

ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Faith Education and

Touring the Bible Lands



Belief and Practice: Spiritual Imperatives for the Adventist Teacher

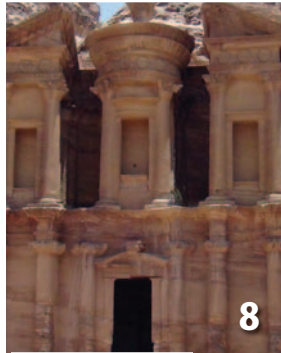
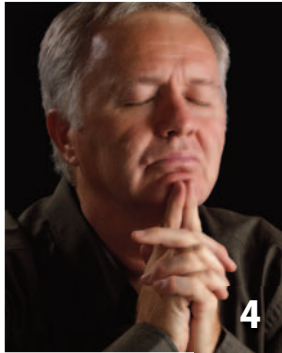
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Faith-Ann McGarrell

Come Apart and Rest Awhile

We are now more connected to one another, globally, than at any other time in earth's history, and these connections comprise a significant portion of our already limited 24-hour day. While each 24-hour cycle promises new experiences, the same also brings with it multiple demands on our time and attention.

Excelacom, a consulting and technology solutions company, released 2017 data about what happens on the Internet in one minute (60 seconds):¹

- 854,166 Facebook logins
- 156 million e-mails sent out
- 3.5 million Google search queries
- 350,000 new Tweets
- \$265,273 million in Amazon sales
- 4.1 million video views on YouTube
- 29.2 million messages on What's App

When compared with 2016 numbers, these numbers are staggering! Facebook logins increased by 152,777, e-mail usage by six million, Amazon sales by \$61 million, and WhatsApp messages by eight million (see endnote for detailed comparison). Daily we manage social connections using multiple electronic and digital devices and social media platforms. Add to this everyday home-, church-, and work-related responsibilities and our "to-do" lists begin to accumulate more and more tasks. What does this mean for our ability to focus? Rest? Spend time with our families? Time with God? What does it mean for our ability to inspire our students to do the same?

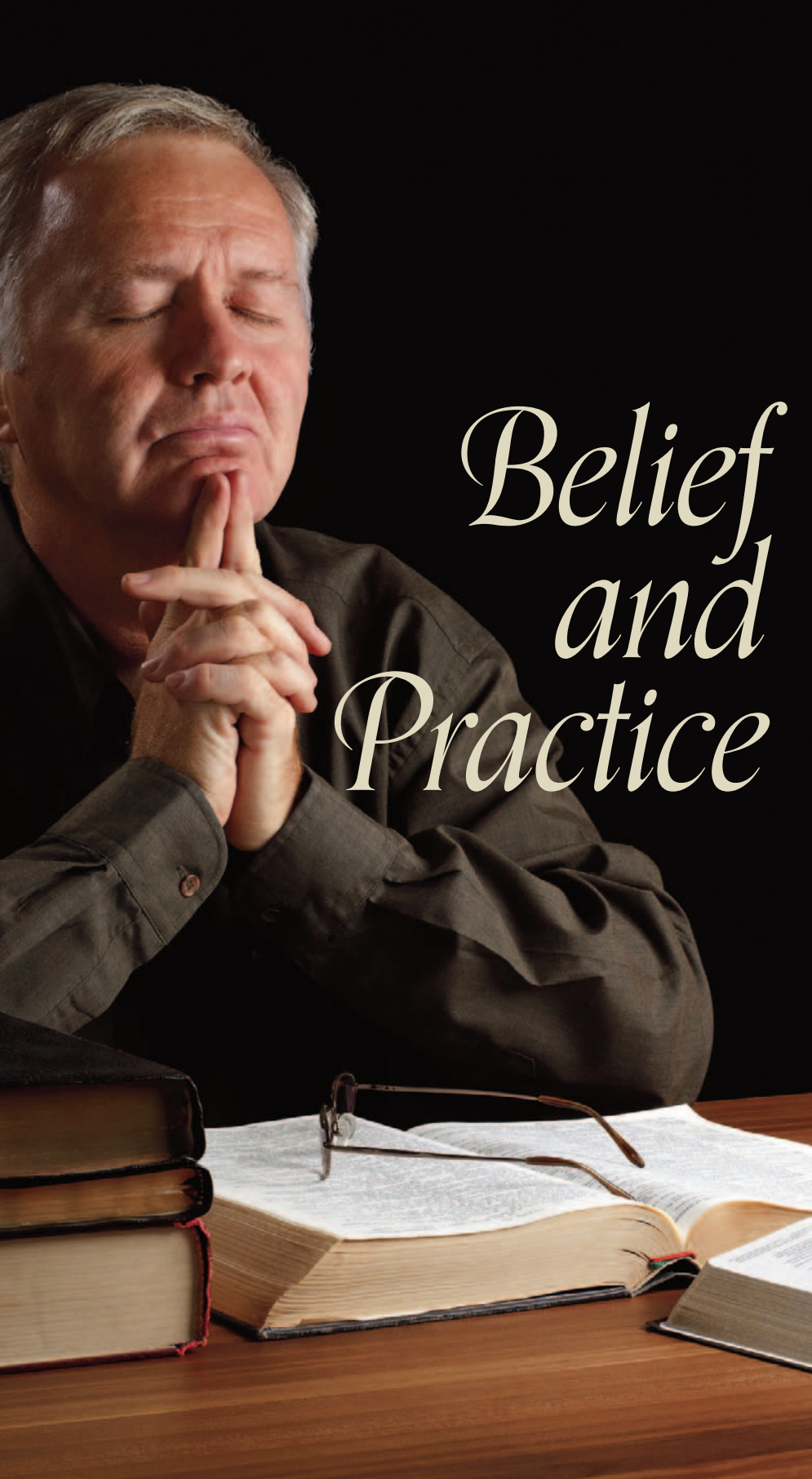
Increasingly, studies show a relationship between poor sleep patterns and use of digital devices and social media²; failing family dynamics due to overconsumption of media³; and decreased time spent in spiritual renewal and solitude.⁴ What do we do with this information? Do we just turn everything off and retreat? Unfortunately, this is not always possible; however, carving out periods of time to disconnect can be beneficial to our overall sense of well-being and productivity.

Several years ago, a few of my students enrolled in a graduate writing seminar that required three days at The Hermitage,⁵ a retreat center in southwest Michigan nestled amidst 62 acres of lush, undulating hills, trails, and woods. The purpose of this retreat? To take time away from tasks that prevented students enrolled in the class from focusing on their major writing assignments—proposals, theses, and dissertations. Many needed a quiet place to rest, think, recharge, and focus—"a peaceful haven"⁶ far removed from the demands of daily life and the added demands of e-mail, social media, Internet searches, and shopping. The location had no Wi-Fi, (although a central landline was available for emergencies), and talking was encouraged only at mealtimes. The first few hours, and for some, days, were difficult; however, the stillness and silence helped many to focus and complete several pages of their assigned tasks.

Over the past several months, many Adventist educators have had time to regroup after the busyness of the previous school year or semester, partake in restorative activities such as rest and time with family, and rebuild excitement for the upcoming academic year. Indeed, the year ahead is filled with new experiences and opportunities for growth—and we look forward to it with joyful anticipation.

Yet a new academic year also brings many challenges, not only to our time, attention, and focus, but also to our overall sense of well-being. And as this new year or semester bursts onto the horizon, and as we create unit and lesson plans, course outlines, syllabi, and schoolwide initiatives that will impact the lives of countless students, kindergarten through higher education, intentionally taking time to nurture and nourish the spirit is essential. Jesus Himself said: "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while" (Mark 6:31, NRSV)⁷ when He felt the need to recharge. Elijah, too, was reminded of the power of silence and retreat as he witnessed the wind, earthquake, fire, and

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Belief and Practice

Spiritual Imperatives for the Adventist Teacher

Being a teacher involves more than the hours I spend in the classroom with my students. Besides the degree qualification, I am proud to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian who is committed to preparing myself and others to meet Christ, our Savior and King. I believe that my role as a teacher cannot be separated from my responsibility to lead others to Christ. In order for this to occur, I must first have my own relationship with Christ. It is impossible for anyone to see Christ in a human being in whom He does not reside.

Christian teaching is a spiritual endeavor with redemption as its core. This aim is distinctively characteristic of Adventist education. Ellen White said: "To restore in men and women the image of their

BY JOEL RAVELOHARIMISY

Maker, to bring them back to the perfection in which they were created—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.”¹ She added: “In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one.”² The Adventist teacher’s role, therefore, is to not only train the youth in worldly matters, but also to educate and lead by example in matters of the spirit. Teachers are leaders, and their students look to them for guidance in the academic as well as personal spheres. The purpose of teaching is to guide students toward improving themselves. Teachers therefore are in a position to improve the spiritual lives of their students.

Continually focusing on the relevance of having teachers in our educational institutions who are dedicated to nurturing their own spirituality is a necessary condition to achieving the goal of true education. *Spirituality* here refers to a constant, personal, and deep relationship with Christ. Teachers who cultivate such a relationship with Christ are important, both for the salvation of the teachers themselves and for the salvation of their students and others who are associated with them.

The works of salvation and redemption are available to all who would avail themselves of the opportunity through Christ, whose love for us was the driving force behind His gift of salvation. For that reason, teachers need to take their spiritual lives seriously because God loves them and sent His only Son to die for their sins. Jesus gave His life without reservations or conditions so that all may have eternal life. In return, He calls us to turn to Him and be saved (Isaiah 45:22). From this perspective, the “redemptive aim of true education” is to save the teacher. It may mean that God has called people into education because He loves them and it is one of many plans that God has designed to save them. Their salvation has already been provided, but it is up to them to accept and embrace it.

Teachers need to cultivate spiritual lives because they represent Christ as a role model for their students. Teaching is a high calling, and Adventist teachers “labor in Christ’s lines for the salvation of souls.”³ Students have high expectations for teachers to live up to their faith because they learn better with what they see than what is told to them.⁴ They can know who Christ is by observing. This principle was revealed in Valuegenesis³ 2010 research, which discovered that “82% of the participants said that attending a Seventh-day Adventist school had helped them develop their religious faith.”⁵

The apostle Paul’s advice to Timothy also provides a clear message for teachers in relation to living a spiritual life: “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16, NASB).⁶ For that purpose, I want to present two ways teachers can strengthen their walk with God so they can have confidence about their salvation and represent God effectively and efficiently to their students. This model is based on a principle found in spiritual-leadership literature.⁷ In order to maintain a healthy spiritual life, one has to combine two imperatives: spiritual beliefs and spiritual practices. True education requires the convergence of these imperatives.

Spiritual Beliefs

Spiritual beliefs include the individual’s understanding of, experience with, connection to, and confidence in God. They are crucial for Christian teachers because they shape identity and determine the quality of life and spiritual experience with God. These beliefs include having faith and hope in a personal and loving God, desiring to be close to God, and having a higher calling to serve God.⁸

Having Faith in a Personal and Loving God

Having faith in God is imperative for teachers because faith demonstrates our confidence in the limitless power of God to replace our limited power. It propels us to act, knowing that God is in control, in spite of the uncertainties of life. We need to have confidence in God to carry us through the challenging circumstances of our teaching responsibilities and daily life. Faith makes even the impossible possible, for the Bible says that “‘nothing will be impossible with God’” (Luke 1:37, NASB).

For this purpose, Ellen White advises that teachers “have a living faith or they will be separate from Christ. The Savior does not ask how much favor you have with the world, how much praise you are receiving from human lips; but He does ask you to live so that He can put His seal upon you.”⁹ Having faith in a personal and loving God is vital to our success and survival.

Having Hope in a Personal and Loving God

Teaching is a “discipline of hope”¹⁰—continuous hope for our students and their families, and a better world as a result of our teaching. In education, “hope is necessary not simply to endure the present situation but to envision and work toward an improved alternative.”¹¹ Our hope sustains us, helping us believe that change is always a possibility.

Therefore, we need to stay with the main Source of hope to carry us through. We can find this hope in God. “He is the One in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered; and the teacher who learns from Him finds a safe anchorage.”¹² He gave us His Son as our Model. He is the great Teacher whose goal is “to restore the image of God in the soul” and to invite “every teacher in our schools [to] work in harmony with this purpose.”¹³

Desiring to Be Close to God

“Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands,

you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world” (James 4:8, NLT).¹⁴ Resisting Satan requires an intentional decision. He who would oppose our relationship with and access to God must be repelled, and we must acknowledge the omnipresence of God in our lives. We are called to live according to God’s way in what we value and cherish (“purify your hearts”) and what we do (“wash your hands”).

The desire to be close to God empowers us to excel in what we do. Having a close connection with Him allows teachers to have “an intelligent knowledge of practical religion.” By “keeping their own souls in the love of God, they will know how to exercise the grace of patience and Christ-like forbearance.”¹⁵

Having a Higher Calling to Serve God

Not everyone is called to teach, and not all who were called accept the invitation. However, Adventist teachers have accepted the “high and holy calling”¹⁶ to teach students “to be fitted to serve God, not only in this life, but in the future life”¹⁷ and to “love and serve God . . . to be the light of the world, shining amid moral darkness.”¹⁸

For that reason, there can be no compromise in the teacher’s lifestyle. We are expected to “flee” from the dangers of sin and pursue a righteous life (2 Timothy 2:22) and “to live a life worthy of the calling [we] have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:1, 2, NIV).¹⁹ We can trust God to help us in this endeavor and equip us for His ministry. Moreover, we “need to come to [Him] with faith in all that is promised in the word, and then *walk in all the light and power that God gives*.”²⁰ In other words, belief alone is not enough, we must also put our belief into practice.

