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THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION (ISSN 0021-8480) is published bimonthly, October through May, plus a single summer issue for June, July, August, and September by the Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. TELEPHONE (301) 680-5075; FAX (301) 622-9627; E-mail: rumbleb@gc.adventist.org. Subscription price, U.S. \$18.25. Add \$3.00 for postage outside the U.S. Single copy, U.S. \$3.75. Periodical postage paid at Silver Spring, Maryland, and additional mailing office. Please send all changes of address to P.O. Box 5, Keene, TX 76059, including both old and new address. Address all editorial and advertising correspondence to the Editor. Copyright 2008 General Conference of SDA, POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION, P.O. Box 5, Keene, TX 76059.

## CognitiveGenesis Study Identifies Predictors of Superior Academic Achievement

**T**his issue of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION reports on the findings from the first two years of the *CognitiveGenesis* study. The findings are robust: Students in K-12 Adventist schools in the North American Division outperform the national averages. More data will be collected in the next couple of years and then analyzed for final conclusions. So far, whether in a small rural multigrade classroom or a large urban single-grade class, grades 3-5, 6-9, or 11, at all ability



Lisa M. Beardsley

levels, students in Adventist schools perform at or above the national average in every subject tested in the study. How good? On average, performance is one-half-grade level higher than their national peers. What is more, students perform even better than their own ability level would predict.

The researchers conducting the 30,000-student *CognitiveGenesis* study found a cumulative beneficial effect—attending an Adventist school for multiple years is directly related to superior academic performance. Moreover, they found that non-curricular factors such as a healthy diet and adequate sleep contribute to this success. Student interaction with parents, parental involvement in schools, and family control over television viewing and Internet use also contribute to superior achievement. These findings affirm Adventist education’s emphasis on a healthy, balanced lifestyle and its historic commitment to educating the whole person.

We expect the role of parents to feature in student academic achievement, but the *CognitiveGenesis* researchers found that support of the school by the church and pastor are also important. For this reason, you will be interested in reading about how to get pastors involved in schools on page 28 of this issue of the JOURNAL.

Our church’s education system depends on a qualified and committed Adventist workforce, so I hope you will find the article I wrote about how to fill a job in Adventist education to be helpful for administrators and candidates alike. Also in this issue, “Collaboration: An Alternative for Mentoring New Faculty” on page 45 addresses the need to grow the people who grow the students.

Addressing an increasingly influential worldview, Humberto Rasi highlights positive and negative implications of postmodernism in this issue of the JOURNAL and provides some practical suggestions for steering a safe course for learning and faith formation in the classroom.

The *CognitiveGenesis* study, together with the two Valuegenesis studies, makes a compelling case for the advantages of Adventist education. The latter studies showed that three factors contribute to growth in faith: attending Adventist schools, being raised in an Adventist home, and being fostered in an Adventist church. Other studies have shown that attending denominational schools increases the likelihood that young people will remain members of the Adventist Church in adulthood. Make a point of sharing this positive information in your church and community this week and whenever you can. I hope that the empirical findings of these studies will encourage the teachers and school administrators reading this editorial as they work with students and parents.

The *CognitiveGenesis* study also raises questions and points to a research agenda that deserves attention. Why are math computation scores consistently lower? Can these findings be replicated outside of North America? How does the Sabbath fit into academic achievement? THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION seeks to communicate and promote the very best practices in classroom and extracurricular components of an Adventist education. To that end, we solicit more research like the *CognitiveGenesis* and Valuegenesis studies that help us understand why Adventist education has the power to transform lives—and how we can do it even better.

In the meantime, we have reason to celebrate that Adventist education is positively contributing to our students’ growth in faith and academic performance.

# Letters to the editor

## Peacemaking Issue

Let me add my heartiest congratulation and gratitude for the February/March 2008 issue of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION! Here is a link to my "post": <http://adventistpeace.typepad.com/peacemessenger/2008/04/peacemaking-and.html>. We also highlighted it in the electronic newsletter that went out today.

