheet containing the lesson objectives and lesson outline with key words omitted. Students use their textbooks to hunt for answers, fill in the blanks, and cut and paste these into their notebooks. The interactive notebook style is non-threatening and offers a kinesthetic learning opportunity. Students also look for page numbers and titles of diagrams, make predictive questions and answers regarding what they think they might learn, and complete anticipation guides.

Vocabulary in Context

A vocabulary context clue hunt or other vocabulary strategy follows. Students identify the sentence-level context clue giving meaning to the highlighted vocabulary words. This works very well for math, science, and social studies. They also choose a single vocabulary word to use to complete a detailed concept map. This is cut and pasted into their notebook.

Note Taking

While there are many forms of note taking, my students work best with graphic organizers and other non-linguistic representations. These are beneficial to both lower-achieving and advanced learners, are less stressful to struggling writers, and go directly to the meaning of a portion of text. Based on the structure of the content, students complete pre-made graphic organizers to express comparison, component parts, sequences, metaphors, and the like. These are cut and pasted into their notebook. Another option is to let students decide on the structure that best represents the content and create their own structures.

Each graphic structure is made to relate to the objectives; each structure is referenced by a Roman numeral corresponding to the outline. This points students directly to the section of the text they should read to complete the organizer.

Scaffolding Critical Thinking Items

Some learners struggle to write narrative responses to higher-order thinking items typical at the end of a lesson. As an experiment, I provided fill-in-the-blank questions and scrambled the answers for students to match. Varying the number of blanks adjusts the level of difficulty.

Summary frames are useful. These are also fill-in-the-blanks structures, with longer blanks for full sentences. The prompts also encourage a complete and thorough response rather than a one-word answer.

Conclusion

Our students can learn to engage with textbook content in ways that support literacy across content areas while learning to be self-regulated. Literacy and self-government are powerful assets that can help each student in the future as they spread the gospel.



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TRIANGLE PARTY PROJECT

Miriã Sette Pereira, South American Division, Brazil



What ways can we use to make the study of Geometry more fun and didactic?

Learning mathematics and shapes is very important for children. In Lorenzato's (1995) view, the presence of geometry in our schools is essential because this part of mathematics helps people solve everyday problems that are often geometrized, as well as helping people solve problems involving other areas of knowledge.⁹ As Fainguelenrt says, "Geometry plays an integrating role among the various parts of mathematics, as well as being a fertile field for learning to do and learning to think."¹⁰

Because of the importance of this content, there must be dedication on the part of the teacher to make learning real and attractive. The "Triangle Party" project aims to make this learning fun for students. To do so, it follows a few steps:

1. To start the project, the teacher should send a notice to parents asking the family to participate in this moment of learning. The students should receive the invitation, also in a triangular format prepared by the teacher, to make the moment special and remarkable. Partnership with the family is essential for success in the project and in learning in general.
2. Parents, together with their children, should prepare a dish using food that is triangular in shape, or shaped into a triangle by the end of the preparation. After preparation, they should together classify the geometric figure in terms of sides: isosceles, scalene and equilateral, and in terms of angles: acute angles, obtuse angles and right angles, and make a classification sheet with the justification.
3. The plate should be taken to school for the Triangle Party. The setting of the room should be prepared for a party, containing objects in triangular formats, such as plates, cups, etc. The table should be prepared so that each student places his or her triangular plate on the table with his or her rating sheet hidden under the plate.
4. At the start of the lesson, the teacher should invite the students to observe each plate that is placed on the table, while the cards with

the possible rankings are hidden. After observing, the teacher randomly selects students to rate the food. The dynamics of the lesson are at the teacher's discretion. At the end of the quiz for students, the time should be directed towards recreation and eating.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR THE SOCIAL NETWORK GENERATION

Helen Candido, South American Division, Brazil



People who use social networks more often experience more influence on their beliefs and the beliefs inherited from relatives.

It is unquestionable among scholars that digital experiences have directly impacted the way the current generation has lived its faith. A survey conducted by the Sociology department at Baylor University in Texas from 2002 to 2013 studied 3,290 teenagers and young people aged 13-17 and 22-29 years old.¹¹ The study aimed to measure the relationship between social media communications and religious beliefs. In this survey, it was found that young adults who use social networks tend to personalize their faith, regardless of what their traditional family religion teaches.

The respondents answered the following questions about their faith:

- Is only one religion true?
- Can many religions be true?
- There is very little truth in any religion. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- Do you find it acceptable for a person of your religion to practice other religions?

The findings suggest that the tendency to personalize the religious message, viewing it as a way of meeting personal needs, increases when there is more time for social media use. Thus, the study suggests that social media affects perspectives on beliefs. In particular, those who spend the most time on social networks like Facebook tend to find it perfectly acceptable to experiment with other religions and do not feel as much need to remain committed to traditional family teachings.

This is a concern of the parents of the teens interviewed. McClure states:

"According to these concerned parents, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter not only expose adolescents to a plurality of worldviews that may be at odds with what they have learned at home, but they may also distract them from their schoolwork, inhibit outdoor recreation, and increase nefarious behaviors like

cyberbullying and sexting. As a result, new social technologies often pose a threat to parents who wish to impart specific moral or religious teachings to their children."¹²

The researchers point out an issue that deserves attention from Christian educators: people who use social networks more often experience more influence on their beliefs and the beliefs inherited from relatives. This is a concern of parents and should also be ours as Adventist educators.

According to the pillars of education that contribute to human development, proposed by Delors,¹³ especially concerning "learning to be," which involves personal values, each person needs to firm in his or her personality to determine his or her spiritual posture in the face of the distractions or opportunities that social media offers.

For the current generation being raised with social networks, it is fundamental that students have strong beliefs and values in order to use these technologies positively. As educators, we can assist parents in this work of teaching values to our students.



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AN INCENTIVE TO SCIENTIFIC CAREERS

Amanda Castelão, South American Division, Brazil



As teachers of basic education, we must encourage our young people to seek scientific knowledge, as well as the formation of autonomy and critical sense.

A large part of the population believes that scientists and science inhabit a world of closed understanding. As Germano notes, the idea has been built that scientific knowledge is inaccessible to the ordinary citizen, with a power of absolute truth and thought that brings the idea of science closer to something mystical. This kind of thinking alienates young people from scientific careers since many do not feel able to perform such a function.¹⁴

In Brazil, the perspective on science has become even more clear due to the recent research study "Public Perception of Science and Technology in Brazil" conducted by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation in 2015.¹⁵ The research aimed to analyze knowledge as well as attitudes of Brazilians towards science and technology. The research subjects were men and women aged 16 years or older. When asked about the levels of interest in various topics, only 26% declared themselves very interested in science and technology. The study also found that 86% were unable to remember the name of any Brazilian institution dedicated to scientific research, just as 94% were unable to mention the name of any Brazilian scientist.

This picture may be a reflection of the school context described by Rosa and collaborators, who point out that the school institution is often a place where only pre-established content is reproduced. Thus, true scientific knowledge is restricted only to an academic elite. As teachers of basic education, we must encourage our young people to seek scientific knowledge, as well as the formation of autonomy and critical sense. Here are some ways to encourage students toward scientific competency and openness to scientific careers:

- **Do not give answers readily.** Instead, encourage students to research and help them generate more and more questions. Curiosity is an essential characteristic of the formation of scientists.

- **Be a facilitator.** The student is the main character in a meaningful teaching-learning process. The teacher should only facilitate and mediate the construction of knowledge.
- **Make good use of technological resources.** It is not necessary to fight with the Internet; use it as an ally in the training process. Teach your students the correct ways to use the information they find online.
- **Contextualize the content.** Use examples, resources, and methodologies that encourage your students to see the reality that they live in and encourage them to problematize that reality. This ability to look at the world critically is fundamental in the formation of a conscious citizen.
- **Stimulate peer relationships.** Students feel much more encouraged when they work together and see their peers devoting themselves.
- **Don't avoid projects and tasks that seem 'too difficult.'** Our job is to guide our student's learning beyond what they can achieve alone.

Finally, get informed! Find out what is happening in science in your city or country and spread the word. Many believe that there are only scientists outside of their local area and, therefore, they do not even consider the possibility of dedicating themselves to a scientific career. Many scientific institutions maintain online pages disseminating their work, in addition to maintaining guided tour programs for schools completely free.



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ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Assessment and evaluation are often overlooked as subjects of study, but in reality, they are surprisingly complex. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as summative and formative assessment, rubrics, evaluating writing, and integrating faith in evaluation.

CATERING TO DIVERSITY IN SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Grace Wong, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, Hong Kong



One of the key benefits that we as teachers can bring to education is the ability to adjust for the needs and diversity of our students.

I work in an Adventist mission secondary school in Hong Kong with over 500 students from a wide variety of backgrounds. One of the challenges teachers face today is that students come from all walks of life and backgrounds, so embracing diversity is an important consideration in our teaching and assessment.

The best methods for assessing diverse learners have become a continuing discussion in the everyday work of our teachers. In the past, assessment practices tended to be summative and focus on “assessment of learning.” In recent years, however, schools have been encouraged to use formative assessments and put more emphasis on “assessment for learning.” Still, summative assessments are sometimes necessary, and it can be difficult to adjust them for a diverse student body.

There are two methods we have considered for adjusting summative assessments at my school. First, some schools prepare assessments with multiple versions or multiple levels. This requires more work for teachers. Some schools grade these assessments by using a lower possible highest grade available for the easier version of tests or exams, such as having the highest possible grade for the easier version be a B rather than an A. Some schools do exactly the opposite. They rank their students in two or more lists, then compliment or give prizes to those who achieve high marks regardless of the level of the exam. In this case, fairness is not their main concern; they want students to learn in their own pace and find satisfaction in learning.

Second, some schools design one version of assessments, but include questions from all levels of difficulties. Usually this is done in a certain agreed ratio. For instance, 60% of the questions might be easier questions about basic core content, 20% would be moderately difficult, and 20% would be quite difficult. With more differentiation in assessment, teachers can cater for the diverse needs of students. This method is more easily carried out in some subjects than others. For example, it is not an easy task to set exam papers this way for language

courses because the difficulty of these exams depends mostly on the reading materials chosen for testing, and it is not easy to choose something suitable for both high achievers and those who are weaker academically.

Both of these methods have benefits, but they have downsides as well. Adjusting to the needs of diverse learners is an issue we are still working on resolving, but we know that it is an important issue. As technology continues to develop, it may seem that teachers can be replaced through computers and e-learning. One of the key benefits that we as teachers can bring to education is the ability to adjust for the needs and diversity of our students. We have the opportunity not only to help our students to learn more effectively, but also to make our school a more pleasant place for our students.



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RAFT ASSIGNMENTS AND RUBRICS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN LEARNING

Sharon Aka, North American Division, USA



Allowing students freedom in creating their projects can increase student engagement and allow them to connect with the material in the way that works best for them personally.

The RAFT method is an approach to projects that is designed for engaging students, creating assignments and rubrics, and providing opportunities for students to customize learning to their own learning styles. It is student-directed differentiation at its best, and yet can be held to a rigorous evaluation standard. Here is how it works.¹

R – ROLE

The R stands for ROLE. The students determine the role they wish to take in the presentation of the project. For instance, in a nursing program, students could speak from the perspective of the patient, nurse, doctor, family member, hospital administration, or community at large. In a fifth grade science classroom, students could speak from the perspective of the frog, pond, scientist observing the frog, wildlife federation, or community where the pond is. The ROLE of the learner is entirely up to each learner.

A – AUDIENCE

The A stands for AUDIENCE. The students choose the audience to whom they are presenting. In many cases, the options for audiences could be similar to the ones available for the role.

F – FORMAT

The F stands for FORMAT. This is the format in which the assignment is presented. Students have the freedom to choose if they wish to write a research paper, do a presentation, create a short video, Prezi, or power point, do a play, facilitate a debate, create a gallery photo display, or any other presentation type that they can come up with. Freedom in format liberates the student in how to present their work.

T – TOPIC

The T stands for TOPIC. Several topics are chosen by the teacher and presented to the students to choose from. Given the many options in

each of the 4 categories R.A.F.T. student generated projects will be widely diverse even if the topics are limited.

A teacher may get overwhelmed with the amount of options that students have. To make things easier, a teacher can simply choose to give students options in one of the four factors, instead of all four. For instance, the teacher could choose the role, the audience, and the topic, and let the students choose the format of their presentations.

Invariably the question from teachers is “How do I measure the success of the students equitably when there are so many project options?” The easiest way to achieve this is to use a standardized rubric that fits all project options and holds all students to the same rigor in assignment production. There are a wide variety of categories that can be used for the rubric that will apply to any project, such as the introduction, focus, grammar and mechanics, sequencing and completeness, communication, word choice, communication, audience awareness, communication, APA Style, discipline inclusion, and conclusion.

While it can require a mental shift for the teacher, allowing students freedom in creating their projects can increase student engagement and allow them to connect with the material in the way that works best for them personally.



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POETRY SCORES: YOURS, MINE, AND THEIRS

Carrie Hess, North American Division, USA



By involving students in evaluating their own work and the work of other students, they become more active learners who think critically about the qualities that make a piece of writing excellent.

As an educator, I continually struggle with knowing how to best evaluate writing assignments. Do I use a rubric? If I do, will the students read it or just look at the letter grade? Do I merely write comments on the papers, or combine that with a rubric? How many drafts can a student create before we both get sick of the paper? Am I putting in more work grading than the student is in writing the piece? Many teachers encounter these questions and more as we work with student papers.

For me, evaluating student writing has been a continual push and pull between wanting a streamlined, objective way to evaluate writing while also acknowledging the craft and artistry, the subjective aspect of writing. There may not be anything technically wrong with a piece of writing, but does that make it “effective”? This is what makes the arts and the humanities frustratingly wonderful and beautiful—and difficult to score because until we have a better system we must mark at least some student writing with grades.

During the past two years, I have muddied the waters even more for myself by creating a semester long poetry unit that ends with a class sponsored poetry café complete with food, music, lanterns, and readings of student-composed poetry. If evaluating essays is hard enough, poetry is even more challenging because the standards for poetry are so fluid.

After trying several different approaches, I have landed on something I am fairly happy with. It doesn't solve all the struggles of evaluating poetry in a classroom setting, but it does honor the expertise of the teacher, the students' own perceptions of their quality of writing, and the impressions of third-party readers.

I began by announcing that each poem would be scored using three weighted elements: their score, my score, and a peer's score. The students debated back and forth about the values each score should have, and in the end the students landed on 40% for my score, 40% for

their score, and 20% for the peer score. This is not necessarily a perfect ratio, but the point of having the students decide was to allow for conversation about who should have the most say in evaluating the quality of something: the expert, the creator, or the audience.

After trying out the system, a couple of practical considerations became clear:

- **The students need a simple rubric that they can use to show the reasoning for their scores.** This helps the student evaluations to be more objective.
- **Some students may try to inflate their own grades.** To address this, I told the students that the grades given by a peer or by themselves had to be within 10% of mine. If any were outside of this margin, they would receive my score for that evaluator's component. This helps keep students from inflating or deflating their own or another student's grade.

I am continuing to tweak the process, making it more relevant and reliable as an evaluation tool. It may serve as a valuable tool for evaluating more formal writing as well. By involving students in evaluating their own work and the work of other students, they become more active learners who think critically about the qualities that make a piece of writing excellent.



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RETHINKING EVALUATION THROUGH EMPATHY

Peter Katz, North American Division, USA



Jesus challenged us to think about assessment not as mere gatekeeping, but as a means to connect with our students and address their needs.

Assessment often feels like a necessary evil. We must evaluate our students' competence, we must measure our own effectiveness in the classroom, and we must endeavor to track the work of the institution as a whole.

In its least pleasant forms, assessment leads to gatekeeping. We must honestly consider the long-term educational prospects of a student who cannot pass basic writing courses, or a pre-med student who cannot pass the first quarter of biology. But like the enforcement of any barrier, it never feels good.

How fortunate, then, that Christianity offers an alternative to coldly rational, purely quantitative, formal assessment. Jesus challenged us to think about assessment not as mere gatekeeping, but as a means to connect with our students and address their needs.

Our students come to Adventist colleges and universities in part, because they want to be treated as whole people. It's easy to get torn up in the cogs of the larger university-machines. But we offer to teach the whole person—and part of that is Christ-like assessment.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Empathy

Recognize that your students have many concerns outside of your class. I know that the students in my upper-division general literature course are not English majors. My course is tangential to their core classes. So, while I think my course is important, I empathize with their decision to put off reading *Frankenstein* so that they can pass Biochemistry II. I acknowledge the pain involved in that decision, the stress of the exam, and the shame they may feel if they do not do well on the exam.

This knowledge doesn't make me grade their essays with an asterisk that allots for a difficult Biochemistry test, but when I acknowledge their

feelings, they understand that I value them as a whole person, even if ultimately they still receive a low score.

Mercy

When an English major tells me that she has three papers due this week, and that she has not had time to sufficiently work through the paper for my class, I remind myself that our care must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. Yes, my syllabus says no late work. Yes, she could have planned better. But empathy tells me she already knows that; she has already learned that she needs to consider how she manages time, or takes on tasks. What is left to teach here? Mercy. I would rather she write a paper she can be proud of, and that she understands that I [value her intellect](#)² more than her adherence to the law.

Compassion

Compassion is all about meeting students where they are. The truly amazing thing about grace is not that it covers all our sins. That's important, but anyone can simply ignore an offense. The truly amazing thing is that Jesus meets us where we are.

When a student receives a failing grade on a paper, and then comes to me to ask for extra conferences and help in improving their paper, I'm more than happy to meet that student where they are. Compassion can build a [community of care](#)³ that encourages the students to meet each other where they are as well—in discussion, in study sessions, and outside the classroom.

We are charged with gatekeeping, but we can keep that gate closed through law, or we can follow Jesus's example and [help people find their way through](#).⁴ Assessment matters. Consistency and clear standards matter. But, as Jesus reminds us, people matter the most.



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SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING

Anne Thorneycroft, South Pacific Division, Australia



Collaboration across subjects and grade levels can be very helpful for improving outcomes as staff work together to create change.

At a school located in Melbourne's east, some 295 students participate every year in annual Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT), which assess their progress in Reading, Vocabulary and Spelling, Mathematics, Grammar, and Punctuation. However, staff generally were not able to effectively use the resultant data, which made it difficult for them to observe trends or analyse their students' results.

Following the 2017 test results, staff received a Professional Development training followed by brainstorming sessions on how to use the data to inform best practice. The focus was on writing, given that writing is the element common to all subjects, but the principles could apply to any subject.

First, a common "language" across all learning areas and grades was adopted. The purpose was to allow better mining of data, which would highlight strengths and weaknesses in writing and inform future learning and teaching with regard to structural elements and assessment rubrics.

Research clearly shows that vocabulary instruction and student-directed learning are important to effective writing ([Nagy, Berringer and Abbott, 2006](#)).⁵ When students are given the opportunity to direct their own course of learning, they have ownership and thus a commitment to doing their best ([Zimmerman and Risemberg, 1997](#)).⁶ Good writers plan, monitor, evaluate, revise and manage the writing process ([Lenz, Ellis, and Scanlon \(1996\)](#)).⁷ When teachers give positive feedback, learning is further improved. Formative assessment, continuous feedback throughout the learning process, is also a powerful strategy and is most beneficial in the development stage of the writing process. Feedback obtained from students can also be helpful, as it provides information to help teachers design future learning tasks.

[Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick \(2006\)](#)⁸ give a useful seven-step formative assessment strategy that could be used for writing and for most other subjects:

1. Identify to students what “good performance” looks like.
2. Teach students to self-assess.
3. Provide comprehensive and timely feedback.
4. Encourage teacher and peer dialogue.
5. Encourage and motivate students.
6. Give ample time for students to remedy their writing defects and deficiencies.
7. Collect feedback from students for their teachers to help inform and improve teaching methods.

Self-regulation is critical and is something that can be taught and learnt. It can, however, be something of a challenge for teachers, as students need assistance to become proficient, which involves frequent reinforcement and intervention. Advancing a student s learning requires assessment. It is similar to cooking: as a student produces their learning product, the "soup," the teacher will taste” it to see what needs to be added or adjusted to improve the flavor. Summative assessment ensures that the soup is perfect *before* it is served (Robert Stake in Dirksen, 2011).⁹

Rubrics and checklists are sound assessment strategies for critiquing pieces of writing. They make the learning expectations transparent and help with avoiding grader bias. Only definable qualities should be assessed, such as specific skills and concepts. In this case, the staff created a school-wide standardized rubric for evaluating students’ writing, which allowed staff to identify changes over time.

Lastly, the work that the staff did together led to improvements in staff collaboration. This sort of collaboration across subjects and grade levels can be very helpful for improving outcomes as staff work together to create change.



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PORTFOLIO IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Cíntia Souza, South American Division, Brazil



Portfolios are an important method for showing the individual progress of the child and the efficiency of the educator's practice.

Adventist education sees education as the harmonious development of all human potentialities, to enable its students to exercise citizenship. According to the [Adventist pedagogy](#),¹⁰ it is concerned with the formation of character, the acquisition of values, the development of autonomy, identity and the process of social interaction. It excels in playful learning, taking into account that the child is a thinking being and brings with him life experiences and previous knowledge.

In this context, portfolios are an important method for showing the individual progress of the child and the efficiency of the educator's practice. When it comes to Early Childhood Education, the portfolio can be built in several ways. Hoffmann states, "Careful and curious observation of the manifestations of each child and reflection on the meaning of these manifestations in terms of their development, are basic assumptions for a proposal of evaluation in Early Childhood Education."¹¹

Drawing is one helpful element for a portfolio. According to Shores and Grace, the ability to draw evolves from scribbling to representation in a predictable way for most children, although the rate of this progress varies significantly.¹²

Photography is also a strategy of preserving and presenting information about what and how the child is learning. Shores and Grace say, "This resource captures the life of the classroom, especially when one can take unbiased photographs."¹³

It is essential to work on activities that help them understand their physical body and make these activities evident in the portfolio. As the [Referencial Curricular Nacional para a Educação Infantil](#) notes, "On the level of body consciousness, the child begins to recognize the image of his body, which occurs mainly through the social interactions he establishes and the games he plays in front of the mirror. In these situations, he learns to recognize the physical characteristics that integrate his person, which is fundamental for the construction of his identity."¹⁴

Portfolio activities should be chosen carefully. Early childhood education needs to balance playfulness and situations that favor the autonomy of each child. There are many activities and tasks that do not achieve these goals. Care must be taken not to overstimulate children or force them to learn what is not in their universe of interest. Carefully chosen activities and portfolio items can help move students toward their goals and show their progress.