Spiritual Practices

Spiritual practice is what we intentionally do on a regular basis to

Considering the importance of the work of teachers, Ellen White advised them to make the Word of God their meditation. She indicates that by relying on the Word of God, we become vessels wherewith the Holy Spirit inspires us and then in turn touches the mind of the student through us.

deepen our relationship with God. It includes dealing with our busyness, prayer, meditation, and study of the Word of God.

Dealing With Our Busyness

Teachers face the challenge of being 24/7 professionals and thus, other aspects of our lives directly impact our role and influence. The forces of “busyness,” which occur on a daily basis and can detract from deeper communion with God, can be placed into four categories: personal, family, professional, and social life. These four priorities dictate our responsibilities to our jobs, families, workplaces, and ministries, and also include personal desires and goals. The problem is not found in these, but in our lack of prioritizing God above all. The solution: being intentional about making God our priority, so that “the worries of this life” and

“the desires for other things” (Mark 4:19) will no longer be barriers to deep, meaningful communion with God.

Prayer

The importance of prayer in the teacher’s life cannot be overstated. Prayer is communication with God. It is the source of our strength and power. It is the breath of the soul and is central to our spiritual life (Ephesians 6:18) as we share with Him the burdens of our hearts. Prayer can be individual (Matthew 6:6) or collective (Acts 1:13-15; 2:42). Each type of prayer has its place and utility in spiritual practice. “Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite.”²¹ In return, God will pour out His blessings in our walk with Him. “Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse where are treasured the boundless resources of omnipotence.”²²

“Every teacher should daily receive instruction from Christ and should labor constantly under His guidance. It is impossible for him rightly to understand or to perform his work unless he is much with God in prayer. Only by divine aid, combined with earnest, self-denying effort, can he hope to do his work wisely and well.

“Unless the teacher realizes the need of prayer and humbles his heart before God, he will lose the very essence of education. He should know how to pray and what language to use in prayer. ‘I am the vine,’ Jesus said, ‘ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing,’ John 15:5 [KJV]. The teacher should let the fruit of faith be manifest in his prayers. He should learn how to come to the Lord and plead with Him until he receives the assurance that his petitions are heard.”²³

Meditation and Study of the Word of God

Meditation is the practice of filling our minds with the wonder, works, and Word of God. It is the art of having a personal experience with God, especially by studying His Word. We seek union with a personal God when we meditate on His Word, on Him, His creation, and the ways He has led our lives. We make ourselves available to Him by allowing Him to speak to us and to guide our lives.

The uninterrupted connection with God through the undivided heart in studying His Word will equip us to think about “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable . . . excellent or praiseworthy” (Philippians 4:8). In addition, the practice of meditation will shape our character to conform to God’s. Meditation on the Word of God will enrich teachers’ lives “with that wisdom and piety” that will make them “beloved of God and angels.”²⁴

Considering the importance of the work of teachers, Ellen White advised them to make the Word of God their meditation. She indicates that by relying on the Word of God, we become vessels wherewith the Holy Spirit inspires us and then in turn touches the mind of the student through us. “The beauty and virtue of the word of God have a transforming influence upon mind and character; the sparks of heavenly love will fall upon the hearts of the children as an inspiration. We may bring hundreds and thousands of children to Christ if we will work for them.”²⁵

Ellen White expanded on the same concept and stated that teachers should daily seek to learn from Christ: “The true teacher will educate himself [herself] in moral excellence, that by precept and example he [she] may lead souls to understand the lessons of the Great Teacher. No one should be encouraged to do the work of teaching who will be satisfied with a low standard. No one is fitted to teach the grand mysteries of godliness till Christ is formed within, the hope of glory.”²⁶

Conclusion

The teacher’s spiritual growth is sustained by the interaction between two imperatives—religious beliefs and religious practices. This synergistic blending—when teachers faithfully believe in God and practice what they believe—has a transformative effect on their life and work. It is essential for teachers to embrace these imperatives as well as consider the salvation of their students (Philippians 2:12). Teachers become the first beneficiaries of their spirituality by being known and loved by God (2 Timothy 2:19). Furthermore, students also become partakers of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) as they interact with and learn from their godly teachers. ☺

This article has been peer reviewed.



Joel Raveloharimisy, MBA, PhD, is Director of the Community and International Development Program at Andrews University, Berrien

Springs, Michigan, U.S.A. His areas of interest include political economy, gender, entrepreneurship, corruption, institutions, and spirituality in education. He can be contacted at jrlaveloharimisy@gmail.com.

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FAITH EDUCATION AND

Touring the Bible Lands:

A Case Study

As part of building a link between theoretical knowledge and lived experience, Avondale College of Higher Education in Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, has conducted study tours for more than two decades in a variety of disciplines. One of these, the Bible Lands Study Tour, a biennial event over many years, specifically aims to connect the religious information and spiritual experiences of students attending a church tertiary institution. A qualitative study was designed to validate the extensive anecdotal evidence for the special learning value of the 2013 Bible Lands Study Tour and to identify the factors that best contributed to the students' learning.

The 2013 Bible Lands Study Tour provided challenging, structured learning scenarios that placed students on the edge of their usual learning patterns. The theoretical framework used to design the qualitative study drew upon diverse strands. In particular, in line with several scholars' findings on the centrality of the experiential and relational quality of true education,¹ the tour set out to create a relationship between participants, educators, and history *in situ*. Kolb's² experiential learning theory, which proposes that learning is the process in which knowledge is constructed during transformational learning experiences, is closely aligned to the intentions of this study because it acknowledges both the cognitive and subjective aspects of learning.³

BY DANIEL REYNAUD and WAYNE FRENCH

Research into study tours shows that they can provide students with authentic, in-context experiences that enhance their course learning. By extending the boundaries of traditional higher education, experiential travel learning⁴ aims to deepen and broaden the student's experience by situating it within an authentic context.⁵

The 2013 Bible Lands Study Tour provided fresh perspective on a discipline that, by its nature, is frequently interpreted *for* students rather than *by* students. This is especially important for Australian students, whose experience of the past *in situ* or on location relates only to relatively recent Australian sites with limited global significance. Hence, their concept of the past is largely filtered through processing information from textbooks. They know *about* the Bible, but they have more information than experience. The 2013 Bible Lands Study Tour provided students with a wholistic, life-altering integration of the world around them, themselves, and their place in the world.

The tour was designed around creating a "Memory Event," a type of experience that has been demonstrated to have great power in the lives of young people, captivating their imagination and putting faith into action through multisensory active experiences.⁶ The Bible Lands Tour stimulates spiritual growth by bringing context, reality, enhanced visualization, and illustration to the ancient Scriptures. Research has shown that up to 80 percent of young people involved in "Memory Events" identified these experiential events as having "changed their spiritual perspective in a positive way."⁷ This was evident from participants' comments about the Bible Lands Tour:

"This trip was amazing. It definitely served its purpose of bringing the Bible to life and enabling us, in a way, to live the experiences for ourselves. I will not read the Bible in the same way that I used to, especially now that I've learned so much about each of the stories" (S4 Essay).⁸

Because these positive memories are associated with organized religion, they greatly help in reinforcing the role of the church in young adult faith development.

Aims and Purpose of the Bible Lands Tour

The five-week Bible Lands Study Tour encompassed sites of biblical interest in Italy, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt in June and July of 2013. A number of nearby non-biblical sites were also included to provide broader cultural enrichment. Unfortunately, the outbreak of civil unrest in Egypt with the overthrow of the Morsi government prevented the group from completing the Egyptian stage of the tour.

The aims of the 2013 Bible Lands Tour were:

1. to lift the study of the Bible from an abstract theory to a life-changing personal experience through a positive "Memory Event" connecting Scripture and church;
2. to model and inspire students regarding how to use "Memory Events" in their future classes and churches;
3. to inspire student enthusiasm about how the world of archaeology can give them accurate, in-depth, historical information and context regarding the biblical world; and
4. to give students a "taste" of various biblical countries

in order to inspire them to return to further their experience.

The structured learning scenarios began with 16 lectures on biblical archaeology, chronology, examining ancient manuscripts, and understanding the ancient Mediterranean cultures. It also included specific material tied to each archaeological site included in the visit. These lectures also included briefings on expectations for behavior and dress standards (with particular instruction about how to dress in Muslim countries), and managing health and well-being during a Mediterranean summer. Presentations and lectures continued on location throughout the tour. Assessment tasks included pre-tour reading reports and worksheets, and a tour diary to be filled out daily, with a template of suggested content, which included prompts on the range and nature of their learning experiences and requests for them to reflect on their value. The assignment of a post-tour expository essay of 2,000 words asked students to apply their tour experiences to their understanding of the reliability of the Bible.

Forty students and six staff members participated in the 2013 Bible Lands Tour. The students were from the following courses of study: theology: 17; education: 17; arts: 2; business: 2; outdoor recreation and leisure studies: 2.

The researchers gathered data from students' daily reflective diaries, the essay, the pre- and post-tour questionnaires, and from lecturer observations made during the tour. The post-tour questionnaire asked a series of qualitative questions similar to the pre-tour questionnaire and the tour diary template. It also asked for ratings of each site visited, using a five-point scale. While the data are too extensive to provide in a single article, some highlights will be presented.

Discussion

It was evident that this tour had a significant impact on participants, not only academically, but also in areas of spiritual development and engagement, professional development, personal growth, social development and to some degree, cultural awareness.

Student Learning

Students emerged from the tour with a heightened understanding of biblical history, culture, and archaeology. One student's tour diary entry was titled: "Mars Hill: Today I Felt Closer to Christianity Than I Have in Years." The entry was one of several that also noted the impact of reading the Bible on location: "It really does bring it home and consolidate our understanding. It also makes it very real—not just a book" (S20 Diary). Many students commented that being on the tour gave them a real sense of perspective on biblical events. The words *visualise* and *alive* were frequently used to express the relationship to familiar Bible stories, noting how seeing the actual locations transformed stories that had seemed like "fairy tale . . . movie locations" into "real, historical" accounts with "purpose and meaning." One student expressed having had "preconceived ideas" changed, and a number of students expressed a revived interest in Bible reading and a new love for archaeology, which had "come alive" for them.

Spiritual Development

Students' descriptions of their academic and intellectual growth revealed a very obvious passion for spiritual things. Their experiences fostered a "deeper relationship" with Christ. One participant wrote that "walking in the steps of Jesus brought me closer to Him." Others expressed a sense of revival. When asked how it affected their spirituality, a number used the word *intensely*. One diary entry read: "this trip has really opened my eyes to my relationship with God and I wanna take it seriously now" (S5 Diary). Another wrote that the tour "allowed me to see that these events are not a mythical story that has been passed on to generations throughout the centuries and . . . millennia, but they happen in real time, in a real place and to real people. This closes a gap that I hold between myself and the characters of Scripture" (S3 Essay).

Another student drew a personal spiritual connection to features seen at Laodicea:

"Much like the pipes that remain at the site of Laodicea, with their mineral build up, my spiritual life can often get clogged up with unimportant things, things that don't matter and that get in the way of my relationship with God. Since visiting the site of Laodicea, I have realised that I often need to be reminded to take stock of my life, and reassess where I am placing my values, and whether they are contributing to me living my life the way that God intends for me to live my life" (S34 Essay).

Yet another student commented on the stories of Jesus and Peter at Caiaphas' palace: "Throughout these two great Bible stories, my experiences in visiting these Bible locations have greatly enhanced my understandings of what I've previously only read on paper. It has also brought to mind some of my own failings under similar pressures to be true to Jesus and reminded me of my need to build a daily close relationship

with Him through the infilling of the Holy Spirit and not to just 'call' myself a follower of Him" (S29 Essay).

Virtually all of the diaries and essays repeated, like a refrain, the very close connection the students developed to the Bible because of the tour. Here is an excerpt from one of them: "When I talk about the Bible now I light up and get passionate like never before because I know how true and how real it is. I never doubted the existence of the places in the Bible but that's all they were—far-off places. But now—now they are real. Now they are relevant. Now they are close. Now they are geographically true. I am a very visual person so experiencing the Bible firsthand has helped me grow spiritually in ways I never would have been able to if I had not had this experience" (S7 Essay).

One final comment demonstrates the way in which the experiences added significance to the students' Adventist faith. "Awesome Sabbath in Galilee, just loved it, it created a different mindset to the Sabbath, and I would really like to get mine and my family's head around what I have learnt" (S5 Diary).

