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# Is Adventist Education Worth It?

According to the *General Conference Working Policy* (FE 05 10), the distinctive characteristics of Adventist education, derived from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, point to the redemptive aim of true education—to restore human beings into the image of their Maker—mentally, socially, spiritually, and physically. Our church exists to prepare individuals for God’s kingdom, and education is a crucial process through which this preparation occurs. Should this vision of mission be lost, there would be no reason for our schools to exist.

Since God is the Author of all truth, and the aim of each educational discipline is to discover truth, the Bible provides the basis for the best possible education. When biblical principles underlie the essential ingredients of the curriculum, the result is a unified rather than fragmented understanding of our world. When biblical principles shape the context and instructional attributes of schools, this provides a solid basis for promoting students’ growth in critical thinking, social interaction, spiritual insight, and knowledge about a healthy lifestyle, as well as the principles of psychological and physical well-being. In other words, scriptural principles become the lens through which other knowledge is interpreted and evaluated.

The promise we make to Adventist parents and students is that we seek to provide the best education possible. This biblically based education helps students understand what matters most in life, enables them to distinguish between truth and error, and provides them with an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This wholistic context for learning prepares them for life here on Earth and for eternity. This is higher-order knowledge, interpreted in the light of God’s Word.

Adventist institutions, developed within this framework, serve as “Redemption-Oriented Schools of Excellence (ROSE).” I refer to it as a *ROSE* because the students graduating from this type of school should come out smelling like one!

There are other characteristics of Redemption-Oriented Schools of Excellence:

1. They are very clear and unapologetic about their mission.
2. Their goals and objectives stimulate attitudes and processes of operation that convey academic and behavioral expectations which are consistent with their mission.
3. Their personnel (faculty and staff) exemplify institutional ideals and are selected with this in mind.
4. They provide their students with opportunities for service and outreach, and inspire them to make a contribution to society and to the church.



By C. Garland Dulan

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# Editorial

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5. Their programs are strong in quality and content.

6. Parents, constituents, and church leaders perceive the education as excellent and well worth the cost, and provide solid financial support.

7. The school, the local community, and the church constituency collaborate for success.

8. The facilities reflect what is expected of a school with high standards.

Whenever church members discuss the cost of Adventist education, I believe they are really asking: "Is an Adventist education worth the cost?" Homes and automobiles are also expensive, but this does not necessarily deter people from purchasing *them*. What makes the difference? I believe that part of the answer lies in one's level of commitment and willingness to sacrifice. However, the greater part of the answer may lie in the perception that our schools do not provide a quality of education that *warrants* commitment and sacrifice.

The ROSE concept may be lost to parents and students if greater value has been placed on prestige, acclaim, and social placement, rather than on opportunities for gaining wisdom that is of eternal value. I believe that to the extent that our schools exemplify the mission, ethos, and educational practices of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education, God will supply their needs "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19, KJV). Our biggest problem will be how to handle the waiting lists for admission because the education provided will be seen as of eternal value, and parents, students, church members, and leaders alike will commit themselves to pay for it. ✍



# AVLN

## DISTANCE EDUCATION: COLLABORATING AND CONNECTING

*Sponsored by the Adventist  
Virtual Learning Network*

**W**eb pedagogy—a term we introduced in the previous column—suggests that as teachers incorporate Web-based technology in their teaching and learning, they must always consider pedagogy first. The three exemplary courses referred to in the previous column (and described in greater detail at <http://avln.org/jae/>) demonstrated the wide variety of possible instructional designs. In the Web link for this column, we expand the possibilities with three more course descriptions: a curriculum-design class, a Web-design class, and a biocomputing class. In each case, instructors use technology in unique ways to help them meet their goals for student learning.

Because interactivity and assessment continue to challenge online instructors, we focus on how the teachers successfully incorporated these into their classes. Of course, there is much more to instructional design than these two components, however, these appear to be the some of the most difficult areas for online instructors.

In the April/May issue, we will highlight a new initiative that requires significant cooperation between academies and higher-education institutions. Historically, public colleges have provided courses in which both high school students and college students can enroll. Such courses are attractive to bright students who want to earn college credit while still attending high school. It is time for Adventist students to have this opportunity in a denominational setting.

This is a recruitment and enrollment management issue that needs broader discussion and implementation. High school students who make connections with Adventist colleges and accrue a number of credits at these institutions are more likely to attend an Adventist institution of higher learning. We invite your input on this new initiative. You will be able to read about it and respond in a special AVLN online bulletin board.

If you would like to present your research and/or experiences with distance education in this column, please send an E-mail message to Shirley Freed at [freed@andrews.edu](mailto:freed@andrews.edu) or Marilyn Eggers at [marilyne@verison.net](mailto:marilyne@verison.net).

Now, go to <http://avln.org/jae/> to read about three more exemplary online courses.