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WHY EVALUATE?

Rob Mayr, South American Division, Brazil



Principals need to find ways to ensure that education fulfills its primary role. Like an airplane pilot, do your best to lead your team safely to the final destination.

The responsibility of a principal is similar in many ways to that of an airline pilot. Both have the role of a leader who must safely move a group of people from an initial situation or location to a desired situation or location. Both must be able to recognize in a timely manner when they have deviated from the optimal route and be able to take corrective action as necessary. In both cases, the consequences of irresponsible leadership can be disastrous.

Implicit in the concept described above is the idea of evaluation. In front of the airplane pilot are a large number of controls and sensors, each evaluating some different aspect of the aircraft or the route being taken. It is expected that the airplane pilot will know how to read these controls and interpret the information given by each one of them. Although much of the information captured by these sensors may be available after the flight, it is vitally important that this data is used and interpreted during the flight.

So why should pilots be constantly evaluating while piloting their planes?

- Because they need to steer safely and avoid accidents.
- Because they need to detect and correct deviations from the flight plan in a timely manner.
- Because they don't want to get lost on the way.
- Because they need to get to their destination as soon as possible, with the least expense.
- Because they need to determine the progress made and the distance that still separates them from the destination.
- Because piloting a plane is not simple; intuition is not enough.

These reasons point to some clear risks of not evaluating:

- Getting lost along the path and going around in circles with no clear direction.
- Not realizing that you have lost your way.

- Not arriving at the destination.
- Causing an accident, leading to personal injury and damage to others.

The same reasons for assessing and risks of not assessing apply to school principals as well. Education is a complex activity; there are many factors that determine the success or failure of school management; the principal's intuition is not enough to direct a school safely. The principal needs to continuously evaluate the different indicators available to measure the level of achievement of the proposed objectives.

Aware of this reality, in 2012 the Department of Education of the South American Division created the Adventist Education Evaluation Program (PAEE, for Hispanic countries; PAAEB for Brazil). Each year, standardized tests are applied to certain levels of primary and secondary education, in addition to contextual questionnaires for students and teachers throughout the division's educational network. The results are used to construct indicators that help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of education throughout the division, and serve as input for decision-making.

It is essential for principals to prioritize assessment. Principals need to find ways to ensure that education fulfills its primary role. Like an airplane pilot, do your best to lead your team safely to the final destination. Is there a specific assessment program at your school? What are the best assessment methods for your particular reality?



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INSTRUCTION & TEACHING

Having strong teaching skills and strategies makes classroom time more pleasant and effective for teachers and students. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as flipped classrooms, emotional literacy, developmentally appropriate instruction, language learning, business education, music education, discussion tips and skills, science education, online education, and Biblical perspectives on teaching.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED FLIPPING YOUR CLASSROOM?

Eric Johnson, North American Division, USA



With a growing body of literature supporting active learning course designs across disciplines, traditional educational models are rapidly losing their foothold in higher education.

Traditional lecture-based education models continue to dominate the teaching and learning landscape, but the person doing the talking is usually the person doing the learning. Also, lectures may be less effective today than they were in the past, as sociological studies suggest that today's millennial college students have more pervasive narcissistic attitudes and shorter attention spans.¹

More than two decades ago, educational psychologist Alison King lobbied for a student-centered active learning process. She said an educator should be a "guide on the side" and not a "sage on the stage." Traditional lecturing is not generally considered "active learning." In contrast, the "Flipped Classroom," the roots of which many trace to King's work, actively engages students.²

The flipped classroom is a pedagogical model where students study course content ahead of time (asynchronous learning) and come to class prepared to actively develop what they have discovered along with their classmates (synchronous learning). It is called a flipped classroom because instead of the teacher presenting information and then sending students home to practice applying the material, the students study the information before coming to class and apply the material in class together with their teacher and classmates. In the [Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Loma Linda University](#),³ we have fully embraced the flipped classroom in the neurology curricular track with good results.

Thoughtful craftsmanship of synchronous and asynchronous activities is required for successful outcomes when flipping the classroom. It is not enough to simply "flip" a classroom and place self-directed learning on students. One of the early challenges we faced in flipping our classrooms was time management during the face-to-face lecture sessions because of increased discussion; flipping the classroom creates informed students who have had time to consider content and develop more thoughtful questions. Another challenge was the considerable time commitment

required to develop and refine various synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.

Despite these challenges, students have responded positively to classroom flipping. Student assessments including laboratory work, examinations, and standardized course evaluations have overwhelmingly encouraged us to stay the course. In particular, qualitative feedback from our standardized course evaluations shows that many students appreciate the thoughtful discussions and organization of the flipped courses.

With a growing body of literature supporting active learning course designs across disciplines, traditional educational models are rapidly losing their foothold in higher education. The flipped classroom” provides opportunities for educators to engage students in ways that foster deeper learning. However, because of the challenges, it is wise to slowly integrate aspects of a flipped classroom, learn from any mistakes, and build upon early success.

The word “educate” is etymologically derived from the Latin “rear or bring up,” and the word “learn” is attributed to Old High German language meaning, “to find the track.” Effective educators raise learners in ways that allow them to discover their path. As we explore ways to best educate our students, whether this means classroom-flipping or other techniques, we can be confident the Master Educator is at our side.



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CHARTING COURSE WITH SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Leanne Entermann, South Pacific Division, Australia



Schools that teach children how to read an increasing range and depth of feelings — just as they teach an increasing range and depth of English or mathematics every year — are more successful in every way.

If you have watched any school-based documentaries recently, you're likely to have seen at least one classroom erupt into chaos. Professor of Psychology Maurice Elias from Edutopia explains what is happening here. Once students enter the school gates, they store most of their belongings away in their lockers. One thing they cannot put away, however, is their emotions. When emotional burdens are too heavy to bear, disasters like this are bound to occur.

Life, Learning, and Emotions

When a child does not understand their own emotions, they're also unaware of another important factor: other people's feelings. Empathy is a high-complexity, high-value skill. The vacuum created when this skill is absent results in an emotional environment prone to creating problems.

Children who lack understanding of emotions struggle not only socially and emotionally, but also academically. A curriculum gap develops. The learning received by the student in the classroom is very different to the learning teachers believe they are delivering. Elias notes:

From the earliest grades, children's academic and life trajectory is affected by their ability to pick up emotional nuance. Stories cannot be properly appreciated unless characters' feelings are well understood... from Dr. Seuss onward! History and current events become dry and disconnected facts unless enlivened by empathy and compassion and an understanding of what the individuals involved in the events were and are experiencing. And being able to work with one's classmates benefits enormously by being sensitive to signs of their feelings, knowing when to back off, knowing when they are interested, knowing when they need help or support, etc.⁴

In contrast, when students develop the ability to detect and express their own and others' emotional nuances, they can grasp much more complex content and carry out higher order skills.

Reading Emotions

We call this Social-Emotional Literacy (SEL): the ability to accurately read (perceive) and label emotions. SEL transforms peer groups, the playground, the classroom, families and workplaces into friendlier, safer, and more productive and successful environments.

Teaching SEL

SEL is absorbed by children from those around them, but must also be taught. Schools that teach children how to read an increasing range and depth of feelings — just as they teach an increasing range and depth of English or mathematics every year — are more successful in every way.

This is achieved in a number of ways, including through:

- School ethos and behavioral expectations.
- A restorative practices approach to discipline.
- Explicit co-curricular programs targeting age-related issues or the needs of specific students; for instance, resilience programs for middle schoolers in readiness for the emotional and academic rigors of senior school.
- A conscious effort by teachers to teach emotions explicitly in the classroom, specifically around class culture and group work.

Social-emotional literacy is a library. We add volumes to it as we age and develop the capacity to read with more complexity.

Our business is, and has always been, more than merely readying students for a job or further study. We want our students to complete their education equipped with a full complement of the classics. Our goal is to ready them for now as well as eternity.



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TEACHING BUSINESS CLASSES IN THE ADVENTIST INSTITUTION

Marie-Anne Razafiarivony, East-Central Africa Division, Kenya



Research has shown that business majors exposed to ethics training still often behave unethically once they join the corporate world. Can faith-based institutions do a better job at training and molding their students?

Business schools in faith-based institutions have a unique opportunity of shaping future professionals who will go out in the world to share their faith and bring their expertise as well. The blend of faith and living should start in the classroom so that students can develop confidence for sharing their faith when the time comes. It must be recognized, however, that the business context often emphasizes the organization's interest at the expense of other stakeholders. This emphasis is reflected in the textbooks and case studies used in classrooms.

Although there is a tendency to a strictly utilitarian approach to business, faith-based institutions often encourage students to look into nonprofit contexts and entities, including faith-based organizations. The values and mission of these entities differ from those of the for-profit organizations. Nevertheless, students are trained to think of the centrality of the organization, at the risk of overlooking both the mission and values of the nonprofit because of what [Rochschild and Milofshy](#) call a lens borrowed from the for-profit (dominant) sector.”⁵

That is not to say that the concern over ethical understanding and practice has been ignored in the for-profit setting. It has been long recognized that the business curriculum should include an ethics component. Still, research has shown that business majors exposed to ethics training still often behave unethically once they join the corporate world. Can faith-based institutions do a better job at training and molding their students? What are the training elements that need to be optimized?

First, the interconnectedness of each aspect of the business curriculum needs to be understood, as well as the ethical implications related to each one of them ([Nicholson, DeMoss, 2009](#)).⁶This calls for the collaboration of all the teachers in the department.

Second, teachers set the tone for the morality students should develop, but teachers are not the only ones involved in the molding process. Every employee of the institution can intentionally make a contribution. One individual can never know the far-reaching impression made on a student during an interaction.

Third, students need a heart education, whereby they are brought to reflect, commit and resolve in their inmost being to stay true to their calling ([Harris, 2008](#)).⁷ This is where the spiritual component of school life plays its role. No commitment can be made for the right from a vacuum. Students need to recognize that God is the source of all that is true and right. They need to know that they can ask for the Holy Spirit to enlighten their thinking and reasoning, and they should be encouraged to do so.

How can an Adventist teacher make a distinctive mark in the life of each student? Will the teachers stand out in the students' memories as role models when the going gets tough? Will they be called upon for advice, encouragement, and support in prayer? Questions like these are the keys for creating the blend of faith and living needed to mold business students who will be faithful to their ethics throughout their careers.



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TEACHING GRAMMAR WITH NATURE AND THE BIBLE

Tess Belarmino, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



Getting students interested in grammar can be a challenge, but if we teach each stage focusing on creativity and variety, coupled with nature and Bible teachings as examples, we can increase the likelihood of engaging our students and encourage their understanding of God and of biblical truths as well.

Motivating students to learn grammar can be tricky, but teaching it in context helps. As I teach grammar, there are five steps that I find helpful. One method that has worked well in my classroom is to integrate the five steps and God's two books: the Bible and nature.

First is the lead-in. Students enter the class with many distractions from the outside world. We need to catch their attention and hook them on the topic. The lead-in is a good place to present a Bible story. The lead-in could involve showing a short film, performing a role play, or sharing stories, anecdotes, analogies, questions, or songs.

Second is elicitation. Eliciting means gathering as much information as possible from the students. We can gauge how much our students already know about the topic and how much time and effort we will need to put in. One of the most common approaches to elicit information is to ask questions. These can be direct questions or indirect questions, and time should be given for reflection before we select a student to respond.

The third is the presentation. This phase will focus on the grammar concepts being covered. The Bible provides many examples of figures of speech and parts of speech that can be useful for this. The examples can be sentences extracted from the parables of Jesus, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments or other passages, depending on the target lesson.

It is not necessary for the teacher to give the presentation independently; a student volunteer can provide input or interaction. The teacher may put picture prompts on the board or show a Power Point presentation. Drawing timelines, arrows, and even using our fingers can be very useful to illustrate how to form the grammatical structure. Ideally, the presentation should guide students to relate the new structures to their prior knowledge and life experiences. The teacher can also use controlled practice to model examples of what to expect in the next stage.

The fourth step is connecting the grammar concepts to God's book of nature. Students can do an activity like a scavenger hunt for adjectives, writing their impressions of what they see, or doing a walk filling in prepositions to describe their movements. They should follow the teacher's instruction or models carefully. These activities can combine repetitive drills with the creativity and freedom that comes with being in nature.

The fifth step, communicative practice, allows students to smoothly transition from what they learned in class, to the actual application in real life situations. The students can answer questions about their reactions to the topic and the activity, using the things they have learned to compose their responses.

Getting students interested in grammar can be a challenge, but if we teach each stage focusing on creativity and variety, coupled with nature and Bible teachings as examples, we can increase the likelihood of engaging our students and encourage their understanding of God and of biblical truths as well.



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GOOD QUESTION AND ANSWER STRATEGIES

Sharon Aka, North American Division, USA



Great questions and responses support learning and are useful in persuading others to courageously learn.

As teachers, we often find our classroom discussions falling flat. How can we encourage critical thinking, deeper conversations, great discussions, content synthesis, and learner engagement? Here are some easy questioning and responding strategies to strengthen your classroom discussions.

Questioning Strategies

The 5 Whys method was developed by Sakichi Toyoda, a founding father of the Japanese industrial revolution. This systematic strategy can quickly get you to the root of the problem or identify information gaps.

When faced with a problem, ask why 5 times, each time waiting until you get a more specific response. The responders must answer the questions based on fact, not opinion. If they run out of answers, it may be a good indication that more research or information is necessary before the problem can be solved.

Choose questions that require understanding and insight, not just information. This helps the student link point A to point B, without you explaining everything. Here are some types of questions that work well:

- ‘How ’ questions like “How does that work?”
- ‘So what ’ questions like “So what could be going on?”
- ‘Now what ’ questions like “Given that information, now what?”
- ‘Benefit ’ questions like “How does that make things better?”

Allow students to ask questions of you and of their fellow students. Make sure you set expectations for the other students answers. Ensure their responses to their peers are constructive, not critical.

Adopt the attitude that there are no stupid questions. When a student asks a question, listen and respond sincerely, even if you are surprised, perplexed, or annoyed by the question.

If the participant's question indicates they weren't listening or have a large knowledge gap, chat with them privately. Don't humiliate them in front of their peers. If several students have similar questions, then perhaps it's time for review.

Response Strategies

Respond to students with **yes and**" instead of "yes but," and encourage students to do the same. This will drastically change the conversation from convergent to divergent.

Redirect. Encourage students to add to other's responses and extend the conversation by asking questions like, "Okay, can someone expand on that thought?" or "How do the rest of you feel about that?"

I Don't Know." No one knows everything, so admit when you do not know something and direct students to helpful resources. By demonstrating that it's okay not to know everything, you empower students to solve things on their own.

Great questions and responses support learning and are useful in persuading others to courageously learn. Questions are also a powerful way to build relationships, avoid misunderstandings, and defuse heated situations. Remember to use a pleasant tone of voice and respond with open affirming body language to encourage your participants in their exploration. And listen - a lot. Questioning and responding inclusively will radically change the classroom conversations. The focus will shift from information to application and synthesis.



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PAINTING THE WORLD'S PORTRAIT OF GOD

Jennifer Litau, South Pacific Division, Papua New Guinea



God the creator can work through our teaching and learning activities to re-create and transform the lives of young people if we as Adventist educators are unashamed to prayerfully and rightly share the word of truth.

Integrating faith and learning can sometimes be difficult in the science classroom, but God's creation can be used to paint a beautiful portrait of God as the creator, sustainer, and loving Father.

When I am teaching Geography, for example, one of the topics that I find naturally shows this view of God is the story of creation. Last semester, I assigned Genesis 1 as the reading for my senior class. Before teaching the topic, I prayed for inspiration on ways to show students this view of God through creation.

I decided to emphasize the fact that God demonstrated His care and love for animal life and humans by creating all of earth's natural life support systems and processes before the creation of animal life and human beings.

This is illustrated in the order of the creation week.

- Day 1: Light, and night/day ([Genesis 1:2-5](#))
- Day 2: Sky ([Genesis 1:6-8](#))
- Day 3: Land/sea, and plants ([Genesis 1: 9-13](#))
- Day 4: Lights in the sky: sun, moon and stars ([Genesis 1:14-19](#))
- Day 5: Marine creatures, and birds ([Genesis 1: 20-23](#))
- Day 6: All kinds of animal life, human beings (male/female), human reproduction, stewardship, and plant-based diet ([Genesis 1: 24-31](#))
- Day 7: Blessed the day, set it apart as a holy day, and rested.

In our class discussion, we considered this question: "What is the significance of this order of creation in the relationship of different species of life forms and human beings?" I pointed out that God created an inter-dependent relationship between nature, animal life, and humans. For example, in order to survive, humans and animals depend on a variety of different species of plants for food and for clean air, and those plants depend on sunlight and water. For this reason, God created

sky, land, water, and sunlight before creating plants, and created plants before creating humans and animals.

Next, I connected the order of creation to the food chain. At the base of the food chain are primary producers called autotrophs, organisms that make their own food from sunlight or chemical energy or both from deep sea vents. I noted that our wise and caring Creator God had already created energy and mass earlier in the week before animal life or producers and consumers.

Many other spiritual lessons can be learnt from creation's scientific explanations of the world. God created our food sources, drinking water, sunlight, and the other resources we use before creating us humans as stewards and beneficiaries of the world's bounty. He created the Sabbath as a memorial of God's creation ([Exodus 20:11](#); [Exodus 31:17](#)), and gave the Sabbath to Adam ([Mark 2:27](#), [Genesis 2: 1-3](#)) and through him, to all nations ([Acts 17:26](#)). Therefore, "the biblical Sabbath law of Exodus 20:8-11 is for all humans to observe, not just Jews or Seventh day Adventists" ([100 Facts About the Sabbath and Sunday](#)).⁸ In keeping the 4th commandment, we worship and show reverence to the true creator God.

By teaching this view of God through creation, I have seen students changed. One day in class, a non-Adventist student said, "Creation is the beginning of the science of geography and God is the creator." Since that encounter, the student has continued to demonstrate a transformation of habits and attitude. God the creator can work through our teaching and learning activities to re-create and transform the lives of young people if we as Adventist educators are unashamed to prayerfully and rightly share the word of truth ([2 Timothy 2:15](#)).



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HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED IN ONLINE COURSES

Keri Conwell, North American Division, USA



Succeeding in online learning requires specific skills not developed through general internet use.

It may seem surprising that students often struggle in online courses. After all, our students are growing up in an online environment. However, succeeding in online learning requires specific skills not developed through general internet use. As I prepared the orientation unit for Preparing for College and Career,⁹ a free online course for Adventist high school students, I considered what students need to do to succeed in online learning and how teachers can help them.

These elements, among others, can encourage student success in online learning:

1. Knowing their motivation. Students are more likely to succeed if they understand their motivation for completing the course and doing well. It can be helpful to ask students to contemplate their motivation, either by journaling or by discussing with other classmates taking the course.
2. Creating and following a regular schedule for working on their online courses. Students often struggle because online courses can provide less structure than classroom-based courses. Creating their own schedule for working on their online courses can help provide more structure. The schedule should include specific work times each week and dates for completing each section and may need to be checked to make sure it is realistic. Teacher-created deadlines for certain sections or assignments can also help students stay on track.
3. Organizing their materials. Students frequently lose files and links that are needed for their online courses. Students should be guided through creating bookmarks for important links and creating folders for assignments and other files that they can access anywhere, such as through Dropbox or Google Docs.
4. Finding multiple ways to access course content. A student's progress can be slowed down if their primary device has a technology problem. Having access set up on several devices can help. Depending on what devices they have access to, they

could have bookmarks to their course and other necessary links saved on their phone, personal tablet, and school computer, for example, so that if one device is not available, they can easily continue until they resolve the problem.

5. Controlling distractions such as other online activities. Encouraging students to turn off other devices and turn off notifications can help them to stay focused. Quiet music helps many students by cutting down on external distractions.
6. Connecting with others who are taking the course or can help them as they work through the course. Having these connections allows students to reach out quickly for help if a teacher is not immediately available, encouraging engagement in the course. These connections can happen in discussion forums within the course itself or through regular meetings in a physical classroom.
7. Using proper internet etiquette. In the age of texting and social media, it is important for students to understand that communication in online courses has different rules than other online communication. This video gives an excellent overview for students of the rules for polite communication for online courses: [Online Netiquette](#).¹⁰ Another helpful resource is this article¹¹ that gives an overview for teachers of the rules for online communication.

Guiding students through online courses can feel intimidating, but ultimately our strategy for encouraging student success in online courses is the same as the strategy used in traditional courses: recognize student needs and stumbling blocks and help them develop the skills needed to succeed.



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THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Ellen Stencel, South American Division, Brazil



In what way do you believe that the teaching of music can contribute to the integral development of the student?

In the Adventist philosophical realm, music is of paramount importance. Unfortunately, the teaching of music in schools is often devalued. Reflecting on the possible reasons for this, it is clear that there is a lack of knowledge about the importance of music and the difficulty of connecting with professionals prepared to act as teachers.

Based on the assumption that God is the creator and the source of beauty, the Bible includes artistic production in several aspects, such as congregational singing, instrumental practice, the Schools of the Prophets, the planning of the Sanctuary, and the book of Psalms, to name a few. God has placed in each one of us the desire to be in contact with beauty and art. For that, the teaching of Music should provide an excellent opportunity for students to develop creativity and to prepare students to be guided and stimulated to realize that they were created in the image and likeness of God in their artistic creations.

