



COGNITIVE GENESIS

Assessing Adventist Academics

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2006

A significant question has swirled through the minds and hearts of the faculty/researchers at La Sierra University's School of Education. This question focuses on a desire to know the impact of Seventh-day Adventist education on the lives and futures of students sitting in our classrooms every day. And now this question has generated a hunger to know, and a desire to strengthen the efforts of thousands of dedicated Adventist educators.

At the School of Education, the natural response to important questions is systematic inquiry. La Sierra University's School of Education faculty/researchers have a history of effectively practicing a host of quantitative and qualitative methods in their pursuit of answers to important questions. They gather data through surveys, tests, questionnaires, interviews, and

observations. They analyze large data sets using current technologies. They engage in curriculum development and piloting, classroom experimentation, and software development. They share their findings through publications, conferences, workshops and institutes. And in the end, this research informs and enhances what happens in classrooms around the world.

Now this important question—identifying the variables that impact academic performance in Adventist elementary and secondary schools—has inspired a new research effort called *COGNITIVE GENESIS*. And Seventh-day Adventist educators across North America have a significant role to play in this important research.

WHAT IS COGNITIVE GENESIS?

Seventh-day Adventist educators have long maintained that their students' Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores, pass rates, and college matriculation percentages consistently outpace most public school and even other private school systems. The Annual Council of American Private Education Report indicates performance of private education students on nationwide standardized tests routinely outpaces those of public school students. Are these impressive facts or just well-intentioned propaganda?

COGNITIVE GENESIS is the first division-wide study to assess Adventist academics in elementary and secondary schools. Researchers at La Sierra University, in conjunction with the North American Division Office of Education (NADOE) and the cooperation of all nine unions, will undertake a three-year project. This research initiative will document the academic achievement of approximately 37,000 students in the NAD and examine the various factors that influence achievement.

HOW WILL IT BE DONE?

Working together, the *COGNITIVE GENESIS* Project at La Sierra University and the NADOE will gather information from surveys of teachers, administrators, students, and parents about factors that influence academic achievement, including uniquely Adventist ones. These survey responses along with the standardized test results for students in Grades 3-9 and 11 will provide the basis for establishing an accurate documented picture of elementary and secondary Adventist academic achievement. This information will be collected over a three-year period, beginning fall of 2006.



“Our purpose is not to defend the educational system as it is but to find out how well we are doing and what we can do to improve the educational experience of our children,”

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NAD WIDE INITIATIVE THAT BEGINS FALL 2006

WHY COGNITIVE GENESIS?

According to Robert J. Cruise, Ph.D., research director of the project, the information collected will provide an empirical data bank that will answer the following questions:

1. How well are students doing academically?
2. Are there unique, identifiable qualities attributable to Seventh-day Adventist academics and, if so, what are they?
3. How do Seventh-day Adventist students compare in academic performance to their counterparts in public and private schools?
4. What needs to be improved in order to provide the best possible education for our young people?

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

1. Valid, reliable data to explore the strengths and weaknesses of Adventist education
2. Reshaping of curricula and teaching strategies based on findings to further enhance student learning
3. New marketing and recruiting strategies promoting Adventist education

Valuegenesis I and II examined the faith maturity and loyalty of Adventist elementary and secondary students to Adventism and Christian faith. In contrast, CognitiveGenesis will focus on factors affecting the academic quality of Adventist k-12 education. Together, these two major studies will provide valuable insights into two of the three components of the triad (“the spiritual, mental, and physical”) upon which Adventist education is based.

When youth and parents see that Adventist education delivers both spiritually and academically, there may be a growing group of young people who will choose to be part of Adventist education and as a result participate in the life of the church.

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INFORMATION SESSIONS AVAILABLE

For Teachers

What is your role in CognitiveGenesis?”

MONDAY, AUGUST 7 - 12:45 p.m. & 1:45 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8 - 12:45 p.m. & 1:45 p.m.

For Superintendents, Associates & Principals

“What is the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)?”

MONDAY, AUGUST 7 - 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

session 200, Governor's B (seating limited)

session 300, Main Auditorium

For Everyone

“Ask Me About CognitiveGenesis”

MONDAY, AUGUST 7 - 3:45-5:00 p.m.

session 300, Main Auditorium

session 300, Tennessee C

CONTACT US

www.cognitivegenesis.com

(under construction)

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