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"PICK UP 'N' GO!"

Language Arts for Small Schools

By Jeanette Stepanse

What is included in the new language-arts curricula? How will teachers and students use the various components?

Joy looked at her watch and sighed as she stacked English teacher's guides for six grades on her desk. At least her files contained 14 years of accumulated materials! However, planning and coordinating English curriculum and instruction for six grades was still mind-boggling. "There must be a better way," she muttered, reaching for her lesson plan book.

Ray felt confused. He had enjoyed his first year of teaching. He loved the students and the subjects. But planning was so difficult, inefficient, and time-consuming. Somebody ought to do something about this, he thought as he stared at the huge stack of teacher's guides.

There is good news for Joy and Ray and other multigrade teachers. The North American Division is preparing for publication the Small School Language Arts Curriculum. This is the second in the "Pick Up 'n' Go series" developed specifically for teachers in small schools.

The new English and spelling curricula provide specialized courses of study and management guides for students and teachers in multigrade classrooms. Teachers will be able to use these curricula

as a primary resource for correlating topics, instruction, and resources throughout the elementary grades.

What is included in the curricula? How will teachers and students use the various components? Following is a brief description with illustrations from a lesson on news writing, the first lesson in Unit 6. (Figures 1-4)

English Curriculum Components

The Small School Language Arts Curriculum includes the following components:

- Thirty-five file folders for weekly lesson plans,
- Teacher's Manual with numerous resources for grades 1-8, and
- One-hundred thirty-four Independent Activity cards and 70 Writing Adventure cards that extend and reinforce the daily lesson and unit themes.

The Small School English Curriculum has seven writing-based units: sentences and paragraphs, letter writing, story writing, book reports, poetry, news writing, and report writing. These topics, combined with writing, speaking, reading, literature, and mass media, are integrated throughout the student activity cards and teacher resource ideas.

Teachers will find a natural integra-

NEWS WRITING Content

MECHANICS PRACTICE

Capitalization: headline, proper nouns

Punctuation: quotation marks

Indentation

Proofreading Exercise:
CINCINNATI (AP) - city council is upset EPA Hasn't cleaned up Radioactivity in the building damaged in '51 by exploding X-ray equipment. EPA: it doesn't pose a Health threat?

USA Today's National News Network, "Across the U.S.A.: News From Every State." USA Today, June 12, 1990 p.6A

WRITING EMPHASIS

Persuasive paragraph

FIRST AND SECOND GRADE EMPHASIS

Simple persuasive paragraph

A. Writing News Stories

1. Parts of a newspaper
 - a. news story (to inform/factual)
 - b. feature story (to inform and entertain-- fact/opinion)
 - c. editorial
 - d. advertising/Ads (to persuade/to inform)
2. Writing a News Article
 - a. editorial/Persuasive Paragraph
 - introduction
 - body (pro-con statement related to opinion)
 - conclusion (begin with transition word)
 - headline
 - b. writing process
 - prewrite
 - compose
 - revise
 - present

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- LA-1 index cards
- LA-2 one editorial per student
- PR "Help Wanted" section of newspaper
- CA word processing program
- IA-106 newspapers or local Union magazine and Review
- WA-54 newspaper editorials

FIGURE 1

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

TEACHER-DIRECTED

1. News Writing: Parts of a Newspaper - Grades 3-8

Write the following headings on separate pieces of paper and put them in a hat.

News Story (information)
Feature Story (entertainment)
Editorial (opinion)
Advertisement (persuasion)

Group students into *four* equal groups. Each group will draw a piece of paper stating their assignment. The group will work together to write that type of story using school events. When finished, compile the stories to make a school newspaper and send it out to the parents.

2. News Writing: Persuasive Editorial Articles - Grades 3-8

Explain the form and the persuasive purpose of an editorial article.

Introduction (broad opinion statement)
Body (statements for and against the opinion statement)
Conclusion (a summary and restatement of the writer's opinion)

2. Give each student an editorial to read from the **Primary Treasure, Guide, Insight,** or newspaper. Have the student paraphrase the main idea of the editorial. Even younger students can do this if editorials are carefully chosen and older students help them with the reading.

3. **Application/Analysis:** Have students list reasons they think students should be allowed to wear shorts to school (or some other idea). Have each student arrange this list in his/her own order of worst to best. Tally the votes of the class to determine which reason was the best/worst and arrange accordingly.

· **Synthesis/Evaluation:** Have students list things they would like to convince the school board to do
continued on next page

Lesson 27

CARD 53
Grades 1-3

Writing Adventures

Think of some place you have been that you really liked. You want a friend to go there with you. Write a topic sentence telling where you want to go. Write *three* or *four* more sentences about the place that will make your friend want to visit. You might even use a picture.

Share your paper with your friend. Does he/she want to go?

FIGURE 2

tion of faith and learning throughout the new curricula. Every component has been developed to include vocabulary, materials, and experiences that contribute to a Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist curriculum.

For example, students will learn to spell words such as *Jesus* and *denominational* at the appropriate grade level as part of their spelling program. For their English class students may write sentences describing interesting Sabbath activities or what they like about their church. By design every lesson includes church-related experiences.

Planning for Instruction

The *Small School English Manual* is a rich resource guide for yearly, unit, and weekly plans. After completing a topical yearly schedule, teachers prepare a learning center to correspond with each unit.

Teachers will find a natural integration of faith and learning throughout the new curricula.