Music instruction has many benefits to students:

- It encourages personal expression through musical language to communicate ideas.
- It develops creative thinking through interrelationships in the way of thinking and reflection, to encourage curiosity and provide original experiences.
- It adds aesthetic experience (perception of the senses) to broaden awareness and artistic and musical sensibility.
- It helps students understand the nature of music through experience in multiple ways.
- It increases self-discovery and knowledge of feelings, develops self-confidence and a sense of self-esteem.
- It improves integration through the knowledge of perception, reason, and emotion.

Allan Merrian states that music has the following functions: aesthetic pleasure, emotional expression, body response, conformation to social

norms, entertainment, validation of religious institutions and rituals, communication, continuity and establishment of culture, symbolic representation and integration of society.¹²

In the social field, the teaching of music is related to the importance of preserving and strengthening communication between people, as well as minimizing indiscipline and violence. Music class needs to be meaningful and must be open to a constant dialogue with the socio-cultural reality. The skills of composition, instrumental performance, and musical appreciation, as well as musical styles and biographies of composers and the study of various works, are needed for a full musical education.

Multisensory learning theories have stated that the use of music in the classroom promotes complex thinking and makes connections between emotion, thought, and learning because music activates most areas of the brain. The elements present in musical activities such as singing in the choir, playing an instrument, and participating in musical education classes are the same used to build a neural network, such as challenge, innovation, coherence, time and reinforcement. Thus, it is correct to state that music improves cognition, as well as being pleasurable and necessary for daily life.



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HOW TO TEACH FINANCIAL EDUCATION BASED ON BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Kátia Regina Lanzendorf, South American Division, Brazil



Since Adventist education has its philosophy based on Christian principles, it is wise to include biblical verses in our projects that substantiate the correct attitudes regarding the use of money.

Due to the problems caused by the growth of consumerism and the lack of financial education in families, there is a growing need to teach children about financial management. This work can be done in partnership with families, encouraging parents to act consciously when it comes to money, always leading their children to participate in the accounting of household expenses.

Since Adventist education has its philosophy based on Christian principles, it is wise to include biblical verses in our projects that substantiate the correct attitudes regarding the use of money.¹³ We can include verses that lead children to understand that:

- **Everything we have belongs to God.** "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the word, and all who live in it" ([Psalm 24:1](#)).
- **It is God who enables us to earn money.** "But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today" ([Deuteronomy 8:18](#)).
- **Many things have more value than money.** "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold" ([Proverbs 22:1](#)).
- **We should make the most of our abilities in serious and honest work.** "Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth" ([Proverbs 10:4](#)).
- **We must know how to live with what we earn.** "Give to everyone what you owe them" ([Romans 13:7-8](#)). This implies not spending more than we can afford. We must be careful not to make financial commitments that exceed our financial conditions.
- **The family budget needs a plan.** For the family to have enough for itself and to share with those in need, a plan is needed. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and

estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?
" ([Luke 14:28](#)).

The practice of meaningful activities that keep in mind the reality, needs, and interest of children, helps them to develop skills and abilities that will enable families to see the benefits of financial education in the home. For this financial education to be something pleasant, it is a good idea to explain why it is important and to unite the pedagogical with the playful.



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TELLING A STORY WITH CREATIVITY

Glória Barreto, South American Division, Brazil



There are several aspects necessary for successful storytelling.

There are several aspects necessary for successful storytelling. For example, have you ever heard an adult telling stories in an infantilized voice as if they were imitating a child? In a few minutes, that constant high tone begins to annoy the listener. This style of voice quickly ends the patience of the adult and child audience. On the other hand, a low voice that remains in the same tone does not solve the problem either. On the contrary, it makes the audience sleepy and distracted. Problems like this can negatively impact storytelling. Learning about the aspects of good storytelling can help with avoiding problems.

Voice

The voice is one of the most important parts when it comes to telling stories. Using creative voices for the characters and the environment can increase interest among listeners. You can use the tiny voice of a pet, the thick voice of a brave king, the noise of the wind or the knocking of a door. The voice is a valuable resource when telling stories, especially for children, because they have a lot of imagination.

The voice is a dramatic and essential element. It is a working instrument for a storyteller, and is most effectively used by bearing in mind the following aspects:

- **Tone.** Vary the voice tone in a way calculated to match the characters.
- **Volume.** Vary between low and high volume, showing the emotions of the characters.
- **Rhythm.** Vary the speed to match the events of the story.
- **Pauses.** Add silences to create an atmosphere of suspense without compromising the meaning of sentences.
- **Vocabulary.** Choose words that your audience will understand.

Body Language

Like the voice, body language should also be varied and reflect the emotions of the story. Facial expression, for example, should convey what is being said, and the storyteller should look in all directions so all

listeners can see the facial expressions.

Resources for Illustrating Ideas

There are many resources storytellers can use to draw in listeners' attention and illustrate what is being presented, including an object, a figure, an image on the screen, a sound instrument, or a person dressed up as a character in the story.

When choosing resources, consider the number of listeners and the physical space. There is no point in taking an illustrated book to an event with 300 children, for example, since they will not all be able to see the illustrations. Plan and analyze which resource best fits each situation.

Varied Stimuli

Children learn through images, sounds, and sensations. Therefore, it is helpful to include different types of stimuli. You can express yourself with a song, noises created by objects, the taste of a loaf of bread, the smell of a perfume, figures, objects that represent the characters of the story and other resources that make the story more attractive. Adding these different types of stimuli will make communication more complete and increase retention.

If you carefully use voice, body language, interesting resources, and a variety of different stimuli, your story has everything it needs to be a success. It may seem like a lot of effort for just one story but noticing the sparkle in the eyes of little listeners will make the effort worthwhile.



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LEARNING

Understanding how students learn allows us to adjust our teaching strategies to ensure optimal learning. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as the psychology of learning, learning styles, multiple intelligences, study habits, active learning, modes of learning, and faith-based learning.

FOUR LEARNING STYLES

Sharon Aka, North American Division, USA



Varying our instruction to meet the needs of each type of learner will help all of our students learn the information more effectively.

According to the Learning Styles theoretical framework, there are four types of learners. Each of these types of learners does best when instruction answers one of four simple questions:

- Why?
- What?
- How?
- Where do we go from here?

Imaginative Learners

The first type of learner is the imaginative or innovative learner. This learner needs to find the answer to 'why' questions, especially Why do I need to know this? Why learners aren't even interested unless you can first convince them that something is important. A teacher must capture the participant's attention and provide the motivation to explore. This student's engagement is based on having a rational need or reason for the information. Great why activities include group interactions, stories, role-plays, object lessons, active learning games, short videos, and readiness activities to help connect the participant to the subject emotionally.

Analytical Learners

The second type, the analytical learner, is most interested in the question what. What information is most important? This student learns best when they have as much information about a topic as possible. This participant is excited about facts, details, content, and information. Sometimes this learner focuses on surface knowledge more than deep understanding. Although information is important, it does not present the entire picture. Learning and critical thinking occur with application, not just information. Great 'what' activities for the analytical learner are power point presentations, lectures, self-study, competitions, quiz games, content presentations, memorization, and written reports.

Common Sense Learners

The third type, the commonsense learner, focuses on the 'how' question. How does it work? This student wants to know how to use the content. They are usually good with their hands and with translating information into action. They may be able to perform tasks without being able to explain fully how they did it or why. These students use their past experiences as a reference point for future learning. To engage this learner, make the connection between new content and its application. Great activities for the commonsense learner include inquiry and problem based learning, projects, case studies, logical problems, concept maps, fixing, building, or other applications.

Dynamic Learners

The fourth type, the dynamic learner, asks the question, "Where do we go from here?" Dynamic learners are able to quickly and accurately adapt new knowledge to new situations. This student wants to take what they are learning and apply it beyond the current situation. This is the heart of critical thinking and information synthesis. The dynamic learner loves to brainstorm, think outside the box, discuss open ended questions, participate in group activities or competitive events, take on leadership roles in the learning process, apply what is being discussed in real time, or create new ways of using the information.

The great news is that all four of these types of learning are essential for fully mastering new material, so varying our instruction to meet the needs of each type of learner will help all of our students learn the information more effectively.



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ACTIVE LEARNING IN SMALL GROUPS

Jennifer Litau, South Pacific Division, Papua New Guinea



Small group learning can be achieved through cooperation, collaboration, or a combination of both.

Active learning is essential for students, but the rapidity, intensity, and volume of information available online can encourage passive rather than active learning. Educators aware of this problem can counteract its effects by employing methods such as small groups to engage students in active learning. Small groups are extremely valuable, especially when they include the integration of faith in learning.

Small group learning can be achieved through cooperation, collaboration, or a combination of both. Cooperative learning refers to structured, systematic learning in which students work towards a common goal. This type of learning includes communicating a common goal to group members, offering a reward for achieving the goal, assigning complementary roles to group members, holding group members accountable for their own learning, providing team-building activities or discussion of social skills for effective group work, and discussing methods for improvement. Cooperation can have favorable effects on achievement, productivity, physiological health, self-esteem, motivation, intergroup attitudes, and attitude towards learning.

In contrast, collaborative learning is a relatively unstructured process in which the small group members negotiate goals, define problems, develop procedures, and produce socially constructed knowledge. Sometimes this free collaboration fails to systematically produce learning. One way to enhance its effectiveness is to structure interactions by engaging students in well-defined scripts. A collaboration script is a set of instructions prescribing how students should form groups, interact, collaborate, and solve problems.¹ Methods like this that employ elements of both cooperative and collaborative small group learning can achieve the best outcomes.

My university's undergraduate geography and social science program often engages students in projects reproducing small group dynamics including personality, social interaction, work ethic, time management, and compliance with requirements. We encourage students to

understand the needs of their community so that they can proactively address those needs and to engage in peer mentoring so that stronger students assist weaker students.

We recently asked our students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of last year's small groups and give recommendations for future improvements. Students identified these attributes as contributing to their small groups: research skills, oral presentation skills, equal participation and contribution by all members, faithful attendance at team meetings, effective communication skills, cooperation, collaboration, and meeting deadlines. Students perceived that small groups were weakened when these attributes were missing and when there was misunderstanding of scripts and tasks, disorganization, poor time management, and personality weaknesses such as laziness or procrastination.

In their recommendations, students reflected the influence of our efforts to integrate faith in learning. They affirmed the importance of cooperation and collaboration, commitment, faithfulness, time management, organization, responsible leadership, clear understanding, and equality in task distribution, among other qualities. Students value the godly influence of Adventist education as they experience it through small group learning. What an opportunity for personal, professional, and spiritual growth and development!

As Adventist educators, let us frequently incorporate opportunities for small group learning. This will permit students of our educational institutions to apply and practice godly values, peer mentor each other, and grow in such areas as leadership, organization, time management, cooperation, collaboration and faithfulness.



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WEIGHING PIGS, LEARNING AND EDUCATING

Paul Lehmann, North American Division, USA



Education should include both action and reflection for the learner and the educator.

A farmer does not increase a pig's weight by weighing it every day. Likewise, standardized tests and other assessment methods do not necessarily make the student learn the material. Evaluation is a necessary part of education, but sometimes we use it simply as a motivator or as disciplinary action, instead of using it as a tool students and teachers can use to enhance learning. Education should include both action and reflection for the learner and the educator. One of the keys of learning is to use assessment in ways that encourage true learning of content and of essential life skills.

It is important for this learning that teachers balance the level of challenge with the level of physical and psychological safety. As Todd Miner noted in his presentation at the International Conference for Experiential Education,² if the level of challenge is low and students are always in their comfort zone, also called the green zone, little learning may take place, potentially resulting in boredom. On the other hand, if students are in the red zone, or panic zone, little or no learning may occur. Callousness to learning may be the result ([Dewey, 25-26](#)).³

The zone where most learning occurs is the yellow zone. There is enough challenge that the students are motivated to focus on the subject at hand, and interest is developed, but the student feels safe enough to take on the challenge. There is a level of excitement and anticipation, and the learner recognizes that there will be guidance along with psychological, emotional, and physical safety.

So, what are some of the principles for encouraging positive learning while avoiding the boring and panic zones? In his article "Walkabout," Maurice Gibbons suggests that education should include adventure and challenge ([117-122](#)).⁴ In addition, he includes logical inquiry or investigation. Students should be encouraged to ask: "what if?" and "then what?" Such questions peak the interest to discover, important for sustaining curiosity. Gibbons also mentions that service is important in educating the learner. On this topic, Ellen White notes, Unselfishness

underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty" ([White, 16](#)).⁵ In service learning classes I have taught, students invariably demonstrate a positive change in life skills and interpersonal relationships, not to mention an increased level of learning, as they engage in experiential education. Service helps bring purpose to students' learning. Doing things that are not purposeful leads to boredom. The life skills and purpose developed through service help learners to make decisions that are positive for themselves and everyone they meet. Learners often ask the question, "How will I use this in the future?" or "Will this learning give me the edge for graduate school or a job?" The aspect of true service is something that is critical to a positive educational experience. Mentorship is also a key factor to enhance the yellow zone level of learning because it helps enhance the sense of safety for students.

If we want our students to grow, to "increase in weight," we cannot content ourselves with measuring what students currently know. When we find ways to make learning and assessment purposeful and fun for the learner, and couple it with a commitment to caring for our students, we can increase the weight."



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LEARNING THROUGH DIALOGUE

Eduardo Sola, North American Division, Canada



This dialogical process in class also points to Jesus teaching style, which features a teacher who engages students by means of questions and critical thinking.

As teachers who are engaged in improving curriculum and instruction and making learning meaningful to our students, we are often looking for new pedagogical methodologies and new teaching techniques. Some of these involve ample use of digital media and other tools afforded by the development and diffusion of technology.

Yet in my teaching of music theory grounded in history, such as counterpoint, a sixteenth-century Renaissance compositional technique, I have been trying to incorporate historical texts and techniques from the past into our classes.⁶ Perhaps this could be influenced by my predilection for music history, given my background as a historical musicologist. The results have been fascinating.

In teaching counterpoint this term, I have made Johann Joseph Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum* ([1725](#)) one of the main required textbooks for this course.⁷ Despite the many recent textbooks on the study of counterpoint at a post-secondary level available today, Fux's *Gradus* is unique in at least two ways. Firstly, the textbook is a thorough and comprehensive pedagogical treatise written specifically to teach Renaissance counterpoint to advanced students. Its simple design is based on acquired competency, practical development of compositional skills, and an increasing level of difficulty throughout the teaching process. Secondly, it is written in an organic and friendly dialogue format.

The dialogue takes place between Alouysius, the master, and Josephus, the pupil. The former constantly engages his student by means of probing questions that encourage critical thinking and reflection. Assessments are completed as the instruction progresses and are always formative, in that both Alouysius and Josephus provide one another with feedback on the instruction process.

Fortunately, Burman University's small classes afford the possibility for a similar instruction format, which I adopted throughout this term, namely that of engaging students through a dialogical process of lesson and

assessment similar to the methodology in Fux's text. Although our classes are not one-on-one, as portrayed in Fux's *Gradus*, they allow for a direct application of the dialogue format. We converse about the material and course content, share examples with one another, and provide peer feedback and critical perspectives on one another's compositional work. As a result of this formative process, my students have been successful in completing within an average of four months what I have myself completed in four semesters of counterpoint classes as an undergraduate student.

This is to say that, by simply adopting a simple, welcoming—and rather ancient—dialogical technique, our class has been achieving results that I did not consider possible before this semester. In our constant pursuit of effective new and innovative pedagogies and teaching methodologies, we may lose sight of the simplicity and efficacy with which masters taught in the past, centuries before the concepts of curriculum and instruction—at least how we understand curriculum and instruction today.

My experience with this dialogical process in class also points to Jesus' teaching style, which features a teacher who engages students by means of questions and critical thinking. In approaching teaching in this way, Jesus was able to instill in His students the rewarding experience of a dialogical exchange that involves deep reflection, personal involvement, and, consequently, a practical, lasting, and meaningful understanding. As teachers, we too can give these benefits to our students by being open to older teaching techniques in addition to new techniques.



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CREATING A CULTURE OF TRUST THROUGH A FAITH-BASED CONNECTION IN ACTIVE LEARNING

Barbara Konter, North American Division, USA



A faith-based connection helped create a culture of trust, and the positive learning experiences that result can prompt students to engage in active learning as they continue with their education.

Student success is a goal of educators who are passionate about learning. Student success is defined in many ways, depending on context: the pass-rate in a specific course, the perception of students, the extent to which students meet specific objectives, or the extent to which the course achieves the educational institution's mission and goals, for example.

Perhaps the more pertinent question is how we can interact with students in a way that helps ensure their success. I believe the answer is through active learning. Active learning fosters student engagement and promotes positive interaction between students and faculty. If we focus on the scope of student-faculty interaction and communication, we quickly see that a culture of trust is essential for student success.

I am a professor in a distance-learning program, so my communication with students is through an online course platform, so my interaction with students is not typically face-to-face. This has prompted me to consider how best to create a culture of trust. Trust begins with establishing values. At AdventHealth University (AHU)⁸ our core values include nurture, excellence, spirituality, and stewardship. A faith-based culture of trust in the active learning process is closely aligned with the mission, vision, and goals of Adventist schools such as AHU.

The culture of trust⁹ begins with mutual respect between students and educator. Typically, my class is composed of a diverse group of students from a geographic and professional perspective, so I convey my respect for my students by telling them that I understand their commitment to our profession, medical imaging, and that I want them to draw upon their own experiences in their specialty as well as learn from the experiences of their classmates.

I also convey my genuine interest in their learning needs and their subsequent success. One way I do this is to share a Bible verse and devotional message with the students each week. Often students

comment on what the verse means to them. Sometimes the messages prompt students to share their particular situations or needs. Trusting that I am interested in my students prompts them to engage in class activities. The resulting culture of trust supports the course goals as well as the school's mission and goals.

Further, my aim is to motivate students to commit to mastering course material because they trust that the assignments and assessments are beneficial and in line with their own educational and personal goals. The faith-based component of this process lasts far beyond the course itself. Students enrolled in my class hold a minimum of an Associate of Science degree in Medical Imaging or Radiologic Sciences, and sometimes struggles with assignments that require research and scholarly writing at a level appropriate for their bachelor level program of study.

Recently, a particular student reached out to me expressing her anxiety over scholarly writing assignments. She told me that she appreciated our class devotions and was encouraged by this particular week's Bible verse:

I can do all this through Him who gives me strength" ([Philippians 4:13](#)). This was the beginning of a productive interaction between us. I worked closely with her, critiquing her work as she created her assignments. By the end of the course, her writing had improved appreciably. I truly believe that the faith-based connection we developed was a significant factor in her active learning experience. A faith-based connection helped create a culture of trust, and the positive learning experiences that result can prompt students to engage in active learning as they continue with their education.



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BUT HE'S SO SMART!

Térbia Leal, South American Division, Paraguay



Unfortunately, intelligence has been overvalued over the years to the point of being considered of greater value than justice and truth.

Rodrigo's¹⁰ parents were called to his school because of a very serious action by their son. After hearing the irrefutable account of the aggression committed by Rodrigo, the parents answered: "But he is so intelligent!" What the parents really meant was that they thought that the fact that the boy was intelligent compensated for his behavior and character problems.

The word *intelligence* is wrapped up in an almost magical aura as if those who have it have everything.¹¹ All scientific and artistic achievements, medical advances, the wonders of architecture, and the beauty of musical and literary compositions are believed to come from intelligence. It is used to classify prodigies and to excuse infractions, lack of responsibility, and even poor character. Unfortunately, intelligence has been overvalued over the years to the point of being considered of greater value than justice and truth.

The classic definition of intelligence is "the ability to solve problems." This definition does not fully express the rich dimensions of intelligence because to be true intelligence it must also "create products that are meaningful in one or more cultural environments" (Gardner, 1994).¹²

The definition of intelligence has also been expanded to include different types of intelligence. In the 1980s, Daniel Goleman and Howard Gardner revolutionized what was known about intelligence with their innovative proposals. Gardner suggested the existence of *Multiple Intelligences*, putting artistic and synesthetic intelligences on an equal footing with traditional linguistic and mathematical intelligences, for example. He said that "one intelligence has no supremacy over the others."¹³ Similarly, Goleman launched the idea of *Emotional Intelligence*, highlighting the fact that the human being "in a very real sense, has two minds, one that thinks and the other that feels."¹⁴

Myths about Intelligence

Unfortunately, there are many myths related to intelligence in popular culture, including:

- **High grades equal intelligence.** Getting good grades is not synonymous with intelligence. School grades only show how well students respond to formal schooling. Many very intelligent individuals have low grades in school because they do not adapt well to the conventional education system.
- **Men are smarter than women.** Men and women reach the same intellectual levels provided they have received the same cultural incentives, access to education, and social opportunities.
- **Intelligence is the most important thing.** A healthy and balanced life, based on good choices and lifestyle, is more closely associated with wisdom than intelligence.
- **Intelligence can be accurately measured.** IQ tests, famous for supposedly measuring intelligence, were created based on the psychological understanding of the time. We know today that it is impossible to measure intelligence through tests or trials. This is because the manifestations of intelligence are so variable that it is impossible to find a reliable standard of comparison to measure it.
- **Intelligence is solely hereditary (or solely environmental).** It has become clear that mental phenomena such as intelligence generally depend on both hereditary and environmental factors.

The important thing to know about intelligence is that intelligence in isolation does not guarantee success. Making wise decisions and living in a healthy and productive way are more closely related to using free will to act on principles and values than to genius. As psychologist Joseph Renzulli notes, "The fact that someone has a brilliant idea does not mean anything. The true protagonists of greatness not only create ideas, but they know how to turn them into useful works for others and keep them in truth."¹⁵

Therefore, although intelligence is helpful, it is no guarantee of success or happiness. For that we need to ask God for wisdom and exercise our free will in healthy, positive ways.



