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Multi-Level Partnering in Adventist Education

It is common nowadays for institutions of higher learning to form alliances, memoranda of understanding, and collaborative efforts in order to reduce duplication of services, form partnerships, and improve relationships with entities that share similar purposes.

Within the Adventist Church, however, there appears to be reluctance to form partnerships across levels of education (i.e., universities and/or colleges forming collaborations with secondary schools or with primary schools). What causes this reluctance? What would be the advantages to forming such relationships?

Consider, for example, how we might develop a program that encourages universities to partner with other educational levels. Let’s assume that a university offers degree programs in the areas of business—finance, accounting, and so forth. Universities generally require their professors to regularly engage in research endeavors that further knowledge in their field of expertise. Why not develop a partnership with an Adventist K-12 school system to discover more productive ways of financing elementary or secondary education? The researchers could then study a variety of approaches the K-12 schools could use to enhance their financial situation. The research endeavor might involve identifying the problem, reviewing the literature on school finance, forming hypotheses, developing a research design aimed at resolving the problem, collecting data from private and public education systems, analyzing the data, reporting findings, and then proposing solutions. The research might also identify schools or school systems that have been the most successful in making Adventist education financially accessible to families with various income levels. This area of research is sorely needed by the church as it attempts to provide education worldwide to individuals and families with varying abilities to pay for Adventist schooling.

Through careful and intentional planning, union conferences might develop a fund that provides incentives for such collaborations. Funding might be made available only to those entities willing to partner with another educational level in solving a problem of critical importance to the level(s) engaged in the partnership. Professors and/or teachers could use the funds to obtain release time, research assistants, support for travel, and other research-related expenses. In the publish-or-perish environment of the university, research could be conducted that not only furthers the career of the scholar but also helps the church solve perennial problems.

The advantages are many. People at different educational system levels would get to know one another and develop an understanding of each other’s problems and challenges. Collaborative efforts might even be formed in areas not heretofore contemplated. Just think about it: The church would not only further the integration of faith and learning, but also the integration of faith and practice.

To qualify to receive the funds for collaboration/partnership, applicants would have to submit a clear research design. The design could be proposed by elementary and secondary education to benefit colleges/universities or by colleges to benefit K-12 systems/institutions. Partnering would be the primary determinant for approving and funding research proposals. Considering all the time, money, energy, and talent we invest to achieve the mission of our institutions, shouldn’t we collaborate to achieve our shared objectives?

There are a few areas in the church where this has been attempted—such as in the Value-genesis research—but most of them have been aimed more toward providing research information than toward developing multi-level partnerships.

My hope is that the proposal briefly presented in this editorial can be broadened to include many possible areas where collaboration could benefit multiple educational levels.
The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has, over nearly 20 years, generated a number of position statements on a wide range of ethical issues. This should not be surprising for a community of faith that is deeply committed to introducing a Savior to a suffering world.

Societies worldwide are wracked by evil. The church has a mission to share the good news of deliverance from sin and recommendations for achieving a happy and healthy lifestyle. Whether the issue be domestic violence, tribal and national warfare, use of tobacco, abortion, euthanasia, or caring for the environment, the church has positioned itself on many of the key moral issues of our day. Indeed, it would be irresponsible to operate an educational system, hospitals, social programs, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency without some sense of where the church stands on such issues.

Recognizing the need to provide leadership in the area of ethics, church leaders have established study groups of experts and laypersons to formulate position statements. Even though most of the issues addressed in these statements are highly controversial, they have usually met with an appreciative response from those who have studied them. The statements have also provided guidance to Adventist institutions because of their focus on specific issues that are relevant to education, health care, social services, and local congregations.

Unfortunately, most church members, including many educators, are unaware of the statements. This article will suggest ways to encourage more widespread use of the statements, so that students and teachers will be more informed on positions shaped by the biblical and theological convictions of our church. It will answer questions such as these:

- How were the statements generated? Who created and reviewed them?
- What is the justification for such work?
- How can those who are interested access the statements?

Hard Questions

In the course of our work, the authors, both ethicists, are thoroughly engaged with educational, health-care, congregational, and administrative organizations within and outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We routinely must grapple with the implications of our faith for human biology and medicine—an area known as bioethics. The work is sometimes stressful, but never boring or trivial.

Perhaps the issue that most vividly illustrates these dynamics is abortion. Sometimes, when conducting seminars, we ask how many of the attendees have studied the church’s official statement on abortion. It is rare to find an Adventist audience in which the majority has even heard of this statement. The abortion guidelines document is just...
one of dozens of important statements that the church has produced on matters of ethical, theological, and social significance.

**Christian View of Human Life Committee**

In 1989, recognizing the growing need for attention to ethical issues, our church’s leaders established an abortion committee that eventually embraced a broader agenda and was therefore renamed the Christian View of Human Life Committee (CVHLC). Led by Dr. Albert Whiting, then director of the General Conference (GC) Health Ministries Department, an interdisciplinary group was assembled in Takoma Park, Maryland. From the beginning, the chairman insisted that the CVHLC be balanced for gender and cultural diversity. While membership varied over the years, the number of those in attendance was usually between 20 and 30.

Drafts of a number of the CVHLC’s proposed statements were circulated to church leaders around the world to obtain feedback, a step that turned out to be exceptionally helpful.

The first issue taken up by the CVHLC was abortion. Their work on that topic aptly illustrates the need for such efforts. The issue had been controversial for some time, both within and outside the church. The church had already issued a brief statement in the 1970s, which was later modified. But by 1989, it was clear that the church needed a statement with greater clarity. Its health-care institutions were asking for help in creating policies on this issue.

Obviously, faithful Christians, each reading Scripture carefully, have come to a variety of positions on abortion. So the question arose: Should the church's ethics statements can provide guidance to medical students and doctors at Adventist hospitals as they are called upon to make life-and-death decisions about patient care.
Church take on the role of arbiter in ethical debates, laying out what should be regarded as the Seventh-day Adventist position on such matters? If so, does this negate the role of individual conscience? If the church does not offer guidance, where are its medical and research institutions to get assistance with decisions about bioethical issues?

Recently, one of us was conversing with a young physician regarding abortion. I mentioned that the Adventist Church had a position statement that could inform his thinking on this matter. Some five minutes later, he stopped me, and referring back to my earlier reference to the church’s official statement, said, “What do I care if the church has an official position on this matter? This is my decision to make!”

**Shared Answers**

Perhaps some readers will be surprised that we agree with the young physician’s basic sentiments. As Protestants, Adventists rightly reject the notion that ecclesiastical authorities should dictate what each member must believe about complex ethical issues. However, we believe that the church does have an important role to play in helping our members and the societies in which they live to think carefully about such matters.

The Adventist statement on abortion makes a very deliberate effort to do that. It clearly delineates the relationship between church guidance and personal conscience: “The need for guidelines has become evident, as the Church attempts to follow Scripture, and to provide moral guidance while respecting individual conscience.”

The introduction to the most recent compilation of the church’s statements on ethics, *Statements, Guidelines, & Other Documents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, responds to this question: Why should the church bother taking positions on matters of moral import? Ray Dabrowski, communication director for the General Conference, boldly states: “It goes without saying that the church as a moral force in society is expected to clarify or express its stance, or even develop a particular concern.” Tapping into our denominational history, Dabrowski notes some of the issues about which Adventists have been vocal in the past: civil rights, slavery, religious liberty, health and temperance reform, alcoholism and drug dependency, tobacco, and education.

Affirming this stance, General Conference President Jan Paulsen wrote recently in *Adventist World*: “There is a vast difference between seeking a voice in the public discourse, and seeking to wield political power. As a church—and individuals—we have not only the right, but the obligation, to be a moral...
voice in society; to speak clearly and eloquently on that which touches our core values. Human rights, religious freedom, public health, poverty, and injustice—there are some of the areas in which we have a God-given responsibility to advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves."

The work of the Christian View of Human Life Committee from 1989 to 2000 illustrates the wisdom of gathering informed members to address the pressing ethical issues of our times. After input from a variety of sources, a number of statements were finalized and sent to either the church’s Annual Council or its executive branch. The topics included assisted human reproduction, birth control, genetic intervention and therapy, euthanasia, and human cloning.

The CVHLC is not the only body that has generated position statements considered to be representative of Seventh-day Adventist thinking on matters of social or ethical import. Such documents have come from the General Conference in session, the GC Executive Committee and GC Administrative Committee, and the office of the GC president. Additionally, statements from the Biblical Research Institute have occasionally taken up ethical issues.

However, none of these bodies has been charged with making sure the statements are widely disseminated. As a result, few members are aware that the statements exist.

Where to Look

For those with computer access, the easiest place to find the documents is on the Internet (http://www.adventist.org).

In addition, the statements have been compiled in an inexpensive book, referred to above, which is published by the GC Communication Department. The third edition (2005) is available through the Review and Herald Publishing Association, although we have yet to see it featured at an Adventist Book Center.

Using the Statements in the Classroom

In our day-to-day work at Loma Linda University, we find a number of ways to introduce and use the church’s statements. Since we teach ethics courses, it makes sense to incorporate a number of the statements into the curriculum, such as those on care for the dying, domestic abuse and violence, abortion, peacemaking, environmental responsibility, HIV/AIDS, genetic therapies, and reproductive technologies. We often have the students buy the inexpensive book referred to above, but they can also access and read the statements online if they wish.

Because of their brevity, the church’s statements...
and to respond to classmates’ online postings. This often stimulates vibrant dialogue.

The level of students’ interaction and interest highlights the ongoing relevance of the church’s statements. The topics dealt with by the statements energize, and sometimes balkanize, entire communities. The fact that Adventists have something to say about these topics indicates that the church is wrestling with matters that are relevant to church members and to the societies in which they live.

These statements can be useful in a number of courses, not just those that explicitly focus on ethics. As a teaching tool, they highlight a foundational principle of Adventism: to help students engage in critical thinking, not simply memorize specific bits of information. Ellen White, in one of her most provocative statements about teaching methods, wrote: “Teachers should lead students to think, and clearly understand the truth for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the student to believe; inquiry must be awakened.”