Professional Development

Students, particularly from theology and education, perceived the Bible Lands Study Tour as having positively affected their professional development. Several students echoed the sentiments of one theology student, "Helps with preaching—glorious," while education students noted that they had already implemented some of the lessons from the tour into their teaching practicums. One wrote, "I was able to share my personal experience in the classroom" (Post-tour questionnaire). This student also mentioned a professional interest in studying archaeology. Another had shared photos and experiences of the tour with her home church, while a



Student comment while looking over Philistine positions in the Valley of Elah, Israel: "As I was telling [my wife] about the Valley of Elah and the footsteps of Jesus a wave of emotion flooded over me."

Tour Itinerary

Country	Main Sites	Time Frame
Italy	Venice and Florence Renaissance and Ancient Rome	2 days 2 days
Greece	Athens and Corinth	2 days
Turkey	Seven churches Troy, Gallipoli, Istanbul, and Cappadocia	5 days 3 days 3 days
Israel	Jerusalem, Judea, Dead Sea, and Galilee	7 days
Jordan	Jerash, Nebo, Madaba, and Petra	3 days
*Egypt	Sinai, Cairo, and Luxor	8 days

*This portion of the tour was cancelled.

business student reported benefitting from watching “other cultures’ business and law in practice.”

Others noted links between the tour, their chosen profession, and their personal spirituality. One wrote, “As a future Teacher who will be teaching History, not only are my beliefs important but also the history behind the Bible is of the most importance, especially if you are teaching students about the Bible in a historical context” (S22 Essay).

Another reported: “Visiting these sites has forever changed the way that I not only see the Bible, but also how I explain my faith to others. For me, it is so important to be able to explain to people the history of the Bible. For those who do not have much knowledge of the Bible, unfortunately that there is so much history surrounded around the places that Jesus was born, lived, worked, died, and was resurrected. The holy lands of the Bible have forever changed me not only as a future Teacher but also as a person on a religious journey” (S12 Essay).

Emotional Impact

The descriptions of the emotional impact of the tour highlighted the integrated nature of the learning experiences, tying in with the intellectual, spiritual, and professional outcomes. Diary entries were replete with expressions of wonder, with *awesome*, *speechless*, *moving*, and *amazing* being commonplace adjectives. One student’s diary entry described a day as having “blown my mind!” (S7 Diary). Other students also experienced incidents of powerful emotional engagement; one student described being “moved to tears” when the group gathered outside Caiaphas’ house and spontaneously sang Calvary-related songs (S6 Diary). Another student wrote: “I realised when talking to [my spouse] on Skype this morning just how much this trip means to me. As I was telling her about the Valley of Elah and the footsteps of Jesus a wave of emotion flooded over me. I was surprised” (S13 Diary).

Personal Growth, Social Development, and Cultural Awareness

Students noted many instances of growth in their personal and social development as well as in their cultural awareness. Living in such close proximity on what was a grueling tour schedule tested students’ capacity to manage their emotions and tolerate those of others. A number of students spoke of improving their ability to deal with others— “[I am] more patient and analytical with people,” wrote one student. “Enjoying the relationships formed on the tour: very important to overall experience” wrote another student in a diary entry (S5 Diary).

One student observed that the trip “made me reassess my life and childhood”—an altogether unexpected learning outcome for both the student and the organizers! Cultural observations cropped up repeatedly, both in the questionnaire and the diaries. Some noted that they were now “better at cross-cultural bonding and understanding,” while a frequent observation was a desire for more time and autonomy in key locations to enable them to better engage with the local culture. In particular, time in a Jewish Sabbath setting was repeatedly requested.

However, not all cultural experiences proved positive, as a number of students struggled with various cultural aspects such as expensive, ornate churches in obviously poor cultures, the worship habits of Christians of other faiths, and issues such as the treatment of women in Middle Eastern cultures and the claustrophobic persistence of aggressive sales solicitations. Even simple issues like dealing with the heat and thirst caught students by surprise, despite their familiarity with hot climates in Australia and the repeated advice of the staff both before and during the tour.

This highlighted the critical importance of thorough pre-tour training relating to all aspects of the tour, particularly cultural differences, to maximize empathetic engagement with the local culture, rather than offense and repulsion, as exemplified by a diary entry at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: “The Holy Sepulchre made me angry. They were worshipping a rock. Jesus rose, people” (S17 Diary). The comment both affirmed the Resurrection and misunderstood what other Christian worshippers were doing.

Positive and Negative Learning Experiences

The itinerary was intentionally packed, given the sheer number and richness of the sites available, and abetted by the fact that it was costly in money and travel time for Australian students living on the other side of the world. But the early mornings and late nights took a toll on interest levels, stamina, and health. As the tour progressed, increasing numbers of students missed events due to fatigue and ill health. “The days are slowly getting more and more boring and the information is just getting to a point where I don’t care about [it] anymore” complained a student in a diary otherwise packed with awe and wonder (S17 Diary). “I think if we had slowed down a bit, we would have learned and experienced more” responded another student in the post-tour questionnaire. On the other hand, when asked in the post-tour questionnaire what might be changed, one student said, “Nothing.”

Adding to the crowded itinerary were additional interesting sites not connected to the Bible. While some of these held immediate relevance for Australian students (particularly the visit to Gallipoli, site of Australia's legendary battle in the First World War), others were opportunistic, as the group was nearby (such as Troy, Cappadocia, and even Venice and Florence when traveling through Italy).

The intention was to give students a taste to tempt them to plan further travels later on. It was successful in some cases, but many regretted the extra unrelated travel, and expressed a wish to invest that time in Bible-related sites and in having time out from the intensity of the tour. "The tour didn't really take on significance for me until we reached Turkey and began visiting the seven churches of Revelation, although even here I think there are a number that could easily be dispensed with to save time," wrote one student, expressing the sentiment of a number of participants (S15, Letter to tour organizers). Another wrote, "it seems as though we don't spend enough time at the places we enjoy more" (S5 Diary).

Students also expressed a desire for some autonomy, to be able to choose sites and cultural experiences of their own, and the desire to engage in immersion experiences rather than hurried, fleeting surveys of a wide range of sites. Adding to the disenchantment with some of the additional sites was a lack of understanding of the significance of the history, art, and culture experienced, due to gaps in the pre-tour learning. The intensity added up to "cultural indigestion."

Another source of frustration for some students, as well as the accompanying staff, was the uneven commitment across the group to the tour goals. A minority treated the trip as a holiday rather than a learning experience, detracting from the enjoyment of the rest of the group. They could generally be identified by their lack of engagement with the pre-tour academic work. Ensuring that no student was merely taking a "junket tour" would have improved the quality of the experience for all participants.

One student described the tour as an "immersion of the senses" (S1 Diary). Many students appreciated the knowledgeability and helpfulness of the local guides; at the same time, the information they shared was often excessive and unconnected to the students' knowledge or experience. "An overload of information," noted one student (S10 Diary), a sentiment widely echoed in diaries and questionnaires. It highlighted the need to brief tour guides thoroughly to ensure carefully targeted on-site information that connected prior learning to the specific experience (see Boxes 1 and 2).

The highlights of the learning experiences were the actual encounters with the past and the way that these encounters intersected with the students' knowledge and experience. While local tour guides were a fount of information, the best person to connect knowledge and experience on this tour was the tour organizer, as many diaries noted: "[Lecturer was] . . . such an inspirational speaker, what he said today was SO GOOD," wrote one student with enthusiasm (S5 Diary). Another student recorded, "Who cares about information. I can Google that any time I want. All I care about is the experi-

ence" (S2 Diary). Still another student wrote, "Listening to [lecturer] explain Scripture in context left me with a profound God moment in an otherwise trying trip" (S24 Diary).

Perhaps the most striking feature of the diaries was the mixture of amazement, delight, and exhaustion. Typical of these was this comment while in Jerusalem: "The first half of the day was simply profoundly spiritual highlights to me. . . . Second half however dragged on a bit and kind of dampened the day a bit. Could have done without it and perhaps spread out the first half" (S10 Diary).

However, while the list of negative features may seem numerous, the overwhelming impact of the tour was resoundingly positive. Its effectiveness was unquestionable. Of a day spent in Galilee, a student wrote: "Today is a day I will never

Box 1. Tips for Choosing a Tour Company

1. Security. The tour company has clear safety protocols that include travel insurance, protection of travelers' financial information, secure and up-to-date itineraries, emergency contact information, and a tour guide who remains with the group during the entire tour—both scheduled and unscheduled times. This is important when visiting all locations, but especially areas where there are concerns about terrorist activities.

2. Knowledge. Select a tour company that provides guides who are knowledgeable not just about the history of the location, but also about customs, food, laws, language, and daily living within the new context. Tour companies, and the guides associated with them, should be experienced in all aspects of the new environment.

3. Safety. Tour guides should be well-trained and registered with their local government agencies that provide oversight. They should be fully licensed, insured, and trained in safety and life-saving emergency care (First Aid).

4. Schedule. Tour guides can assist in providing insight into how best to balance the tour schedule so that participants are not worn out from visiting too many sites within a short period of time. There should be enough flexibility to allow participants to make changes to the itinerary based on their needs.

5. Transportation. Provide multiple, yet safe, options for transportation. The company should be able to accommodate the size of the tour with appropriate forms of reliable transportation, and the insurance requirements that come with each form of transportation.

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Box 2. Tips for Choosing a Tour Guide

If an independent tour guide is used (someone not affiliated with the tour, as in our case), the following tips should be considered:

1. Get referrals. A good way to identify individuals to serve as tour guides is to ask for recommendations from friends or colleagues who have traveled to the area. These individuals may be able to provide the names and contact information of tour guides who provided good service. Travel Websites such as Rent-a-Guide (<http://www.rent-a-guide.com/>); Viator (<https://tourguides.viator.com/>); or TripAdvisor (<https://www.tripadvisor.com/>) can connect you with individuals screened and recommended by fellow travelers.

2. Check references and testimonials. Ask the tour guide for references and check them. Ask for testimonials—these may be on a personal or travel Website since many independent tour guides contract with travel companies as a way to gain more exposure and clients.

3. Verify certification and licensure. Many countries require independent tour guides to be licensed and to register with the Ministry of Tourism or tourism board. This registration may also include certification and training in First Aid, CPR, and the use of AEDs (automated external defibrillators) where available.

4. Conduct interviews. If traveling to a location where the language used to communicate is different from the one spoken by members of the tour, consider arranging a telephone or video chat interview with the prospective tour guide to observe communication and language proficiency in both languages.

5. Get it in writing. Tour guides should confirm the itinerary, their availability, pricing, and travel arrangements (what type of vehicle will be used, who will pay for transportation, lodging, and accommodation of the guide, how payments will be made, etc.) ahead of time. A written contract or agreement is most appropriate and will help ensure that both parties have the same expectations.

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forget. Being in the place of so much of Jesus’ ministry made the Bible really live for me. Never the same again!” (S13 Diary).

While students acknowledged the features they would like to modify, their overall response to the trip can be captured in two post-tour questionnaire responses: “Fantastic trip overall and well planned & run,” and “Such an amazing experience.” A striking feature of tour feedback was how many students personalized their relationship to the Bible. It was frequently referred to as not “the Bible” but “my Bible.”

Recommendations for Future Study Tours

The results of this study enabled the planner to identify the factors that contributed to effective learning and revealed that the Bible Lands Study Tour was extremely successful across a range of learning experiences, representing a powerful way of communicating many things that are central to a Seventh-day Adventist tertiary education. The results also suggest ways in which the tour’s effectiveness could be enhanced, and these factors are in harmony with those identified in an earlier study of an Avondale history tour.⁹

The authors began with differences on the philosophical basis of the tour, and hence have differing conclusions in some respects. For the tour organizer, the tour was intended as a broad sampler, complete with visits of opportunity to adjacent incidental sites to inspire students to further travel—hence the full schedule and wide coverage. The other author’s experience of study tours focused on less breadth but closer cultural engagement, with a highly selective choice of sites, and a less-intense daily schedule. There is a case to be made for each perspective. However, the following factors have been identified as issues to consider in planning an effective tour:

- *Remember that there is generally a strong correlation between pre-tour preparation and student ratings of the value of the sites.* Places such as Troy, Renaissance Rome, Florence, and Venice, intended as bonus travel teasers, received no pre-tour coverage and were among the lowest-rated sites. A number of students questioned the value of such sites, while others found them interesting and motivating. On the other hand, sites covered in classes such as Jerusalem, Capernaum, ancient Rome, and Ephesus received consistently high ratings.

- *Address academic, social, and cultural matters thoroughly in pre-tour preparation, supplemented by on-site applications.* It is particularly critical to address the cultural challenges and gaps that students will encounter in meeting vastly different social and religious practices. Gaps in students’ awareness of academic, social, and cultural matters correlated with levels of dissatisfaction with, or misinterpretation of, specific sites.

- *Enforce academic rigor, as it improves student engagement and enhances the benefits of the tour.* There was a correlation between commitment to pre-tour assessment tasks and engagement with on-location activities.

- *Create opportunities for students to participate in setting appropriate behavior boundaries before the tour,* which will help to reduce on-tour stresses.

- *Consider the relevance of each site to the purpose of the tour.* While non-biblical sites had their admirers, the student ranking of sites indicated that the most effective sites were almost all directly biblical, and clustered around Jerusalem, Galilee, and Jordan, along with selected sites in Turkey, Italy, and Greece. Students gave high ratings to only two non-biblical activities: the extraordinary ballooning experience in the unique landscape of Cappadocia, and the visit to Gallipoli, whose centrality to Australian history and culture needed no other justification.