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DEVELOPING STUDY HABITS

Roberta Siqueira Soldaini De Oliveira, South American Division, Brazil



It is important for students to develop the taste for study and the habit of study.

It is of fundamental importance for teachers to help students learn to get into a routine of positive study habits. Spending hours concentrating is not an easy task for students today. Time spent on cell phones and videos has made our students extremely immediate people. We can see this, for example, by observing the great success of series with short episodes compared to movies or shows with longer episodes.

Unfortunately, this means we often find that our students become bored and distracted easily. Therefore, it is important to look for methodologies and procedures that help our students learn to develop and sustain interest.

Here are some strategies that can be used to establish a pleasant and effective routine of studies:

- **Same day study.** Many students have a bad habit of studying material the day after it was discussed instead of on the same day. This can make it harder to learn the material, so students should be encouraged to study the content seen in class on the same day. A good way to make them aware of this is the directed study of the book *Learning Intelligence*, by Pierluigi Piazzi, a practical manual of good study habits.¹⁶
- **Mental maps.** Students should be encouraged to create a mental map for each module studied, with criteria outlined in advance by the teacher. It should be colored, with clearly legible writing, adequately formatted, never on a simple notebook sheet, and illustrated, with clear and objective content. This requires students to study the content carefully and allows them to memorize it easily.
- **Encourage frequent subject engagement.** It is helpful to remember that you only learn by doing. It is not uncommon for students to say that it is easy for the teacher to understand the material since he is an expert in that subject. This statement has a basis in reason, since the teacher has constant contact with the

subjects he teaches. So, it makes sense for students also to have constant contact with the subject and practice in the subject. Encourage them to do many exercises, introducing them in a gradual way so that the student is encouraged by his or her own success in carrying out tasks, starting with the simplest and working up to much greater challenges. Whenever possible, encourage students to evaluate their own progress to further develop their expertise and confidence in the subject.

It is important for students to develop the taste for study and the habit of study. By carefully choosing strategies and planning for this result, we can make the development of these skills efficient and even pleasurable.



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FIVE TIPS TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP NEW HABITS

Suellen Timm, South American Division, Brazil



Transforming a habit isn't necessarily easy or quick. It isn't always simple. But it is possible. -Charles Duhigg

Who as a child heard the teacher say: "If you study a little bit every day, you will do well in the exam"? Or heard your mother say, "Start the day with your homework and then you can enjoy your free time"?

We live surrounded by routines and habits. Since we were born our parents have tried to teach routines of sleep, hygiene, food, and so on. When we grow up, the habits of childhood still accompany us. Teachers can encourage students to develop new habits, such as taking time to read the Bible, study, or eat more healthily.

According to Celia Garabaya, British Bubblies' pedagogical director, in an article published on the Children's Guide website, "childhood is the ideal time for children to acquire a series of habits that will be very important to them for the rest of their lives. The longer we wait to instill routines in children, the harder it will be as they get older. That's why it's important to start working with children as soon as possible."¹⁷

Here are 5 tips for encouraging your students to develop new habits:

1. **Prefer persistence over performance.** If the goal is to establish a reading time every day, start with 15 or 20 minutes. Even if learners are excited about the challenge, prioritize how easy it is for them to execute the goal so as not to demotivate them.
2. **Connect the new routine with habit.** In his book *The Power of the Habit*, Charles Duhigg points out that it is scientifically proven that "habits arise because the brain is looking all the time for ways to save effort."¹⁸ It is as if people perform some activities of the day such as waking up, brushing their teeth, and eating breakfast automatically. Associating the new habit with this routine can simplify things. For example, if you want to encourage your child to drink a glass of water as soon as they wake up, you can ask them to leave a bottle of water beside their bed before bedtime.
3. **Establish an initial time period.** A study conducted by Maxwell Maltz¹⁹ revealed that if a habit is maintained for 21 consecutive days it is easier for it to become a routine. Give the child a

timeframe for practicing the habit. Challenging a child to study for twenty minutes every day may seem impossible since they see it as something for the rest of their life, but if they can do the challenge for a few days, it will gradually become easier to face the challenge.

4. **Reward.** If the goal is to have a moment of reading, the reward may be to buy a new book. If the goal is to eat healthier, the reward may be to have a picnic with classmates. Children like to be rewarded for their effort. Remember to associate the reward with the new habit in training.
5. **Set new goals and deadlines.** Laura Vanderkam interviewed people who started a new habit and continued it for years. She says that Somer Hanson was challenged to wake up early every day to read, including weekends. At first, she woke up half an hour before it was necessary. Then it went from 45 minutes to an hour. "It was a bit difficult at first, but I kept discipline,"²⁰ she said. The initial goal was to read 45 books a year. Two years later the goal had been raised to 52.

As Charles Duhigg says, "Transforming a habit isn't necessarily easy or quick. It isn't always simple. But it is possible."²¹



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COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Suzete Maia, South American Division, Brazil



Redemptive education, which is the center of our philosophy, helps to build concepts of growth for life.

To be an educator in the Adventist school system implies having clarity about the purposes of Christian education. It also implies giving meaning not only to knowledge but to the activities involved in the teaching process. What kind of teaching differentiates Adventist schools from others?

Adventist schools teach using a learning-oriented model focusing on the development of skills and abilities. Redemptive education, which is the center of our philosophy, helps to build concepts of growth for life. In this model of training, the important thing is that the student can apply the knowledge they obtain. In this way, learning becomes active and effective.

When the focus is only on content, covering a lot of content seems more important to the rhythm of the classroom than reflection, autonomy and decision making. However, our goal is the formation of citizens for this land and for the homeland to come. This requires that we work together with other teachers and with our students to ensure that our philosophy is aligned with our methodology.

Here are some tips for fulfilling God's plan for the harmonious development of physical, mental and spiritual faculties within your school:

- **Focus on reflection and practical skills instead of favoring the intellectual faculty over others.** Teach in-depth lessons, present the contents in a practical and useful way for the life of the student, and avoid focusing on excess content memorization dissociated from reflection.
- **Determine the best interventions for your students.** The teacher's intervention is an essential element. Dialogue with your students to understand what their real learning difficulties are. Have well-defined criteria for success and refine your teaching methods based on students' responses. Emphasize that the purpose of

learning is to transform content knowledge into something practical that is linked to the everyday life of the student.

- **Have clear expectations.** Teachers' expectations for the ways that students will learn largely determine academic success. Deep learning is more likely when classes include positive dialogue, group study partnerships, or construction of concepts related to practice.
- **Encourage student participation.** The student must play an active role, and teaching must start from research and connections with students. Knowledge must be built with the participation of everyone who is part of the educational process.
- **Reflect on teaching together.** The active and collective reflection of teachers on their role in the construction of pedagogical work should be a permanent exercise. Being unified in action as a teaching staff is fundamental.
- **Work in groups.** When the teaching team is engaged in the same focus, solutions end up being more linked to educational partnerships than to abstract learning models. Collaborative partnership as an important strategy for teacher training and development. Collaborative partnership with students also improve teaching and encourages students to become critical and active participants in the learning process.



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SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

Leadership happens on many levels within Adventist education. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as Biblical perspectives on leadership, team building, character development, school fundraising, building a positive school environment, alumni, and teachers, students, principals, staff and education directors as leaders.

A FATHER AND A DYING SON

Andrew Mutero, East-Central Africa Division, Kenya



We can stay in our comfortable shelters at the top of the mountain, or we can go down to the bottom of the mountain with Jesus and reach out to the families in need of help, healing their children by providing an Adventist education.

From our rich history of over one hundred years of Adventism in Kenya, we have observed that whenever Adventist education has provided quality and excellence, evangelism has flourished. In the early 1900's, our pioneer Adventist missionary, pastor Arthur Carscallen, made his first breakthrough in evangelism only after he built the first school in Gendia, Nyanza, around Lake Victoria, Kenya. More schools were later built, and the rest is history. The region became the bedrock of Adventism in Kenya and the home of academic and intellectual giants.

In [Mark 9:2-18](#), we find a story about the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus takes his inner circle—the disciples Peter, James and John—with him and leads them up a high mountain. The three disciples are at the top of the mountain while the other nine are at the foot of the mountain. This story makes me wonder where our mission field should be. Should it be at the top of the mountain or at the bottom?

At the top of this mountain is a lot of glory. For a long time, we have been comfortable surrounding ourselves with the people in our Adventist sub-culture at the top of the mountain, separating ourselves from others outside the church. There are things that make us very comfortable at the top of our mountain.

However, there is no doubt that with Jesus, the mission field is always at the bottom of the mountain. Unfortunately, the other nine disciples at the bottom of the mountain did not stay up that night like their master in prayer and watching. They had a long night full of complaining, discouragement, politicking, gossiping, and finger pointing. They complained about the lack of money and could not understand why three of them were at the top of the mountain while the rest of them were at the bottom of it.

Soon, when it was morning, there was a large crowd at the bottom of the mountain. The disciples got into a heated argument with the scribes, the

teachers of the law. In this moment of confrontation and confusion, a helpless father showed up with a dying son, possessed by demons. No one could help. Not even the nine demoralized disciples. Luckily for this father, at that very hour, Jesus was on his way down the mountain.

At the bottom of every mountain” is a helpless father with a dying son. When he arrived, Jesus rebuked his disciples, “What are you arguing with them about?” ([Mark 9:16](#)). The life of a child was at stake! This was not the time for empty words, but action. The father was crying to Jesus in despair. This is the real mission field—a desperate father trying to save his son.

We have a choice to make. We can stay in our comfortable shelters at the top of the mountain, or we can go down to the bottom of the mountain with Jesus, and reach out to the families in need of help, healing their children by providing an Adventist education.



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GO FOR THE GOLD

Arceli Rosario, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



“Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.”
[Ecclesiastes 9:10](#)

When I hear the word “might,” I see muscles twisting and hear voices grunting. I also see a runner sprinting toward the finish line with face drenched with sweat and tears. Indeed, “going for the gold” calls for strenuous effort. It calls for self-sacrifice. It calls for sheer determination.

God is a God of excellence and His people, especially the leaders, should strive for it. He is not a God of mediocrity and He does not want His people to dwell in the valley of ordinariness. He declares through Ellen White, “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children.”¹

What does it take for leaders to “go for the gold”?

First, as leaders, we must strive to understand God’s ideal for us. What God wants is for us to be like him. Being like Christ is the first goal of a leader. Henry and Richard Blackaby, in their book [Spiritual Leadership](#), point out that “as leaders grow personally, they increase their capacity to lead.”² Leadership development is first of all personal development and personal development is character development. A leader may have increased the organization’s assets or may have led the university through great success but if his or her character is soiled, he or she cannot continue to lead effectively. Leadership is not only about amazing statistics and figures. It is most of all a character issue. Still, leaders must also strive to grow in their profession, since they can take the organization only as far as they can go. Giant organizations are so because they have giant leaders.

Second, as leaders, let us dream big for our organizations and strive to make our dreams come true. Our dreams should be coupled with our passion to bring to concrete reality the abstract things which are conceived in our mind. Aside from the gift of vision, the leader must have the force of will to hammer the first nail and the perseverance to strike the last nail.

Third, as leaders, we must understand that the road to excellence is not always a step forward. At times along the road to success, we may slip backward. But it does not matter how many backward steps we take; what matters is that we stay on course and continue moving forward. As long as we are on the right track, we will reach our destination. [Churchill](#), a leader known for his unflinching determination to win the Second World War, said, "Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm."² At the end of our journeys, we will not remember our failures; our minds will just be enthralled with the overwhelming joy of victory.



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SCHOOL FUNDRAISING PRINCIPLES

Donald Sahly, North American Division, USA



Teachers in Adventist Schools are master builders, and we exercise great care and caution in building young lives.

Although fundraising is important for the well-being of Adventist schools, it can be surprisingly tricky. Understanding the principles that make fundraising more effective can help. Ideally, philanthropy represents doing good things for the right motives. People give and continue to give for a large number of reasons, too numerous to mention in a short article, but there are two principles I find particularly helpful for fundraising efforts.

Match Requests to Donor's Hearts

When speaking to prospective donors, make sure you understand the heart and motives of the person you are asking to give and try to match the personality with the needs of the school. I have found during my years of raising money for church schools and universities that different projects appeal to the different personalities. I have met those who will not give to a new building or put money into an endowment but will give generously to the immediate need of a student who is in real need of this semester's tuition. There are others who want to see their gifts live on through bricks and mortar or an endowment that continues to give year after year.

Focus Fundraising Campaigns on Student Needs

The school and administration also need to think carefully about the goals and purpose of their requests. Projects that help students directly have greater appeal than general needs. In choosing a project, an educator can often see a real need. Sometimes that need is more for the benefit of the teacher than the children. Teachers have real needs, such as new work computers. Although such needs are worthy, they are best handled by the board or by seeking a single donor to assist. Major fundraising campaigns should focus on projects that will assist many or all students in the school and have a wide appeal to many donors.

Teachers in Adventist schools are master builders, and we exercise great care and caution in building young lives. Each student is a unique and special person, a gift of life in the form of a young man or woman. Each

is a life building toward a special destiny God is preparing. The projects we choose and ask others to give towards must reflect the goals and purpose of education.



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EDUCATION: BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR ETERNITY

Sandeep Kachchhap, Southern Asia Division, India



God didn't intend eternity without community. Therefore, just as Christians are called to build community, so are Christian educational institutions.

As a Seventh-day Adventist educator, I keep asking myself if our department as a community tends to strengthen or weaken the community. Each of us are part of the community and have a part to play in the strength of the community. By extension, our schools too are agents designed to build community.

The Bible contains an abundance of stories that convey the theme of unity. The Garden of Eden was the first little community, Adam and Eve, and God deemed it good. Even in His last prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ's burden was that his disciples continue to live united. The significance of this concern cannot be overestimated since it was his last prayer. Sadly, centuries later we find ourselves creating more divisions than community.

We have sometimes allowed an altered version of our purpose to become our guide. It is important to remind ourselves of our purpose of building community, and to focus on that purpose. The following principles can be a good start for moving back toward our purpose:

Put on Love

“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” ([Colossians 3:14](#)).

The struggle to put on genuine love is real for most of us. Nonetheless, with God's grace and a constant desire to emulate Christ, the struggle may be overcome. As Christian educators, recognizing the significance of genuine love in the classroom and outside is paramount to building community.

Pursue Humility

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” ([Micah 6:8](#)).

Micah instructs us to walk humbly as the Lord requires. It is only through humility that we can submit ourselves to a righteous God who provides us guidance. Humbly submitting to His counsel and reproof, we begin to see His will, which will lead us as we work on building community. In our schools and classrooms it would be beneficial to pursue humility at all times, serving others rather than ourselves.

Seek Mutual Benefit

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification” ([Romans 14:19](#)).

Living amidst people, seeking one's own benefit comes easy. Even within educational institutions, some of us are quick to further our cause even at the cost of others. Such choices lead to disharmony, distorting our purpose. Working together benefits everyone involved and also moves us toward our purpose.

God didn't intend eternity without community. Therefore, just as Christians are called to build community, so are Christian educational institutions. As Adventist educators, may we seek to build each other up.



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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A PROFESSION OR A MINISTRY

Constantin Popescu, Inter-European Division, Romania



Every individual connected with the school is essential for positive school leadership.

An understanding of educational leadership is essential for healthy schools. Thus, it is important to consider the principal areas and primary purposes of educational leadership.

Many leaders look at their position like a pyramid with them at the top. They look down on others, expecting others to serve them. This image of leaders exists in many people's minds, and they believe that if the leader is not successful, it is not the mistake of their leadership but of other people in the organization who did not achieve the organization's goals.

The main goal of education is to prepare students for their best service for this world and for the Kingdom of God. Keeping this in mind helps us fulfill the purpose for Christian education. The pyramid from this perspective is upside down. The students and their future represent the top level. Leaders are at the bottom of the pyramid to serve the teachers, the parents, and the students.

Every individual connected with the school is essential for positive school leadership. The principal's role is important because he or she is responsible for all that happens in the school. Administrators are important because they need to provide all that is necessary for the school to function at its best. Teachers have a significant role since they are in charge of the teaching and learning process. Parents contribute to education because they send their precious gifts of God to our school and we should not disappoint them. All of these groups should work together with students to build up our students and connect them with God because the students are the future, and the future of the church and society depends on their success.

If we look in the New Testament, we see Jesus as a servant teacher for the world, for His people, for His disciples and for the future disciples that will finish the work in the end time. The leader, from Jesus's point of view, is a servant, working together with teachers, parents, and students. Leaders are servants working to realize the goals of the students and the

goals of our master, Jesus Christ. The first disciples called Jesus “Master” ([John 1:37-39](#)), and when Jesus sent the disciples to prepare for the Holy supper, He used the same word: “Master” ([Matthew 26:17.18](#)).

Even though he is the true master, Jesus lived to serve others. When Jesus was on the Earth the main objective of His mission was declared in Matthew: “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” ([Matthew 20:26-28](#)). Let us follow in Christ's example.



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LEAD BY INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Sylvan A. Lashley, North American Division, USA



When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ([Acts 4:13](#))

Leadership is a modern-day buzzword, with ongoing discussion on leadership definitions, styles and typologies. Where does the Christian fit into all of this and what is the role of the church and school? More importantly, what is your personal role in the leadership discussion? A study of the Gospels and the book of Acts reveals the saga of Christian leadership by recounting the story of Jesus and his relationship with the disciples. I'd like to outline some strategy steps that Jesus followed in what I've termed "leadership investment-mentoring":

- **Identify your mission.** Jesus clearly outlined, repeated and described his mission. He had not come to overthrow Caesar and to install himself as a King. He had come to reveal the true nature of who God was and to save men and women.
- **Select a team.** Jesus believed in and espoused team work. He selected a team of willing workers.
- **Develop the team.** Jesus focused on preparing people and not programs. By working steadily with the disciples, Jesus shared by example.
- **Delegate duties.** Jesus delegated several tasks to the disciples, such as the feeding of the five thousand—he did not attempt to do everything.
- **Become a servant leader.** Practice transformational, inclusive servant leadership—Jesus washed the disciples' feet, and demonstrated a role reversal in the master-servant expectation of society.
- **Establish a leadership structure.** Jesus had a flat structure; he was accessible to the disciples and to children. Jesus carried his office with him wherever he went.
- **Commission and empower.** Jesus dedicated and empowered the disciples, sending them out to minister.
- **Reflect on mission in action.** Take time to pray, meditate, discuss and reflect on what is happening, always keeping the mission in view. "Do not let your hearts be troubled...My Father's house has

many rooms...I will come back and take you to be with me" ([John 14:1-3](#)).

When people, students, church members and parents see us, do they conclude that we have been with Jesus? Are we constantly trying to make heaven our home? Does this show in how we lead?



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BRIDGING GAPS WITH ALUMNI

Ranjith Gladstone, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



When the heart of every alumni is touched with a resounding love for their school, they will stay committed.

Alumni relationships in a university are essential to the sustainability of any given vision. According to Margaux, a well-known educational administrator and writer, alumni relations are essential to the success of your institution, whether recruiting students, promoting training, boosting employment, encouraging donations, or adding to your resource pool. Neglecting your alumni or connecting with them carelessly makes it less likely that they will feel responsible to remain involved and invested with your school. Connecting in a careful and positive way, on the other hand, can help bridge the gap.

This gap can be created either by the alumni or by the university. It can be helpful to do studies in this area to identify ways to improve the situation. Disorganization and excessive bureaucracy can make it difficult to implement the recommendations from this sort of study, but it is important to work through these difficulties. Getting alumni involved with improving the university enhances their institutional attachment, and this encourages them to become even more involved with the goals of the institution. The contributions of the alumni to the institution in terms of growth and development correlate with stronger attachment to the school.

Communication is the key factor in bridging the relationship between alumni and the university. Studies show that alumni of any institution are willing to contribute their best to every facet of the institutional life; however, this willingness is often stunted by bureaucracy and ambiguous channels of communication. Alumni asked about how their university could connect with them more effectively often emphasize that there is a lack of ample communication.

Alumni of an institution should be given the opportunity to connect with their school and contribute to its continued success. Every institution should create an alumni society where each alumnus can have access to the opportunities and resources that they need to be able to contribute to fulfilling the vision of the school. Through this channel, a sense of

responsibility and accountability can be built among the alumni. Communication methods such as this can play a major role in creating bridges between universities and their alumni.

There are other methods of communication that can help alumni to become connected, engaged, and committed. A well-defined note with Christ-filled intentions can help alumni connect to the goals and values of the institution. It can also be helpful to combine an explanation of the school's vision with practical ideas for how alumni can help with accomplishing that vision. Finally, when the heart of every alumni is touched with a resounding love for their school, they will stay committed. Let's cross more bridges and stay better connected with our alumni.



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BRINGING UP FUTURE LEADERS IN SCHOOLS

Marle Himberg, Trans-European Division, Finland



A successful leader needs an extensive set of leadership skills, even more important is an attitude of servitude, like our Lord Jesus had.

The traditional way of arranging classroom activities has been heavily teacher-centered. Some estimates say that the teacher occupies as much as 85% of the speaking time during lessons. If the teacher acts as the manager-of-all-matters in the classroom, when do the students get a chance to practice and develop in leadership skills? Consider these scenarios:

Scene 1: A class of preschool children has been divided into teams. Each team has a leader. The leader goes to the teacher to get an assignment. The teacher tells the assignment shortly and gives a bag with material. The leader goes back to their group and organizes the work. The teacher does not interfere. When the work is done, the leaders report to the teacher and the teacher briefly gives encouragement to the leaders. At the end of the lesson or the day, the teacher gives each leader a tag for a monetary reward and asks them to go back to the group and choose which team member they want to give it to and on what grounds. The next day, another child from the same group is chosen to be a leader.