In light of this mandate, one way to use the church’s statements into the classroom is to ask students to discuss questions such as these:

- Should our church issue statements on ethical issues?
- Isn’t there a danger that such efforts might be viewed as political statements rather than ethical ones?
- If the church does formulate statements on ethics, who should be selected to develop them? How can any drafting group be sufficiently representative?
- How should we approach ethical issues when there is no specific guidance from the Bible?
- If the church does offer ethical guidance on a particular issue, how should individual members relate to it? Should it be considered binding on all members? On all church institutions?
- What process should be used for revising statements that the church has already formulated?

Questions like these can help students go beyond the specific content of the church’s statements to think about what it means to be responsible church members seeking God’s guidance together.

Other Venues

In addition to our work in the classroom, we often find other opportunities to highlight the church’s statements. One of the primary avenues is via publications.

One example is *UPDATE*, the news journal published by the Center for Christian Bioethics at Loma Linda University. Mailed quarterly free of charge to those interested, *UPDATE* highlights the work of the center and addresses issues relevant to bioethics. But it also publishes articles on ethical issues outside the realm of bioethics. Recently, for example, two editions focused on race relations, homelessness and poverty, domestic and family violence, and women’s issues. Using the church’s statements, Adventist scholars offered analysis, and suggested other topics that the church should address.

Five years ago, one of us began writing a column for our union conference paper, the Pacific...
Union Recorder. The assignment was to write a brief article periodically about a topic that was relevant to church members, focusing on ethical issues faced by the Center for Christian Bioethics. The ethics column has challenged church members to think about what our church can contribute to the major ethical issues of our time.

Yet another channel of communication is curriculum materials. Several years ago, the North American Division developed a new series of textbooks for academy-level Bible classes called “The Crossroads Series.” One of us served as the primary author of an elective resource for the grade 11-12 textbook, entitled, “Life Philosophy and Moral Issues.” It includes a number of our church’s ethics statements in the hope that students and faculty will be helped by knowing that the denomination has engaged in careful reflection and study of ethically significant questions.

The Center for Christian Bioethics is now working on a textbook for college-level classrooms. The first half will focus on a Seventh-day Adventist framework for addressing ethical issues. The second half will be a collection of church statements focusing on bioethics and social ethics. In planning for the latter section, we have asked a number of scholars to offer an academic analysis of the church’s statements. At the end of each analysis, the experts look toward the future.

In addition to such publications, we seek to foster discussions of ethics in other ways such as...

Church groups: We strongly encourage church administrators, theology professors, and pastors to use these statements in their work with congregations, boards, and committees. Occasionally, we are asked to give seminars that focus on issues for which the GC has position statements. For instance, the Carmichael, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church asked one of us to give a lecture on the topic of stem cell research. Although no statement on this subject has yet been approved by the church, statements from the CVHLC on human cloning, Christian Principles for Genetic Intervention, and Human Gene Therapy were helpful in the discussion.

Camp meetings, workers’ meetings, and seminars for lay and professional evangelists and chaplains: Particularly relevant in these contexts are the following: Family Violence (1996 statement), Statement on Stewardship of the Environment, How Seventh-day Adventists View Roman Catholicism, Guidelines for Engaging in Global Mission, Guidelines: AIDS Epidemic, Guidelines for Employee/Employer Relations, Relationships With Other Christian Churches and Religious Organizations, to name just a few.

Because of their brevity, the church’s statements form a useful supplement to other required readings in a class syllabus.

Encouraging Widespread Use

We recommend that teachers, theological professors, and educational administrators look over the collected statements to find the ones that are relevant to their specific area of responsibility. The fact that such a wide range of topics has been addressed suggests that anyone could surely find a topic of interest to his or her work within the church.

Academy, college, and university teachers will find the statements listed below to be relevant in the following disciplines:

Religion/Theology: most of the statements.

Science: climate change, genetics, stewardship of the environment, human cloning, and human sexuality.

Social Studies: racism, homelessness and poverty, war and peace, human cloning, family, family violence, women’s issues, employee/employer relations, HIV/AIDS, and religious freedom.

History: calls for peace, racism, human rights, ecumenical movement, ethics and tobacco, abortion, religious extremism.

Nursing, pre-med, biological sciences: care for the dying, abortion, genetic therapies, reproductive technologies, birth control, HIV/AIDS, family violence, sexual abuse, and sexually transmitted disease.

One of us routinely interacts with teachers on a nearby academy campus. Recently, students were seen carrying around their “babies” (lifelike dolls). The senior Bible class teacher had assigned a unit in which the students researched the issues and expenses involved in planning a wedding, setting up an apartment, developing a budget, and having children. Which of the church’s statements might be relevant to this assignment? At least these: birth control, stewardship of the environment, family violence, abortion, pornography, and assisted human reproduction.

In conversation with the teacher one day, we toyed with the idea of including the reality that some of the “couples” in class would also end up in divorce court. In such a case, the teacher could also
Statements, Guidelines, and Other Documents:

**Statements:**
- Abuse and Family Violence
- AIDS
- Birth Control: A Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Consensus
- Caring for Creation—A Statement on the Environment
- Care for the Dying
- Climate Change
- Creation, An Affirmation of
- Competition
- Drugs
- Environment
- Stewardship of the Environment
- Family
- Family Violence
- Gambling
- Health-Care Institutions
- Homelessness and Poverty
- Homosexuality, Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on
- Human Cloning
- Human Rights (50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of)
- Marriage
- Peace
- A Seventh-day Adventist Call for Peace
- Peace Message to All People of Good Will
- Pornography
- Racism
- Religious Extremism—A Danger to Religious Liberty
- Religious Freedom
- Religious Minorities and Religious Freedom: A Statement of Commitment and Concern
- Same Sex Unions
- Sexual Abuse (Child)
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Smoking and Ethics
- Smoking and Tobacco
- The Role of the Ten Commandments in Public Life
- Tolerance
- 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Religious Tolerance and Non-discrimination
- Women’s Issues

**Guidelines:**
- Abortion
- AIDS Epidemic
- Sexual Harassment
- Harassment
- Guidelines for Employer and Employee Relationships

**Other Documents:**
- AIDS—A Seventh-day Adventist Response
- Christian Principles for Genetic Interventions
- Church-State Relations
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Gene Therapy
- Relationships with Other Christian Churches
- Considerations on Assisted Human Reproduction
- Ethical Foundations for the General Conference and Its Employees
use sections from the Church Manual on divorce and remarriage.

Recently, one of our colleagues served on the judges’ panel for a health essay competition. Elementary and secondary students were invited to write on topics that they believed to be particularly relevant. One of the essays submitted was on abortion. It was clear that the student was unaware that the church had a statement on this topic. While we are not suggesting that the paper should have simply upheld the church’s position statement on abortion, surely the writer should have been made aware of what the church teaches on this important matter.

Teachers and educational administrators often interact with colleagues from state universities and other religious colleges. As they discuss and study various ethical issues, they can use the statements in their research and seminars, and make their colleagues aware that our church takes these issues seriously enough to offer guidance for members and for public policy-making.

In several cases, church administrators and ethicists have been contacted by other churches to ask, “What do Adventists believe about ______?” And reporters from various media have contacted the authors and church headquarters asking about the church’s stance on a variety of issues.

Finally, more and more universities, colleges, and academies are incorporating service courses into the curriculum and/or requiring students to perform a certain number of hours of voluntary service. One academy recently “adopted” a trailer park. Each week, the students and faculty go to the park and help those who are unable to take care of their trailers and yard or to pay others to do so. Reading the church’s statement on “homelessness and poverty” could help set the context for such work for both faculty and students.

We leave it to the church’s teachers to exercise their creativity in the effort to make these statements come alive for our youth.

Conclusion

We feel optimistic about the need, relevance, and usefulness of these church statements even though we understand why some would hesitate to encourage widespread exposure to them. Looking to the future, the church needs to consult on a regular basis with ethicists, theologians, medical personnel, and experts in other areas, since many of the current statements will require revision, and new statements may be needed as scientific research generates new ethical complexities.

If this article has done nothing more than draw attention to these statements, we’ve made progress. While we have focused on the use of these statements in educational contexts, the reader should recognize their broad applicability. While students may regard their study of the statements as a mere academic exercise, the applicability to their lives will very likely become real all too soon. Each of us will have to care for a loved one during his or her final days. Most of us will face the challenges of deliberating over matters of birth control, human sexuality, employee/employer relationships, and care for the environment, to name just a few.

We feel confident you will find relevant and helpful materials in the list of church statements at http://www.adventist.org. As we continue to challenge our students and the broader society with a witness of Jesus as Savior and Lord, these statements will serve our church and its members well.

For those unacquainted with our church, the statements illuminate how Adventists establish biblical positions with regard to important health-care issues.

Mark F. Carr is Associate Professor of Ethics in the School of Religion at Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California. Gerald R. Winslow is Professor of Religion and Vice President for Spiritual Life and Wholeness at the Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

2. Ibid., p. iii.
4. Once you have accessed the main Website, you can link to the specific list of statements, guidelines, and other documents under the drop-down menu on the left side of the screen, entitled, “Adventist Beliefs.”
news release about the annual enrollment statistics of Adventist primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions in the North American Division recently came across my desk. Naturally, as a university president, I looked first at the tertiary statistics, noting that the 2006 college enrollment was up by about 300 over the previous year, an increase of approximately 1.3 percent. The release included the usual disclaimers—that the report had inaccuracies and did not tell the whole story. I checked the Andrews University numbers and found them to be essentially accurate—after all, they were self-reported!

Even before the report came out, I had been approached by several people who claimed to have previewed some of these stats and congratulated Andrews on doing well, observing that the university enrollment appeared to be up again in 2006-2007. I thanked them, but the conversation bothered me. Let me explain why.

**Enrollment does not tell the whole story.**

Enrollment numbers are an important indicator of success, but certainly not the only one. They do not tell the whole story, and may even lead us astray if we rely on them too much. Consider the auto industry by way of comparison. Here in Michigan, this has been the big news story the last few years. Which car company is the biggest, General Motors or Toyota? How many cars, trucks, and SUVs do these companies sell each year? These questions correspond to the enrollment question, i.e., how many credits do we produce and deliver? How many students do we enroll? But they do not tell the whole story. Some small car manufacturers sell fewer units, yet do very well. Clearly, factors other than market share matter when assessing success in the car industry. For example, how much of the profit per unit sold is eaten up by rebates? The answer to that may be more important than market share. How many recalls were necessary to correct manufacturing flaws? The answer relates to quality and reliability and is very important to owners. In short, enrollment numbers for schools and colleges, like market share in the car industry, can be a poor indicator of product quality, economic stability, or contributions to the common good.