- *Achieve a balance between being representative and being exhaustive.* Select maximum-impact sites. Often, lesser

sites merely become another pile of ruins or yet another ornate Byzantine church. Two examples of poorly rated yet relevant sites included Bergama and the Valley of Elah—both of which felt like one stop too many for the majority of students.

- *Minimize the number of different overnight accommodations by selecting a central location from which the group can travel to multiple sites.*¹⁰ Moving from one hotel to another is one of the most fatiguing aspects of a tour.

- *Consider scheduling regular time off, with no planned activity.* This allows students to rest, absorb, and explore at their own pace in order to achieve the known benefits of student-directed learning. Heightened learning and connectedness occur when students control their own site visits. Tours of one to two weeks benefit from a couple of free half-days.

Longer tours can benefit from whole days free in key locations.¹¹ It is important to note here that students and tour staff should take every precaution to ensure safety and security, such as traveling in pairs and making sure others are aware of their travel plans.¹²

- *Ensure that on-site information connects directly to pre-tour information.* In many cases, the person best equipped to do this is the tour coordinator, rather than a hired local guide, whose generic presentation can miss the specific needs of the group.

Conclusion

Experiential learning is a powerful teaching tool because the students are fully immersed in the subject they are studying. This sensory experience involves every part of the student's being, ensuring that the learning experience has a powerful impact.

The feedback data from the Bible Lands tour for 2013 revealed an overwhelmingly positive impact on students' spiritual growth as the result of experiencing many of the locations that they had only heard about earlier in their spiritual journey. Visiting actual locations they had only read or studied about before helped them to visualize the stories in their real geographic locations. It also provided participants with new insights into specific scriptural references and helped them make stronger spiritual connections to the Bible text.

In general, although the tour was physically exhausting, prompting reflection on managing the intensity of tours (which becomes more important the longer they are), the spiritual insights gained and the overall positive impact of the learning experiences made it clear that this type of tour can be a very successful and ef-



Students on the Bible Lands Study Tour boarding a fishing vessel for a cruise on the Sea of Galilee. One student commented: "Awesome Sabbath in Galilee, just loved it, it created a different mindset to the Sabbath."



Tour leader Dr. Wayne French (left) explains the significance of the synagogue in Sardis, Turkey.

fective way to educate students in the future.

The tour studied for this article took place several years ago. While a longitudinal study has not yet been formally conducted, considerable anecdotal evidence supports the conclusion of a long-lasting impact on participants. The tour organizer, having managed multiple tours over many years, is often being told by current pastors and teachers of how beneficial the tour has been to their personal faith and their faith-sharing experiences. One former student told the authors of being inspired to travel to Israel no fewer than five times since, and to study Hebrew. Another wrote to say that she often caught herself “wishing I was back reliving the whole experience with everyone over and over.” A Bible teacher noted not only the “huge blessing” personally, but also that “there have been countless times that I have been able to share photos, stories, and artefacts from my trip during classes,” adding that her students found that these moments made their classes “more interesting and easy to remember.” A minister gave many examples of his use of tour experiences in his ministry, stating that “the Bible Lands [tour experiences] have been key in developing my ministry,” especially in making the Bible relevant to young people (e-mails to authors).

The final words come from a student who demonstrated in her response that the tour’s aim of creating a church-related spiritual “Memory Event” was highly effective:

“The entire trip was the best memory event I have ever experienced. I learned so much about my own faith as well as the beliefs of the SDA Church. During the tour many places stood out as memorable, but the two places that have totally changed the way I view my Bible have got to be Mount Zion in Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Despite not having total confirmation of the site of Jesus’ crucifixion and burial, being in the general proximity and seeing just how much Jesus changed the lives of millions of people thousands of years on was enough for me to realise what a great man He was/is and the gift He has given me” (S14 Essay). ✍

This article has been peer reviewed.



Daniel Reynaud, PhD, is an Associate Professor at Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia. His doctorate is in history and cinema, and he teaches courses in history, as well as the intersection of history, film, and literature. In addition to 26 years of experience teaching at the tertiary level, Dr. Reynaud also served as Faculty Dean of Arts and Theology for four years. His areas of interest include the Australian army and religion, representations of history in film, online education, and innovative teaching such as history tours. Among his extensive publications are *Reading With New Eyes: Exploring Scripture Through Literary Genre* (2000), *“Have Passport, Will Learn: History Study Tours and*

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Wayne French, DMin, has served as Chaplain for Avondale College of Higher Education for the past 12 years. He graduated from Avondale College in 1976 with a bachelor’s degree in theology, followed by Master’s and doctoral degrees in youth ministry. He has been in ministry for the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the past 40 years. He spent 14 years as a local church pastor and 14 years as Youth Director for the North New South Wales Conference. In addition to his pastoral and teaching ministry, Dr. French has written *Creating Memories for Teens* about the importance of experiential learning. During his time at Avondale College, he has lectured on mentoring and on Youth Ministry, and has taught one of the core subjects in the Master’s program.

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While teaching at an academy in the United States, I (LS) asked students to write personal-experience stories. One student, a girl from Burma, turned in a painstakingly written account of her experiences coming to the United States from a refugee camp in Thailand. Unfortunately, despite all her hard work, her story made little sense in English.

Since the paper needed a major overhaul, and we lacked the time in class, I invited her to my house. Starting at the beginning, we talked through her story step by step, crafting it on the computer as the details emerged from her memory. Yes, the writing came from me, but the story was hers. I believe that by giving her a voice in English, I was not only building her language abilities, but also bringing her story to life.

Helping students to write across a language barrier is not always such a drastic process. Writing, however, is arguably one of the most cognitively demanding things that we do in school, and for that reason, it poses significant challenges to second-language learners and the teachers who work with them.

A Significant Challenge

Educators worldwide face a growing challenge as migration brings learners from other parts of the world. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in 2010, three percent of the world's population lived outside their country of origin.¹ In the United States, where we work, more than nine percent of American public school students—some 4.6 million, according to 2014-2015 statistics—were classified as English-language learners.² Migration is a global trend,

with more diverse sending and receiving countries than in the past. Teachers in more and more countries now face the daunting challenge of working with learners struggling to write across a language barrier.

Writing demands linguistic knowledge, fluency, and rhetorical expertise. Since writing is a productive rather than receptive skill, writers need sufficient vocabulary and the ability to construct sentences in the new language. Further, they need knowledge of the writing system for that language, including spelling and punctuation rules.

In addition—and this is often overlooked—a skilled writer needs to know what different types of documents look like and how they are constructed. What is appropriate and typical varies with the genre—poem or personal letter, blog or résumé, book report or literary analysis paper. Writing is a skill learned through experience in different settings where expectations about language, style, and structure may also differ widely. Learning to write—in any language—is a lifelong process.

Including
Second-
language
Learners
in the

Writing Classroom



BY LAURIE STANKAVICH and AMANDA LIVANOS

Younger learners can more easily surmount the obstacles posed by crossing a language barrier, not only because they study more basic materials, but also because they have a language learning advantage. Research suggests that, if in an immersion situation, younger learners can attain native-like proficiency in a few years.

Jill Fitzgerald's survey of 56 studies of multilingual writing in preschool through 12th grade uncovered few surefire solutions, but several studies did show that preschool and primary learners developed very similarly to native speakers of the same age group.³ In general, second-language-acquisition research supports the perception that younger learners have an advantage in terms of developing a native-like intuition about grammar patterns in a second language.

The sensitive period for language learning seems to diminish around puberty, possibly because of neurological changes that take place around that age.⁴ For this reason, emotional support from teachers may help younger students adjust to learning in a new language, but providing specific instruction is not linguistically vital. Therefore, for the rest of the article, we will offer recommendations about learners who are not conversationally fluent in the language in which they are writing and who are approaching or have passed puberty—in other words, those over the age of 12.

Giving Effective Feedback

One of the most hotly debated challenges in teaching writing to second-language learners is how to effectively give them feedback. The literature is inconclusive about whether direct correction or student self-correction works best in the long term.⁵ For example, some teachers correct every error on every assignment, but this time-consuming process may not help students write better. Other teachers believe that students should correct their own errors (self-correction), but this may not always be effective, either.⁶ Most teachers rely on common sense, varying the approach to fit the learners and the purpose of

the assignment. Hyland and Hyland observe that “Teachers respond to *students* in their comments as much as texts, and experienced teachers often tailor their feedback to suit each student, considering their backgrounds, needs and preferences as well as the relationship they have with them and the ongoing dialogue between them.”⁷ Ultimately, teachers should keep the learners’ needs at the forefront.

When a writer makes many language-related mistakes, teachers tend to focus their energy on those areas, often neglecting content as a result. However, the ideas shared by language learners are as meaningful as those of the other students in the classes. Teachers should strive to look past students’ language errors and hear what they really have to say. I (AL) often read written assignments at least once without marking any mechanical errors in order to intentionally give feedback about content.

However, teachers are doing language learners a disservice if they simply ignore their errors. “Since language problems constrain the entire composing process, editing is a critical and necessary facet of the text creating process, not just a clean-up activity.”⁸ Students must be taught the importance of clean writing, and without help, they may be unaware of the errors they are making. This is why we (LS and AL) believe that teachers should select specific assignments for which they will correct all errors. Chandler’s study has shown such direct error correction to be the best method at increasing accuracy both immediately and in the long term.⁹

I (AL) often correct all the errors on my students’ short, in-class journaling assignments. I don’t take off points for their mistakes, but when I return their papers, I ask them to review the corrections. They often exclaim, “Wow, I didn’t realize I made so many mistakes!” This exercise should not be discouraging, which is one reason we don’t recommend correcting all errors on every assign-

ment. But periodic error correction will give students a realistic idea of areas in which they need to improve.

In some circumstances, indirect feedback may be helpful as well. In this type of feedback, the teacher draws attention to errors without correcting them; for example, underlining each instance or using an error coding system. In this type of system, a teacher might use a “V” to refer to problems with verb tense, a “C” to denote comma errors, and so on. Coding goes a step beyond underlining by directing students’ attention to the types of mistakes they frequently make and pointing them toward the correction.

At high school and college levels, depending on students’ maturity, pushing them to correct mistakes themselves with this approach can foster valuable proofreading skills. A study by Ferris and Roberts showed that even when the results from only underlining mistakes seemed equally effective compared with coding, students nevertheless preferred the coding option.¹⁰

Both types of indirect feedback work best for easily defined types of errors. If students already understand the grammatical principle behind the error, they will often be able to correct it themselves just by having their attention drawn to it (like problems with pronouns, articles, and even verb tenses). However, fixing other errors presents a challenge. For example, writing “wrong word” may not help the student find the right word. Instead, it may be helpful to provide suggestions, perhaps by underlining a phrase and, above it, writing how a native speaker might typically convey the idea. In one recent example, a student wrote that CD’s were “a common thing to listen to music.” The teacher underlined the word *thing* and, in class, pointed out that a more appropriate word was *way*.

Since marking all errors can be time-consuming, even if indirect methods are used, it may be helpful at times to focus the feedback on certain areas. Ferris and Hedgcock suggest focusing on serious errors—those “interfering with the comprehensibility of a

text”—and those that are “frequent” or “stigmatizing.”¹¹ Alternatively, teachers may choose to focus on a grammatical concept that has recently been covered in class or a recurring problem for this particular student.

Whatever type of feedback teachers choose, they should also remember the value of positive feedback. In other words, when we catch students using authentic, native speaker phrasing, we can let them know that they “got it right.” Language learning is a constant search for feedback. Learners get positive feedback when they try something that “works.” Since what works can diverge from what fluent speakers do, letting the learner know that something both works *and* matches usual practice can be valuable feedback and positively reinforce the things the learner is doing right.

Beyond Feedback

While writing instruction for language learners may primarily involve providing plenty of feedback (both pointing out what students need to learn and affirming what they may already know), certain instructional strategies and resources can facilitate the process. Here are several that we have found useful:

1. Enhance the regular language-arts lesson with materials explicitly designed for non-native speakers.

Not every language has appropriate materials developed for non-native speakers, but when these materials are available, they can be valuable. Materials designed for native speakers sometimes address issues that are not an issue for non-native speakers. Some English learners, for example, have an awareness of aspects of grammar that allows them to escape some of the persistent problems of native speakers. A subject-verb agreement problem that fools a native speaker may appear obvious to a learner who can readily identify the subject of a sentence. Of course, the converse is also true.

Assignments focusing on areas desperately needed by non-native speak-

Language learners may find it daunting to read materials beamed to their own age group, but books for elementary students and even picture books with a few sentences on each page can provide valuable exposure to written language and new vocabulary.

ers seldom appear in language-arts materials for native speakers. For instance, even in the early grades, native speakers typically use past tenses automatically and fluently, so language-arts materials offer limited drills in this area. Yet non-native speakers need this practice. More and more of these materials are available online and are usually appropriate for non-native speakers since research shows that learners from different language backgrounds share many of the same problems when learning a new language.¹²

2. Encourage outside reading.

Reading and writing have a close relationship. Reading helps learners develop the knowledge of the components of written language that correlate with success in writing.¹³ This is particularly true in the area of vocabulary development. For both native speakers and language learners, significant exposure to oral language may be insufficient to develop a strong vocabulary. Anne E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich point out that nearly all written sources outstrip oral sources for improving vocabulary. For vocabulary develop-

ment, students will benefit more from reading preschool books than listening to college graduates holding a conversation.¹⁴ Language learners may find it daunting to read materials beamed to their own age group, but books for elementary students and even picture books with a few sentences on each page can provide valuable exposure to written language and new vocabulary.