Scene 2: A class of first-graders has a newcomer who is very shy. The classroom teacher asks a team of children to go and ask the new child to join them. Please, come and join us," they say cheerfully to the new child. The newcomer is too shy to join, but he sits on a chair close to the group and observes and reads a book on his own. The teacher goes to the child and says: Well done! Today you may sit here and read, but tomorrow, you will move your chair and sit closer to the group." The next day the same thing is repeated, and again the day after, until he finally has the courage to participate fully.

The previous scenes are from Finland, where the "Young Leader" teaching method has been developed especially by Maritta Lamponen and put in practice in Christian schools.⁴ Teachers who use this method believe that leadership is for everybody because most people end up leading others at some point in their lives. The older the student, the

more demanding the leadership tasks and roles they can assume. When the training of leaders starts as early as preschool, the results are more lasting, and the young adults become more mature leaders earlier on.

If leadership skills are not taught systematically, possibly only a few students get any chance for practicing. The unfortunate result is a lack of leadership skills that encourages a stick-to-the-power-once-you-get-it leadership formula, which is affecting our church life negatively. If we changed the way we look at leadership, then perhaps power shift in the local church might become less painful a process, among other benefits.

A successful leader needs an extensive set of leadership skills, even more important is an attitude of servitude, like our Lord Jesus had. The disciples who studied with Jesus were originally ordinary men, but through His divinely orchestrated process, became powerful apostolic leaders. By helping our students learn to be leaders and to lead through service, we can equip them for a lifetime of positive leadership.



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FIRST OF ALL, A SERVICE OF LOVE

Sergio Klein, South American Division, Brazil



How important is it to truly love our students? How can we discipline our students and show love at the same time?

"You will be our new head men s dean as of this year," the person on the other end of the phone said. I was a bit scared about the challenge of taking on the care of the more than 500 students in the men s residence since becoming head dean had not been in my plans, but I got down to work.

Practical Concerns

In the following years the boarding school grew, and we reached 750 boys in the men s dormitory, 750 girls in the women s dormitory and 6000 students throughout the campus. The growth created new needs for the boarding school. We needed to build new rooms and spaces for students and apply new logistics for the best use of other boarding services such as the cafeteria, laundry, gym, sports complex, library, and chapel space. We also needed to adapt the spiritual activities to allow this large number of boarders to attend. We created new schedules for the services in the chapel so that all the students could attend, since our chapel does not hold everyone at the same time. Currently we have four different service schedules, all of which offer daily moments of praise, prayer, and contact with God.

Team Motivation

Regardless of the size of the boarding school, one challenge that all head deans face is to care for, guide, and motivate the dorm work team for excellence in service. From the assistant deans to the resident assistants to the cleaners of the dormitory, all are equally important and need to be aware of their roles, duties and responsibilities. Working in a dormitory is intense and can be exhausting if the people who make up the team are not in good condition. Therefore, it is essential that the head dean motivate and support the team so that they will be able to serve with joy and offer the best of their potential.

School Rules and Values

In addition, head deans have to attend to the rules and regulations of the school and their applications. This is perhaps one of the greatest

challenges, since the current generation strongly resists rules. Many educational methodologies are based on the concept that it is forbidden to forbid anything. It is easy to answer "yes" to students' requests, but when we have to answer "no," all previous positive responses are forgotten, and the student only focuses on the negative. This can lead students to believe that we are against them. What can we do about this situation?

A Service of Love

Although functional buildings, motivated workers, and rules are valuable and necessary, interest in the well-being of our students is most important. The people we serve are the heart of our mission. In order to care for our students, we need to truly love them. We need to love our students more than the rules of the home and we cannot love if we do not get involved with our students. We must look to the example of Christ who, to save humanity, chose to live with us. We only reach the heart of the students when we join in life with them and love them, just as a shepherd lives with his flock.



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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As educators, we continually seek to improve our skills, just as we expect our students to do. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as spiritual development, research about continuing education, stress management, and collaboration with fellow educators.

GROWING PROFESSIONALLY IN CHRIST

Carol Kingston, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



Let your work appear to your servants, and your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands. [Psalms 90:16-17](#)

Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men. [Proverbs 22:29](#)

As educators, we often view professional development in terms of attaining outstanding credentials, advanced academic degrees, excellent research and so on. While academic achievement and training is important, we should also connect our professional development with striving to grow in Christ. This is the most vital part of professional development for the Adventist teacher.

Growing professionally in Christ means to develop a deep and intimate relationship with Him. Becoming closer to Christ will naturally help us to grow a Christlike character, with temperance in all things, a positive attitude, wisdom, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to connecting with Christ more deeply, there are a number of specific qualities of Christ that we should strive to develop, such as strong ethics ([Philippians 4:8](#)), perseverance ([2 Peter 1:5-11](#)), industriousness ([Ecclesiastes 9:10](#)), excellence ([Philippians 1:9-10](#)), love ([1 Thessalonians 4:1](#)), humility, trust, and wise use of time.

Although these can be difficult qualities to develop, we can develop them with Christ's help. Here are a few basic principles that can guide our growth as professionals in Christ:

- **Remember that developing skills requires time and patience.** As the Bible reminds us in [Ecclesiastes 3:1-8](#), there is a time for everything. We can only grow by setting aside time for the things that are important, and by continuing to work on them patiently even when it takes longer than we would like.
- **Nourish your mind by reading the Bible and quality Christian literature.** [2 Peter 3:18](#) notes that it is essential for us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

- **Focus on showing love and care to others above all else.** Strive to show the characteristics of love to all around you ([1 Corinthians 13](#)).
- **Have a true desire to grow in Jesus.** [1 Peter 2:2](#) urges us to “like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.”

All Christian professionals are chosen by God to grow in Him and to serve the dying world. Ideally, we are growing in Him in all aspects of our lives: spiritually, academically, psychologically and throughout our lives. We should strive to continually gaze upon the life of Christ and keep following His precepts and growing in His grace until He comes again and takes us to His heavenly university.



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BUILDING YOUR OWN PERSONAL LEARNING NETWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jeremy Everhart, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, Taiwan



We all need to be proactive about searching out professional development that will help us we grow in the areas that are most important for us personally.

Although we all want to continue to grow professionally, not everyone relishes a professional development seminar. Still, we all need to be proactive about searching out professional development that will help us we grow in the areas that are most important for us personally. Luckily, there is an untapped wealth of resources and instructional strategies just waiting for you online. Finding those materials can be difficult, however, if you are searching randomly each time you need a resource. It is much more effective to develop your own personal learning network, or “PLN,” of professionals who have experienced the same challenges that you do.

Finding Time

As I began to develop my own personal learning network, I felt a bit intimidated, but it turned out that it was easy to find professionals who provide many useful resources, articles, and ideas to a large network.

One of the questions you might ask is, “When do I have the time for this?” To me, it s not a question of creating more time, but a matter of adjusting time spent on social media. Switching time spent on your own personal social media to reading professional content on social media is a good start. I have found Twitter and educational blog portals wonderful places to connect and share with others with similar interests. Wasted time can easily be converted into time in which I am reading about how a literacy specialist is engaging her English language learners (ELL's) in the mainstream classroom, or about math resources that can be used to push advanced students or support those needing greater assistance. I follow 235 Twitter accounts, roughly 200 of which are educational professionals, and find a huge amount of useful content shared there.

Practical Tips

Your PLN can be most useful when you save ideas for future use in addition to using it as a means for solving immediate problems. For example, at the beginning of one school year I saw a post by Dwight

Nelson in which he shared a PDF of a book ([Steps to Personal Revival](#)) that later became the morning devotional for our school's faculty worship time. Another time, I found a nifty app, [Genius Scan](#), that has effectively replaced my need for physical scanner machines. When developed to meet your own needs, a PLN can help you with simple tasks also while providing a window into cutting edge educational research.

Getting Started

You can start your personal PLN whenever you want by picking a social media platform or education blog portal and signing up. If you choose to use Twitter for this purpose, you can login into or create a Twitter account, then select the search option at the bottom of your Twitter app to find professionals to follow. Here are some resources you may find helpful in developing your PLN:

- [Feedly](#): organize, read, and share what matters to you.
- [Teaching Channel](#)
- [The Educator's PLN](#)
- Edublogs Teacher Challenges: [Building Your PLN](#)



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EIGHT TIPS FOR TEACHING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

Glynis Bradfield, North American Division, USA



How can a teacher strive for excellence when the world around them is falling apart?

When a country is in turmoil because of war, civil unrest, natural disaster, or major economic crises, the basic questions of life can bedevil even the youngest student. How can a teacher strive for excellence when the world around them is falling apart?

When praying for Adventist schools where countries are in turmoil, I reflect on my time spent teaching and leading a school during hyperinflation and civil unrest in the Congo. When dealing with serious issues in your region, consider these 8 ways to strive for excellence:

1. **Give God a chance.** We cannot help students respond with resilience when we are not replenishing our reserves. Acknowledge God, who is ready to direct our paths. Believing God's promises to care for us even in the shadow of death comforts, calms, and restores. Sharing God's plans and promises can rekindle hope and purpose amidst the unknowns.
2. **Continue to make vision-driven decisions.** This is not a time for divided loyalties or lengthy debate over policies and procedures. With the school's purpose clearly in mind, consider available information about the turmoil or trauma. Then, work together to prayerfully decide on the best next steps. Teachers can help students thrive through challenging circumstances by treating each student as an individual with great potential, not settling for less despite the tough circumstances.
3. **Make time for personal renewal.** Seek new times and ways to continue daily life and health routines. While we cannot control events, we can control their effect on our thoughts, emotions, and actions. Reduce stress by taking a five-minute nap, breathing deeply for a minute, contracting and expanding body muscles, and other simple personal renewal activities.
4. **Communicate and continue.** Re-establish school security and emergency networks daily. Increase communication with staff, students, parents, and stakeholders. Continue the school routine

- for the stability of the community and the students as long as possible.
5. **Prioritize and document.** Plan for smaller units of study and teach core units first in preparation for disruptions to the academic calendar. We documented progress each week with short narrative reports that would be easier for other teachers to follow if we were evacuated or closed school, or the families had to relocate.
 6. **Support each other.** Hold short staff meetings daily to pray and share information impacting the school situation. Make team decisions, supporting flexible solutions and adapting creatively. Talk about and teach resilience.
 7. **Re-establish classroom climate often.** Fear of life-threatening situations or the unknown inhibits and exhausts. We reordered the schedule to begin with a combined music, art, worship, and writing class each morning. Students arrived at school with questions that parents were too busy trying to survive to answer. This first hour provided students with time to debrief and to express themselves through drawing or writing so teachers could better understand their concerns and prayerfully adjust learning activities to help them thrive. We also implemented a buddy system, where student partners shared their concerns with each other.
 8. **Make positive memories.** As disasters often disrupt weekly cycles and special occasions, facilitate simple celebrations in the moment. Model a growth mindset and an attitude of gratitude. Play a favorite game or celebrate a birthday in a new way. Share personal experiences that help students recognize God's leading in the past, which can reassure them of His continued presence even through the unknown.

When civil unrest erupted in our region after months of tension, most of our students and their families were evacuated. While disruptions like this are difficult, students and staff alike learn to live the Serenity Prayer, asking God for the serenity to accept what we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.



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REVIVING YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR TEACHING

Lara Melashenko, North American Division, USA



Rather than remaining in isolation, reaching out and asking for help is not only important, but it can be critical to maintaining your stamina and sanity!

This summer while I was attempting to mentally prepare for the upcoming school year, I started reflecting on my current level of exhaustion. As I surfed the internet looking for helpful suggestions on how to revive my enthusiasm, I came across a private Facebook group, *Principal Life*, for school principals, vice principals and other members of school admin teams to ask questions and share advice.

Curious about what kind of response I might receive, I posted the following question on the group:

I'm entering my seventh year at my current school and fear that I'm at the point of burnout. After three weeks of vacation, I'm still fighting a lot of fatigue and anxiety about returning for my pre-school prep next week. I love my school, my staff and am very passionate about the vision of the school. However, after six years of 60+ hours per week, my reserves are empty. Any suggestions?

To my shock and absolute delight, dozens of principals piled into the discussion thread promptly, all offering empowering suggestions. The words of wisdom and support from these complete strangers buoyed me up and gave me the courage and strength to start my year with renewed vigor. These were the suggestions that stood out most to me:

- **Take time to reflect.** What do you like about the job? What do you dislike? What are your capabilities? What do you need to do to take care of yourself? Create a personal vision board to help you stay focused and keep your balance. Store it on your phone, computer screen, or a frame on your desk for easy reference.
- **Take care of your physical health.** Eat lunch every day. Exercise. Plan a date with a friend, preferably one who does not work in education, so you can get a professional mental break. Never miss personal care or health-related appointments. Get annual check-ups for your health.

- **Set work hour boundaries.** Don't answer emails or phone calls between 7 pm and 7 am - when you go home, go home. Leave your computer at school. Don't discuss your work problems at home.
- **Establish flexible work practices.** Determine your annual goals, and then eliminate any tasks which may interfere with that or overload you. Pick leaders and create committees to share or delegate the workload. Make breakfast your non-negotiable time with different students every two weeks. Give yourself a change of scenery by going out of your office before or after school and during recess and lunch breaks. Visit different classrooms every day. Give yourself permission to miss some deadlines when you have too much on your plate. At the end of the day, write down three accomplishments as well as any issues that consume you and give yourself permission to let them go for the evening.
- **Gain knowledge from your colleagues and resources.** Connect with other Principals. Read "[Balance Like a Pirate](#)"¹ and "[Compassion Fatigue](#)".² Attend "[The Breakthrough Coach](#)"³ training.

It's important to remember that there are others that have gone before us and are in the same trenches. Rather than remaining in isolation, reaching out and asking for help is not only important, but it can be critical to maintaining your stamina and sanity!



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IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Betty Bayer, North American Division, Canada



Distance, time, and limited resources often make collaboration difficult in the Adventist system, but it is possible.

Although teachers spend a lot of time on professional development, not all professional learning opportunities result in improved instruction. According to a National Staff Development Council [study](#) of the professional learning activities teachers participate in, traditional workshops, seminars, and conferences have been shown to be less effective in changing practice than other types of learning that support sustained opportunities to implement that learning in the classroom.⁴

Unfortunately, our educational system has not provided many of these opportunities for sustained implementation. Our policies and our practice encourage more traditional options. We have tended to take a “one size fits all” approach to professional learning for teachers. Despite research, such as that by [Fullan](#), that shows that teachers need learning experiences that align with their real learning needs and their unique contexts, limited resources and inadequate opportunities prevent most teachers from selecting and participating in such individualized learning.⁵

My recent study of the professional learning practices of teachers in the North American Division showed that there is a high level of expectation in the system for annual participation in professional learning and that most of our educators participate regularly in some type of learning.⁶ However, fewer than half of the teachers surveyed believe that their professional learning is directly related to their current needs. In other words, although most teachers in the system participate in some type of ongoing learning, likely the result of the recertification requirements for Adventist teaching certificates, much of that learning is not relevant and does not result in improved practice.

Another important finding of my study is that when more opportunities are available for collaborative practice, educators spend more time in professional learning and participate in a wider variety of activities. Collaboration gives teachers an opportunity to engage their own contexts to shape their learning. Reflection and dialogue help to create meaning

that is more likely to result in sustainable and meaningful change for the improvement of instruction.

Distance, time, and limited resources often make collaboration difficult in the Adventist system, but it is possible. Technology can assist in creating professional learning communities that not only connect teachers, but provide the flexibility, customization, and “just-in-time” learning that many teachers, millennial teachers in particular, crave. But even more important is a willingness to venture out beyond our comfort zones to consider and then facilitate more non-traditional approaches.

Leadership is critical in this process. Leaders can nurture a culture where teachers can articulate their needs in a safe environment that supports both voice and choice. This support may mean new job-embedded models, cross-generational and cross-curricular planning time, a reconsideration of certification and recertification requirements, classroom-focused action research, adjusted workloads and teaching schedules, more opportunities for local teacher leadership, and professional learning communities. Only when we move toward these goals will professional learning fulfill its intended purpose of ongoing instructional improvement and increased student learning.



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SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

A positive, Christ-like environment is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Adventist education. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as redemptive discipline, classroom arrangements, facilities planning, and tips for fostering a community of grace and creating a positive school environment.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Robert Bairagee, S. Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Madagascar



Fitness for the human body includes many different aspects, as does fitness for healthy schools.

The apostle Paul used an analogy of the human body to demonstrate the functions of the church as an organization. He emphasized that every church member is important, as each part of the human body is important ([1 Corinthians 12:12-28](#)). The same analogy can be applied to Adventist schools. How can we work together to create healthy schools?

Fitness for the human body includes many different aspects, as does fitness for healthy schools. When any one of these is affected, the body is unable to function normally. Here are three tips for healthy schools.

Spiritual Exercise

Regular physical exercise keeps the body active, while occasional exercises may cause muscle pain and feebleness. Similarly, regular staff and faculty worship strengthens a school's spiritual muscles. When spiritual activities are restricted to the Week of Prayer or special religious events, rather than a regular part of the educational life of the school, they have less value as a spiritual enrichment to the souls of the staff and students.

A school's spiritual atmosphere molds the Christian character of the students, which is the fundamental goal of Adventist Education. Teachers are role models at school ([White, 1913](#)).¹ Administrators, faculty and staff members should set an example by attending and participating in midweek prayer meeting, Friday vespers, Sabbath worships and other religious and evangelical activities. Deficiency in regular spiritual exercises of the school administrators, faculty and staff causes spiritual lethargy in the school.

Social Connections

Social acceptance elevates self-esteem and dignity and improves work performance. Thus, in Christ, there is no race, cast, religion, nationality and gender discrimination ([Galatians 3:28](#)). A school's mental and emotional health is negatively affected when discrimination is common among students and employees.

A *discrimination virus* can be avoided in many ways, including:

- **Increase diverse course selection.** Encourage students to take general requirement courses with other departments. This creates social bonding among students.
- **Encourage group social activities.** Involve the maximum number of people in indoor and outdoor games, hiking, camping, picnicking, and small group and club functions. Involving people in activities helps to break class, color and race barriers.

Balanced Diets

Balancing diets for healthy bodies are a complex phenomenon. However, basic diet principles must be followed by all who wish to maintain a healthy body. A balanced diet for a school means providing fair and equitable care for all employees, including in remuneration, benefits, promotion policies, and guidelines. When these policies are absent or intentionally neglected, employees become malnourished and school health gradually deteriorates. The primary issue is not the amount of funding but how it is used. When the lion's share of the school operational budget is used for administrators' allowances and other related benefits, while the basic needs of other employees are overlooked, resentment breeds. Hiring and promoting employees using nepotism and favoritism while dedicated and qualified employees are ignored demoralizes the serving spirit and encourages unhealthy competition and divided grouping among employees and students. The remedy is to practice servant leadership and avoid oppression and power games.

By caring for the health of our schools, we can become even more effective as leaders and as a school family.



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ADMIT WHEN YOU ARE WRONG

David McClintock, South Pacific Division, Australia



Jesus provides absolute forgiveness but then also empowers us to change. That is what we need to portray to the people we interact with.

We make no claims as teachers to be perfect. We make mistakes. Let us use those opportunities to model how to respond and apologize when it is appropriate. It provides a sense of vulnerability and reality for our students and one that they appreciate. The challenge is for us to swallow our pride, recognize when we need to sort things out, and lead by example. This is an aspect of true education when we portray Christianity in action.

I remember a day when the Home Economics teacher was away, and I was supervising her Sewing Class. Anna came in ten minutes late. I greeted her, established why she was late and then told her what we were doing and asked her to commence working. She went over and sat near Simon.

I was only four or five meters away from the group, watching them, when I saw Anna grab the cutting board that Simon was using and start using it herself. I was almost certain she had not asked him for it. He appeared surprised that it had been so abruptly taken from him.

Immediately I walked over to Anna and asked her if she had asked Simon if she could use the cutting board. She said, "No, I didn't" I then asked her to please return the cutting board to Simon since he had been using it. Begrudgingly she did so. She then returned to her seat and sat there sulking. After a few minutes, I sat down beside her to learn more.

She looked at me and asked, "Did you hear what he said to me?" I had to confess I did not. I asked her to share with me what had so clearly upset her. He had said some very inappropriate comments, hence her immediate reaction to grab the cutting board.

I asked Simon to join us; he acknowledged what he had said. Due judgment was delivered, and I apologized to Anna for not dealing with it fairly at the time. The next day her mother told me that Anna said it was the first time a teacher had apologized to her.

Nathan told King David to build the temple for God. But then he had to go back and say to David, "I ran ahead of God. You are not going to be able to build the temple after all." There are times when we have the best of intentions as parents or teachers, and yet we make a wrong judgement call. How will our children and students learn to rectify their mistakes if we do not model it for them?

Jesus provides absolute forgiveness but then also empowers us to change. That is what we need to portray to the people we interact with. Forgive and then expect the best. It is important that we provide a sense of how to sort things out when they go wrong for us. That level of vulnerability is just what our children and students need.



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THE CLASSROOM AS A SANCTUARY

Benjamin Jr. Amoah, North American Division, Canada



The way I can incorporate faith into my classrooms is to see my students as church members; and church members are required to be active.

I never imagined myself working daily in a classroom setting. Memories of my mind drifting in class, doodling during lessons, texting on my phone, and browsing social media convinced me that being in charge of any classroom, let alone a Christian classroom, would be an unbearable task. Fast forward many years and I m still not a teacher. However, as a pastor I have been given the amazing opportunity to teach Bible classes to twelfth, eighth and fifth grade students at Fraser Valley Adventist Academy in British Columbia, Canada.

When teaching in Adventist educational institutions, we continuously consider how to instill Christianity into the children s daily interactions. What are practical methods we can use to encourage our children to grow in spirituality? As a pastor, I figured the way I can incorporate faith into my classrooms is to see my students as church members; and church members are required to be active. A church grows when members are given opportunities to participate and express their spiritual journey when we congregate on Sabbath, whether that is through music, testimonies, or other ministries.