Perhaps more closely related to education is the health-care industry. Its success is sometimes measured by the size of the hospital, the number of beds, or market share achieved by the various units or departments, such as surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, Emergency Room, cardiology, etc. Profitability is another important indicator. Does the hospital make enough money to afford the most advanced diagnostic equipment and to attract the best technicians? However, equally important is the competence of the health-care providers when diagnosing illnesses, adopting and following the best protocols available for treatments, controlling infections, reducing recovery time and unnecessary deaths, and so on. In the future, reimbursement of health-care costs may be tied to the proven quality and treatment outcomes, and various indicators of effective health-care service in a given hospital will become public record. Such openness might be worrisome to some hospital administrators, but it would give patients and their families a sense of confidence when selecting a health-care provider.

**Enrollment numbers are an important indicator of success, but certainly not the only one.**
Undergraduate research opportunities in various science fields can give Adventist college students an extra edge.
are likely to face similar scrutiny. Are high schools and academies really preparing their graduates for success in college? Can students readily transfer credits from institution to institution? Will colleges offer credit for demonstrated knowledge or competencies that match their published expectations? Can college students actually graduate in four years? Do they acquire the moral and spiritual values they and their parents seek? Have they received what the school catalogue promises? Do they get good educational value for the money spent? These questions are asked not only by concerned parents who have to pay the school fees, but also by employers, national leaders, legislators, and others concerned with the economy, civic engagement, personal and professional integrity, and family and social responsibility of our graduates. Clearly, these important questions cannot be answered by the enrollment statistics alone, yet educators and administrators must address these concerns.

The story of our schools, academies, and colleges goes beyond enrollment statistics.

So how good are our schools, academies, and colleges? How well prepared are our graduates to meet the expectations of society and the church? Is our educational system succeeding in its mission? Enrollment statistics alone do not answer those questions. The demands of accreditation agencies help ensure quality, but not as much as we might think. How do we answer these questions?

Just the thought of raising such questions and then publishing the findings for all to see may seem like an intrusion of privacy. And in the case of our schools and colleges, some may consider such scrutiny a breach of the separation clause in the U.S. Bill of Rights. But that objection will not do, for in fact we educate our students for service both in the church and in society, and so we have to meet the educational expectations of both. Indeed, nearly all our professional programs must prepare our graduates to pass their boards, licensure, or certification before they can enter their professions. We do not educate our young people in a vacuum, but in front of the whole world to see. So what does the world see when it looks at us? How well are we doing?

Having worked many years in Adventist higher education, I have observed some things. I believe we are doing many things very well, but we rarely report them in a serious and scientific way. Schools tend to make great, sometimes exaggerated, claims in their promotional material. I do not know how truthful some of these advertising claims are, but I do know that I have serious doubts about many of the public relations and marketing claims car manufacturers make about their products. I have driven the cars, and they are not all that good! And I know that not all hospitals offer the best care in all areas of service. If they did, why would doctors refer patients with major health problems to special institutions? Public relations claims are probably useful in making potential students aware of what we offer, but they do not offer any assurance that we are performing well. So what does?

Here are some things we can find out about our higher education system (I will limit my suggestions to the college level, which I know best). I believe many of them will show that we do very well.

How many of our students devote themselves to service while enrolled? It would be impressive and inspiring to measure that achievement. Forms of service would include not only student missionaries and task force workers, but also mentoring services, religious outreach, and local student ministry. The report would be the envy of many schools.

How effectively do Adventist teachers inspire students to...
perform well? We could show the extent to which Adventist teachers inspire student performance. Our institutions are not very selective in admitting students, but the quality of our “output” is higher than what our “intake” would suggest. Science education at Andrews has caught the attention of the National Science Foundation (NSF) for just that reason. How do we succeed in moving a fairly ordinary and very diverse student population so far in four years of science study—farther than some elite colleges do? Grants from National Science Foundation to study this are in the works, and we expect that the report will be impressive and instructive to educators across the land.

How many of our freshmen become sophomores in their second year? How does this percentage compare to that of similar colleges? If we do better than average, how do we manage it, and if not, what can we do to improve this important statistic?

How many of our college students graduate in four years? Public college students commonly take five to six years to earn a college degree. I do not know how good our report card would be in this area. But unless our students work their way through college and therefore have to take a lighter load, would it not be better and cheaper for them to complete their degree in four years by careful academic advice, and a curriculum designed to be completed in four years of study? The cost of tuition, room, board, books, and incidentals before financial aid in U.S. religious private colleges approaches $25,000 per year; in selective colleges, that cost exceeds $35,000 per year. Indeed, it has been shown that spending four years to graduate from an Adventist college will cost much less than five to six years in other colleges, considering the cost and lost earnings from the additional years of study.

How prepared are our graduates to enter professional schools (such as medicine and law), or other graduate programs? I suspect that, given our generally small classes and close relationship between teachers and students, our graduates will do very well. If we were to establish a solid program in undergraduate research—a national priority in good colleges these days—we would do even better. A good report on this achievement could move our colleges and departments to national prominence.

Finally, we all believe our schools and colleges are faith-building, but we can’t know this for certain unless we can show it by some means. Growing our students in faith by inches will be more impressive than growing our enrollment by scores, and I think the whole world would pick up its ears at such a prospect. Can we not show it?

Conclusion

Of course, I believe we must continue to grow our enrollments, and I look for positive reports each year. Our budgets depend on it, after all! But I would advise us not to conclude that we have a good thing going in Adventist education from kindergarten through college just because of rising enrollment numbers. Christian education must also be “good education” in every way, and we must be able to show it. Come to think of it, would it even be possible for us to offer a “not particularly good” or even “so-so” Christian education? That would seem like an oxymoron. If we dare call it Christian, our education must be first rate! ☹

Niels-Erik Andreasen is President of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.
How do Seventh-day Adventist secondary teachers perceive the concept of integrating faith in learning? To what extent are they practicing faith integration? What problems keep them from doing so effectively? Are secondary teachers aware of Adventist curriculum resources? Which ones do they actually use—and how effective do they perceive them to be? How can needed resources best be delivered? How have resource awareness, usage, and needs changed since the first global survey of Adventist secondary teachers in 1997?

To answer these questions, the General Conference Office of Education funded a global curriculum-needs assessment of Adventist secondary teachers. The Curriculum and Instruction Resource Center Linking Educators (CIRCLE), sponsored by the North American Division Office of Education, surveyed 265 Adventist secondary schools, half of those listed in the 2005 Adventist yearbook online. Responses were gathered by mail, e-mail, fax, and online in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. To determine how perceptions of faith integration and resource awareness, usage, and needs had changed in eight years, many of the questions from Paul Brantley’s 1997 survey of 450 high school teachers in more than 50 countries, were included in the 2005 survey.

A Profile of the Respondents

Of the 837 respondents from 12 world divisions, 94 percent were Seventh-day Adventists (a decrease of 5 percent from 1997) with 62 percent having been church members for 20 or more years. Fifty-five percent were more than 40 years of age (compared to 43 percent in 1997). Forty percent had 1-10 years of teaching experience (down from 50 percent in 1997). Thirty-nine percent were female (a five percent increase over 1997), and 87 percent possessed a teaching degree or certification for their region. Survey recipients were asked to indicate their major area of teaching, as well as their other assignments. Both are shown in Figure 1.

The proportion of Adventist secondary teachers who said they had completed undergraduate studies at an Adventist college or university decreased from 62 percent in 1997 to 53 percent in 2005. But in 2005, nearly three-quarters of the 319 respondents who had attended Adventist secondary schools had continued their undergraduate education at an Adventist college or university. Seventy-one percent of teachers who had attended non-Adventist secondary schools had also enrolled in non-Adventist tertiary education. Similar percentages were found when comparing the type of undergraduate and graduate institutions attended. These findings suggest that greater support for Adventist elementary and secondary education may be the best marketing strategy for Adventist colleges and universities.

Perceptions About Faith Integration

A major emphasis in Adventist education is the integra-
tion of faith and learning (IFL). Rasi defines this term as “a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise—both curricular and co-curricular—from a Christian perspective. In a Seventh-day Adventist setting, its aim is to ensure that students, by the time they leave school, will have freely internalized biblical values and a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Bible-based, Christ-centered, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed.” Seventy-nine percent of respondents said that they understood the term integra-

![Figure 1](image.png)

**Figure 1**

**Respondents' Teaching Assignments in 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Additional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language or Literature</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math, Physics, or Chemistry</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business or Technology</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, Art</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
[The survey’s] findings suggest that greater support for Adventist elementary and secondary education may be the best marketing strategy for Adventist colleges and universities.

Seventy-two percent disagreed with the statement, “it is difficult to integrate biblical faith in the subjects I teach,” and 79 percent indicated that it was realistic to make conscious plans to integrate faith in learning.

Eighty-four percent of respondents said they wanted to know more about faith integration. Three-quarters of these teachers were interested in receiving training on how to teach from the Adventist worldview. Seventy-four percent of teachers with a teaching degree or certification said they would like such training. Even more teachers without a teaching degree or certification (84 percent) indicated they would like in-service training. While 85 percent of teachers carried out some of their plans to integrate faith in their classes, only 58 percent agreed that most of the lessons they taught made specific reference to biblical ideas and themes. This varied greatly according to the respondents’ major teaching assignment, as shown in Figure 2.

Fifty-eight percent of the teachers said they would be willing to share how they integrate faith in their teaching at a workshop, indicating that a slight majority were confident practitioners. While 61 percent of respondents said they regularly integrated faith in classes, responses varied by content area, from 46 percent of music/art teachers to 79 percent of Bible teachers.

Perceptions of the definition of faith integration and how to teach from an Adventist worldview were similar in the 1997 and 2005 studies. Brantley’s 1997 observation still holds: "Whereas teachers overwhelmingly..."
support the concept of integrating faith in their teaching, a smaller majority report significantly incorporating it into their lesson plans."

Qualitative responses to the 2005 secondary teacher survey echo the South Pacific Division research recommendation that teachers could more clearly verbalize their Adventist worldview and make more deliberate use of strategies for teaching values and ideas. A longitudinal study of individual teachers might provide more information on how teachers progress through the levels of deliberately implementing faith integration plans proposed by Korniejczuk. Such a study could help guide the development of pre-service and in-service training curricula that models and motivates biblical integration and teaching from the Adventist worldview.