3. Use peer tutoring to supplement instruction by the teacher. In immersion contexts, peer tutoring can be an excellent way to help students build skills. One young refugee arrived as an academy freshman with almost no English skills, not even the ability to hold a simple conversation. Lacking the resources to deal with her situation, the best I (LS) could do was to set her up with two student tutors, one for an hour in the morning and one for another hour in the afternoon. Over the course of the year, these tutors shifted from working on basic conversational skills to providing guided help with assignments. Without much direction from me, these high school students were able to perceive the refugee student’s needs and adapt as her abilities grew. In fact, one of the tutors built such a strong bond with the student that she arranged for an intensive period of tutoring during the summer. Inviting the student to her home, the tutor helped her work through the history and English requirements for 9th grade, a plan that ultimately allowed the student to catch up and graduate on time. Peer tutoring can often supplement classroom instruction and, in some cases, it may be the only customized approach available.

4. Within each lesson, use pair and group work. When students are working in mixed groups of native and non-native speakers, activities such as collaborative writing and peer review can help both groups. The native speakers benefit from constructing meaning and giving feedback. However, the language learners may make valuable contributions in these areas as well. We once had a college

student who took three semesters of ESL writing before progressing into the standard English Composition sequence. She felt very insecure about participating in peer review. We reassured her that the time she spent in the additional writing classes would pay off. During our first peer-review session, she found she had several valid suggestions regarding her classmate's paper. This experience justifiably increased her confidence in her own writing abilities.

5. Allow students to revise for a higher grade. Giving students the opportunity to redo a paper reduces their anxiety about getting it right the first time and allows them to experiment with the new language without the persistent threat of a bad grade. At the academy where I (LS) taught, the school had a policy that allowed all students to improve and resubmit work for higher grades as long as this was done in a timely manner. This proved to be valuable for many students, but especially for English-language learners. Since then, we have become aware of related policies in other educational contexts. While research on this practice is limited, a study of Australian university students found that low-performing students appreciated having a "safety net" that allowed them to revise final drafts; and ultimately, those who chose this option improved their writing.¹⁵ Many teachers find writing portfolios to be an efficient way to incorporate this principle, and several studies specific to language learners support the efficacy of portfolios.¹⁶

Conclusion

At its most effective, writing instruction involves coaching and mentoring. Nowhere is this truer than when working with students who are also becoming familiar with a new language. By enriching their writing pedagogy with additional linguistic feedback through selective correction, peer tutoring, activities that call attention to language patterns, and revision opportunities, teachers can make the process more productive for language learners. Everyone who teaches writing grapples

with polar challenges—providing feedback that encourages and yet guides, demonstrating conventional usage while still fostering creativity. Both the challenge and the reward come from our interactions with the individual learners, seeing them grow and change before our eyes. ✍

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Laurie Stankavich, MA, is an Assistant Professor of English at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, U.S.A. She completed a BS at Andrews University, an MA from the University of Texas, Arlington, and is currently pursuing a PhD in English at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A. Prior to her appointment at Southern Adventist University, Ms. Stankavich served as a language-school director in Taiwan and has taught English and ESL in China, Costa Rica, Korea, Taiwan, California, and New York. Her areas of research interests are writing studies and rhetoric.



Amanda Livanos, MA, is an Assistant Professor of English at Southern Adventist University (SAU). She received a Master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A. Since 2010, she has taught ESL, TESOL, and writing. Ms. Livanos has served as the Writing Committee Chair and is currently the Composition Coordinator at SAU. Additionally, she has taught ESL courses internationally and in a variety of community settings.

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ESL Writers in the Mainstream College Classroom



English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs on U.S. college campuses play a vital role in helping students develop academic English skills to a certain threshold of success, usually defined by a particular score on a language proficiency test such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). However, educators who teach mainstream college classes may expect that threshold of success to be defined as native-like use of English.¹ These educators are surprised to find that while some students who completed the ESL program or scored high enough on the TOEFL meet this expectation, others are still developing their English skills. As a result, these students continue to be referred to as “ESL” students even though they are enrolled in mainstream college classes.²

College educators often find ESL student writing especially unpredictable. Students who appear native-like in conversation and demeanor can still make “ESL” errors in their writing such as inaccurate mixing of verb tense or incorrect use of articles. At the same time, ESL students who struggle with listening and speaking might also struggle with writing, or they may produce writing at a higher level than expected. Consequently, many college educators who regularly assign writing in their classes find ESL student writing challenging to read and assess.


The purpose of this article, therefore, is to offer insight on how college educators can better understand ESL students in their classrooms, particularly from three different perspectives: ESL students’ backgrounds, the texts they produce, and the errors they make. The article then concludes with four suggestions for how educators may use this new understanding to choose teaching practices that will help ESL students succeed in mainstream college classes.

Understanding ESL Students’ Backgrounds

The most recent Open Doors Report from the Institute of International Education reveals that more than one million international students were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities in the 2015-2016 academic year, a seven percent increase over the previous year and the continuation of a broader increase over the past 50 years.³ Many of these international students are English-language learners who enroll in college ESL programs before entering undergraduate and graduate-degree programs. Also, the Open Door Report statistics do not account for the children of immigrants who have become permanent residents or naturalized citizens but still identify as ESL students upon entering college.

Consequently, U.S. college classrooms today are com-

BY CHRISTIAN STUART



Cultivating a Culture of Success

prised of growing numbers of ESL students with varying backgrounds. In most cases, these students have successfully completed ESL programs or scored high enough on a language proficiency test to enroll in mainstream classes. Some of them could still benefit from additional English-language support. Others may *appear* to no longer need English-language support but actually do need assistance in various areas, including writing.

Joy Reid, a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) scholar specializing in ESL writing, provides a useful way of understanding how these students' varying backgrounds reveal their different needs as college writers. She calls international ESL students "eye" learners because although a majority of them have learned English "through their eyes [by] studying vocabulary, verb forms, and language rules,"⁴ they may have limited experience using conversational English. Because of their status as international students, these "eye" learners have often developed sophisticated literacy skills in their first languages and may have potentially transferable academic writing abilities from their secondary or even tertiary school experiences. Consequently, some international students struggle conversationally in class but show an ability to produce acceptable-quality academic genres such as essays, research papers, lab reports, and proposals.

At the same time, international students can vary widely. Some may come from countries where English is used in ed-

ucational contexts, while others may not. Some come from educational backgrounds where lecture-based, teacher-centered classes are the norm and view collaborative, student-centered classes as unfamiliar and even unnerving. Other international students may have a difficult time being critical in their writing, as they have been taught to respect the authority of published texts. For these students, taking a stance questioning the view of a celebrated scholar or writer is counterintuitive.

Furthermore, Reid calls U.S. citizen and permanent-resident ESL students "ear" learners because a majority of these students have lived in the U.S. for an extended period of time and have "[learned] English principally through oral trial and error."⁵ These "ear" learners have had more exposure to conversational English than their "eye" learner peers. "Ear" learners may also be more comfortable with U.S. classroom practices than international students, since many of them attended U.S. middle and high schools. However, these students may struggle with writing. Many of them began formal schooling in the U.S. at a young age but continued to speak their first language at home, so they

may not have fully developed literacy skills in either their first language or in English.⁶ Thus, U.S. citizen and permanent-resident ESL students may need extra assistance with their writing despite their apparent comfort levels in the classroom and ability to converse without difficulty.

Understanding ESL Writers' Texts

Even when ESL students have demonstrated a high proficiency in English, perhaps by successfully completing an on-campus ESL program or by scoring well above the college's required score on the TOEFL, it is not unusual for them to still struggle with writing assignments in mainstream college classes. One possible explanation for this comes from contrastive rhetoric scholarship (the study of how writing in a second language is influenced by first language and culture). A subfield of TESOL, contrastive rhetoric is rooted in the work of Robert Kaplan, who in 1966 published a groundbreaking article suggesting that ESL writing can be difficult to read from a Western educator's point of view because of cultural differences in "thought patterns" that shape the logic and organization of such writing.⁷

According to Kaplan's argument, based on analysis of writing authored by students from different cultural backgrounds, ESL students write and produce texts that are logical (i.e., they make sense) from a particular cultural perspective of the writer, but read in the context of another cultural

perspective are illogical and do not make sense.⁸ ESL writers from Korea or Japan, for instance, might not explicitly state the main point (thesis) until the very end of an essay, which reflects accepted rhetorical practice in those cultures. For readers expecting the seemingly linear organizational pattern of writing in English—main point stated up front, followed by detailed support—Korean and Japanese students' texts in English may appear indirect and unfocused.

Since Kaplan's publication, many scholars have studied contrastive rhetoric in ESL writing. One particularly significant revelation to emerge from this scholarship is that English is a "writer-responsible" language, meaning that the onus is placed on *writers* of texts in English to make the writing explicit and understandable.⁹ ESL writers, however, may come from cultures where the language is

"reader-responsible" (e.g., Korean and Japanese), meaning that it is understood that *readers* make an effort, as part of the reading process, to understand the main point of a text, which is often only implicitly stated.¹⁰

The challenges that ESL writers face in mainstream college classes, therefore, can go beyond language issues. These students may demonstrate adequate vocabulary and knowledge of English grammar, but lack awareness of their expected "writer responsibility" or of the organizational patterns that define the many different academic genres U.S. college professors assign in their classes. As a consequence, ESL writing, even if it is clear and mostly error-free, can sometimes come across as indirect, clichéd, or overly personal when educators are expecting focused analysis, objective stances, and a demonstration of critical thinking. The simplistic nature of some ESL writing may reflect the student's unawareness of implicit expectations about writing in mainstream U.S. college contexts and have nothing to do with a lack of English-language proficiency or an inability to think in a sophisticated way. For these students, explicit instruction on educators' expectations for written work may go a long way toward helping them succeed.

Understanding ESL Students' Writing Errors

Research has revealed certain identifiable error patterns common to ESL writers. Handbooks and textbooks designed for mainstream college writing classes (i.e., "Freshman English") are beginning to address these errors as more and more ESL students enroll in U.S. colleges. For instance, the most recent edition of *A Pocket Style Manual*, a popular handbook used in first-year college-writing classes, includes a whole section on "grammar concerns for multilingual writers."¹¹ Likewise, *What Every Multilingual Student Should Know About Writing for Col-*

"Educators who recognize that ESL students are a diverse, legitimate, and numerous part of the core group can begin to see them less and less as 'ESL' and more and more as biology students or engineering students..."

lege identifies the "top ten" errors made by ESL writers.¹² Both handbooks focus on language issues involving vocabulary, verb tense, articles, parts of speech, and prepositions, areas of English that ESL writers commonly find challenging.

Most ESL writers who attend mainstream college classes have demonstrated English proficiency by either completing an on-campus ESL program or by passing a language proficiency test such as the TOEFL. Why, then, do ESL writers still make "ESL" errors in their writing, sometimes to such a degree that the overall effectiveness of their written work is compromised?

Dana Ferris, who has devoted her career as a TESOL scholar to studying ESL writing errors, cites research showing that "error is a natural part of language acquisition . . . it may even signal progress rather than deficiency

. . . [and] language acquisition takes time and requires both effort and patience."¹³ Research also shows that students who are given the time to develop the skill to edit their own work (rather than having each error marked by an instructor) will become more proficient over time.¹⁴

In short, ESL writers need opportunities to make errors and to discover and remedy these errors on their own. This is true even if such students have scored well on the TOEFL or have successfully completed an ESL program. Despite having developed a strong foundation in English, they still need ongoing practice to develop their skills. College educators who see ESL writing errors as a natural part of the learning process and consequently give ESL writers the space to make errors—primarily by encouraging self-correction of errors and giving students the chance to edit and revise written work even after it has been turned in and graded—serve these students well.

Cultivating a Culture of Success

By better understanding ESL student backgrounds, how and why these students produce the writing they do, and how and why they continue to make certain errors in their writing, educators can begin to cultivate a culture of success for ESL writers in their classes. This article concludes with four suggestions of cultivating this culture of success.

- **Look beyond the ESL-mainstream divide.** The terms "ESL" and "mainstream" may appear to only be a practical means for categorization, but these labels can reinforce the problematic idea that "mainstream" students are the core group while the "ESL" students are a peripheral part of the class. Educators who recognize that ESL students are a diverse, legitimate, and *numerous* part of the core group can begin to see them less and less as "ESL" and more and more as biology students or engineering students, future teachers or dentists,

daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, and God's children. That is, individuals with real lives and specific learning needs who are equipped and willing to work hard and succeed in class just as the "mainstream" students are. Individuals whom God loves. Indeed, seeing beyond the "ESL" label is part of a Christ-centered approach to teaching, an approach that reflects the values at the heart of any Seventh-day Adventist institution.