Bringing this concept into my classrooms has allowed me to incorporate faith daily. Every day, a student shares a devotion to the class. They find a verse that stands out to them, explain why it speaks to them, and pray for the class after taking any prayer requests their peers may have. Doing this, gives students the opportunity to internalize and share the Word of God. Students are also given the opportunity to intercede on behalf of their classmates in prayer. This brings faith into the classroom and sparks spiritual growth because there is a requirement to do something intentional associated with God.

I've found that another key factor in integrating faith in the classroom is to create a culture of safety and vulnerability. Initially, it is up to the teacher to set that standard. As the classroom leader, we must be willing to open up so that our students know that they can open up as well.

When we take the risk to open up, it motivates others to follow the same example. When a culture of safety and vulnerability exists, students naturally begin to ask difficult questions and share about the obstacles and successes in their spiritual journey. Faith can be incorporated into the classroom when the classroom is not seen simply as a place where students come to be told something. It needs to be a place where they can share and grow.

While these are the methods I've used personally, there are many more ways to instill faith in our schools. Let us continue to make our institutions places where our students grow in their spirituality.



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FLEXIBLE SEATING: WHAT, WHY, AND HOW

Yanina Jimenez, North American Division, USA



Flexible seating is about providing opportunities to move while learning, and not as a separate activity from learning.

Our students' brains love and need a multitude of elements in the learning process, including music, art, imagination, relevance, love, change, frequent breaks, review, story time, trial-and-error experiences, positive social experiences, and movement. Out of all these strategies, the one thing that the brain appreciates the most is movement.

So how does flexible seating fit in? Flexible seating is about providing opportunities to move *while* learning, and not as a separate activity from learning. As [Ostroff](#) states, "Rather than trying to get children to sit still and stop fidgeting, we must design learning spaces that embrace children's movement and action as necessary prerequisites for developing attention."²

Students need to be in many postures throughout the day: standing, kneeling, walking, bouncing, laying down, rocking, tummy touching the ground, back touching the ground, sitting, sitting with feet up, and more. Flexible seating is not about sitting comfortably. We want students to move, because movement is the best way for students to learn better according to a wide variety of brain research. In addition to physical benefits, you will see social and cognitive benefits when you allow more movement.

So, how do you get started? Decide on the items you would like to have, then go about getting them. Funding can seem intimidating, but doesn't need to. Creativity and enthusiasm are free! Make frequent trips to your local thrift store. Check Amazon. Consider publishing a list of the items you need and why or create a GoFundMe account. This allows your school and church community to jump right in to help. Here are some ideas to include:

- Tall table so students can stand while working
- Low table with cushions around it
- Couch, bean bags, stools, scoop or rocking chairs
- Use the floor - you already have it and students love it!
- Tent or reading nook

- Pillows to set on a rug by the library
- Mats to work on tummy or back
- Balance balls - preferably with back support

Be sure to provide options for various postures and balancing options with and without back support. In addition to the furniture, consider the lighting, music, colors, sounds, smells, and temperature in your classroom. Allow for variation and student choice.

One of the great things about having a flexible environment is that you can set it up according to you and your students' needs. It will be a trial-and-error experience. Try new things. If they don't work, try something else until your classroom becomes functional. Remember that classroom spaces affect how we think, feel, and behave in a myriad of ways. Spaces can and should inspire curiosity. In classroom design, as in architecture, form should follow function. Vary, change, and play with your furniture. Be ready to endure the mess, as this is when inquiry-based learning happens. You need flexible spaces, so students can find opportunities to move all day long.



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REDEMPTIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

Millicent Ojwang, East-Central Africa Division, Kenya



Redemptive discipline is God's choice for redeeming the human race, and should be a continuous practice in Adventist schools.

The ultimate purpose of Adventist Christian education is the restoration of human beings to the image of their maker through a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. This is mainly achieved through redemptive discipline. The Christian teacher disciplines and equips the learner to grow spiritually, academically, psychologically, emotionally, and socially.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines discipline in part as "bring under control, train to obedience and order."³ To *discipline* an individual involves training that person to obey specific rules. [Proverbs 22:6](#) states, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." [Nancy Van Pelt](#) clarifies that the discipline of children is not a punishment for their misbehavior but rather instruction in the way they should go.⁴

The Aim of Redemptive Discipline

The aim of redemptive discipline is to change students into the image of Christ ([Romans 8:29](#)). Additionally, Ellen White views the objective of discipline as the training of the child for self-government.⁵ The wrongdoer is led to see his fault and is given an opportunity to change. The student is helped to know God more deeply and to understand more clearly His design for their life. Redemptive discipline, therefore, helps teachers to restore those who are struggling with behavior problems and prevent the loss of students from their schools.

Adminstrating Redemptive Discipline

The discipline of a school rests heavily on administrators, especially the principal. The role principals play in creating and sustaining a disciplined school climate is very critical. They must work closely with parents, teachers, and students in order to succeed. Redemptive discipline should be a continuous process in Adventist schools. Redemptive discipline measures in the Adventist Christian school include guidance and counseling, communicating, reasoning out, and role modeling.⁶

Guidance and Counseling

Guidance and counseling are measures that promote good discipline in students. Guidance is primarily preventive and attempts to bring out an acceptable behavior in students, while also providing advice and direction to students. Counseling, on the other hand, is both preventive and curative, and is more often used when resolving an issue. White counsels that when students are disobedient, they should be corrected but the teacher should avoid giving reproof in the presence of others. Students tend to respond best when they are spoken to separately in a quiet environment.

Communicating

Effective communication is essential for the success of redemptive discipline. Part of communication is clearly communicating with students on arrival at the school what type of behavior is acceptable and unacceptable and why. Another part is clearly spelling out the consequences of misbehavior. Effective communication has a positive effect on the misbehaving student.

Reasoning Out

Reasoning out can be done either before or after a mistake has occurred. It gives erring students an opportunity to give their side of the story and an opportunity to say what they are going to do to address the mistake they have made.

Role Modeling

All teachers should be role models of what they want their students to be. This includes showing students how we react to our mistakes and deal with those who have hurt us through their choices, among other things.

Redemptive discipline is God's choice for redeeming the human race, and should be a continuous practice in Adventist schools.⁷ It takes the joint effort of school administrators, teachers and parents to effectively execute redemptive discipline to lead students toward positive behavior and eternal salvation.



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THE ADVENTIST TEACHER, THE POSTMODERN STUDENT, AND DISCIPLINE

Milton Panetto Jr., South American Division, Brazil



Teachers deeply mark the lives of children and young people. But how can we mark them in positive Christian ways and still maintain discipline?

One of the great challenges for teachers is to reconcile the theories they learned during their education with the reality of the classroom. Also, they face the challenges of the postmodern, inquisitive, challenging, vocal, and sometimes undisciplined student. In the context of Adventist Education, the Adventist teacher is also Christian. Thus, he must be different from other educators in other institutions, since he works with a philosophy of redemptive education. The main goal of Adventist Education is the salvation of the student. Therefore, it is assumed that this teacher should love his students, encouraging them to develop the best in themselves, as well as a deep relationship with Jesus. This includes using discipline to move toward these goals.

Teachers deeply mark the lives of children and young people. But how can we mark them in positive Christian ways and still maintain discipline? Here are some tips that I gathered during my teaching years:

- **Be prepared and organized.** Start with yourself. Have goals, objectives, and know what to do in class. Organize yourself in the best way possible. Always have Plans 2 and 3 in hand in case Plan 1 fails. That perfect lesson plan you spent hours creating may fail if the power or the internet goes down.
- **Collaborate with students.** On the first day of class, work with students to decide on classroom limits and rules. The success of your school year will depend on what is established in that first meeting, also you can change the guidelines as the school year goes on and students may suggest changes as well.
- **Be an understanding leader.** Try to understand them, within their age, because they are not adults. Be a friend, but remember that you are the teacher, the adult, the counselor, the class leader.
- **Connect with your students.** Know how to approach your students. To be successful you need to know them and be connected with them. It is no use to try to defeat challenging students, you will

need to win them over. Create strategies that allow you to work with them instead of against them in class.

- **Adjust for your class characteristics.** There are some classes that are extremely undisciplined. These classes require more pedagogical and didactic planning and clarity about the rules. Beware of allowing the class to fall into chaos. No class should be idle for long. While you are correcting an assignment, give them another activity to work on to avoid the chaos that comes when students have nothing to do.
- **Stay calm and balanced.** You will be tested by your students in every way. Be calm and balanced in your actions so that you can be confident in your actions when faced with student complaints.
- **Pray for your students and their family.**

Pray for yourself. Ask God for daily wisdom to face the challenges and to be victorious.



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A LESSON WELL-LEARNED

Suzanne Honoré, North American Division, USA



Jesus Himself said that unless you become like a little child you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. This is what the teacher should always remember before punishing: the child is not a miniature adult.

In our pedagogy class we were often told that the child is not an adult in miniature but a small being with his own feelings, needs and world. I once experienced this firsthand when dealing with the way my students entered the classroom in the morning. They made too much noise and I was looking for a solution.

The rule I decided on was this: after hanging up their bags and coats, everyone would get their books and do fifteen minutes of silent reading, and then I would give a reward to whoever deserved it. Usually, it was something small like a pencil, an eraser, a cookie, a candy, a box of orange juice. Parents helped with the expenses and the plan was a real success.

One morning, everyone was doing fine except for Pierre, who was chattering in a low voice. At the time for the reward, I passed out cupcakes and he received nothing. Pierre became angry and, in a gruff tone said loudly that he didn't need my cupcakes, he didn't care, and I could keep them for myself. Then he stamped his foot with force to show his anger.

I didn't respond to his behavior. Not a word. No punishment. After this commotion, the class became quiet again. The students were working on their mathematics, and I was watching Pierre. He couldn't concentrate because he was very unhappy.

When he could no longer stand it, he stood up and came to me, sobbing and saying, "I'm sorry. I was not supposed to speak. I am sorry! It will never happen again, I swear. I want my cupcake, please. I won't give any more trouble from now on."

I opened my box without saying a word and handed him his cupcake. He took it, said thank you, went back to his place and ate it, and his sulk disappeared forever.

Did I do the right thing? Absolutely. A cupcake is of no importance for an adult, but for a child who is not a miniature adult, but rather a little individual with his own emotions, this cupcake is of great value, especially when you are the only one who doesn't receive it. It is the best of all treats.

Although children can seem similar to adults, they are quite different in some ways. Children have no pride. They forget quickly and forgive with ease. They don't suspect evil of others. They do not usually mean to hurt others. Jesus Himself said that unless you become like a little child you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. This is what the teacher should always remember before punishing: the child is not a miniature adult.



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COMMUNICATION & COOPERATION

Having healthy schools requires effective communication and cooperation with a wide variety of stakeholders. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as conflict management, principles of communication, team teaching, and communicating with parents, students, colleagues, and the local church and community.

STUDENT-DIRECTED CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Lori Rusek, North American Division, USA



All classrooms should have a conflict resolution tool that students can use independently.

Teachers hear minor arguments between students daily, and they can be extremely time-consuming. When they happened in my classroom I used to talk them through with the students, but the students never seemed to remember how to solve their problems the next day, and I had an uncomfortable feeling that I was simply reinforcing the idea that children needed an adult present to solve their problems. Conflict resolution is a skill they will need their entire lives.

Then I remembered a long mat that sat outside a kindergarten door of my childhood academy. Two children would stand on either side of the long mat, and each step they took toward each other on the mat was a step towards finding a solution to their problem. I wondered if I could make a similar conflict resolution mat for my own 4th and 5th graders. I decided to put together what I called a "Step-It-Out" mat.

Here's how the mat worked: Let's say that Ami had a problem with Ben. Ami would stand on the *Say what you feel* side while Ben would stand on the opposite side that read, *Listen without interrupting*. Both of these first steps were colored green. In smaller text they could also read suggestions related to that step. If both Ami and Ben agreed they understood the problem they would step closer to each other. Now they would be on the blue step which is the reverse of the green. Now Ben would have a chance to talk and Ami would need to listen.

The last two parts on the board are about finding a solution. The purple step is to brainstorm solutions. If they have decided on a solution then they move on to the yellow and state their decision. Both students must agree on the solution before leaving.

When I introduced the mat, we practiced pretend scenarios for about a week. Then they began to use it for real problems. When a student had a problem they simply asked me if they could "Step-It-Out." Unless I was in the middle of instruction, I let them do so. Because students take responsibility for conflict resolution, I am now able to devote more time to instruction.

The "Step-It-Out" mat doesn't solve all the problems. Occasionally I still have to help the students with their conflicts. I have to make sure children don't use the mat to get out of doing classwork and that they take it seriously. But overall, this tool has become invaluable to me, and the students have internalized the steps so that sometimes the mat is not even necessary for them to go through the process together.

Using the "Step-It-Out" mat helps children independently solve their own problems in a healthy way and helps me devote more attention to students with academic concerns. All classrooms should have a conflict resolution tool that students can use independently, and the "Step-It-Out" mat has worked very well in mine.



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ON BEING A TEAMMATE

Rachel Fetroe, North American Division, USA



Barriers like geographic distance, exhaustion, and personality clashes can make reaching beyond classroom walls difficult. Still, if we are going to serve our students well and grow as educators, true collaboration is essential.

Early in my career, I learned a lot about teaching from my colleagues, but when I sat down with the other teachers at weekly meetings, people talked past each other and bad feelings reigned.

A few years later, I was invited to join a group of teachers from many schools. I was skeptical, but agreed, and to my surprise the diverse team thrived. The tools I learned there have served me well into my current jobshare status where I share a classroom, yes, the whole thing, with my fellow part-time teacher.

Barriers like geographic distance, exhaustion, and personality clashes can make reaching beyond classroom walls difficult. Still, if we are going to serve our students well and grow as educators, true collaboration is essential. Here are a few steps that have been helpful for me:

Connect

Identify teaching peers and reach out. There is great value in connecting with many types of groups: a team of teachers from your site/local area/conference, a team at your same grade level, or a team of cross-grade level peers. Meetings can take place in-person or virtually. Skype and Google Hangouts offer free multi-user video chat options.

Commit

Pick a common meeting time and keep it every time. Put it on a shared e-calendar, set-up automatic email reminders, or pencil it in on your real paper schedule. Make it happen.

Begin by establishing norms for your group. Creating clear expectations helps prevent personality clashes, gripe sessions, and other distractions. Have each member jot down expectations in areas such as timeliness, participation, confidentiality, and decision making. Post-it notes work well since they can be grouped together in the follow-up discussion. Then

consolidate and choose four or five norms that everyone is willing to support. Revisit these as needed to keep the group functioning smoothly.

Communicate

Trust is built when a predictable framework can be relied upon. Set up a process to follow. Set an agenda and stick to it.

Taking notes helps clarify ideas during the discussion and is a good reference tool for later. One tool, Google Docs, allows all participants to add to the same document in real time and automatically saves your work.

Formalize agreements, using tools if necessary. Ask for a fist to five---each member raises 0 to 5 fingers depending on their level of buy-in, or try consensus voting, where everyone votes for all the things they can live with instead of their single top choice.

Use data to inform your discussions and remember to stay student-focused instead of relying on feelings. Look at student data from all students and strategize to maximize their success, then check back in to track progress.

Celebrate

Celebrate success. There is always more to do but stop and look back at your progress from time to time. Evaluate data to track student progress. Celebrate your growth as a team, too.

Remember, we are all in this together!



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FOSTERING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PASTOR AND TEACHER

Tralese Syvertson, North American Division, USA



Have you ever pondered the possibilities that could come from a great working relationship with the pastor of your church? What would that relationship look like?

Imagine a world where you could create an excellent environment for yourself as a teacher. Many components of this environment would be strictly up to you, but some parts would depend on other people.

As Adventist school teachers, we have the opportunity and responsibility to work with the pastors of our affiliated churches. [Romans 12:4-5](#) encourages us in this matter: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

Have you ever pondered the possibilities that could come from a great working relationship with the pastor of your church? What would that relationship look like? What would it be like to start practicing the “one body” collaboration between pastor and teacher?

Pastor and teacher would:

- Pray for each other
- Talk frequently
- Ask each other’s advice
- Understand each other’s spiritual gifts and strengths
- Recognize that each is an integral part of a ministry team
- Have regular planning sessions for the school
- Include the pastor in the school for spiritual events such as Bible studies, baptismal classes, weekly chapel, week-of-prayer, prayer time together
- Incorporate the pastor in other events like driving for fields trips, or supervising recess, art, physical education, music, language learning, or any other elective
- Have the teacher participate in the church program in a position that fits their strengths
- Get to know each other’s families outside of work
- Attend each other’s board meetings

- Support each other as often as you can
- Believe the best of each other's intentions and motivations
- Ask how to support the other person's programs but try to not make plans for each other unless invited

Benefits of this partnership include:

- Blessings received from the prayers of the pastor and church team
- An example for stakeholders of working as a united team
- Shared stress in difficult times
- Better mental, physical and spiritual health
- Enthusiasm for programs of both church and school
- Energy to do the best possible job
- Sense of well-being that comes from being affirmed
- Trust in each other's motives and intentions

I know this is possible because this is my reality. The pastor of our local church is pastor to my own children in a personal and effective way and I teach his boys in my school. I have had to be taught many of these skills and the pastor I work with right now has so kindly led the way. I am blessed!

If this is not your experience, take heart. Perhaps you can lead the way by praying and asking the Lord to direct you in making some small steps toward what He has in mind for you and your pastor working together. Ask Him to assist you as you look for something that both can agree on. Look for ways you can help each other. I know that some situations seem impossible, but God reminds us, "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" ([Jeremiah 32:27](#)). It will be well worth the effort.



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COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Carol Kingston, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



The benefits of positive communication and cooperation can be immense. It can help reduce conflicts and increase positive engagement by students. It can boost the learning of students and the professional growth of teachers.

Developing communication and cooperation between teachers and students can sometimes be difficult, but God’s word clearly emphasizes the importance of connecting in healthy ways. [1 Peter 3: 8-9](#), for example, says, “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.” Similarly, [Romans 12:16](#) tells us to “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited” and [Colossians 4:6](#) tells us to “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

We know as educators that this can be much easier said than done, however. How can we as teachers develop trust and open communication with our pupils? The attributes that are essential for this development are respect, enjoyment, reflection, accommodation, and adjustment. When guiding our students, we should focus on giving positive and constructive advice and learning about the unique strengths and weaknesses of our students. Because each teacher is a unique individual, and our students are individuals as well, it is essential to look for our own ways to communicate our care and concern to each individual student.

Much of building trust with students happens through a lengthy process of developing our respect, enjoyment, reflection, accommodation, and adjustment towards our students. However, there are also many ways we can build trust through simple activities during class time. While some of these activities may seem silly, they show that we are interested in our students as individuals, not just as students. Chase Mielke¹ suggests that at the beginning of class you could:

1. Have students pair and share the highlights of their day.
2. Ask students to write down “2 Truths and 1 Lie” about themselves. Then read some at random and have peers predict who wrote it.
3. Welcome each student into class with a fist bump and a smile.
4. Do something playful, like asking for random facts or corny jokes.
5. Ask them to write a brief, half-page summary about what’s going on in their life.
6. Do a quick round of “speed dating” in which they talk to a peer about a random question you pose.

The benefits of positive communication and cooperation can be immense. It can help reduce conflicts and increase positive engagement by students. It can boost the learning of students and the professional growth of teachers. Ultimately, however, perfect communication and cooperation between teachers and students will occur only when Christ's character permeates our hearts. The working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts can help us as we work toward harmony and connection with our students. God has designed mankind to live together harmoniously despite our differences, and he will help teachers and students with this as well.



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INTEGRATING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY FOR ENGLISH LEARNING

Jennifer Litau, South Pacific Division, Papua New Guinea



Our worldwide Adventist network has the potential to help communities integrate reading into their student's lives and have a positive impact for regions with low English literacy.

In parts of the developing world, many school children experience failure in school because all school instruction occurs in English, their second, third or fourth language. Unlike children who are native English speakers, non-native speakers' competency in reading, writing, speaking and listening in English are often underdeveloped when entering school. In particular, underprivileged children struggle to learn and apply English skills. This occurs frequently in Papua New Guinea, a country of more than 700 languages where most children acquire a native language and Pidgin English first, but only English is used in school. Such issues can be addressed through both formal education and informal community service-oriented outreach.

The end of 2016 marked six years of a pilot Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) project funded by Pacific Adventist University through which we established an integrated school-community English-learning-through-reading program at Ediwa Adventist Primary School in Tasitel Village, and Saio Adventist Primary and Tavol Community Primary on Mussau Island, a predominantly rural SDA island community.²

The initial steps of the CBPAR used reflection and discussion with parents and other interested parties to analyze the schools' student drop-out issue, a major issue for parents and students alike. The analysis found that the primary problem was lack of adequate reading and understanding of English. Poor English skills have been reflected in high rates of primary school dropouts, with few students progressing on to high schools outside of the island. The discussions also identified community assets including a school library, literate individuals and the power of family assistance with children's reading.

Our meetings with interested parties contributed to developing intervention strategies. Each school established a weekly library reading

hour and a community librarian and extensive hours for the school library. Students were encouraged to borrow books to read at home, where literate family members or community members would read and discuss the books with them. Parents of school children were also permitted to borrow books from the school libraries, an unusual but necessary bridge between school and home for developing a culture of reading and learning.

This project has helped to develop a culture of English learning through reading in these respective schools and communities. Teachers, parents, and children have come to value reading as way to learn and understand English and succeed in school and their futures. Some migrant parents seeking good education in urban centers have returned to educate their children in these village schools. At the end of the first year, Tavol Community School Grade 8 ranked first in the provincial Grade 8 examination because one of its students who had read 200 books in that year excelled in the English exams. Ediwa had success stories in every grade from students who read many books, and the serious readers have continued to improve. Where both parents and children have maintained a regular school-home reading program, the positive impact on academic learning and assessments have become consolidated and sustained. An evaluation in 2016 showed more than one child in each of the lower grades of Ediwa school sharing first, second and third year-end academic ranking. Improvements in reading have helped student learn English skills and succeed academically. The ongoing success of this project has depended very much on the motivation, encouragement and continuing involvement of school administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders.