**Perceived Obstacles to Integrating a Biblical Faith**

It is not always easy to teach a distinctly Adventist curriculum. The study investigated the extent to which

**Figure 3**

**Factors Negatively Impacting the Integration of Faith in Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>% a Problem in 1997</th>
<th>% Somewhat or a Real Problem in 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of good faith integrating teaching materials</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no time to prepare</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of library reference materials</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training in Adventist worldview</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students lack interest in faith-integrated learning</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks don’t support the Adventist worldview</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding of how to integrate faith</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack division/union curriculum in my subject area</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty integrating faith in my subject area</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not understand why IFL is important</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government controls curriculum</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little support from leadership to integrating faith</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on government exams</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few Adventist teaching resources in my language</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School does not promote integrating faith</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage
various factors negatively affected teachers’ ability to integrate faith in learning. Findings for the 12 items included in both studies are shown in Figure 3.

In 1997, respondents checked items they regarded as a problem. In 2005, they had three options from which to choose: a real problem, somewhat of a problem, or no problem. The 1997 study surveyed teachers of five content areas in sampled schools, whereas the 2005 study invited all teachers to participate. While these differences may account for some of the variation, it is noteworthy that in 2005, 10 of the 15 listed factors were perceived as a problem by the majority of respondents. The good news is that three of the factors that most negatively affected teacher perceptions: lack of good IFL teaching materials (74 percent), lack of library materials (69 percent) and training to teach the Adventist worldview (66 percent) can readily be addressed through CIRCLE, the Adventist education resource clearinghouse that links educators across levels and world regions. Increasing awareness of CIRCLE, encouraging resource sharing, and distributing Adventist curriculum and other learning objects online could dramatically change these results in the near future. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents said that student lack of interest in faith-integrated learning was a problem in 2005, compared to only 17 percent in 1997. Focus on national
How to Integrate Faith and Learning

*Teachers* interested in faith/learning integration approach their subjects from a biblical-Christian worldview perspective, discovering in the subject matter the themes and issues that naturally allow for an explicit connection between the curricular content, on the one hand, and the Christian faith, beliefs, and values on the other. Teachers highlight these connections in their course plans, lectures, student assignments, class discussions, thought questions in examinations, and other learning experiences, with the goal of leading their students to develop their own Bible-based view of knowledge, values, life’s purpose, and destiny.

*Educational administrators* interested in fostering faith/learning integration set in motion an ongoing, campus-wide plan that involves both faculty and staff in selecting the beliefs and values that the institution wishes to convey to the students—based on the institutional statement of mission and vision—assigning responsibilities, providing the necessary resources, engaging all curricular and co-curricular activities, assessing the effectiveness of the plan, and making the necessary adjustments. This unified plan helps administrators to support initiatives and programs that foster the transmission of those beliefs and values and also to de-emphasize or discard those activities that are counter-productive.

Humberto M. Rasi

http://www.aiias.edu/ict/ifl_definition.html

Eighty-four percent of respondents said they wanted to know more about faith integration.

Exams, government control of curriculum, and few Adventist resources in the local language were perceived as a problem by two-thirds of teachers in all divisions other than North America. Lack of time was a problem for 70 percent of teachers in 2005, more than double the response in 1997. Nine qualitative comments cited teacher assignment to extracurricular activities, scheduling issues, and low salaries necessitating additional work as reasons for lack of time. Difficulty integrating faith in a specific content area was perceived as a problem for 54 percent of respondents in 2005, compared to 11 percent of teachers in 1997.

New Ways to Deliver Adventist Education Resources

How can resources best be deliv-
ered? Almost all listed resources were more readily available in 2005 than in 1997, as shown in Figure 4. In 2005, secondary teachers were asked whether resources were available always, sometimes, or never (the figure combines “always” and “sometimes” responses). In 1997, those surveyed were asked to check items that were available anytime they wished to use them in their teaching.

In 2005, nearly 70 percent of all high school teachers had access to the Internet sometimes or always. The four divisions without reliable access to fax, e-mail, or the Internet reported limited access to almost all other listed resources as well. The dramatic increase in Internet access suggests that this will be an increasingly effective way to deliver faith integration resources to secondary teachers.

**Improved Resource Distribution Is Essential**

Given a list of 14 resources, respondents were asked which ones they actually used to integrate a biblical faith in learning, and how helpful they perceived each to be. Sixty-seven percent of respondents had used books on Adventist education, philosophy, and values. All other resources were used by less than half of those responding to these questions, with considerable regional variations. Figure 5 shows improvement in the use of all nine of the resources that appeared in both of the surveys. To best utilize major investments in the development of biblical integration tools for teachers, specific plans for resource distribution, promotion, and in-service training are essential.

**Used Resources Perceived as Helpful**

How effective do secondary teachers regard the resources they employ? Sixty-nine to 92 percent of respondents who actually used the listed resources rated them as helpful or very helpful, as shown in Figure 6. The Profile 2004 study of North American Division teachers, education administrators, and teacher educators reported similar findings, with those who actually used the division’s curriculum guides considering them to be easy to use, and as reasonably reflecting the philosophy of Adventist education. Notably, “persons who came to share IFL ideas” and “teacher groups to share IFL ideas,” while available to less than half of teachers in 2005, were ranked as helpful or very helpful by 86 and 92 percent of the teachers who had experienced this support. Mentoring and training with practical ideas that work are key to improving teachers’ skills in sharing the Adventist worldview.

Teachers who had not used the listed resources were asked how useful each of these same 14 items would be if they were available. The majority of this group said that each item would be useful or definitely useful if available, with the highest percentage of positive responses in divisions with the fewest resources. More than two-thirds (66 percent to 74 percent) of these teachers said that textbooks, software, lesson plans, curriculum guides, presenters and teacher groups that share ideas, in-service training seminars, and Websites would be helpful.

**Recommendations**

Building redemption-oriented schools of excellence, “demands the most devoted, faithful workers and the very best methods of labor in order that a strong influence for Christ and the truth may be constantly exerted.” Despite the problems noted above, secondary teachers said that training and resources to prepare students to live the Adventist faith would be useful if available. Education administrators and teacher educators are therefore encouraged to:

1. Re-emphasize the role of secondary education in providing students to Adventist higher education;
2. Promote the use of Adventist college/university campuses in orienting secondary teachers to the Adventist philosophy of education, and as a venue for continuing education;
3. Link certification and credentialing of secondary teachers globally to training in and commitment to the integration of faith;
4. Develop and implement an IFL training-of-trainers process and curriculum;
5. Build a peer-mentoring network so Adventist educators at various levels can regularly share ideas and methods to integrate faith in their disciplines; and
6. Effectively use available technology to disseminate critical Adventist education resources and to develop and market highly engaging computer-based learning packages or distance-learning opportunities to prepare Adventist teachers to continue the teaching ministry of Jesus Christ.

While 85 percent of teachers carried out some of their plans to integrate faith in their classes, only 58 percent agreed that most of the lessons they taught made specific reference to biblical ideas and themes.

Glynis Bradfield, Principal Investigator, is the Director of CIRCLE (circle.adventist.org), located at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Pretoria Gittens-St. Juste is a doctoral candidate and research assistant in the School of Education at Andrews University. Jerome Thayer, Ph.D., is the Director of the Andrews University Center for Statistical Services.

NOTES AND REFERENCES
8. While the survey question did not specifically list the Spirit of Prophecy books, qualitative comments indicate this may be what most teachers had in mind when answering this question. Forty-two percent of the 85 respondents who listed other resources that had been useful in preparing to teach from an Adventist worldview named the Bible and Ellen White’s books on education primarily.
When reading a recent notice from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., the Valuegenesis research team was surprised to learn that the gender gap in underage drinking among public school students had closed. When public school students were asked about their use of alcohol during the past 30 days, more 8th-grade girls than boys said they had consumed alcohol (boys, about 18 percent; girls, about 19 percent). In addition, more 9th-grade girls than 9th-grade boys also report binge drinking (boys, 34 percent, vs. girls, 39 percent). When studying these alarming statistics, the Valuegenesis team wondered about Adventist boys and girls in our church’s schools.

Given the current trend of girls engaging in more at-risk behaviors, would our data reflect the same results? And in reflecting on the larger issues in our research, are there implications for faith development, when comparing the religious lives of boys and girls? Just what can we learn?

**Faith Development Theories**

We know a great deal about how boys’ and girls’ brains develop and the implications for educational theory, and so by abstraction, we can make some assumptions about growth in faith as well.

Michael Gurian and Arlette Ballew’s book, *The Boys and Girls Learn Differently Action Guide for Teachers* (Jossey-Bass, 2003), reviews current brain research and provides a wealth of information with physiological evidence of the source of gender difference. It also provides a variety of interesting pedagogical strategies that teachers from the preschool to high school level can use in their classrooms. Some of their conclusions regarding gender are described below.

**Research on Girls**

- The corpus callosum that allows for communication between the right and left hemispheres is 20 percent larger in females. This may mean that they can use more oral vocabulary.
- Girls take in information more effectively through touch.
- Girls are better at remembering names and faces in social situations and in relationships.
- Girls are often more verbal and more adept at multitasking.
- Girls sense emotions earlier, which promotes more immediate discussion and handling of problems.
- Girls often need to move from specific and...
concrete in order to build up to conceptualizations.
  - Girls work better in groups and in low-light rooms.

**Research on Boys**
  - Boys are often seen as better at spatial and abstract reasoning, but they tend to need clear evidence.
  - Boys are unable to multitask.
  - During puberty, boys are often more aggressive and stimulated to abstract thinking.
  - When physically active, boys are more competitive.
  - Boys have a tendency to physically explode to release pent-up emotions.
  - Boys think about a way to solve a problem, then often work alone in solving it.
  - Boys prefer to work independently.
  - Boys tend to need a louder voice rather than a softer one.
  - Boys work better in well-lit rooms.
  - Boys often need more physical space in which to work.

Religious educators can learn much from this research and its implications. Other research helps to increase our understanding about how faith develops. Researchers in faith-development theory have thought about gender differences for a long time, and the North American Division research project, Valuegenesis, has previously shared some insights and implications about gender differences in our publications.