• **Avoid defining ESL writers by the errors they make.** Some ESL students make a lot of errors in their writing; others do not. Many of the errors they make are different from the errors made by native English speakers. But to assume all ESL writers will make the same kinds of errors, and that they will also make a lot of these errors is to generalize that ESL students are part of a predictable, homogeneous group. Educators who can distinguish between serious writing errors and minor ones and who give ESL students the space to make errors—and self-correct them—can help them develop much-needed confidence. More importantly, educators who define students not by their writing errors but by their individual backgrounds, their academic interests, and the thoughts and ideas that come through in their writing despite a few (or many) errors, play a successful role in furthering these students' English-language development and achieve the primary objective of effectively teaching these students the assigned subject matter.

• **Be explicit about writing assignment expectations.** When educators give writing assignments, they often assume that students know what a "short response essay" is, what an "argument paper" should do, and what a "10-page research paper" should look like. Chances are, however, many students—including those who are native speakers of English—have only a partial understanding of the teacher's expectations. Educators can therefore help all of their students by being explicit in a number of ways: Before making each assignment, they should provide clear directions, describe the specific learning goals, present the grading rubric to be used, share examples of successful assignments from previous classes, and highlight unique organizational expectations for the particular assignment genre. They should also give students a chance to revise and further edit writing for credit after it has been initially submitted, graded, and returned.

• **Reach out to the on-campus ESL program.** A final suggestion for educators is to reach out to the on-campus ESL program, if there is one, for guidance when struggling with especially challenging ESL writing issues. These programs are staffed by professionals who work with ESL writers on a daily basis. In fact, these ESL instructors probably know many of the ESL students taking mainstream classes and can offer help that is tailored to their needs. Working with the on-campus ESL program can also help college educators better understand the second-language acquisition process, replace unrealistic expectations about this process with realistic ones, and form partnerships with ESL professionals that will serve the best interests of ESL writers across the campus. ✍



Christian Stuart, PhD, is currently Director of the Center for Intensive English Programs (CIEP) and Assistant Professor of English at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A. He earned his doctorate in English from the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A. Dr. Stuart began teaching in 1997, and he has taught English in South Korea and Japan, and college writing at several colleges and universities in the Seattle area. His areas of interest and expertise are TESOL theories and methods, ESL writing, composition studies, and research on multilingual students' college writing experiences.

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1. Research in second-language acquisition, notably the work of Jim Cummins at the University of Toronto, shows that developing basic conversational proficiency in a second language takes less time than developing academic proficiency in a second language, with the latter taking many years. Acquiring native-like ability in a second language may also take many years and probably will never entirely happen. Since on-campus college ESL programs often only have a few semesters or quarters, at most, to work with ESL students, the goal of these programs is typically to help them develop a solid foundation in grammar, aural/oral skills, reading for academic purposes, and writing for academic purposes, with the understanding that upon meeting a certain threshold of success, these students will move into mainstream classes and further develop their English-language skills as they pursue their academic degrees.
2. This article uses the term "ESL" to describe English-language learners of all backgrounds who study in mainstream U.S. college classes and are still developing English-language skills; the term includes but is not limited to students who have also studied in ESL programs. While there are other descriptors used for English-language learners (for instance, "ELL" for English-language learner and "L2 student" for second-language student), "ESL" is arguably the most widely understood and recognized term used to categorize English-language learners in U.S. higher-learning contexts. Hence, "ESL" is used in this article. At the same time, it is important to realize that the term "ESL" can have a stigmatizing effect if it is used as the primary means of identifying a student, especially when a student demonstrates fluency in English but is still regarded as an "ESL" student by peers and instructors. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see the first teaching suggestion in this article.
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SAGRADA BIBLIA

Using the BIBLE to Teach

a Foreign Language

The first time I heard about the relationship between learning a foreign language and reading the Bible was during one of my linguistics classes. The professor stated: “I have learned several foreign languages just by reading the Bible, [and] although I do not consider myself a Christian believer, I noticed the effective result of learning through an extensive, varied, and valuable book.”¹ As a 19-year-old Adventist student in my first year at a public university, I was deeply affected by the words of this professor. From that moment, I decided that when I became a professor, I would use the Bible as a basic manual to teach a foreign language.

I thought that I was alone in using the Bible as a primary resource for teaching until I found Humberto Rasi’s *Christ in the Classroom* series, which he began in 1993.² These books are a compilation of articles and essays about the integration of faith in teaching and learning written by Adventist college professors. Rasi’s philosophy is stated as follows:

“The integration of faith and values with teaching and learning is 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, by the

time students complete their studies, they will have freely internalized beliefs and values and a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Bible-based, Christ-centered, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed.”³

In reviewing these wonderful resources for Christian teachers, I noticed that while the articles and practical examples came from a variety of subject areas, only one related to English-as-a-second-language teaching, and none related to teaching the Spanish language. This motivated me to fill this faith-teaching gap through using the Bible as a primary resource in my English and Spanish classes, and creating materials that would assist instructors in the integration of faith in teaching and learning.

Using the Bible as a Text Base

In 1998, I was hired to teach at an Adventist educational institution in Sagunto, Spain. During the next five years, I taught English as a foreign language to the senior high school students. While I felt an enormous responsibility to prepare these students for their *Selectividad* (Selectivity) examinations, a crucial examination at the end of the course that would determine their ability to enter university and pursue desired careers, I also relished the opportunity to integrate faith with learning. This exam would select from among all the high school students in Spain only those who were really prepared to continue with their education.

The examiners who created this

exam used random magazines, newspapers, and media news to structure comprehension activities. I took the risk of integrating texts from a modern version of the Bible into my lesson plans for the English class.⁴ I advised my students to accept the challenge to learn with this method, even though a few of them were not Adventists. The Selectivity test consisted of a final written exam on writing, reading, and grammar, so I created a few activities by using the Bible as the text base. Because the Scriptures contain a variety of vocabulary words, topics, and writing styles, I anticipated that students would obtain good linguistic results at the end of the course. Furthermore, the students, along with the professor, would also be exposed to many educational and spiritual values, as well as the integration of faith and learning. (See examples in Tables 1-3.)

Surprisingly, the results were much better than expected. During the five consecutive years that I prepared students for the Selectivity examination with this method, 100 percent of the students passed and were able to enter the universities of their choice. Furthermore, my students obtained the highest average scores on the test in all the subjects taken by students from our school.

Reading Frank McCourt’s book, *El Profesor*, ushered in a new stage in my life as a teacher and served as a source of inspiration as I searched for tools and methods to help me inte-

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grate faith with learning in my Spanish and English classes. Based on McCourt's personal experiences as a professor of Irish descent teaching at the McKee Institute in New York City, the book describes the passion and struggle of a teacher yearning to reach his students. I was impressed by the words he shared about his first class: "Ya llegan. Y yo no estoy preparado. ¿Cómo iba a estarlo? Soy un profesor nuevo, y estoy aprendiendo con la práctica." ["They are coming. And I am not ready. How would I be? I am a new professor, and I am learning with practice."]⁵

McCourt used unconventional methods to teach English language and literature in order to awaken a higher interest among his young students. He listened to their inquiries, immersed himself in their communities, tried to understand the realities of their lives, and planned their learning experiences based on their routines and realities outside the classroom. He set out to have an impact on their lives and used several creative approaches to do so. One such method was to engage his students using the Bible. For example, he asked them to write an apology letter from Adam and Eve to God for having been disobedient and falling into sin. Many of his students were familiar with the Bible since they attended Christian churches and Bible schools.

My interest grew as I saw others using the Bible to help students build important skills. Then, when I was completing my doctoral studies, one of my professors encouraged me to pursue this topic and proposed that I read the work of Paulo Freire. Freire states that students need to be "actors, rather than spectators, that they may have a voice, instead of just saying the word, that they may have the opportunity to create and re-create, and transform the world."⁶

In other words, students should have the opportunity to be heard and to participate in choosing the content of their learning. We, as professors, should also consider this an opportunity to present learning as a vertical system, not just a horizontal one. Integrating faith and the Bible engages stu-

Table 1. Lesson Plan Example 1.

<p><i>John 10:11-16</i> Topic: Study or Work? Title: <i>Jesus, the Good Shepherd</i> Writing style: Argumentative Text Level: Elementary Grammar contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verb "to be" • Present Simple Tense • The Negative Form • The Auxiliary Verb "to do" • Verb "to know" <p>Reading activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: <i>What are the characteristics of a good shepherd and a bad shepherd?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True/False: <i>All the sheep know the good shepherd.</i> • Synonyms: <i>pastor - shepherd</i> <p>Writing activities: <i>Give your opinion about the differences between a good and a bad student and/or worker.</i></p> <p>Vocabulary: <i>shepherd, sheep, wolf, flock, pastures, hired, belong to, work, rich, money, thief, to care about, to know, life, to abandon, to run, freely</i></p> <p>Educative values: <i>sacrifice, respect, friendship, honesty, responsibility, obedience, work ethic, love</i></p> <p>Bible values: <i>spiritual leadership, good and bad pastors' characteristics, obedience to God, faithfulness, Divinity, Trinity</i></p>
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Table 2. Lesson Plan Example 2.

<p><i>Genesis 6-8</i> Topic: A Family Trip Title: <i>The Story of Noah</i> Writing style: Narrative Text Level: Intermediate Grammar contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past Simple Tense • Future Simple Tense • Family Words • Animals <p>Reading activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: <i>How many people traveled with Noah?</i> • True/False: <i>Only the clean animals survived the Flood.</i> • Synonyms: <i>story - account</i> 	<p>Writing activities: <i>Narrate your most recent family vacations.</i></p> <p>Vocabulary: <i>earth, time, ground, sky, day, night, rain, torrent, wind, boat, water, mountain, peak, waterproof, deck, stall, feet, flood, survive, covenant, son, daughter, wife, husband, children, human, family, father, mother, animal, domestic, wild, creature, pair, male, female, bird</i></p> <p>Educative values: <i>hard-working, teamwork, solidarity, creation-evolution, family care, animal care, peace, nature care</i></p> <p>Bible values: <i>goodness, faith, creation, obedience, God's justice and judgment, confidence, forgiveness</i></p>
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Table 3. Lesson Plan Example 3.

<p><i>Mark 10:17-31</i> Topic: Properties Title: <i>Poor Man/Rich Man</i> Writing style: Dialogue Level: Advanced Grammar contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past Simple Tense • Present Perfect Tense • Past Progressive Tense • Imperative • Auxiliary Modal Verbs • -ly Adverbs • Housing Words <p>Reading activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: <i>Why did Jesus ask the rich man to sell all his possessions?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True/False: <i>The young man left happy because he was very rich.</i> • Synonyms: <i>belonging - property</i> <p>Writing activities: <i>Write a dialogue of a conversation that you had or you listened to about two people talking about the purchase of a house.</i></p> <p>Vocabulary: <i>inherit, house, property, commandments, testify, cheat, honor, teacher, to sell, possessions, money, poor, rich, treasure, kingdom, intently, truly, falsely, humanly, must</i></p> <p>Educative values: <i>honor, respect, obedience, generosity</i></p> <p>Bible values: <i>worship, eternity, witnessing, faithfulness, love, discipleship, salvation, humility</i></p>
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dents in thinking about their relationship with God within the context of the area of study. Adventist schools and colleges have an excellent opportunity to embrace the Bible as an essential manual that can help students learn linguistic and spiritual content. To further this goal, I would like to present a practical section describing how I have been integrating Adventist educative values, faith, and the Bible in my Spanish-language teaching at the college level.

Creation of Materials

As a result of almost 20 years of experience teaching a foreign language, 10 years of research, and 15 years working on activities that include Bible usage, I decided to create a series of professional Spanish manuals, following the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines, including the universal educative values,⁷ and integrating the Bible and faith in learning and teaching in both the implicit and explicit curriculum, in the teaching of college-level Spanish.⁸ These manuals have been published and are available for use in Christian colleges. (See Box 1.)

Meaning of IFELE

This project has been named *IFELE* (Integración de la Fe en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Española—*Integration of Faith in Teaching the Spanish Language*). *IFELE* provides materials that integrate faith and the Bible and can be used in the teaching and learning of Spanish in Christian classrooms. Smith and Carvill convey that the gift of the stranger consists of faith, hospitality, and foreign-language learning, and that all the languages in the world deserve to be considered in the same way.⁹ Currently, few studies have looked at the integration of faith and the Bible in the teaching of English, or other foreign languages, as a second language. This is also the case with Spanish, although I have found a few individual articles and activities.¹⁰ As a result, I have been working on the *IFELE* project during my almost 20 years of experience teaching a foreign language. (See Example 1.)