Our worldwide Adventist network has the potential to help communities integrate reading into their student's lives and have a positive impact for regions with low English literacy. Adventist colleges, educators, and students alike can be the catalyst for creating innovative methods of English language learning in regions of high illiteracy, which can promote human rights and well-prepared employees for the church.



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THE COURAGE TO CLASH

Maria Lombart, Middle East and North Africa Division, Lebanon



As we work together to communicate within our differences, we can build the healthy relationships that will allow the diversity of those we interact with to enrich our lives as we grow individually and learn from each other.

I work in a very diverse setting where more than 20 nationalities are represented within the faculty and student body. When you have such a diverse group, it is natural for there to be [differences in communication](#), and these differences can lead to conflict. Having completed a graduate program with an emphasis in cross-cultural communication and having lived in multiple cultural contexts, I believe it is important to consider how we can work through our differences and be more understanding of our differences in communication.

Communication is based on factors such as one's worldview, framework of reference, culture, family of origin, and gender. It involves more than the spoken word, and styles differ between groups. For example, women use [high-context communication](#) more frequently while men rely more on low-context or direct communication. Similarly, the American default method of communication is based in [individualism](#) while the Middle Eastern approach begins and ends with community.

If we enter a multicultural context and attempt to place our understanding on everyone around us, there is bound to be conflict. The key to addressing these conflicts is to [begin communication with listening](#). As little children, we are curious about the world around us and listen carefully as we learn about topics that are above our understanding. As we grow up, we lose this natural urge to learn through listening and begin to approach life from the perspective that we know everything and others should listen to us. However, as people cross borders more fluidly and organizations become more culturally diverse, it is to our advantage to learn by listening.

Conflict in communication is often perceived as negative, but it can serve a purpose if we are able to accomplish these three objectives:

- ***Listen and learn.*** Observe the other culture and [refrain from assigning a moral value](#) to someone else's method of

communicating or doing things. Be willing to accept that their methods are as valid as yours even though they are different.

- ***Have the courage to communicate.*** When you clash, avoid antagonizing the other person. Instead, point out that there may be a miscommunication happening and ask the other person what they think you are saying, then listen carefully to their perspective. Tell them how you are approaching the topic from your cultural context and then [try to find common ground](#).
- ***See the humanity in others.*** Jesus knew others would frustrate us, so He reminded us in [Luke 17:3-4](#) that if someone did something wrong and apologized, we should forgive them, even if they offended us seven times a day.

In the book [The Five Languages of Apology](#), Chapman and Thomas describe healthy relationships as those where both people accept responsibility for their behavior, there is forgiveness and reconciliation, and the two parties work on building the relationship.³ As we work together to communicate within our differences, we can build the healthy relationships that will allow the diversity of those we interact with to enrich our lives as we grow individually and learn from each other.



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TAKING THE TEACHING PERSPECTIVE

Janine Lim, North American Division, USA



Instead of assuming that students are equipped to succeed, we as teachers should take the teaching perspective.

Have you ever been really frustrated because someone didn't do something the way you wanted them to? Have you ever seen someone else really frustrated because they aren't getting the results they want? Have you ever been frustrated that your students weren't responding the way you wanted?

These situations happen all the time:

- An administrator is frustrated that a faculty member isn't accomplishing assessment tasks as desired.
- A teacher is frustrated that students aren't making the desired progress.
- A committee leader is frustrated that the members aren't doing their part.

Who's to blame in these situations? Is it the student or teacher? Leader or follower? Or both parties?

Recently, a fellow faculty member commented, "I tell my students to only spend an hour on this assignment. If they don't have it done in an hour, I ask them to write on it what they tried, where they are frustrated, and just turn it in. If they can't do it, it's because I didn't teach it well enough, and I need to teach it better."

Taking the Teaching Perspective

In situations of conflict and unmet expectations, I always think of professional development, teaching, training. The teaching perspective encourages us to ask what elements may be missing:

- Were the necessary resources provided?
- Was the task or expectation scaffolded?
- Is the underlying concept clear?
- Are any steps missing or unclear in the instructions or expectations?

- In online environments, were the needed resources and instructions where the student was expected to use them? For example, were instructions near the spot where they turn in the work?

In higher education, the attitude is often that the student should “come and get it” and that it’s their responsibility whether they are successful or not. Instead of assuming that students are equipped to succeed, we as teachers should take the teaching perspective. We should try to understand where the other person is coming from. We should try to consider the novice perspective vs. the expert perspective.

Your Turn

- What do you think? Is there a limit to this concept?
- What does it take for someone to be able to see another’s perspective?
- Should the teacher/leader take all the responsibility for failure? Where does this break down?
- Is it useful to consider the teaching perspective in a conflict?



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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

Sharon Aka, North American Division, USA



Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. - [Galatians 6:1](#)

Conflict is a normal and natural consequence of human interaction. It may be uncomfortable but we need to know how to manage it, particularly when conflict arises with our students. Most of the time, positive conflict management and resolution skills result in positive outcomes. Conflict can enhance our classroom's balance, stability, and effectiveness, or it can result in a disaster. Management is key. Let's explore five strategies for effective conflict management and resolution.

Separate the person from the problem.

- Use a neutral, calm tone of voice
- Talk about the problem
- Listen!
- Focus on preserving relationships

This strategy requires self-control, the ability to listen, and a focus on building relationships rather than winning or proving the other person wrong.

Focus on the issues, not intent or personal position.

- Avoid name calling
- Make 'I' statements, not 'you' statements
- Use humor appropriately
- Apologize if necessary
- Never assume motive or objectives

Generate a variety of options.

- Ask questions
- Allow time to investigate options
- Establish options
- Allow all members to put forward their ideas, information, or options

Finding out more information about the situation almost always results in better conflict management. Being heard is often the first step to resolution.

Base agreement on objective criteria.

- Don't assume someone has to win or lose
- Maintain a time line

Creating objective criteria helps everyone to focus on the results, not the people involved in the conflict.

Prepare for failure before it happens.

- Be patient and persistent
- Know your best alternative plan
- Know when to take a break or walk away
- Ensure all parties know you worked hard to come to resolution
- Treat others as you would like to be treated

Conflict should be dealt with as soon as possible. It should not be left to fester from week to week. However, when all parties in the conflict are highly emotionally engaged, it may be a better idea to step away from the situation, pause, and then reconvene for continued discussion once the heat of the moment has passed. Participants in conflict should be encouraged to resolve conflicts on their own, but should have a strategy and resources handy if necessary.

Conflict situations can be a learning experience for students and a way for teachers to set the bar high. Much conflict can be avoided by creating norms and acceptable behaviors standards prior to an incident occurring. These types of standards allow a teacher to navigate the conflict conversation successfully. It is much easier to reflect on a situation when teacher and student are able to focus on the underlying standards and expectations already in place, than when the conflict appears to be a personality issue. Conflict shouldn't simply be a response to a bad situation; instead, it should be the beginning of a process that leads to resolution.



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COMMUNICATION

Karina Bresla, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, Taiwan



Communication is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a work of the heart as well.

Being a teacher is an unpredictable adventure that can help us learn about both ourselves and others. A lot of times teachers wish we could simply transmit content knowledge directly to our students. The truth is that teachers communicate so much more than we realize. This happens through our choice of clothing, tone of voice, gestures, body language, class rhythm, routines, and more.

Before I accepted that teaching far transcends passing on content to the next generations, I used to become frustrated at having to explain concepts that I thought should already have been present in students' lives: neatness, respect, friendship, cleanliness, etc. I thought teaching these was beyond the scope of my responsibility. It felt like a waste of time to have to take time away from grammar or reading to let someone know how to speak politely to a classmate.

However, with enough time and experience, I learned to embrace the idea of a teacher being much more than just a facilitator or an expert in a certain field. Teachers also share their culture, their principles, their lives. Before we try to teach, however, we should seek to understand. A teacher who forgets to learn will soon lose the ability to teach at all.

One particular day, I was feeling tired and frustrated. I forget the name of the student and I forget the offense as well. It could have been Annabel, Carlos, Roy, or Susie. The offense could have been refusing to work, being noisy, chasing other kids with a broom, standing on a chair and jumping to the ground or to another chair (it all happened); the list goes on. But what I do remember is that I was teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) to a group of elementary school kids. I had had enough. I decided to take the offender to the office to have a talk with the principal. What else is a teacher to do? Since it is very unusual for me to take students to talk to the principal, this was a big deal. On the way there, I tried to reason with the student. I don't understand why you keep doing (whatever the misbehavior was). I think I have been very patient with you. Do you think I have been patient with you?" "No," came

the least expected answer. I was about to lose my cool completely when God sent a ray of light into my exhausted and confused brain. Could it be that the student didn't know what I was talking about? After all, this was an ESL class. So, I had to ask another question. "Do you know what patient means?", I asked almost shyly. "No," came the same unexpected answer. I didn't know if I should laugh or cry.

But there, on the way to the principal's office, I learned a very important lesson that I will never forget: If we want to teach, we should be willing to learn. Communication is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a work of the heart as well. As we engage in communication with colleagues, parents, and students, we should first seek to understand so we can speak words of encouragement, comfort, and peace.



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TEAMWORK: COMMUNICATION

Roy Mayr, South American Division, Brazil



Recognizing the importance of communication and studying the most effective ways and methods of interaction can elevate your team's creativity, productivity, and motivation to ever-higher levels.

Surely you have heard many times that working as a team is better than doing things alone; that unity makes strength; that by collaborating you can achieve better results in less time. But in practice, is this always the case? Is it easy to work as a team? Does working in a team make people more creative and productive?

If you have had the experience of working in a team or you've had to supervise a group of experts in some area, you know from experience that building a team is not that simple. It is not as easy as gathering four or five people around a project and hoping that by having a common goal they will be able to come together and produce quality results. Although some teams achieve excellent results, many fail and do not reach their full potential, regardless of the nature of the project. What makes the difference between teams that succeed and those that fail?

A survey led by Alex Pentland of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology evaluated many teams from different business areas that had similar characteristics but had very different results.⁴ To their surprise, the results showed that the key factor explaining much of this difference was communication among team members. Not only that, they discovered that how the team communicated was even more important than the content they were working with.

Two results presented in the Pentland article were particularly intriguing:

1. **The most valuable form of communication is face to face.** E-mail and text messages are the least valuable. In between were phone and video conferences, depending on the number of people attending the meeting. These technologies proved to be less effective when the number of participants was higher.
2. **Individual talent contributes much less to the team's success than might be expected.** The best way to build a successful team is not to select individuals for their ability or accomplishment, but to

learn how members communicate and guide the team to develop successful communication patterns.

To achieve positive results as a team, value personal communication and take every opportunity to interact face to face with your colleagues or leaders. Encourage formal and informal collaboration among team members. Electronic communication has its place and utility, but don't think it can take the place of personal communication. Recognizing the importance of communication and studying the most effective ways and methods of interaction can elevate your team's creativity, productivity, and motivation to ever-higher levels.



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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Strengthening our schools requires us to reflect on ourselves, our skills, and our schools. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as Jesus as the master educator, teaching ministry, and technology planning.

FAILURE!

George Knight, North American Division, USA



I learned that even though one may plant, others water, and still others harvest. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit is quietly working in hearts.

It had been a terribly hard day in my small multi-grade classroom in San Marcos, Texas. The students were noisy and rude, and an angry parent had given me some harsh words.

I thought maybe I should just quit being a teacher and face the fact that I had failed.

Then, I realized that Jesus, the Greatest Teacher, also failed. He only had 12 students. They heard his lessons every day and even lived with him, yet not one of them really understood his message while he was alive. One betrayed him, one cursed and swore that he didn't know him, and all of them disputed about which of them was to be regarded as the greatest"—and that was AFTER he told them he would die for them ([Matthew 26:69-75](#); [Luke 22:14-53](#); see also [Matthew 20:17-28](#)). And these were the guys who were supposed to lead the church!

Talk about failure!

To put it mildly, I like success. I don't mean success eventually. I mean success right now—success I can see, smell, savor, grasp, touch, and best of all, report to the conference office or local school constituency.

Christians hear repeatedly that they ought to be like Jesus. But I don't want to be like Jesus in some ways. I don't want to be like the teacher who failed. I want to be greater than Jesus. I want everything I touch to be a shining success. The only problem is that my desire has not come true. I am not greater than Jesus. I also fail.

However, I have discovered that apparent failure and ultimate failure are not the same thing.

I remember the first evangelistic series I ever preached. It was in Corsicana, Texas, a small town with an Adventist church of twelve aging members. I longed for young Adventists to come to the meetings to make connections with young people from the community.

I discovered there was a young Adventist student at the local community college. I visited his dorm room, prayed with him, and pled with him to attend my meetings. He never did. I failed. After that, I managed to fail at a lot of things. I turned in my ministerial credentials. Unlike Jesus, I quit. I even decided to give up Adventism and Christianity.

A couple of years later, I was driving across north-central Texas and detoured off the interstate to buy something for my wife at the grocery store in Keene, the location of an Adventist college. While going through the front door, I was stopped by a young man.

“Aren t you George Knight?” he asked. You visited me in my dorm room in Corsicana. That visit was the turning point in my life. I am now studying to be a Seventh-day Adventist minister.”

I realized I had planted seeds that had germinated underground where I couldn t see them. My problem was that I also wanted to see the seeds grow and harvest them very quickly.

I learned that even though one may plant, others water, and still others harvest. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit is quietly working in hearts. It was the same way in Christ s teaching ministry. By all human standards, he was an outward failure. Even though he had planted and watered, it wasn t until after his resurrection and Pentecost that his work came to maturity.

Teachers experience the same thing.

We need to take strength from his experience, knowing that with his help, we are planting seeds for the kingdom of God. Don t give up, even if you feel like a failure!



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ENCOURAGING WISE TECHNOLOGY USE

Ranjith Gladstone, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. - [Matthew 10:16](#)

Technology can be a wonderful resource for teachers and students. Unfortunately, it can also cause problems if used incorrectly. Ignorance about the appropriate use of technology is one of the biggest issues in the educational world today. Based on one of my recent research studies, it appears that up to 85% of higher education students are ignorant about their safety and privacy online.

When students, teachers and parents are ignorant about online safety, it can interfere with their lives in negative ways. For example, when potential employers or schools look up a student online, the student's online activities can be checked and considered a reflection of character; having a friend on social networking sites who has a criminal background can cause you problems, and so on. It is all too easy to be irresponsible with your thoughts and actions online. In this digital age, there is a steep rise of young people behaving irresponsibly online. Researchers have proven this irresponsibility through studies on online behavior.

It is tempting for students and teachers alike to want to express everything about themselves online. Unfortunately, doing so leaves digital footprints. People can be more concerned about the convenience of communication than the danger of exposing their personal information.

As Christian educators, we need to have a balance in our online interactions. We should be wise in not exposing ourselves too much and leaving unnecessary traces online. On the other hand, it is wise to develop a positive online reputation through digital footprints, and we should encourage our students to do so as well. In this age of cyberbullying, we should also encourage our students to behave not only responsibly, but also kindly online. We need to guide our students to use technology as wisely as serpents and as harmlessly as doves.



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THE BLESSING OF TEACHING

Prity Pearly Bairagee, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division,
Madagascar



*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. -
[William Butler Yeats](#)¹*

A teacher never knows where his or her influence will lead. This is one of the joys of being a teacher. One night in 2008, my phone rang at midnight. The person on the other end said, "You taught me English in grade five. Do you remember me?" He told me his name and I remembered him very well. He was a Muslim boy who studied in our Adventist school. He asked, "Do you remember you used to scold me a lot for being naughty and not doing my work on time?" I was embarrassed, and said, "I am very sorry if I hurt your feelings," but he replied, "If you hadn't scolded me then, I wouldn't be at college today. Because of your guidance, I am studying Engineering today, and am one of the best students in the university. I am very thankful to you and I always remember you as my best teacher."

This experience helped me to realize the real joy, inspiration, and satisfaction of being a teacher. I fully understood the importance of being a teacher. As the former Indian President, [Abdul Kalam](#), said, "Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, caliber, and future of an individual."²

The Holy Scripture reminds us in [Proverbs 22:6](#), "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is why teachers are considered the most important factor in our schools: because the success or failure of education in our school system depends upon the teachers. They guide, direct and motivate youth toward their goals. I am glad to serve as a teacher and to help shape young minds.

Our passion as teachers should come from within, from love and passion for this profession. If we claim to be teachers and fail to educate the young mind, we will be accountable. [James 3:1](#) says, "Not many of you should become teachers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly." As [Ephesians 4:11-12](#) notes, teaching is a gift given to equip God's people for His service. Similarly, Ellen White noted in [Christian Education](#) that teaching is "the most important missionary field

in the world."³ Undoubtedly, teaching is an honorable and vital profession, and I am content in it.

Teaching sometimes brings challenges, discouragement, and disappointments. It does not promise a high salary or other benefits to make our lives comfortable in this world. Still, as teachers we are answering a noble call and shaping the lives of countless children to build up their character and brighten their future lives. Although teaching is challenging, if we follow Jesus's footsteps, we can be successful in our ministry. As [Proverbs 3:5-8](#) says, we should not lean on our own understanding; we should not be wise in our own eyes but submit ourselves to God.



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SCHOOL FOR LIFE

Christian Noack, Inter-European Division, Germany



By encouraging connections and skills for our students, and by showing interest in them and their lives, we can make our schools truly a school for life for our students.

“My daughter felt accepted,” a father said to me during this year’s graduation ceremony, and I was moved. His daughter came to us only for the Secondary Level II, frustrated by the lack of interest in her as a person at her former school. My school, [Marienhöhe](#), helped her regain her ability to enjoy studying. She met teachers that were interested in her and encouraged her.

I am very grateful for these teachers, who also devise good and interesting instruction and who are dedicated and motivating coaches. They will leave positive tracks in the lives of their students. Many children and young people enjoy the experience of flourishing at our school. The best witnesses for this statement are former students at class reunions who speak of teachers that broadened their horizons, of life in the dormitories, of friends for life and sometimes also of spouses for life they have found at Marienhöhe. Time and again I hear the words “Marienhöhe was my school for life” at these meetings.

In the 2017-2018 school year, we started the year with the mission statement “School for Life” which we had developed in meetings and pedagogic seminars during the previous school year. In the eyes of parents and students we had been a good school for life already for a long time, but now we are in the process of sharpening this profile. There are three steps that we are focusing on, and that I recommend for other schools looking to develop a “school for life” impact:

- 1. Instruction with reference to the student’s lives.** School is often faced with the criticism that here you learn for tests and exams but not for life. Although tests and exams train students in skills like careful preparation, concentration, and performing under pressure, the contents of instruction should be focused on real life connections. Do students feel that fully understanding the topics of the different subjects is worth the trouble? If they see the

relationship between the subject and their lives, the topics suddenly become fascinating for them.

2. **Activity-oriented, holistic challenges that require the use of all senses.** During our summer project week our students enjoyed painting on silk, contemplated wise money investments, played basketball or soccer, went sport climbing, did sewing, knitting, computer programming, acting, windsurfing, skating, wrote literary texts, went hiking, visited the chancellor's office in Berlin or St Peter's Square in Rome, filmed a devotional video, played music, cooked and baked. All products or experiences they made were presented to their parents at the summer party. These experiences helped them develop new skills and connections.
3. **Life skills portfolio.** Starting this school year, we are presenting each student with a folder in which they can file all documents they receive from us during their school education at Marienhöhe, such as school reports, certificates, internship reports, and self-reflections.

By encouraging connections and skills for our students, and by showing interest in them and their lives, we can make our schools truly a school for life for our students.



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EACH CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

John Wesley Taylor V, General Conference



One does not need to hold a leading position to become a remarkable influence in the lives of others.

Sometimes we may have a wrong idea regarding nurturing faith in the lives of our students. We believe that teachers can nurture the faith of students, which is true. The problem is that we sometimes think that teachers are the only ones who can exert an influence on a student's faith, which is simply not the case.

Through the years, I have had opportunity to talk with many students. When I ask who has had the greatest influence on their lives, especially in terms of spiritual growth, students will sometimes mention one of their teachers. More often, however, they will talk about one of the support staff at their school, perhaps an office assistant, a residence hall dean, a librarian, a work supervisor, or a janitor, who took time to become acquainted, who encouraged them, who mentored them, who prayed with them. And that may be true for many of us, as well, as we think back to our own school experience.

In Scripture, apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers clearly have a faith-nurturing role ([Ephesians 4:11-13](#)). But what about those who do not stand in the pulpit or in front of a classroom? Are they not also educators? Can they likewise be agents of salvation? Here are three examples.

1. **She was a young woman and a recent employee.** Many of those surrounding her came from a secular background, as do many students in Christian schools today. This young employee, who was but an assistant to the wife of an administrator, noticed that someone was suffering. She felt compassion and spoke of the God who could bring healing. As a result, Naaman not only gained a new lease on life, but experienced a spiritual transformation ([2 Kings 5:1-17](#)).
2. **He was a middle manager - a deacon, as they were then called - but he listened to the prompting of the Spirit.** He went out of his way to travel to a rather dreary and unpromising setting—the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. There

Philip met a learner, who was a foreigner and wondered about many things. Receiving an invitation, Philip stepped into the student's chariot and spoke with him about Jesus. As a result, the Ethiopian accepted Christ as his Savior and was baptized ([Acts 8:26-39](#)).

3. **His name was Ebed-Melech. He was neither a prophet nor a prince.** He was simply one of the workers in the palace. But he found out that someone was in distress. That person had landed in a deep pit and couldn't get out, as happens at times with some of those around us. No one offered to help until Ebed-Melech stepped out of his comfort zone, spoke up on the student's behalf, and then with gentleness and compassion, rescued Jeremiah from the abyss ([Jeremiah 38:7-13](#)).

In all three cases, we see that one does not need to hold a leading position to become a remarkable influence in the lives of others. We each can make a difference.