Theorists such as James Westerhoff and James Fowler represent two theoretical positions about how faith develops. These, along with my research on faith development, show that because of the range and complexity of human experience, no single theory is sufficient to explain everything. It seems that a great deal is going on with young people as they explore their own personal faith and experience their church and school’s understandings of what the kingdom of God should be like, in the process of growing to be fully mature individuals with their own faith experience.

We should therefore anticipate some differences between boys and girls as they grow in their relationships with God. Perhaps there is something we can learn from these findings? But first, let’s make sure we understand how faith is nurtured.

**Faith Development Theories**
Westerhoff claims that faith is best understood as the perception or awareness of God’s rich grace. Faith becomes a part of human life in response. In a sense, it is complete
It is important . . . to truly know “who” we teach, as well as what it is we are trying to model or explore with students.

from the beginning. Little children have it, yet it grows as a tree does from a seed to sapling and then to full size. Faith development for Westerhoff is a style or mode change as people mature.7 This means that one must expect young people to see their religious life in different ways, and that these understandings will change as time goes by. Expect it, celebrate it, and watch them change. Differences in gender are related to normal physical, emotional, and spiritual growth. And while both boys and girls experience the same type of growth in faith, it may occur at different times.

Fowler, in contrast to Westerhoff, sees faith in stages that represent changes in the way people organize the experiences of life into a reality that is coherent and meaningful to them. He sees growth as a gradual process of building and reconstruction as they move toward this worldview.8 The implication is that faith should move regularly through stages, but may not do so for a number of reasons. He spends little time talking about the differences between boys and girls; being more concerned with how the worldview of faith is impacted by perceptions and failure to progress to higher stages.

I prefer to look at faith as a total personal experience with God, rather than an intellectual way of constructing the world. This means that the situations of life are infused with the possibility of seeing God at various stages of growth. This provides practical, workable moments when we can enhance that faith growth. It is important, then, to truly know “who” we teach, as well as what it is we are trying to model or explore with students. Thus, as coworkers with the Holy Spirit, we can enrich the young people’s experiences so that their decisions about God can be better understood and facilitated. This means that we must comprehend that boys and girls bring to the table different gifts, skills, and development at different times, and carefully study the types of situations that might nurture faith best.

Faith, after all, is personal—God’s gift to us. It is our unique and very personal response to His astounding grace. As teachers, we can assist in its growth by becoming sensitive to the way we model God’s grace and watching for those “teachable moments” when the experiences of daily life, the classroom, or the home invite religious response. “Different times, different problems, different needs shape one’s faith response and provide touchstones for nurture and religious educational theory to take over and for methodological considerations to become important.”9 Therefore, it is crucial to understand the subtle differences between how boys and girls understand their faith.

But for theories of faith development to be effective, applications need to consider the context and range of young people’s experiences where both teaching and learning take place.

What We Already Know

Much has been made of the differences between genders in relation to religious life. For example, in doing research for her book, In a Different Voice, Carol Gilligan found that men and women use fundamentally different approaches
to decision-making about the religious concept of morality. The male approach to morality is to believe that people have certain basic rights, and that you have to respect the rights of others. Thus morality is seen as the governor that imposes restrictions on what one can and cannot do.

The female approach to morality recognizes that people have responsibilities toward others, so morality is an imperative to care for others. The contrast is thus, according to Gilligan, that male morality has a “justice orientation,” while female morality has a “responsibility orientation.” She says, “The discovery now being celebrated by men in mid-life of the importance of intimacy, relationships, and care is something that women have known from the beginning.”

According to Gilligan, when boys have a dispute while playing, they usually work actively to resolve it. When girls have a dispute, she says, they quit playing in order to protect the relationship. Thus a responsibility orientation probably suggests an act of care rather than a decision for restraint in moments of potential aggression for boys.

In a Web comment, “Women and Faith: What a Journey!” Condy Scheetz shares her experience, which reflects some of the journal entries I receive as an assignment in my Religious Faith and Life class at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. Scheetz suggests three areas where men and women are different: (1) Women clearly have a need for friendship; (2) Women take on multiple roles and responsibilities, which implies their faith often must be flexible and adaptive according to the needs and involvements; (3) Women are very often the catalysts for change in their homes and churches. This centrality of women in faith growth is reflected in the Valuegenesis research.

When asked who was the most influential person in their lives who helped their faith grow, both boys and girls in grades 6 through 12 selected their mothers. Fathers were on the list, but often, according to the respondents’ grade in school, as low as 10th on the list of their importance to personal faith.

**What Does Valuegenesis Say?**

When we look at the high school data sets for the North American Division, some interesting insights can be gleaned from this ongoing research. And while there do not seem to be many gender differences in most of the variables, a few do appear.

**At-Risk Behavior and Gender**

Tobacco use, alcohol use, binge drinking (5+ drinks in a row), and shoplifting are common at-risk behaviors among middle school and high school students. It is helpful to compare the findings of our research with that of the national studies on public education. We can clearly assert that Adventist education is a safer place in this regard.

Tobacco use data among public school students in the middle grades (6th-8th) comes from a 2004 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and reflects little
change from research completed in 2002.13

In public school, about 12 percent of students reported using some form of tobacco. Boys (about 13 percent) were slightly more likely than girls (about 11 percent) to use some form of tobacco.

Adventist students in Adventist schools scored better in comparison. About 7 percent of students in middle school grades in Adventist education claimed use of some form of tobacco one or more times during the year 2000. Boys in Adventist schools (about 8 percent) were slightly more likely than girls (about 6 percent) to use some form of tobacco.

Binge drinking during these middle years, as indicated above, is on the rise in public education. And it is here that girls’ use is beginning to exceed that of boys. Here is how the Adventist data compared with public school statistics.

- For 8th and 9th grades in public school, according to the above statistics, 26 percent of the boys said they had engaged in binge drinking one or more times, while 29 percent of the girls admitted to this form of at-risk behavior.
- Adventist students in Adventist schools scored lower in contrast to the above percentages. Boys (about 13 percent) were slightly more likely than girls (9 percent) to be involved in this at-risk activity.

Keep in mind that these are middle-grade students. Comparing public high school students with Adventists in Adventist schools, again one can see the difference. Across the U.S., about 28 percent of high school students reported using some type of tobacco, while only 12 percent of Adventist students admitted use one or more times during the year.

For all of the at-risk behaviors studied in the Valuegenesis research (getting into trouble in school, getting into fights in school, shoplifting, drug use, alcohol and tobacco use), Adventist students scored significantly lower than students in public education. In our research, there were no significant differences in gender as to involvement or participation in these negative behaviors. Let’s look now at religious life to see if there are significant differences between boys and girls.

**Faith Maturity and Gender**

The insights provided by the Faith Maturity Scale used in all of the Valuegenesis research reflects a rich and growing faith life with both deep devotion and piety, along with concern for others and compassion for the world. In both Valuegenesis 1 and 2 projects, girls have higher faith maturity scores than boys do at all of the grade levels. (See Chart 1 at right.)

**Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religion and Gender**

Another significant advance in the Valuegenesis 2 research was the use of the Intrinsic and Extrinsic religion scales. This is a measure of what might be seen as “good” and “bad” religion. Extrinsically religious people see their faith as an end in itself, a central motive for living that is more important than other concerns. They use religion as a way of gaining status or personal security; thus, it tends to become utilitarian and self-oriented. By contrast, intrinsically motivated persons internalize their religion and live by it, regardless of outside social pressure.

Researchers have found that girls have higher intrinsic scores than boys (see Chart 2). It is for this reason that girls are often seen as more “religious” or “spiritual” at an earlier age than boys. This is due to many factors, among which is personality development and physical maturity,
and girls’ concomitant concerns for relationships and clearer morality. The gender difference seen in this scale suggests that during the middle years (10-13), girls might benefit being taught as a homogeneous unit, rather than mixed with boys, whose religious concerns are different, less intrinsic, and who are, as our research shares, less mature in their faith response.

**Summary**

There are, in essence, very few gender differences in our Valuegenesis 1 and 2 research regarding boys and girls. But the slight changes we do see reflect what other major research about gender has explored in greater depth. For example, among Adventist students in grades 6 through 12, boys are slightly lower in intrinsic religion, faith maturity, and their concern for service, while in contrast, girls seem slightly stronger in their understanding of doctrines, involvement in service to others, and altruism. Except for getting into fights and getting into trouble in school, where boys score significantly higher, our children’s religious lives seem on-target and stable. We can be proud of the impact that religion has on our young people and their faith growth.

These hints at differences discovered in the Valuegenesis research could provide us reason enough to attempt to understand the unique religious development of each sex and its own physical maturity. Obviously, more research targeted at gender differences needs to be done, and perhaps if we are fortunate enough to do another Valuegenesis project in 2010 (a third decade of understanding Adventist youth), we might explore in greater depth the differences examined in this article.

In terms of faith maturity, during these crucial faith-forming years, special attention should be given to the early emergence of concerns about religious beliefs and to the types of religious issues that seem to be unique to girls, such as in the areas of relationships and caring.

Here are some suggestions for applying what seems to be implied in all of the research about the uniqueness of boys and girls in the area of faith development:

1. **Learning environments.** Provide rich, stimulating
In both Valuegenesis 1 and 2 projects, girls have higher faith maturity scores than boys do at all of the grade levels.

environments full of color and texture. This is the “teaching architecture” will help both boys and girls at whatever stage to make exciting connections with the learning content, experience, and applications, and to claim personal ownership of it in their lives.

2. **Approaches to learning.** Find times when middle-school boys can work individually in well-lighted places. Ask them to think first about what they believe. At the same time, allow girls to work together in small groups to solve problems and see the implications of their conclusions about God to their lives.

3. **Consider creative groupings.** Try a variety of homogeneous groupings of students—age-related, gender-related, culture-related. Participating in different types of groupings may enhance students’ learning at certain ages and help them understand both the theology of faith and its experience.

4. **Respect students’ maturing faith.** Remember that mature faith means a personal one, rich in both a growing personal devotional life and a developing capacity for caring about others in need. Plan projects that nurture both aspects of faith life. Balance is important here, but recognize that girls probably will develop a personal faith life before boys.

5. **Protect and educate for positive behaviors.** Be aware of the best ways to present information about risky behaviors to young people. Boys work well with information in order to build a strategy to cope, while girls first seem to understand multi-tasking and verbal orientations. Change displays regularly; link indoor and outdoor places, use movement, and engage the motor skills to heighten interest.