During this time, I learned that the

acquisition of a second language is a very complex process; and thus, any element that we as linguists and teachers can find to facilitate it will help to reduce learner anxiety, as well as motivate students to accelerate the four main steps through which learners usually progress in learning a new language: euphoria, frustration, discouragement, and satisfaction.¹¹

Lanauze and Snow support the idea that “unfamiliar content may be as great an interference in comprehension as is unfamiliar form.”¹² This is why the ACTFL Guidelines are so relevant. Below are a few characteristics this organization recommends that a teacher take into account when creating assignments, particularly at the beginning and intermediate levels:

- Use a limited number of letters, symbols, or signs; identify high-frequency words and/or sentences strongly supported by the context (reading).
- Create short, connected, non-complex texts with personal, social, and familiar topics (reading).
- Ask students to copy or transcribe familiar words and sentences (writing).
- Require learners to produce by memory only a limited number of isolated words or familiar sentences (writing).
- Ask students to describe personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other personal topics (writing).

- Have students exchange greetings and identify and name a number of familiar objects in the immediate environment, within a familiar framework (speaking).

- Ask students to talk about their personal interests and preferences related to self, family, home, and daily activities (speaking).

- Help students recognize isolated words or high-frequency sentences within a context (listening).

- Remember that comprehension is most often accurate with highly familiar and predictable topics (listening).

- Use approaches that help students act with greater awareness of self, of other cultures, and their relationships to those cultures, in a variety of settings (community).

- Structure assignments so that students start learning from their own community of practice (comfort zone), in order to participate more fully in global community and worldwide marketplace (community).¹³

Based on the official aforementioned ACTFL guidelines, one can see the connection to the *IFELE* project, which is built on familiarity, faith-integrative principles, and community concepts.

Use of Familiar Content

Anderson and Pearson indicated that “comprehension, by definition, is the process of relating new or incoming information already stored in memory. Readers make connections

Box 1. *IFELE* (Integración de la Fe en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Española—*Integration of Faith in Teaching the Spanish Language*) Textbooks

IFELE Elementary Spanish I (Columbus, Ohio: Biblio Publishing, 2014). ISBN: 978-1-62249-216-6: <https://bibliobookstore.com/International-Languages/IFELE-Elementary-Spanish-I-by-Francisco-Burgos>

IFELE Elementary Spanish II (Columbus, Ohio: Biblio Publishing, 2014). ISBN: 978-1-62249-231-2: <https://bibliobookstore.com/International-Languages/IFELE-Elementary-Spanish-II-by-Francisco-Burgos>

IFELE Intermediate Spanish I (Columbus, Ohio: Biblio Publishing, 2014). ISBN: 978-1-62249-185-8: <https://bibliobookstore.com/International/IFELE-ESPANOL-INTERMEDIO-I-by-Francisco-Burgos>

IFELE Intermediate Spanish II (Columbus, Ohio: Biblio Publishing, 2014). ISBN: 978-1-62249-186-5: <https://bibliobookstore.com/International/IFELE-ESPANOL-INTERMEDIO-II-by-Francisco-Burgos>



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between the new information on the printed page and their existing knowledge.”¹⁴ Langer and Applebee add that “one does not simply learn and write about particular things in particular ways.”¹⁵ Instead, one can learn from a variety of sources, and the information is more meaningful when those sources are familiar.

Anne Ediger¹⁶ also defended the familiar aspect because from her personal perspective, it would be much easier to learn moving from the known or familiar to the unknown or unfamiliar content. She mentioned three fundamental elements: text (familiar content), reader (group identity), and context (linguistic features). Finally, as mentioned above, the ACTFL guidelines recognize key words, cognates, and contextualized phrases and sentences with predictable or familiar information, especially for beginning learners of a foreign language. This organization explores the need to motivate the teachers and learners to produce texts related to their daily routines through familiar topics and contents.

Sandra Savignon¹⁷ named the fun-

damental elements that appropriate 21st-century instruction should deliver:

1. Teaching should be “new” or “innovative,” in the sense of transforming the learners into active participants who are able to interpret, express, and negotiate their own meanings.
2. The teacher should seek to achieve balance between the sociocultural context, the learning strategies, the discourse cohesion, and the less-popular grammar aspect of the course.

Use of the Bible in English Language and Literature Classes

Throughout history, many prejudices have existed against the use of the Bible as a text to teach a foreign language because of the relationship between this book and some prohibited terms in the context of secular education, such as *religion*, *faith*, *moral values* or, in a critical sense, a certain *fundamentalism* by some teachers who have coercively proselytized in their classrooms. However, Astin, Astin, and Lindholm¹⁸ have suggested that care for the spiritual lives of students can

improve their emotional state and, as a result, their academic performance as well. Elaine Horwitz¹⁹ observed that class realities which contradict students’ expectations about learning may discourage them and, as a consequence, interfere with the accomplishment of their desired objectives. Nunan argued that “teachers should find out what their students think and feel about what they want to learn and how they want to learn.”²⁰

Finally, a few secular authors have defended the use of the Bible in language and literature classes. Marie Wachlin²¹ commended the Bible as a textbook to teach a language since it has inspired other disciplines, such as music, poetry, and art, with a variety of forms and literary styles. Wachlin encouraged linguists, professors, students, administrators, and investigators to use the Bible more frequently in American schools, especially in colleges and universities. However, the Bible must be taught in a tolerant, flexible, responsible, objective, and critical way. Professors in Christian schools can openly use the Bible to help students develop positive character traits and a relationship with God, as well as to achieve academic goals.

Morris and Smith²² found a direct relationship between student retention at Syracuse University and the integration of the Bible as literature for English-language learning. Edward Bonard,²³ the pioneer of a faith movement that based its teaching method of English as a second language on using the Bible as a literary text for conversational skill, developed a program titled “Let’s Start to Speak” (*Empecemos a hablar*) in Nashville, Tennessee. The program has helped more than 3,000 immigrants from some 300 countries. Bonard sought to establish a comparative analysis of the results between familiar and unfamiliar texts. He found that the use of familiar texts from the Bible showed better results than the texts taken from other books.

Use of the Bible in Spanish Language and Literature Classes

Although I have reviewed numerous and diverse studies on the use of

the Bible to teach Spanish as a second language, I have yet to find one dealing with the effect of Bible texts on teaching and learning. This therefore needs further study by Christian Spanish-language professors. They, along with the administrators, investigators, and linguists, all have the responsibility to study how to deliver Spanish as a foreign language in ways that increase acquisition of a language that continues to be in high demand.

Communities Integrating Bible and Faith

Benedict Anderson spoke about the concept of nationality as something that should be “natural, in the sense that it contains something that is unchosen (much like gender, skin color, and parentage).”²⁴ While this may be so, there are many for whom nationality is a choice, and the result is a community of practice in which they willingly participate. Bonny Norton²⁵ emphasized the importance of motivating a specific community of language learners to participate in the practices that characterize the new communities, that they may feel the need to integrate their own realities into their learning. In his investigation, Norton included the negative experiences of two students, Katarina and Felicia, who became discouraged and abandoned their English classes because they didn’t feel accepted as active participants in the new community. Lave and Wenger stated that “learning as an increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world.”²⁶ Eda Derhem²⁷ observed that linguists estimate that about 80 percent of the 60,000 existing languages today will eventually disappear, and insisted on the importance of respecting the identities of communities of linguistic practice by avoiding separation of language from culture and society.

Smith and Carvill concluded that “If, therefore, I do not understand the meaning of what I am saying, I will be a foreigner for the speaker, and she/he will be a foreigner for me.”²⁸ Goulah advocated for transformative learning “in interlocking structures of race, class, gender, and power in the context

of the standards-based world language and culture learning . . . to transform learners’ tendencies, attitudes, and actions contributing to them. . . . While critical literacy is necessary, transformative learning is desirable.”²⁹

Rito Baring³⁰ explained why the students in his Christian community in the Philippines read the Bible as an act of faith. Even though the students were Generation X learners, who read very little in general and the Bible even less, he discovered that they could be motivated to read and learn better when they read the Bible as part of their learning experience.

Within a community of language learners, the students can transcend the linguistic, developing their own personal relationship with God, learning about life outside the classroom, practicing critical thinking, discerning between the good and the bad, the convenient and inconvenient. Therefore, Bible content cannot be neutral, but can be used respectfully with consideration of the community of practice.

Morris, Beck, and Smith indicated that unlike secular or public institutions, Christian schools emphasize the importance of students developing wholistically. Spiritual growth is at the core of the overall curriculum, and integrating faith with learning, both in the classroom and in school-wide activities, will help students develop and embrace a Christian worldview. In their study, “when a student reported being spiritually integrated, [he or she was] more likely to persist.”³¹

Final Thoughts

In 2006, I began teaching Spanish as a second language at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.A. The interest in Spanish-language learning and the number of students enrolling in Spanish classes has increased from about 30 to approximately 140 students per semester between 2006 and 2017. More than 90 percent of Oakwood’s student population are Christians, so most are familiar with Bible content. During the fall and spring 2010-2011 semester courses, the university distributed a survey in order to determine how students perceived their spiritual

growth on campus. Approximately 800 students completed the 52-item *LifeCore®2011* survey. In addition, approximately 852 students were interviewed.³²

According to *LifeCore®2011*, 67 percent of the students surveyed found the religious activities interesting, 50 percent said they were significant, and 43 percent said they were relevant. In relation to student involvement in the community, 46 percent of the students were willing to help others understand the Bible. With regard to personal spiritual activities, 73 percent of respondents said they read the Bible frequently, compared to four percent of the participants in Barna Research Group’s national survey taken in 2003,³³ which studied 2,033 adults in the United States. Finally, 32 percent of the Oakwood students said that Bible reading had a significant impact on their knowledge and study of the Bible, still much higher than the national average. This could be because the Bible is integrated throughout the curriculum, not taught only in religion courses.

In their responses to the *LifeCore®2011* survey, students enrolled in Spanish courses said that integration of the Bible in their courses helped increase their interest and understanding:

- “Yes, familiar texts helped me correlate and understand Spanish a lot better”;
- “Yes, it was really helpful. I was able to identify stories and it was easier to identify words, as I associated it with Bible story”;
- “Yes, relating Spanish with texts that I already knew helped me remember it easier”;
- “Yes, it’s a great teaching tool. I find it easier learning something in Spanish [that] I am familiar with rather than a random poem or dialogue”;
- “Yes, I took two years Spanish in [a] Christian school but never learned with Bible texts. I look forward being placed in [a] group to learn using familiar texts.”

To summarize, I found a significant number of previous studies that demonstrated an impact as the result of using the Bible in English-language

learning. However, it was almost impossible to discover similar findings about the impact of the Bible on Spanish-language learning. This, then, became the rationale for my creating materials to teach Spanish as a second language at the college level. Scripture says: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7, 8, NLT).³⁴ As Christian teachers, each of us has a responsibility to continue to use the Bible in our courses and to create materials that integrate faith in teaching within Christian education. ✍

This article has been peer reviewed.



Francisco Burgos, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Oakwood University in Huntsville,

Alabama, U.S.A. Dr. Burgos earned his PhD in Romance Languages (Spanish and English), with an emphasis in Linguistics, Literature, and Teaching Methodology from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He also holds an MA in Anglo-Saxon Philology and Hispanic Studies, and an MEd in General Education from Universidad Adventista del Plata, Argentina. In addition to teaching for several years at Centro Escolar Adventista de Sagunto, Spain, he has served as the Adventist Colleges Abroad Coordinator for the Foreign Languages Department at Oakwood University for 11 years. He also actively supports students in the foreign-languages program by serving as founder and sponsor of several Spanish clubs and raising money for scholarships. He has authored several textbooks for elementary and intermediate Spanish, and presented his research nationally and internationally.

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How to Plan for an Accreditation Visit From the ADVENTIST ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION (AAA)

The Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA) was established in 1997 with the purpose to review the mission practices, spiritual values, and educational policies of Seventh-day Adventist academic institutions.¹ AAA serves as the accrediting body for all higher education programs and institutions owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.² The accreditation process begins when an Adventist college or university receives notification of a AAA visit from the General Conference Department of Education. Included in this notice is the accreditation handbook and the institution's previous AAA evaluation report. The guidelines contain the criteria developed by AAA and are to be used by the host institution as it completes a self-study report prior to the arrival of the AAA evaluation team.³

The self-study process for Washington Adventist Uni-

versity in Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A. (formerly Columbia Union College)⁴ began in 2012. The university was given 10 criteria to address under Form B. Institutions that use Form B have a long history of accreditation by AAA, are recognized by a regional accrediting body, and have a track record of adhering to church educational policies. Seventh-day Adventist institutions that are new to the AAA process will most likely be evaluated under Form A, which requires a lengthier process. WAU was evaluated using the 10 criterion categories included in Form B at that time (see Table 1, Form B). In 2013, the General Conference Department of Education significantly reduced the number of Form B areas from 10 to seven (see Table 2), which decreased the time required to prepare the self-study document. WAU, however, had already made significant progress into its self-study evaluation, so the school adhered to the original self-study plan.

