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EDITORIAL

Survival Skills for Multigrade Teachers

On April 18, 1988, a committee of teachers met at the General Conference to discuss the needs of teachers in one- and two-room schools. Each union sent a teacher to represent its small schools, and to bring the summary of a survey that was taken, as well as discussion group actions. As the teachers talked, one thing quickly became evident—the many needs and the difficult task of teachers in small schools. Furthermore, it became clear that teachers did not know what kinds of help were available to them. As a particular area of need was mentioned, another committee member would break in, “Oh, but we have _____” and describe materials that had already been developed.

As a result of that meeting *The Small-School Teacher's Survival Guide* was developed. This guide provides the teacher of a small school with monthly checklists on what must be done, descriptions of how to do it, and creative ideas for implementing the program. Teachers who have tested the guide have been enthusiastic. *The Small-School Teacher's Survival Guide* will soon be available for every teacher of one- and two-room schools.

In workshops this past summer teachers began to put together a program that will make the teaching of language arts in small schools more manageable. Another group developed correlations for a new art program that has been adopted by most unions in the North American Division. These correlations will make the new art materials teacher-friendly for persons employed by small schools. Piece by piece the concerns expressed by teachers are being addressed.

Lack of information about available materials continues to be a concern, however. Just a few days ago I heard of a teacher who was struggling with all the bits and pieces of the science/health program for grades one to four. She was about to dump the entire program until a friend told her about the Science/Health Multigrade Unit Plan. As she studied it, everything fell into place. The posters, textbooks, task and experiment cards, and the worksheets suddenly became manageable. The help she needed had been there all the time!

Nothing is going to make teaching 18 children in six grades as easy as teaching 25 children in one grade, but materials and strategies are being developed to help. How will you know about them? How will your colleagues in larger elementary and secondary schools discover what is available for them? The responsibility for providing information and introducing materials rests first of all with the North American Division, as well as with the union and the conference offices of education, but it also lies with the teacher.

Ask for help, study and try new materials, and share with other teachers what you have discovered. If you have developed an innovative solution to a problem, a terrific idea for scheduling class time, an effective method of discipline, prepare it in article form, and share your idea with readers of the JOURNAL. You'll even be paid for your effort!

Especially if you are a new teacher in the system, take time to examine what is available. Let's work together to make Adventist schools all that God ordained them to be.—M.L.H. □