6. **Variety of places.** Think about developing active and passive places for boys and girls, respectively. These can include places and times for reflection and retreat, places that provide a variety of different shapes, color, light, nooks and crannies—these can all help ensure the personalization of faith as students find places to think, write, study, and explore the way God works in this world.

Be sure to present a balanced understanding of Christian faith. Respect the individuality of each young person, as well as gender differences. Try to do things that relate to the unique learning skills and needs of both your male and female students, ensuring that each feels special, loved, and needed. Respect the differences you see in your students. You will share the character of Christ with each student as you teach not only content and difficult theology, but also target each one’s personal needs.

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**V. Bailey Gillespie, Ph.D.**, is Professor of Theology and Personality and Director of the John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry in the School of Religion at La Sierra University, Riverside, California. He was the chief investigator of the Valuegenesis Research Project for the North American Division Office of Education and continues research on the family, church, and home as it impacts the faith growth of young people.

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**NOTES AND REFERENCES**


3. Project Valuegenesis research provides insights into the faith, values, and commitments of Seventh-day Adventist young people between 6th through 12th grades in Seventh-day Adventist schools in the North American Division, 1990-2000 and ongoing. The data sets represent a total of more than 24,000 young people. Since the data sets are so large, much is still to be discovered in this research. This article reflects continued research not yet published in Ten Years Later: A Study of Two Generations, by V. Bailey Gillespie and Michael J. Donahue with Ed Boyatt and Barry Gane, published by AdventSource, Lincoln, Nebraska. If you would like further information about this book and research targeting the comparative generations of Adventist young people, contact the Hancock Center at La Sierra University, hckfm@lasierra.edu or go to our Website at http://www.hancockcenter.org.


6. For a unique approach to faith growth, see V. Bailey Gillespie, The Experience of Faith (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1992). Here faith situations are explored, rather than faith stages as faith is explored as a holistic personal experience which each individual lives in a different but related way over the entire lifecycle.


9. Ibid., p. 231.


11. Ibid., p. 38.


Adventist education includes boarding schools (9-12 and college level) with dormitories directed by professional personnel known as “residence hall deans,” a job description with complex challenges. For the dean, every day is different and unique, but there are also predictable routines. Successful deaning requires a high sense of maturity and responsibility, flexibility, commitment, and skills development. While many have found great satisfaction in deaning as a long-term career, others have become disillusioned and quickly left the profession.

Historically, the abbreviated careers of deans have been a problem. In a 1969 study, Weir found the average tenure for an academy dean of boys to be about 2.5 years, and for a dean of girls, about 1.5 years.* I do not know of any recent study about tenure and attrition, but there is still a sense that deans, especially academy deans, have short careers. It is also true that many deans were hired with the expectation that they would not last long. They were worked hard and much was expected of them; but not much value was placed on pre-service or in-service training. Many have believed that “deans are born, not made”; and while there may be some truth to that, both natural abilities and training are needed.

On the other hand, there have been some efforts to increase the tenure of deans through training. The General Conference Department of Education sponsored the first organized training efforts. It was at one of these, in 1942, that a decision was made to produce a publication for deans. The Dean’s Window was published bi-monthly by the General Conference from 1942 to 1986. Summer gatherings, which provided important in-service opportunities for deans, continued to be organized by church educators.

In 1957, the General Conference made a decision that provided a huge advance in the training of deans. Mercedes Dyer of Columbia Union College was asked to hold a deans’ workshop that would provide academic credit through the Potomac University Theological Seminary. When Dyer moved to Andrews University in 1961, the workshop went with her. Starting in 1963, the deans’ workshop became part of the regular summer session. Because many residence hall deans were completing a degree, having the workshop as part of the university’s summer session made it possible for them to take advantage of other class offerings on campus. Residence hall deans’ workshops are still offered at Andrews University, and in alternate years at La Sierra University.

Training for deans took another quantum leap in 1975 when Dyer urged those at the workshop to consider building a structure to stimulate professional growth. Three men and a woman responded, and the work to create a professional organization for residence hall deans began. As part of that process, it was decided to create an organization for all Adventists who worked in student services. By 1978, the Adventist Student Personnel Association (ASPA) had been organized.

ASPA was founded because of a realization that student services professionals needed to keep current in their field in order to be more faithful in their service. There were scriptural and Spirit of Prophecy principles and insights to be integrated, but they also needed a better understanding of the context of their
work. From the beginning, ASPA had four goals:

1. Inclusiveness would be a fundamental principle. Because ASPA was far more than a “deans’ organization,” everyone involved in student services was invited to become a member;

2. Secondary and collegiate personnel would intentionally come together to learn from one another;

3. The organization must have a worldwide scope. International membership has been made available to the Euro-Africa, Euro-Asia, Inter-American, Trans-European, and South Pacific divisions. Expansion to other divisions is needed.

4. ASPA, from the beginning, would assume responsibility for pre-service and in-service training. Professional growth was not something they could leave for others to plan. This was a major step forward from what had been done before.

The original mission and purpose have remained tightly focused over the years. ASPA members desired to (1) promote the principles of Christian education, with primary emphasis on student development; (2) nurture Christian growth and integration in every dimension; (3) strive toward the goal of ethical and professional development; (4) lift up the name of Jesus, trusting that He would draw all unto Himself; (5) identify and communicate to its members’ various methods and materials for professional development; and (6) serve as a voice for its members in dealing with issues and trends in the profession.

The current co-presidents of ASPA are Otto “Buddy” Keubler and Lynette Bates, the senior residence hall deans at Loma Linda University. I invited them to share their thoughts with readers.

**Murray:** It’s now been more than 30 years since Dr. Dyer’s call for professionalism that led to the organization of ASPA. How has ASPA affected the student services profession and Adventist education during these years?

**Keubler:** Over the years, ASPA has greatly impacted Adventist student services. It started by providing a yearly professional conference where growth occurred through seminars and networking with colleagues from other schools. ASPA has helped train numerous student personnel for the Adventist system. We serve professionals in all areas of student services, including residence hall deans, security personnel, counselors, health services personnel, administrators, activity directors, and more. We provide a professional venue that directly influences every boarding academy and college in the system.

**Murray:** How has ASPA’s sense of mission been adapted to meet the realities of the 21st century?

**Bates:** Over the years, ASPA has continued to strive toward its original goals. We strive to stay current in dealing with issues that affect Seventh-day Adventist students in today’s ever-changing world. Currently, ASPA provides professional certification, a yearly conference, summer workshops for new professionals, networking, and student sponsorship to the annual conference.

**Murray:** Certainly, the publication of your newsletter and the service awards given each year, which recognize those who have made extraordinary contributions to the empowerment of students and the building of the profession, are also important accomplishments. Please identify the other current officers by name, office, and school where they serve.

**Bates:** Yes, we are proud to serve with these men and women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPA OFFICE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past President</td>
<td>John F. Mentges</td>
<td>Atlantic Union College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Elect</td>
<td>Bunny Reed</td>
<td>Walla Walla University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP for Student Services</td>
<td>Gloria Roberts</td>
<td>Northern Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University VP for Finances</td>
<td>John Foote</td>
<td>Walla Walla University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP for Academy Residence</td>
<td>David Isawa</td>
<td>Gem State Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP for College Residence</td>
<td>Chamra Otto</td>
<td>Atlantic Union College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP for Guidance and</td>
<td>Wanda Johnson</td>
<td>Canadian University College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP for Communications</td>
<td>Natan Vigna</td>
<td>La Sierra University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP for Public Relations</td>
<td>Jennifer Burrill</td>
<td>Andrews University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historian/Archivist</td>
<td>Kari Shultz</td>
<td>Southern Adventist University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification Review Chair</td>
<td>Donene Caster</td>
<td>Union College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Murray:** In closing, what else would you like to share with the readers of the *Journal of Adventist Education* about ASPA and your view of Adventist education?

**Keubler:** ASPA is here to help train Adventist professionals to better serve the students of our schools. We recognize that the students that we serve today will be the leaders of our church tomorrow. Our main purpose is to serve Christ through educating youth, encouraging them to serve Him in their chosen professions.

**Murray:** Thank you. May God continue to bless you, your officers, and the ministry of ASPA through student services.

*Donald W. Murray is a retired Adventist educator who is considered one of the founders of ASPA. He served as a residence hall dean for almost 42 years, and writes from St. Joseph, Michigan.*

*C. Weir, “Why Deans Quit,” The Dean’s Window 28 (January 1969), pp. 6, 7.*
Amanda and Shirani are close friends. Both girls are in the 8th grade and get good grades. However, they are quite different. Amanda is above average in intellectual capacity but relatively weak in emotional intelligence, while Shirani's average IQ is coupled with highly developed emotional intelligence (EI).

Although Amanda is more intellectually capable, Shirani is more popular. She enjoys the respect of both peers and adults in the school community. Shirani's success stems largely from qualities relating to emotional intelligence. She can motivate herself and persevere whenever a project or assignment needs to be completed. She has good impulse control and has learned to be patient even when rewards are delayed. Shirani also maintains emotional stability—she can regulate her moods and banish discouragement, irritability, and jealousy. This, together with her empathy, her ability to trust, and her capacity to transmit tranquility to others, makes her a favorite at school. Although she may not achieve straight A’s, she will likely succeed scholastically and in the career she chooses. Amanda, on the other hand, may take the top academic honors, but she is much less likely to be a leader and may even be passed over for a job in favor of someone like Shirani.

What Is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence (EI) was widely studied in the 1990s, and the term appears in scientific and popular literature. Formerly, cognitive psychometric aspects of learning were emphasized, based on research by Binet, Thorndike, Wechsler, and others. Early studies of mental ability defined intelligence as the “capacity to carry out abstract thought and to learn and adapt to the environment.”

But EI has much more to offer. Mayer and associates define EI as the “capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.”

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Since it is less genetically determined than traditional intelligence, emotional intelligence can be taught by teachers and parents.

Since it is less genetically determined than traditional intelligence, emotional intelligence can be taught by teachers and parents. Through a variety of instructional modes as well as by example, emotional intelligence may be enhanced in the classroom. There are a number of strategies to strengthen various EI components. They all can be adjusted for use with age levels from elementary through college.

Communication skills. Teachers can create a learning environment that nurtures not only academic success, but also affective development by improving students’ communication skills. They can do this by organizing discussion sessions, making themselves available, and providing counsel.