A unit consists of two to four topics. These are basic to all standard elementary English textbooks and to the North American English Curriculum Guide.

Each topic spans one to three weeks, with a file folder for each week. The front of the folder outlines the weekly content: mechanics practice, writing emphasis, and first- and second-grade emphasis. Inside, the folder is divided into a grid depicting grades 1-8, and boxes to fill in for each of four days of

instruction. Topics for teacher-directed presentations are indicated under the appropriate grade level.

Teachers write their daily assignments and lesson plans on the file folders, using as resources their English textbooks and the *Small School English Manual*. When completed, the 35 file folders contain topical, correlated, weekly lesson plans for teaching English concepts and skills across the elementary grade levels.

The Instructional Process

Researchers have shown that writing is a primary vehicle for teaching the language arts. The striking feature of the new English curriculum is its use of student writing as part of the instructional process. The process is cyclical: students write, edit, and then read their written work. Teachers encourage and praise, while noting writing mistakes. Corrections are incorporated into proofreading

NEWS WRITING

ACTIVITIES

2. News Writing: continued

Group students into pairs. Each pair may choose *one* introductory statement listed on the board. Students work together to write an editorial on a topic they feel strongly about, or a topic that is silly or humorous. After writing and editing, students may read their editorials to the class.

Examples of Introductory Statements:

- Animals have rights and should not be used in experiments.
- Children should have the right to vote.
- Every child should own a pet.
- Candy should be one of the basic food groups.
- Children should be allowed to decide their own bedtime.

COMPUTER ACTIVITIES

Personal Journal: Grades 1-8
Have student boot up the word processing program and retrieve the document - Class Journal from the document - CLASS DATA DISK. Have student type name and date and at least four events (in complete sentences) that occurred that day. Make the events sound exciting and interesting. Save document. Use this information to make a class newspaper!

PERFORMANCE READING

Want Ad Writing Adventure: Grades 5-8 Have students use the "Help Wanted" section of the newspaper to write a humorous performance reading script using two narrators and at least four others. Students should include at least eight ads in the script. Submit the original ads and the final script. Perform for the entire class.

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES, continued

or allow (wearing shorts to school, allowing skateboards at school, providing a microwave for students or hot lunch program). Students should use their textbooks to go through the steps of writing a persuasive essay addressed to the school board. These should actually be presented to the board (if students edit them properly). The teacher may preface with a statement: The following views are not my own.

CARD 54
Grades 4-8

Lesson 27

Writing Adventures

Scan the editorial sections in your newspaper. Find one you agree or disagree with. Write your own editorial giving your views on the subject and the reasons for your views. Try to use some facts to support your opinions. Give your article a clever headline. Edit carefully and rewrite.

FIGURE 3

exercises for the following week.

To facilitate multigrade instruction, teachers alternate their presentations with independent student activities at the various grade levels. Typically, teachers start the week by meeting with all the students to introduce the week's writing activity. At this time they also help the students complete a proofreading exercise—correcting the errors from the previous week's writing assignment. On days two to four, skills and concepts are taught and practiced. Day five provides time for sharing the weekly writing activity.

Spelling Curriculum Components

The Small School Spelling Curriculum provides a teacher's manual with a description of the program. It also includes a variety of resources such as word lists, placement tests, proofreading exercises, dictation sentences, and fun

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ways to study spelling.

The student materials include a set of spelling pads. These have tear-off sheets with weekly word lists. The spelling rule for the week is taught across the grades. It is also printed on the bottom of the spelling list. Dictation sentences are

FIGURE 4

Unit VI: News Writing
Topic A: Writing News Stories

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

Lesson 27

Lesson 27
Independent ActivityCARD 104
Grades 1-2
Lesson 27
Independent ActivityCARD 106
Grades 1-2Persuasive Paragraph
Traveling Salesman

Persuasive Paragraph

You are a salesman.

Try to convince your parent to let you have a friend over for the weekend. Make a list of things you want to do. Then make a list of ways to help around the house to make the visit easier for your parent. Now use some of your words to write *four* sentences asking your parent for permission and telling why your friend should be able to come.

Choose one item from the following list:

1. bike
2. broom
3. Teddy bear
4. pumpkin seeds
5. octopus

Write your item on your paper. Write *three* sentences telling why a classmate should buy your item. Choose a partner and try to sell your item to him.

Things to Do

go swimming

Ways to Help

help clean kitchen

Lesson 27
Independent ActivityCARD 107
Grades 3-8Lesson 27
Independent ActivityCARD 105
Grades 3-8News Writing
Newspaper Editor

Get a newspaper and find one of each of the following:

- News story - to inform (factual)
- Feature story - to inform (facts and opinion)
- Editorial - to persuade (opinion and some facts)
- Advertisement - to persuade and inform

Draw an advertisement to persuade people that smoking or drinking is harmful. Show your paper to your teacher. You may want to draw your advertisement on tagboard to exhibit in a local high school.

Cut these articles out and judge the articles against the criteria stated above. Put a blue star (*) if the articles meet the criteria or a red check () if they don't.

Remember to make it appealing to the eye.

You may work in pairs.

Variation: Get your local Union magazine or the Review to do the exercise above.

printed on the back of the sheet. Student materials include a growth-and-progress chart and a study plan.

Summary

The new English and spelling programs will facilitate organized, efficient planning and management of instruction across the elementary grade levels. These programs should also enhance student achievement, and enable teachers to more fully integrate faith and learning. □

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