
Interaction, Service, and Outreach

A Unique Curriculum Proposal for Adventist Secondary Schools

By Deborah Hartsock Morgan

Seventh-day Adventist day academies are often located in largely Adventist communities. Frequently such schools are situated on SDA college campuses. Consequently, it is not unusual to find students who have

attended the local Adventist elementary school, are now in the academy, and plan to continue their education at the nearby Adventist college.

Herein lies a potential problem. Often young people progress from kindergarten through college with-

out ever leaving the confines of an Adventist community. They live, play, study, and worship among people with the same basic beliefs as they. While many Adventist teenagers are content with this way of life, others chafe at the restrictions placed upon them. They long to break loose and explore the "outside world," which seems to offer excitement and many allurements. Some young people who leave the confines of home, church, and school to venture out into the world subsequently turn

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their backs on any form of organized religion.

A contributing factor to this problem is that communities surrounding the colleges tend to become Adventist "ghettos" where the infiltration of outside influences is vigorously resisted. In addition, educators and parents often unjustly portray as evil or undesirable those who do not subscribe to the Adventist life-style. In such cases, the lure of the forbidden may actually heighten the world's appeal for some students, making them even more anxious to break away.

Academy students should be exposed to people, service organizations, and local events outside the Adventist community. During their childhood few teenagers have had opportunities to interact with people of other religious backgrounds or the chance to get involved in community projects. Well-planned programs of interaction and outreach, directed and supervised by each day academy, allow students to work among people whose perceptions of God and Christianity differ from their own. These encounters will help point out common misconceptions others have concerning Seventh-day Adventists and give students a chance to correct these false impressions by supplying accurate information. At the same time, the interaction may also highlight student misconceptions about non-Adventists. The school must provide a supportive environment for students to comfortably discuss these different perspectives.

Exposure to others' viewpoints need not lead the students' to compromise their beliefs. As the young people work with, and for, people of different religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, they will acquire broader and more accurate perceptions of non-Adventists. Teachers should assist young people

in formulating answers to questions that arise.

As the students associate with people outside their Adventist community, they will discover ways to indirectly share their faith. For instance, discussions about fitness and good health can be used as an opening wedge to eventually lead others to Christ. Likewise, beliefs shared by Adventists and other religions can serve as a starting point for comparisons of differences between these faiths. Situations such as these allow teenagers to become actively involved in the witnessing process.

A curriculum that incorporates these types of activities will foster students' pride in their school's efforts to make the community a better place to live. It may also help stem the tide of young people drifting away from the church.

Guidelines for Implementation

A program of interaction, service, and outreach can be built into the existing curriculum of each day academy. Activities that meet the goals of this plan should be incorporated into each discipline, thus binding the parts into a unified whole.

Teachers from various subject areas can meet and select specific projects for classes to pursue. Generally each project will be set up within the framework of the existing grading periods (e.g. two per semester), with each discipline taking the responsibility for planning one project per semester. In some cases, however, exceptions may be made. For instance, one class may choose to continue a specific project for a full semester, or even the entire school year. Also, some disciplines may decide to combine their efforts for one or more grading periods.

Other suggestions include: (1) allowing the student association to sponsor and organize two or three projects involving the entire student body; (2) setting up a bulletin board

in a central location to promote student interest in current projects, and to advertise upcoming events; (3) placing a suggestion box near the bulletin board where students and faculty can deposit ideas for future projects.

Once the intradisciplinary projects are selected, the entire faculty should meet to review them, make necessary alterations, and then vote their approval. After a sufficient number of projects have been approved, a master schedule must be drawn up to prevent overbooking of available school transportation. This schedule will also chart the frequency and duration of each class's off-campus excursions. Generally speaking, students shouldn't be off-campus for such activities more than once or twice a week.

Some trips will be scheduled outside of school hours. Certain projects may require evening or weekend outings. Though this may sometimes place additional demands upon a teacher's time it will help preserve much of the school day intact for core subjects.

Below are samples of projects and scheduling for a few subject areas.

Physical Education

Gymnastics Class or Team—Students attending this class or members of the team may plan to spend one hour of schooltime every two weeks giving tumbling clinics at nearby public elementary schools. The gymnastics teacher should make prior arrangements with the administration and homeroom teachers of the target schools. Transportation is to be provided by the academy.

Junior/Senior Coed PE Class—Many options are open to those enrolled in this class. One project may specify that students spend at least two hours a week participating in a sports-related activity outside of their immediate Adventist environ-

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What about all the wiring for such a system? Wouldn't this be a hazard? The system I have just described would not require wiring. The same technology that runs most television remote control units could send infrared communications between the computer and the touchpads. And the hassle of changing batteries in the touchpads can be eliminated if the units are solar powered, thereby charging their own batteries from available light.

At this point, I can hear teachers moaning, "I'd have to be a programming genius to set up and operate a sophisticated system like that!" But they wouldn't. To prepare a test, the computer's quiz maker asks them to type in the questions, the possible answers, and how they want to respond to a wrong answer. Other applications could be just as simple with appropriate software.

With the above scenario, the computer benefits the teacher and every student instead of only dealing with one or two children at a time. As a result, one or two computers in a school can have a significant impact instead of the too-little, too-late roles they often play. Cost? Thirty to 40 dollars per keypad. Availability? None. But if you think the idea would be useful in your school, write to us. We may be able to get someone to develop the software and the touchpad system to implement such an application.—
Dave Ruskjer. □

The author is publisher of *Journal of the AMCA (Advanced Microcomputer Concepts and Applications)*.