Open discussions are an excellent way to expose students to a variety of communicative styles and give them the opportunity to vent their feelings within a secure and teacher-controlled environment. The teacher’s comments and directions on verbal and non-verbal content can be very valuable in shaping communication—"Do I hear a little frustration in your statement?" "That is a true statement, but what does it do to the feelings of those listening?" "Have you all noticed that Beth’s answer shows that she listened very carefully?" Activities such as role playing and simulations give students the opportunity to watch and emulate modeled behavior, leading to a deeper level of understanding and application.

Students can also be taught to communicate feelings and emotions through one-on-one encounters. The teacher and student (sometimes a small group of students is appropriate) can come together for a friendly discussion about personal or scholastic matters. In this context, students can learn effective communication, and the teacher’s guidance can prove invaluable.

Informal counseling can occur naturally in the school setting and is an excellent way to enhance emotional intelligence. When a student is willing to share emotional discomforts (or joys!) with the teacher, this provides a unique
opportunity to help the student develop emotional communication skills.

Elksnin and Elksnin offer specific insight into non-verbal communication in the context of emotional intelligence. Teachers may increase their students' emotional understanding by helping them recognize and interpret the non-verbal messages of others and effectively express themselves non-verbally. These skills can be enhanced by using the following assignments:12

1. Paralanguage.13 Identify the emotions when the teacher reads sentences using different voice tones. Read a script with different situations that call for varying emotions. Match the rate of speech with emotions such as happy, angry, or sad. Record your voice, and count the number of words spoken per minute; then compare this with others.

2. Facial Expressions. Demonstrate a “resting face.” Make facial expressions that convey different emotions. Identify emotions conveyed by people in public, on TV, and in magazines.


4. Interpersonal Distance and Touch. Identify types of conversations that should/should not occur in each spatial zone. Discuss your feelings when your personal space is invaded. Demonstrate a touch for an emotion when role playing. (Be sure to discuss appropriate and inappropriate touch with students.)

5. Rhythm and Time. Estimate the length of time necessary to complete various activities. Keep track of the number of times you are late and on time. Describe examples of public and private time.

6. Dress and Appearance.14 Develop dress codes for specific situations, and use magazine pictures to illustrate them. Describe the image conveyed by clothing as you observe people in public. Develop a dictionary of “in” styles.

The above activities can be conducted informally, but these and other assignments can also be formally incorporated in the curriculum, thereby giving students “opportunities to analyze and discuss events on an emotional level.”15

Goal setting and attainment. Like any other area of human behavior and emotion, the development of EI helps students set realistic academic goals and find various ways of reaching them.

In addition, students may be taught to develop personal reward systems for additional motivation. This can be done...
using actual school tasks. For example, Tucker et al. offer this suggestion to help students to face a major class assignment: Ask them to break the assignment into smaller, more manageable tasks, and use a flowchart or a timeline illustrating the target completion dates of each task. They are then to write a positive statement about their ability to do the task and contrast their initial feelings about the assignment with their final feelings after accomplishing it. Smaller tasks are more likely to provide motivation, positive feelings, and a sense of confidence.

Management of emotions. Middle school and high school students are at risk for displaying avoidant, aggressive, or self-destructive behaviors. EI helps protect young people from losing control of their emotions. Teachers can assist in this area by ensuring that they understand their own and others’ emotions such as anger and sadness. They can use the following tips to help students better understand their emotions and thus prevent depression and at-risk behavior caused by adverse feelings and emotions:

1. **Verbalize and discuss difficult feelings.** Invite students to talk about their feelings when they receive poor or failing grades, when they have friendship disappointments or conflicts at home. Ask them to suggest specific thoughts and behaviors as positive alternatives to acting out or explosive anger.

2. **Write about personal emotions.** Tucker and associates suggest that teachers challenge students to write about their negative emotions. Writing can be used as a preventive and therapeutic tool to channel emotions positively. Compositions can be shared with the teacher (and with peers if appropriate) and rewritten after brainstorming.

3. **Practice self-motivation.** Lack of motivation blocks the learning process at all levels. Encourage students to attain previously set objectives and to postpone rewards. This will help them to more fully enjoy such reinforcements once a step has been completed.

**Developing social skills.** Successful social interactions are basic to personal and group development. And this is a central aspect in emotional intelligence. School is a social setting, so good social skills will help students both inside and outside the classroom to build healthy interpersonal relationships and to function productively in social settings. Elksnin and Elksnin list some of these abilities: “interpersonal behaviors needed to make and keep friends, such as joining in and giving compliments; peer-related social skills valued by classmates, such as sharing and working cooperatively; teacher-pleasing social skills related to academic success, such as listening and following directions; self-related behaviors, such as following through and dealing with stress; communication skills such as attending to the speaker and conversational turn taking; and assertiveness skills.”

Positive social values can be enhanced by cooperative group work and respectful and open group discussions. Allow students the opportunity to practice respectful communication and listening skills. An example could be letting them identify boundaries, expectations, perceptions, and specific encounters of a troubled working relationship. As they review, have them evaluate their verbal and nonverbal communication as well as listening skills, and determine alternative behavior options.

Lastly, empathic behavior is a key element of emotional intelligence. This goes beyond simply presenting oneself as polite and kind, to a clear understanding of others’ feelings and identification with them. Teachers are significant role models since they have an ongoing “stage” from which to model active listening strategies. “These include maintaining eye contact, not interrupting a student’s response, reiterating a student’s thoughts for clarification and demonstration of understanding, and acknowledging participation.”

**Conclusion**

The EI movement has brought additional dimensions to the educational process as well as extra challenges to teachers. However, taking a step further into the social and emotional dimensions brings us closer to what the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is all about—a wholistic view of human abilities (mental, physical, spiritual), with
character development at the center. Emotional intelligence theorists speak of motivation, perseverance, self-control, postponement of rewards, ability to trust, healthy mood, and empathy, all of which can and should be emphasized by Adventist education.

As Adventist teachers, we must not only impart knowledge to students, but also inspire them to embrace positive behaviors. Ellen White says that truth, obedience, honor, integrity, and purity, are principles that “make them [students] a positive force for the stability and uplifting of society.”21 The regulation of one’s own emotions and the use of interpersonal competence are truly essential in order to develop men and women of character who can positively influence society.

Emotional learning, moral education, faith development, and critical thinking are not always easy to incorporate in the curriculum. Since they are usually not taught in a specific class, they must be spread throughout the school’s educational endeavors. Textbooks and other curricular materials tend to focus on the cognitive domain. However, rapid changes in world society and the work environment suggest that EI will be of increasing importance to students’ success in the future. Every Christian educator must reflect on how to promote wholeness and think creatively about appropriate activities to nurture EI in the classroom. Raising awareness of emotional needs is the first step toward understanding the issues involved; and understanding can lead to personal commitment and action that enhance our students’ EI.

Nicola Wieland is a psychologist who is currently studying for a Ph.D. in Education (Emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction) at Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS), Silang, Cavite, Philippines. Julian Melgosa is Professor and Dean at Walla Walla University School of Education and Psychology in College Place, Washington. He also served as President and Dean of Graduate Studies at AIIAS. Dr. Melgosa has taught education and psychology at the tertiary level for the past 25 years at four institutions in four countries and three continents. He is the author of several widely distributed semi-popular press books on family and mental health.

REFERENCES

2. Ibid., p. 333.
6. Various studies have engaged in the debate of whether EI is a discrete entity or an array of identifiable personality traits. In the absence of a clear resolution, we have concluded that EI is a unique psychological construct still in the process of being empirically established.
9. Van Der Zee, et al., op cit., p. 117.
13. Elksnin and Elksnin define this term as “nonword sounds that convey meaning. Examples include tone of voice, rate of speech, emphasis and variation in speech, and nonverbal sound patterns such as ‘mnmnmnmnm . . .’” (p. 65).
14. Elksnin and Elksnin define this term as “style of dress and hair, use of jewelry and cosmetics, and personal hygiene that allow learners to fit in with a group” (ibid., p. 68).
17. Ibid.
18. Elksnin and Elksnin, op cit., p. 68.
19. Tucker et al., op cit., p. 335.
20. Liff, op cit., p. 32.
Using Digital Photography to Promote Learning

Web-based education pioneer Tom March says that in an age of instant media gratification, learning experiences must be “real, rich, and relevant.” Yet many of today’s classrooms do not function much differently than those a hundred years ago. Education has been primarily text-based for the past several centuries, but the world is changing from text-based to image-based.

Teachers complain about unmotivated, unengaged students, but Marc Prensky insists that students “do know what engagement is: Outside school, they are fully engaged by their 21st century digital lives.” Students love being immersed in a sea of images and information. Eric Jensen notes that “the brain can register more than 36,000 images per hour . . . [and the] eyes can absorb thirty million bits of information per second.”

Instructional Strategies

It’s a big challenge to meet students’ changing needs by incorporating technology into the curriculum in meaningful ways; but the good news is there are many exciting ways to do it. However, all technology projects need to be built on a solid pedagogical foundation.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom’s Cognitive Taxonomy is a familiar construct to help teachers develop a balance of lower-order and higher-order thinking skills. While both categories are needed, the lower-order skills are often emphasized to the neglect of higher-order skills. A recent revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy lists lower-order thinking skills as remembering, understanding, and applying. Activities that strengthen these skills lay a foundation for the higher-order thinking skills of analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Students love being immersed in a sea of images and information.

Teachers and students can use digital photography in a wide variety of ways. To enhance students’ lower-order thinking skills, teachers can use projects such as vocabulary flash cards, a photo calendar for service-learning activities, or posters and greeting cards. Although these activities are important, educational technology activities too often stay at this level, leaving powerful learning techniques untapped.

Teachers can design digital photography projects that engage students in unique ways and develop higher-order thinking skills. In these projects, students work through a framework to acquire photos for their projects, analyze them, create new products, and communicate or share what they have made and learned with others. As teachers connect real-life projects with the curriculum, students will be motivated to learn.
Visual Literacy

Many researchers including Stokes agree that visual literacy is a critical skill for today’s students. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory defines visual literacy as “the ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional and 21st century media in ways that advance thinking, decision making, communication, and learning.” It has always been a challenge for teachers to develop visual literacy; however, now with the American public education system more and more focused on high-stakes testing, the use of modern tools and skills to promote critical thinking and visual literacy is becoming more important than ever. The pressure teachers feel to prepare their students for these tests may cause them to neglect visual literacy in their classrooms without realizing they can do both.