**Douglas Morgan**  
Adventist Peace Fellowship  
<http://www.adventistpeace.org>

• *The Education Digest has requested permission to publish a condensed version of Tiffany Hunter's article on peacemaking in the elementary classroom that appeared in the February/March 2008 issue.*—Editor.

## Enjoyed Higher Education Issue

I just wanted to let you know I really enjoyed reading all the articles in the April/May 2008 JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION. Thanks for devoting a special issue to higher education topics.

**Grant Leitma**  
Columbia Union College  
Takoma Park, Maryland

## School Boards III (Summer 2008)

Recently, President Andreasen sent a copy of the Summer 2008 issue of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION to each of the Andrews University trustees. I read the issue from cover to cover. The emphasis on school boards was outstanding. The information is timely and hits the heart of the importance and should be the guide used by all school board chairs.

Thank you for the thorough job you did in presenting this subject.

**Juan R. Prestol**  
Under Treasurer  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
Silver Spring, Maryland

I was very impressed with the Summer edition of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION, which I received this week. It was so timely. Issues with K-12 boards and school boards were clearly discussed. I plan to purchase several copies to hand out to our local

board members. The magazine needs to be studied carefully and the guidelines followed with prayerful consideration.

Thank you for such an excellent magazine.

**Catherine Lambert**  
British Columbia, Canada

Thank you very much for the JAE complimentary issue on Boards III. And congratulations again for the great quality of this resource.

God bless you abundantly,

**Roberto Badenas**  
Education and Family Ministries  
Director  
Euro-Africa Division  
Bern, Switzerland  
Via e-mail

• *A complimentary copy of the issue was sent to every division president, division director of education, union conference president, college and university president, rector, and tertiary-level board chairperson worldwide.*—Editor.

We are in the process of preparing a guidebook for board members using mainly the presentations made during the East-Central Africa Division board members' seminar held at our offices in 2007.

The purpose of this inquiry is because I have read all the School Boards III issue of the JOURNAL, and found some of the articles very useful. Is it possible to get permission to include some of them, with acknowledgment, in the guidebook we are preparing? If possible can we have copies sent to us electronically?

**Hudson E. Kibuuka**  
Director of Education  
East-Central Africa Division  
Nairobi, Kenya

• *Contact the Editor for permission to reprint, to photocopy, or to obtain electronic copies of articles in recent issues.*

## "The Firing of Mary Mediocre: The Case for Due Process at the School Board" (Summer 2008)

Professor McKinstry has a heart for teachers who are treated unfairly. I applaud him for that. After more than 30 years of defend-

ing the rights of teachers, I wish more school board lawyers had his attitude. However, I am concerned that Adventist teachers who casually read his article (i.e., ignoring his footnotes) will come away with the impression that they have a federal constitutional right to fair treatment by their board or conference. They do not. The U.S. Constitution restrains only the actions of the government. Public school teachers, not church school teachers, can raise constitutional claims. Adventist teachers who believe they are treated unfairly, but who want to avoid the courts, can obtain both a hearing and binding arbitration of their claims by invoking the church's "Conciliation and Dispute Resolution Procedure" (NAD Working Policy 2006-07 BA 45).

**Bruce N. Cameron, J.D.**  
Reed Larson Professor of Labor Law  
Regent University School of Law  
Virginia Beach, Virginia

*The author responds:* I agree with Professor Cameron's statement that Adventist teachers do not have due process rights provided by the U.S. Constitution. I made that point in a footnote in my article, but his letter is a helpful warning to prevent misunderstanding. He is also correct in noting that the thrust of my article is a call for school boards to use fair procedures when considering teacher termination. Many union education codes have fair procedures clauses, which should be followed carefully.—Charles McKinstry.

## write to us!

Want to share your thoughts or comments about the articles in the JOURNAL? Send your letter by e-mail to [rumbleb@gc.adventist.org](mailto:rumbleb@gc.adventist.org) or by mail to THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Include your name, title, e-mail/mailling address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.