Work-Experience Education

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nothing; it fulfills an important goal of Adventist educational philosophy, and it can be implemented in any

school, regardless of size. This last point is of special importance, since most Adventist schools are small and cannot afford a lot of expensive equipment. The work experience program is made to order for the small school. The smaller the school, the easier the program is to implement, since fewer students need to be placed. On the other hand, it is not difficult to operate the program in a larger school, since there are more teachers who can help in the placement process. In terms of cost, the Berrien Springs school allocates \$500 per year to operate the entire program. The only expense has been \$10 per week for bus transportation to those businesses that are a great distance from the school.

How to Begin

Anyone interested in starting a work-experience program can purchase a booklet, *Step Ahead With Practical Arts*, by writing Harry Rogers, Seventh-day Adventist Church School, P.O. Box 230, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103. The cost, including postage and handling, is \$2.25. □

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ment. They can fulfill this requirement by participating in the activity themselves, or by assisting in its organization and supervision. Students are to keep logs of their activities, and report back to the teacher on a bimonthly basis. Possible options may include: officiating or assisting in the operation of intramural programs at local elementary or middle schools; becoming a junior leader at a YMCA or YWCA; helping special education students prepare for events in the Special Olympics; taking swimming lessons or helping teach swimming classes

sponsored by the Red Cross; riding in a local horse show or working as a volunteer for the county park service in a recreation program. These activities take place after school hours and require no school transportation.

Math and Geography

Teachers from these two areas may choose to work together for one of their projects. They could plan an orienteering course at a local park. Students from their classes will correspond with math and geography students at neighboring high schools, extending invitations to come out and try the course. The academy students will pair up with the visitors and go through the course with them. This activity will be scheduled two Sunday afternoons a month. Students provide their own transportation to the park.

Bible Classes

Sophomore Bible and Art I Class—These two classes can combine their efforts to create and produce a traveling gospel puppet show. The themes, typecasting, scripts, puppets, and stage props are all developed by the class members. Students can write to various non-Adventist schools and churches within a 50-mile radius, describing the Gospel Puppet Hour and offering to perform. Performances will be limited to one per week, and students from the two classes travel with the show on a rotating basis. (No more than one-third of either class should be on the road at any one time.) Bus or van transportation is provided by the school.

Senior Bible Class—Students from this class can join forces with local volunteer organizations such as the Salvation Army, Red Cross, American Cancer Society, United Way, and Candystriper organizations at local hospitals. They are to donate an average of eight hours per month

and to keep a journal of their activities. All activity takes place after school hours and students provide their own transportation.

All-School Projects

One or two days each semester can be set aside for student body and faculty participation in a community service-oriented project. These projects may include: a clean-up day when volunteers go out and pick up litter along public roads in their area; a work bee to help a family that has been burned out of their home; a Christmas dinner and party for needy children in the area; or collecting food and then distributing Thanksgiving baskets.

The preceding examples are only a few of the ways academies may incorporate interaction, service, and outreach into their curriculum. Each geographical setting has its unique problems and opportunities, so the possibilities are limited only by the imagination of the faculty and administration and their willingness to become involved.

The key to the success of this curriculum lies in total commitment and cooperation. This should not be difficult to obtain once everyone is convinced of the program's potential to keep young people interested and involved in the mission of the church.

This plan can serve as a valuable addition to existing curriculums, as well as a viable solution to the current problem of youthful disinterest in church activities. As faculty members see that classroom learning is not suffering as a result of time being spent away from school, they will be more likely to give their full support.

Seventh-day Adventist academies are entrusted with the task of training an "army of youth," preparing them to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every nation" (Matthew 24:14). By enlisting the

active involvement of a greater number of Seventh-day Adventist young people in interaction, service, and outreach, we can help preserve the church's most precious resource—our youth. □

Careers

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- Have students become acquainted with the development of certain occupations. Items for discussion could include a comparison of which industries or occupations were dominant 5 or 10 years ago, and which are important now. If there has been a change, why? How do community values affect occupations within a community? Conversely, do occupations affect community values? Do parental occupations enhance or diminish students' perceptions of themselves? Ask students to analyze labor management relations, job security, unemployment levels, and job satisfaction within their community. How have changed roles of minorities and women affected the church and community?

- Invite speakers to discuss their occupations with the class. Try to avoid stereotypes. For example, use a male nurse, a female minister, a black businessperson, a Hispanic woman lawyer, a male kindergarten teacher, or a petite woman truck driver.

- Ask older students to spend at least four hours a week for one month getting better acquainted with an occupation they know little about. At the end of the month, they can discuss their discoveries about the occupation—and about themselves.

- Have students discuss how the world of work has changed within the Adventist subculture in the past 20 years. Items to include would be the influence of working mothers on

the family, more affluence within the denomination, the drastic increase in the number of occupations that Adventists enter, the increase (or decrease) in the work opportunities in SDA institutions, implications of broadened participation by minorities and well-trained persons from Africa, Asia, and other countries outside North America in the administration of the church, and other topics. Such activities help dispel fantasies about the world of work and aid students in thinking more realistically about career development.

Many career-related skills such as rational decision making, attitude development or change, and personal adjustment can be taught in school.

A number of books and articles can stimulate discussion about the future. John Naisbitt's *Megatrends: Ten New Dimensions Transforming Our Lives* presents trends that likely will influence our occupational lives in the future.³ Many of the concepts in his book would be useful topics for research and discussion in the classroom.

4. What Basic Background Do I Need?

Even if individuals know their interests and values, they still must have the ability and training to perform certain tasks. For example, a young person may be interested in engineering, but without a good background in mathematics in junior and senior high school, he or she will probably not become an engineer. Tragically, students with