Cross-Disciplinary Framework for Digital Photography

Digital cameras now outsell film cameras in the United States and are becoming a “ubiquitous technology throughout society.” Students have video iPods, cell phones with cameras, and digital cameras. With so much equipment available, educators can creatively use these technologies to promote learning in the classroom. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) encourages educators to employ a four-step, cross-disciplinary framework:

Teachers can design digital photography projects that engage students in unique ways and develop higher-order thinking skills.
• Acquire images;
• Analyze images;
• Create instructional activities and products with images;
• Communicate and disseminate products and outcomes.

This framework can be used at any grade level and in any subject. The four steps do not necessarily need to be done in order; once students get to the last step of Communication, they may need to go back to the Acquire or Analyze steps in order to complete the Communication process.

Acquire

Acquiring images includes having students taking their own photographs. They can take photos to document class-

Sidebar 1: How to Develop a Project*

Step 1: Create Foundations – Make sure students have a good foundation of knowledge about the topic before they begin. Discuss resources and copyright issues.

Step 2: Set Expectations – Develop goals, types of products to create, a list of technology tools, checklists, and rubrics to help students understand what is expected for the project.

Step 3: Form Teams – Create heterogeneous groups, and develop clear roles to foster positive interdependence among team members.†

Step 4: Brainstorm Ideas – Have students brainstorm ideas that address essential questions in one way or another.

Step 5: Develop the Vision – Have students create a project vision that includes goals and how they will develop the project for their target audience.

Step 6: Create a Storyboard – Have students develop a storyboard or “roadmap” describing how they will develop each part of the project, it should be approved before implementation.

Step 7: Build the Project – Have students work independently to build their project following their storyboard roadmap.

Step 8: Present the Project – Have students present their project and ask the audience for feedback.

Step 9: Assess the Project and Process – Do both formative assessment throughout the project and summative assessment at the end. Require students to do a self-assessment using the project rubric.


Students can use digital cameras to illustrate projects that will be included in their portfolios.

Sidebar 2: Digital Photography Resource Website

Technology changes rapidly, as new project and lesson ideas are posted on the Web every day; therefore, a supporting Website for this article, “Digital Photography in the K-12 Classroom,” has been provided to give busy educators updated resources on ways to use digital photography to promote learning. It includes all of the resources mentioned in this article plus others on how to develop digital photography technical skills, instructional strategies, and curriculum projects.

Digital Photography in the K-12 Classroom
http://www.avln.org/digphoto
Projects with digital images can communicate far beyond the classroom.

Digital cameras allow students to make “virtual collections” of butterflies, birds, flowers, or leaves for study and analysis.

Students can take photographs to document the outcomes of science experiments.
### Sidebar 3: Digital Photography Activities and Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Discipline(s)</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specimen Collections</td>
<td>Biology, Science</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Students make digital photo specimen collections (flowers, leaves, rocks, butterflies, etc.) in the field for further study and analysis in the classroom. Photo collections can be shared out of class. Digital photography is an ecologically friendly way for students to develop collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Databases</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Students create visual databases using their photo collections. The teacher should create fields that fit the topic of the collection so students can search for specific photos or groups of photos that meet search criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Books</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Photo collections can be published in books with commentary or used to illustrate books that explain and teach in any subject area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Students can use photos and type to develop posters. Large posters can be printed at Kinko’s or other copy companies or by online photo services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Websites</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>Older students can create Websites that share what they have learned, including all or part of their photo collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary-Style Movies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students can create documentary-style movies with their photo collections and voice overlays. Movies can be shared on CDs or DVDs or posted on the Web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Storytelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Read-Alouds14</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Using images, students show what a literary passage means to them while reading the passage in a voice overlay. This activity can strengthen reading skills for all students but especially for those who are not yet able to visualize what they read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Literacy Narratives15</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Similar to Read-Alouds, Visual Literacy Narratives focus on an individual’s story. They can, however, be adapted to interpret and present other concepts such as photosynthesis, the effects of acid rain, the problem of homelessness, and other processes or issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Books</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Students illustrate their writing with photos. Students can create sequencing books, storybooks, counting books, historical narratives, etc. Every field trip is a photo opportunity. Extend the experience by having the students create a class photo book, including their written memories or analytical comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Symbols</td>
<td>Bible/Religion</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Students take pictures that represent some aspect of the spiritual life. They can explain each photo with overlay voiceovers and music in a slide show or publish in a photo book with written narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Parables</td>
<td>Bible/Religion</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Students develop a modern version of a parable, Bible story, or concept in photos. These could be photo books with narratives or presentations with voice overlays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Videos</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students develop their own music videos using still and/or video images that match the music they have written. This is a good way to develop musical intelligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Posters</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Students develop collage posters that tell a story or select a single photo that conveys an idea in a powerful way. Poster titles and/or captions can help viewers to make learning connections to the content and message.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyze

Analysis is a crucial part of critical thinking. During this step, students examine photos or groups of photos to learn something that may not be obvious to the casual observer. This analysis should combine the context of the curriculum content and the students’ knowledge base. Students can develop classification systems for photo collections or use existing tools to analyze historical photos, such as those that are available at the Library of Congress American Memory Learning Page. These collections offer tips on how to use the materials to promote learning. In addition, photos of buildings and bridges can be analyzed mathematically with tools such as Geometer’s Sketchpad. Older students can identify and measure angles and arches; while younger students can identify basic shapes.

Create

Traditionally, classroom assignments have involved the production of written documents, but now, visual projects can be included as well. Students can create digital stories or photo essays using a variety of computer programs. Using free or affordable software, they can develop sophisticated documentaries that combine professional visual effects with recorded narrative voiceovers. Even young students...
can develop meaningful slideshows using age-appropriate software.

Communicate and Disseminate

Projects with digital images can communicate far beyond the classroom. They can be shared face to face with other classrooms, schools, and community organizations; or be posted on the Web either to a select group in a secure area or open to the world. Students can share what they have learned in electronic portfolios filled not only with traditional text documents, but also with photos of 3-D projects, physical skills or events, and digital photo projects. The use of electronic collaboration tools and e-mail can encourage collaboration among students and teachers.

Activities and Projects

Developing technology-integrated projects is an important part of a 21st-century curriculum. But teachers often feel baffled about how to begin. Tech4Learning recommends a nine-step process that covers the essential elements for success (see Sidebar 1). When students learn the project steps, they will know what to expect. This encourages self-directed learning and develops life skills.

Project Design and Assessment

When developing technology-integrated curriculum projects, teachers should plan the end before the beginning and middle. First, they should decide what their students will do to demonstrate what they have learned. Using the Backward Design process helps ensure that, from its inception, the project focuses on stated learning goals. Starting at the end means developing the assessment first.

It can be challenging to decide whether to assess the content of the project or the technical aspects, or both. Balance can be achieved by developing a project rubric, which allows teachers to focus both on key curriculum objectives and required technical features. This also helps ensure that the projects are assessed objectively and fairly.
rubrics, it is possible to be dazzled by technological features of projects that do not fulfill content requirements. Rubistar is a free online tool that busy educators can use to develop meaningful rubrics. This powerful Web tool includes rubric examples for technology-enhanced projects that teachers can modify for their own use.

In addition, rubrics offer guidance to students throughout a project by making it clear how they will be assessed at the end. This knowledge makes them feel more confident that they can complete a project successfully.

**Activities and Projects Examples**

Students feel comfortable in a visual world, so they find it both natural and exciting to use digital images in their school work. A brief sample of suggested activities is included in Sidebar 3, but the supporting Website for this article (see Sidebar 2) has many more activity and project descriptions and lesson plans.

**Collections.** Students enjoy collecting things, so assembling meaningful digital images can be the beginning of many valuable activities and projects. Most digital image collections can be used for study and analysis and later published to audiences such as other classes, community groups, or churches.

**Digital Storytelling.** A powerful way to use digital images is for storytelling, where students share stories containing digital images and their own narrative voiceovers. Ohler encourages teachers to tie digital storytelling projects to the curriculum and to use them "to strengthen students' critical thinking, report writing, and media literacy skills. In creating and presenting digital stories...educators [should] think in terms of a continuum anchored by 'story' on one end and 'analytical report' on the other, and to aim for the middle."21 This balanced approach will keep teachers from being dazzled by special effects that lack solid content.

Teachers should encourage students to make a difference in the world around them with their projects. It is easy for students to entertain and "wow" people with their technical expertise, but teachers need to challenge them to pick project topics that enable them to use their knowledge and expertise to make the world a better place. They might select a community or environmental issue or other meaningful

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**When developing technology-integrated curriculum projects, teachers should plan the end before the beginning and middle.**
Students enjoy collecting things, so assembling meaningful digital images can be the beginning of many valuable activities and projects.

As we learn more about how 21st-century students learn, educators must modify their instructional strategies to better meet pupils’ learning needs. Visual literacy is one of the needs that digital photography can help to address. Further, designing curriculum projects that expand beyond the classroom to the school, home, church, community, and world is an effective way for teachers to make education “real, rich, and relevant.”

Promoting a sense of mission and service through curriculum projects will help students to reach beyond themselves to use their growing knowledge and developing technical skills to be a blessing to others.

Conclusion

As we learn more about how 21st-century students learn, educators must modify their instructional strategies to better meet pupils’ learning needs. Visual literacy is one of the needs that digital photography can help to address. Further, designing curriculum projects that expand beyond the classroom to the school, home, church, community, and world is an effective way for teachers to make education “real, rich, and relevant.”

Promoting a sense of mission and service through curriculum projects will help students to reach beyond themselves to use their growing knowledge and developing technical skills to be a blessing to others.

Challenge: What will you do with digital photography to promote learning, service, and mission in your classroom?

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This article has been peer reviewed.

Marilyn Eggers, Ph.D., passionately promotes the effective use of educational technology in Adventist education. Until the summer of 2007, she taught in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at La Sierra University in Riverside, California, and was the university’s Distance Learning Director. Currently, she is the Education Support Services Director at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

7. See http://www.ncrel.org/.
10. See http://www.iste.org/.
13. Shutterfly.com, Kodak EasyShare Gallery, PhotoWorks, Costco, and Wal-Mart are just a few of the possibilities. See article Website for more options: http://www.avln.org/digphoto.
15. Ibid., pp. 116-124.
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