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NOTES AND REFERENCES: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

1. William Butler Yeats:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/william-butler-yeats>.

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BEST PRACTICES

Best practices include a variety of activities and policies that have been proven to enhance achievement and engagement and to ensure that all students can thrive. In this section, Adventist educators reflect on subjects such as diversity, inclusion, accommodations, second language learning, health, exchange students, career education, and values education.

SEEING WORDS BACKWARDS

Sandra Doran, North American Division, USA



Do you have a child who drops off endings, leaves out syllables, or has difficulty with blends? All of these are indicators that the child is having difficulty distinguishing and sequencing sounds.

As an instructor at Providence College, I once asked my graduate class, comprised entirely of elementary school teachers, for their definition of dyslexia. I was shocked to discover that the common confusion over this well-researched learning disability extended even to experienced classroom teachers. To a person, they all responded: “Dyslexia is seeing words and letters backwards.” This definition, although not accurate, is a common misunderstanding of dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a language-based disability that affects an individual’s ability to read and spell, despite average or above-average intelligence. Generally, children with dyslexia have problems at the phonological level. It is very difficult for them to distinguish and sequence phonemes, or the sounds that make up our language. A sample of a student’s written work can be very telling.

Do you have a child who drops off endings, leaves out syllables, or has difficulty with blends? All of these are indicators that the child is having difficulty distinguishing and sequencing sounds.

Encoding (spelling) and decoding (reading) are two sides of the same coin. The same brain-based problem that causes some children to have to work much harder than others to “crack the code” of reading also makes it harder for them to put the correct sounds in the correct order to result in proper spelling.

If you have a child who is falling behind in reading, it’s important to act right away. A full diagnostic assessment is needed to determine the exact nature of the problem. Most children suffering from dyslexia will benefit from an Orton-Gillingham based approach to reading, which is multi-sensory, sequential, direct, and systematic.

If you are interested in learning how to advocate for a child with dyslexia, you will find [our recent book¹](#) to be a very detailed resource with chapters on What Works, The Law, Interpreting Test Results and more.

My website, TheTeacherTrack.com, is also available to teachers, with many resources and free downloads for teaching reading, writing and math to students on all ends of the continuum.

The important thing to remember is that no child wants to fail. As educators and professionals, it is our job to do whatever we can to unlock the world of learning to those who have become blocked.



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TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Pablo Mleziva, North American Division, USA



For our students to succeed, we have to adapt to their needs.

Children are expected to outgrow certain behaviors by the time they reach college — constant fidgeting, excitability, and lack of awareness of surroundings, for example. But children with sensory processing disorder (SPD) may not outgrow these tendencies.

SPD affects up to 16 percent of school-aged children. [Chang, Gratiot, and Owen](#) note that SPD can cause long-term deficits in intellectual and social development.² According to [Star Institute for Sensory Processing Disorder](#), these deficits result from sensory signals being improperly organized, leading to inappropriate and atypical responses to stimuli.³ [Miller](#) explains that SPD affects the way the brain interprets the information that comes in and the response that follows, causing emotional, motor, and other reactions that are inappropriate and extreme."⁴ It is often said that the brains of children with SPD are simply wired differently."⁵ This does not mean their brains are wired badly, just that they are wired differently. These children may also have special gifts such as absolute pitch in music.

Parents whose children have SPD often ask, "What does the future hold?" [Kranowitz](#) points out that unfortunately no longitudinal research has been done on children with SPD as they grow up.⁶ However, she notes that stories and anecdotes can offer some insight on the question. Therapists treating teenagers and adults with SPD and adults living with SPD can give us a glimpse of what coping with SPD feels like.

College students with SPD may never have received intervention to teach them adaptive skills, so higher education teachers must be able to recognize symptoms of sensory processing issues in students and make adjustments as needed.

SPD may cause students to search for the satisfaction of sensory needs, such as constant movement even when seated in the classroom, recoiling from over-bright computer screens, or preferring flipping through a book instead of using a tablet. Though it is tempting to resist changes to

traditional pedagogical methodologies, it is important to incorporate different teaching methods for students with brains that are wired differently.” Some possible interventions include:

- Dimming room lighting
- Offering both paper and computer-based exams
- Lowering noise levels
- Allowing students to walk in the back of the room during lectures.

Simple accommodations such as these can be provided without drawing attention to specific students and may benefit the whole class.

Educators hate to see their students fail. Watching students fail can be especially difficult at the university level because future careers are on the line.

For our students to succeed, we have to adapt to their needs. We should listen to every student, especially those with challenges such as SPD, and maximize their strengths while working on their weaknesses. I strongly believe that every student has the potential to reach their academic goals. It is my job as an educator to help them find the best route to reach that goal.

Teaching differently may be the best route for reaching those who learn differently.



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EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Carol Kingston, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



*I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. -
[Philippians 4:13](#)*

Teaching second language learners can be challenging. There is nothing easy about simplifying words for students learning a language. The basic forms of words have to be explained in order for learners to comprehend deeply, and pronunciation of each word form is also essential. It is important to have varied ways to help students memorize the vocabulary and then use the words correctly. Some activities I have found useful are:

- **Silent minute.** Students read silently and think about the passage given to them. Then they identify the main idea of that passage.
- **Video clips.** Students watch a video clip, look for the theme of the specific topic, and give a summary of it.
- **Expressive approach.** Students are divided into groups and given activities to work on together.
- **Think aloud.** Students share ideas inspired by what they have read in a passage.

I try to select activities that allow students to participate, have fun, and learn, all at the same time. Flipped activities, pair work, sharing with a neighbor, role play, mix and match, grid activities, and pictures representing words, as well as impromptu oral presentation work well. These cooperative learning activities encourage better understanding of vocabulary and allow students to mingle and get to know each other well. The social aspect makes the class more enjoyable for many students, so these activities can help them boost their learning and enthusiasm.

As second language teachers, we have to adapt and adjust to the learning and teaching environment. As you teach, remember the wise words of [Colossians 3:23](#): “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”



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WHAT IS THE NORM OF BEHAVIOR?

Robert Bairagee, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Madagascar



To live safely and securely, our students need norms of behavior instructed by the Bible and Christ's life.

Seventeen students were killed by a former student of Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14, 2018 in Florida. Although this incident was reported widely, there are many other antisocial activities by minors which go unreported. The U.S. Department of Education reported that between 2013 and 2015, 160 shootings took place in American educational institutions. 53% of the incidents occurred in K-12 schools and 47% in colleges or universities. Shockingly, 56% of the perpetrators were minors and got the weapons from their homes.

After this recent incident, many are suggesting reconsidering gun policies and increasing security. Although there is always room for improvement in these areas, as an educator I also wonder about the roots of this problem. [Daniel Goleman](#) has suggested emotional intelligence as a way to reduce violence in the society.⁷ Indeed, growth in emotional intelligence may control behavioral problems to some extent. Still, questions remain: What is the norm of students' behavior? Who is their role model?

In one of my college classes, students wrote about their favorite person. Most of the students chose movie stars, singers, sports stars, business magnates, political leaders, or TV preachers. When explaining their choices, students focused on the person's celebrity, wealth, business success, leadership, charisma, or political power.

The students' responses reflected the norms they were focusing on and pointed to the sources of their moral and ethical worldview. Movies, television, the internet, their reading, and society in general have greatly impacted our students' norms. These models spread societal problems such as drug addictions, premarital sex, revenge, fraud, and violence.

To live safely and securely, our students need norms of behavior instructed by the Bible and Christ's life. The scriptures advise us to "train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" ([Proverbs 22:6](#)). Similarly, [Ellen White](#) says, "The future happiness of

your families and the welfare of society depend largely upon the physical and moral education which your children receive in the first years of their life."⁸

It is not easy to lead our students to God when societal norms contradict biblical principles. But there are many practical steps we can take. Here are a few to consider:

- Be compassionate, reacting to student misbehavior with kindness rather than condemnation.
- Encourage students to provide a positive influence by speaking up when others do things against their principles.
- Pray with and for students.
- Show respect for students by giving them information about why the things they are doing are wrong instead of simply rebuking them.
- Encourage students to make positive choices but provide them with the freedom to choose.

To encourage a safe educational environment and society, teachers should introduce Jesus as a model to the students. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life ([John 14:6](#)). He is the absolute norm for a happy life and a healthy society.



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MENTORING THIRD CULTURE KIDS

Maria Lombart, Middle East and North Africa Division, Lebanon



A third culture kid is one who grows up in a different culture from the culture that his or her parents grew up in.

She sat across from me as we engaged in an earnest debate about life, philosophy, and the realities of marginalization that others seemed to ignore. I felt lost - I wasn't a trained mentor, I was nearly twice her age, we were raised on different continents, and she was just exploring her boundaries while I had established mine, but in that moment I also felt a connection. She was a [third-culture kid \(TCK\)](#) and so was I, so we understood each other even if we didn't always speak the same life language.

A TCK is one who grows up in a different culture from the culture that his or her parents grew up in. Counseling, mentoring, and other support outside of the classroom is available to many students today. However, are the TCK's particular needs being recognized and met? A TCK easily employs their adaptability to portray confidence. They often hesitate to ask for guidance even while they are questioning and searching for meaning. Their layered approach to life can complicate decisions such as which major to pursue, who to befriend, or how to establish their values. A TCK grows up believing their life is "normal" when it is actually unusual. Their experience with handling inordinate amounts of change in a short span of time, from schools to languages to cultures, may lead the TCK to feel they shouldn't need mentors as they should already be equipped to handle life.

This is particularly seen in the struggle to maintain long-term relationships. The TCK learns to get close quickly and end things abruptly, rather than engage in the natural ebb and flow of bonding. Social media may keep the connection but doesn't provide tools to handle conflict and be vulnerable without fear of rejection. Having a mentor who understands their particular set of challenges is important to help the TCK thrive emotionally.

There are a number of ways a mentor can address the particular needs of a TCK:

- **Let them talk about their world in relation to the wider world.** Their need to stretch intellectually and emotionally requires a mentor who acknowledges their inner tension to adapt to peers while living in a complex world.
- **Get to know them with a sense of wonderment.** [Sit with them and listen to who they are.](#) This is the greatest gift you can give a TCK, as they are so used to trying to fit in that they forget their special qualities.
- **Let them explore.** [Encourage their self-awareness.](#) The more they develop their understanding of themselves, the more they will understand the world around them.
- **Affirm their ability to see gray in the black and white of monocultures.** This perspective will help them build bridges between the worlds they understand fully.
- **Work together to pull their identities into a beautifully complex mosaic.** This will boost their self-confidence and help ground them.
- **Above all—be present.** This will invite their trust as they open up to you.



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QUALITIES OF A CHRISTIAN INCLUSIVE TEACHER

Ranjith Gladstone, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Philippines



As Adventist teachers, we should be inclusive in order to accommodate the challenges of all students.

Ellen White says, "Teachers are to watch over their students, as the shepherd watches over the flock entrusted to his charge. They should care for souls as they that must give account" ([Special Testimonies on Education, 48](#)).⁹ Children with special needs flourish under personalized care. The ultimate focus of Adventist education is to restore the image of Christ in those placed under their care,¹⁰ and achieving that goal for students with special needs requires careful thought.

As Adventist teachers, we should be inclusive in order to accommodate the challenges of all students. This mnemonic, comprised of words whose first letters spell "inclusive," can be helpful for remembering the essential qualities required of an inclusive Christian teacher:

- **Integrity and intuitiveness.** Teachers need to be Christ-like role model to students. Further, teachers must use their intuitive skills to uncover the underlying reasons behind the behavior of students with special needs (Purdue, 2018). They should remember that all students are formed in the image of their Creator and that Christ is the pattern after which they are to be fashioned (White, 1896).
- **Normalization.** As teachers, "we are under solemn, sacred covenant to God to bring up our children for Him and not for the world; to teach them not to put their hands into the hand of the world, but to love and fear God, and to keep His commandments" ([Special Testimony on Education, 48. 6](#)). Because of this, the teacher should accept their students' disabilities and work with students who have special needs to develop their strengths, just as they do with other students.
- **Comradeship.** Teachers should be hospitable to students with special needs in order to help them feel comfortable during the learning process. The Bible gives many clear examples of practicing hospitality by providing help to the needy ([Genesis 18, 19; 1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4](#)), and teachers should do the same.

- **Learning** patience and accommodation. Children with disabilities need special attention and sometimes extra patience. As [James 1:19](#) reminds us, it is good to be quick to listen and slow to speak and to become angry.
- **Uniformity.** Teachers being consistent in schedule and environment helps many children with special needs. Since these children are sometimes slow to adapt to changes, it can be helpful when teachers behave predictably.
- **Special value** of every individual. Teachers need to recognize the special value of each student and remember that all humans are created in God’s image.
- **Individual rights** such as justice, protection, equality, and provision. Students with special needs are entitled to equality and protection rather than skepticism or resistance.
- **Visualization** of desired learning. Teachers should visualize their plans and ensure the plans will address the different needs of all students, including students with special needs. Further, teachers should assist learners in visualizing a clear path to achieving their learning objectives.
- **Expertise** in growth and development. Teachers should develop expertise in methods for optimizing student growth and development. Every child comes with different developmental factors and backgrounds, and teachers should have the expertise to adjust for these differences.

These qualities can be challenging in practice, but achieving them is possible. As [Philippians 4:13](#) says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Similarly, [Galatians 6:9](#) reminds us to “not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”



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ATTENTION DEFICIT AND HYPERACTIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Charlotte Lessa, South American Division, Brazil



How can you tell if a student has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

How can you tell if a student has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)? Some people with this disorder can be talkative, rude, impatient, inattentive, or aggressive at times, but not everyone who has these characteristics can be assumed to have ADHD. The environment in which a child lives and many other factors can cause similar behavior, and students with ADHD may not have all these characteristics.

If you have a student with some or many of these characteristics the best thing to do is to refer him or her to a neurological pediatrician or child psychiatrist. Only a specialized clinician can confirm whether or not this disorder is present. Comorbidities can make the condition worse, and these professionals are the best ones to diagnose and treat the set of symptoms. A psychologist is also an important helper in this process.

Types of ADHD

There are three main types of ADHD, according to the DSM-IV classification:

1. Inattentive type. The most common form in the general population. Characteristics include inattention, resistance to distraction, difficulty in sustaining effort in more demanding activities and poor perception of the passage of time.
2. Hyperactive-impulsive type. The rarest form. Agitation, hyperactivity, impulsiveness is more marked in the hyperactive-impulsive type. Hyperactivity can be a problem, since it disturbs the surrounding environment. The constant search for stimulation, impulsivity and difficulty in thinking before acting can have consequences for both children and adults.
3. Combined / mixed type. The most common form in medical offices and outpatient clinics. It presents simultaneously the characteristics of the inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive types.

This type is generally the most difficult for the affected people and for those around them.

Tips for the Classroom

Here are some practical tips on how the teacher can lead students with ADHD to notice their inappropriate behavior and help them develop self-control:

- The student should sit in the front row, away from the window
- Use constant and predictable routines
- Speak clearly and briefly
- Use audiovisual resources and blackboard
- Minimize stimuli in order to avoid causing over-stimulation
- Talk to the student about his or her difficulties and suggestions on how things could be easier
- Establish few rules and encourage the student to follow them
- Balance demands for compliance with the rules with flexibility
- Focus on creating gradual changes in the learner
- Understand the level of frustration of the learner
- Adapt to the student's need to move around
- Make the student the official helper of the class so that he or she can move around more than peers
- Provide immediate and consistent feedback on behavior
- Compliment and reward when presenting appropriate behavior
- Avoid punishing for inappropriate behavior
- Signal when there is a change of task or activity
- Highlighting important points in tasks
- Use the student's schedule for communication with parents
- Go from the simplest to the most complex requirements gradually
- Remember that simple things like staying seated can be very difficult for those who have this Disorder

We have summarized a few tips here, but research is essential to help you encourage ADHD students towards success in the classroom and in life. Luckily, there is abundant material available on how to work with these students.

(Based on the book No Mundo da Lua - perguntas e respostas sobre Disordinação de Déficit de Atenção com Hiperatividade em crianças, adolescentes e adultos - Paulo Mattos, Lemos Editorial, SP, Brazil).



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HELP YOUR STUDENTS CHOOSE THE RIGHT CAREER

Marly Timm, North American Division, USA



Three key points are helpful to explore with your students to help them make their vocational choices.

The choice for a professional career is usually decided in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. During this period, the choice of the profession often appears to students as a problem to be solved. There are many uncertainties and insecurities, since young people are often frightened by the fact that when choosing a college and course of study, they may be defining in great part their professional career.

The number of professions has grown significantly in recent years. In Brazil alone, there are almost 35,000 undergraduate courses and 2,407 higher education institutions. To make a conscious decision, with discernment and security, the student must know well the profession he intends to choose and evaluate if this is the kind of life he wants to lead.

As teachers, it is important to remind students that such a decision implies letting go of equally attractive possibilities and also living with the disadvantages of the profession. However, if the choice has been made well, the risks and losses will be of little importance.

These three key points are helpful to explore with your students to help them make their vocational choices:

1. **Encouraging students to see their potential.** Help them assess their skills, interests, personal characteristics. Then challenge students to associate these skills with their professions. It is also important that they analyze their limitations and priorities, and know the values, family cultural heritage, principles, and philosophy of life they wish to preserve.
2. **Information about professions.** Create opportunities for them to discover what professionals do in different careers, what their day-to-day life is like, what their remuneration is, and what options they have for working in their chosen field. This stage can be accomplished in several ways: reading professional manuals, visiting colleges, interviewing professionals, getting to know the ideology of the course more closely, among others.

3. **Information about the labor market.** Jobs come and go. Professions that are on the rise today may be saturated when the student completes higher education. It is important to remind them not to worry only about that point. In many areas, the student must go beyond the university degree and plan on taking a graduate degree. Make it clear to students that the important thing is not only to enter the job market but also to stay in it.

The phase in which students need to choose their profession is marked by many challenges. Providing support for your students can help them make this choice more consciously and calmly.



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TAKE CARE OF YOUR POSTURE AND LIVE PAINLESSLY

Lurian Mendes, South American Division, Brazil



Teaching is a profession that depends a lot on this machine called the human body. For a machine to work well, it must be maintained.

Standing for hours, sitting, gesturing, writing, carrying teaching materials, and similar actions are recurrent actions in a teacher's daily life. Teaching is a profession that depends a lot on this machine called the human body. For a machine to work well, it must be maintained.

Because of the large amount of work involved in teaching, teachers often do not find time to practice physical exercises. As a result, the muscles become more and more overloaded each day. The result is widespread pain throughout the body, especially in the joints, as well as swelling in the legs and feet.

Here are seven tips to be a teacher without pain:

- **Wear comfortable shoes.** Avoid high heels, as they stress the muscles of the lumbar spine. Also, avoid low back sandals as they are a "poison" to your posture because they cannot cushion any impacts. Opt for a comfortable sneaker with shock absorbers or wear sandals with thick heels of 3 to 5 centimeters.
- **Be careful with your posture when writing on the board.** Many teachers complain of tingling hands and severe shoulder pain. This is not surprising since it is common to spend several hours in a row with your arms stretched out, writing on the blackboard. In the long run, this bad posture can lead to tendonitis, bursitis and, in more serious cases, freezing of the shoulders, which prevents individuals from lifting their arms because of intense pain. To prevent these problems, avoid extending your arms. Instead, bend your elbow at a 90° angle and keep your legs apart for a wider support base.
- **Use correct posture when helping students and correcting notebooks.** Avoid bending the torso and the spine to correct the activities of your students. Instead, stay seated and call the students to your table. Make sure you are seated correctly, with

your spine against your chair, legs apart, feet touching the ground and elbows resting on the table.

- **Take effective breaks.** When you take a break, drink water. A well-hydrated muscle is a healthy muscle that is less susceptible to injury. Also take time to stretch, especially your arms, wrists and lower back. Do a breathing exercise: inhale slowly and then exhale through the mouth. Do this 3 to 5 times. Doing this will oxygenate the tissues of your body, allowing them to adequately relax.
- **Use proper posture when carrying bags and backpacks.** Distribute the weight. Instead of taking all the books in a backpack, carry some in your arms. When choosing a backpack, look for ones that include a transversal handle.
- **Get real rest.** Set aside a day to leave all your work at school. Being a teacher often requires preparing class outside of school time, correcting exams and notebooks on holidays, and so on. Just like your muscles, your brain needs to relax. Take a day off to be with your family, go for a walk, or just stay home resting, without thinking about work.

Motivate yourself. Often our physical posture is a response to our emotions. The less motivated we feel, the more our posture will suffer. So, value yourself! Know that your profession is unique, inspiring, and transformative, capable of deeply impacting students for their whole life. After all, who doesn't have an unforgettable teacher? Remember your value as a teacher and your posture will show positive effects.



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NOTES AND REFERENCES: BEST PRACTICES

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Adventist Educators Speak: Insights on Educating for Eternity

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--David McClintock, Education Director, South Pacific Division



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--Arne Nielsen, Vice President for Education, North American Division



Adventist Educators Speak! is truly a well-selected collection of short motivational articles pertaining to Adventist education, which can transform your mindset and inspire your soul.

--Ivan Riapolov, Education Director, Euro-Asia Division



When the battery in my smartphone or tablet runs low, I reach for my charger--not just any unit, but my Quick Charge (QC) or Power Delivery (PD) charger. After all, there are things to do and places to go. That is what this book is about: connecting to power in rapid boosts of energy. Each short essay comes with the promise to reenergize our lives as educators.

--John Wesley Taylor V, Associate Director of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



The title of this book represents its content. Indeed, Adventist Educators Speak! They speak from what they have read, heard, seen, done, and a multiplicity of experiences that make them who they are. The core message throughout this book is integrating faith and learning and the relationship of the educators with their Master Teacher, Jesus Christ. This is a must read for teachers, students, parents, and supporters of Adventist education!

--Richard A. Sabuin, Education Director, Northern Asia-Pacific Division