BY GRANT LEITMA

AAA Self-Study Chair

The president of Washington Adventist University (WAU) asked if I would take the leadership role as the chair of the school's AAA self-study committee. I agreed and was given the AAA guidelines. Accepting the role of AAA self-study chair meant my workload and time commitments would increase over the next year. The chair coordinates and keeps track of all the details necessary to produce a well-written AAA *Self-Study* report, and makes plans for hosting the AAA visiting team. The visiting team is typically comprised of the General Conference liaison (chair), the division director of education/vice president for education or designee (recording secretary), the president and board chair of the institution, peers from Adventist colleges and universities, and others in consultation with the chair and division director. In order to coordinate and manage the self-study process, the first several months were spent organizing the steering committee, deciding on the composition of the various subcommittees, developing and constructing a timeline for the entire project, and forming the executive committee. While it took 13 months of planning, researching, writing, and editing to produce the finished AAA *Self-Study*, our ability to complete a successful report was enhanced when WAU's regional accrediting body, the Middle States Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE), found us to be in compliance with its 14 standards. Many of the resources we needed for the AAA *Self-Study* were also reviewed and gathered by our previous MSCHE self-study team such as: MSCHE *Self-Study* report, faculty/staff handbook, board minutes, course syllabi, student handbook, general-education assessment report, the university's audited financial statements, governance procedures, campus master plan, athletic handbook, facts and figures book-

let, and various public-relations brochures. However, the AAA *Self-Study* report made use of those supportive resources differently than the regional MSCHE report (see Table 3 on page 32). In addition, the AAA *Self-Study* report included the university's spiritual master plan—which outlines the goals for spiritual life and development on the campus, and a report on the plan's impact on the lives of students, faculty, staff, and the wider community through the curriculum, service, and witnessing.

I found that the chair had a number of responsibilities. He or she must make frequent reports to the institution's administration, who need to be informed about all committee decisions and should receive the minutes of all meetings. As chair of the AAA self-study committee, I created the minutes for each meeting and then circulated them by e-mail to the administration and all members of the steering committee.

Another important assignment for the self-study chair is to plan for a successful visit by the AAA team. This included making appropriate hotel accommodations, arranging transportation from the hotel to campus meetings, scheduling daily meals, providing adequate campus workspace, and scheduling on-site meetings with administration, faculty, staff, and students, which required collaboration with various administrative officers and staff, the school's food-service director, and campus security. Figure 1 on page 35 provides insight into the amount of time required to complete the AAA research and writing process by the various committees.

Steering Committee

An objective and accurate self-study report should reflect a campus-wide evaluation rather than the work of one indi-

Table 1. Self-Study Form B Criteria Categories (2005)

Self-Study Form B

1. History, Philosophy, Mission, and Objectives
2. Spiritual Development, Service, and Witnessing
3. Governance, Organization, and Administration
4. Finances, Financial Structure, and Industries
5. Programs of Study
6. Faculty and Staff
7. Library and Resource Centers
8. Student Services
9. Public Relations and External Constituencies
10. Pastoral and Theological Education

Table 2. AAA Self-Study Criteria (2013)

Self-Study Form A

1. History, Philosophy, Mission, and Objectives
2. Spiritual Development, Service, and Witnessing
3. Governance, Organization, and Administration
4. Finances, Financial Structure, and Industries
5. Programs of Study
6. Faculty and Staff
7. Library and Resource Centers and Technology
8. Academic Policies and Records
9. Student Services
10. Physical Plant and Facilities
11. Public Relations and External Constituencies
12. Pastoral and Theological Education

Self-Study Form B

1. Mission and Identity
2. Spiritual Development, Witness, and Service
3. Governance, Organization, and Administration
4. Programs of Study
5. Faculty and Staff
6. Educational Context
7. Pastoral and Theological Education

Taken from the 2013 AAA Accreditation Handbook:
http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/docs/aaa_handbook_2005_part_iv_with_online_delivery_elements_and_criterion_10.pdf
http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/docs/aaa_handbook_2013_part_iii.pdf
http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/docs/aaa_handbook_2013_part_iv.pdf

Table 3. Partial Cross-Listing of MSCHE Standards, AAA Criteria, and WAU Strategies

MSCHE – Standards of Excellence	AAA - Institution of Excellence Criteria (2005) (Form B)	WAU – Strategies of the Plan
Standard 1: Mission and Goals	Criterion 1: History, Philosophy, Mission, and Objectives	See entire Strategic Plan.
Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal	Criterion 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration Criterion 4: Finances, Financial Structure, and Industries	Strategy 4: Transform governance and the physical campus Strategy 5: Expand and strengthen financial resources
Standard 3: Institutional Resources	Criterion 4: Finances, Financial Structure, and Industries Criterion 7: Library and Resource Centers	Strategy 4: Transform governance and the physical campus Strategy 5: Expand and strengthen financial resources
Standard 4: Leadership and Governance	Criterion 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration	Strategy 4: Transform governance and the physical campus
Standard 5: Administration	Criterion 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration	Strategy 2: Deeply engage and value people (Imperative 5)
Standard 6: Integrity	Criterion 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration Criterion 6: Faculty and Staff Criterion 9: Public Relations and External Constituencies	Strategy 2: Deeply engage and value people (Imperative 5) Strategy 4: Transform governance and the physical campus (Imperative 5) Strategy 5: Expand and strengthen financial resources (Imperative 2) Strategy 6: Embrace and explore the opportunities of the nation's capital (Imperatives 1 and 3) Strategy 7: Implement an institutional assessment plan and metrics (Imperative 5)
Standard 7: Institutional Assessment	Criterion 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration	Strategy 7: Implement an institutional assessment plan and metrics

Matrix of Institutional Goals and Major Accreditors' Goals, v2 Created by Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. AAA *Self-Study* Form B (2013): http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/docs/aaa_handbook_2013_part_iv.pdf.

vidual. A balanced report will result from participation by a cross-section of the students, staff, and faculty. Once we received the criteria and the associated questions, I chose a steering committee composed of 10 individuals to oversee the research and written responses for each of the AAA criteria. One subcommittee was created for each of the 10 criteria. Each steering-committee member was assigned to write one section of the *Self-Study* report and to review the work of fellow committee members. The steering committee thus engaged in a review process for every section of the *Self-Study* report and provided feedback to each steering-committee chair regarding suggested improvements, changes, or additions.

I invited the university's institutional-research director to be a member of the steering committee. An individual filling this position will be able to procure self-study resource materials quickly, which will lessen the amount of frustration or delay that the self-study committee might otherwise experience. If the institution does not have such a position, then the chair should select a person who works in the administrative office and is familiar with the school's internal report-writing process.

Subcommittee Assignments

For the WAU self-study, the AAA self-study chair, in collaboration with the university provost, determined the fac-

ulty/staff/student composition for each of the subcommittees. Committee assignments were determined by the nature of the criteria questions and specific background of the faculty, staff, and students. The sizes of the various committees ranged from five to 10 members, depending on the magnitude of the specific criterion. Because we knew that student input would be valuable, several students were asked to be on certain committees such as spiritual development and student services.

I obtained a master list of all faculty and staff and became familiar with the skills and talents they possessed. A campus-governance committee list is very useful, as is a departmental faculty/staff phone and e-mail roster. The chair should choose individuals who have the knowledge and experience for the selected criterion areas by virtue of their campus positions and years of experience in that position.

Ideally, the self-study subcommittees should represent a broad spectrum of people and programs on campus to ensure a fair and balanced investigation of the school's programs and departments. The self-study subcommittees will function as a campus fact-gathering mechanism whose mission will be to evaluate, analyze, and make recommendations based upon the responses to the criteria. I tried to be sensitive in the selection process so as not to choose individuals who would be unduly burdened by this extra responsibility due to current work obligations or recent regional accreditation responsibilities. For example, if an individual had chaired one of the self-study groups for the recent regional

accreditation (i.e., MSCHE), he or she was not requested to chair a similar committee but instead was asked to serve on a related AAA committee.

Having each subcommittee evaluate one of the criteria is an efficient method to accomplish the task of writing a self-study report. It would be a serious mistake to combine several criteria and have them handled by one subcommittee as a way to reduce the number of subcommittees. The process would be cumbersome, confusing for committee members, and an inefficient use of committee time. It might also produce a dysfunctional committee due to conflicting research objectives.

The Executive Committee

The executive committee is responsible for making all final edits before the self-study is sent to the publisher. While keeping the committee small in size, be sure to include individuals with experience in content/style/editorial work, proofreading/correcting grammatical errors, and who are regularly involved in creating institutional reports and/or academic research. Since the scope of this type of editorial writing requires a significant time commitment, I requested a stipend for this faculty member to compensate for the additional work. The remaining committee members were full-time staff/faculty and received no extra compensation. The executive committee membership was comprised of four individuals, including the chair of the WAU self-study.

An executive committee begins its task when the steering



Members of the visiting AAA team in the exhibit room reviewing artifacts, consulting and verifying information, and writing their reports.



The Washington Adventist University AAA executive committee at work.

committee has finished reviewing the criteria responses. Their primary task is to make final edits so the published draft is coherent and polished. A detailed-oriented person skilled at discovering editorial issues such as punctuation and sentence-construction problems should be included on the committee; however, no one person will catch all the small errors. Individuals responsible for writing the final draft easily become absorbed with content accuracy at the expense of discovering editorial problems. The final step is for the executive committee to contact the publisher and ensure that all work is uniformly completed. Our final published report was 78 two-sided pages of content and 26 pages of appendix documents, graphs, and charts. The document was then ready for the visiting committee to review as they conducted their evaluation.

Things to Do Before the First Steering Committee Meeting

1. Locate all resource materials. Subcommittee chairs will want to know where to find information about the items included in their specific criteria. If your institution employs an individual who is responsible for producing regional, state, or federal reports, he or she will be an indispensable resource guide.
2. Create a packet containing all needed information for each team. Materials should include the most recent self-study document, AAA's last recommendations, each team's specific criteria, and a steering-committee timeline.
3. Produce a cross-listing of all materials used for the regional accreditation with relevance to specific AAA self-study criteria. If your school is regionally accredited, the regional accreditation standards can be cross-matched with

AAA criteria. This index will serve as a useful guide for the steering-committee chairs in locating recent regional accreditation report findings. We found this to be very helpful for locating areas already evaluated.

4. Select and reserve a good meeting location with access to a projector, a high-speed Internet connection, and a white board or chalk board.

5. Choose a steering committee meeting time that has the fewest time conflicts with other campus activities and members' schedules, and keep to it.

Timeline Construction

The AAA self-study chair should develop a reasonable timeline to guide the self-study process. Make sure everyone understands the importance of observing the due dates listed on the timeline. Get everyone to agree to the schedule at the beginning, and try not to deviate from it. Build into the timeline reasonable expectations regarding completion of committee tasks. Construct a schedule that is sensitive to the demands of the academic calendar. Faculty and staff usually find graduation, test weeks, and holiday times stressful, so plan to complete the major portion of the writing during longer break periods such as mid-semester or summer vacation. This will leave time for each chair to finish writing his or her chapter of the self-study and for it to be reviewed by the steering committee. Be sure to build some flexibility into the timetable so self-study participants do not feel rushed or overloaded. Despite careful planning, delays may occur for a variety of reasons, often related to the professional and personal obligations of the subcommittee chairs.

The timeline should specifically indicate the time, date, and location of the steering-committee meetings. Plan on getting together at least once a month for a report on subcommittee progress and so that specific questions can be addressed. WAU steering-committee members were particularly interested in knowing where to locate resource material and how to interpret specific criterion questions. However, our steering committee kept to the schedule, meeting every Monday and Wednesday during the summer until we had heard from each subcommittee. Figure 1 provides an example of the timeline that was successfully developed and followed for WAU's AAA self-study.

Useful Internet Aids

A decision was made at the beginning to require all of the subcommittee chairs to work on their drafts using Google docs.com. The self-study chair provided the names of the committee chairs, as well as each team member, to the university's Information Technology Services (ITS) so they could arrange for access to this service. Google docs.com was set up to allow each team to access the most current version of their team's draft. Using a shared space avoids the problems created by having as many versions and flash drives as there are committee members. In addition, this practice avoided the problem of identifying who had the most current working subcommittee draft. Google docs.com (1) constantly backed up written entries and allowed only authorized team members to view and edit each report; (2) allowed the self-study chair access to each subcommittee's working document in order to monitor the committees' progress; (3) allowed each subcommittee chair to present his or her group's work to the entire steering committee via the Internet; and (4) allowed the steering committee to make comments and ask questions about the work being presented. Since Google docs.com is an Internet-based program, changes could be made immediately. The main disadvantage reported by some of the subcommittee chairs was that the program was less user friendly than they had hoped.

It is important to back up the report as it is being written. Do not take for granted that everything written will be automatically saved by one program. The computer system used for writing the final report should be regularly evaluated by updating the virus protection and making sure all software is working properly. This step is easily overlooked when trying to finish a report on time. A small cost to an institution but highly recommended is a subscription to Carbonite.com, which allows writers to have documents constantly backed up. For example, one subcommittee member made the mistake of not using Carbonite.com at first and instead used an external hard drive for backing up documents, only to discover later that the hard drive was not working properly during an editing meeting with the executive committee. As we attempted to complete the final editing stage, the computer screen froze. Restarting the computer caused the loss of the last section of the document. ITS tried to retrieve the lost section by running a special document-recovery program but without success. The only

Figure 1. Timeline for AAA Self-Study at Washington Adventist University

1. President appoints AAA self-study chair (August 2011).
2. AAA self-study chair works on organizing steering committee and team members (September 2011 through December 2011).
3. First organizational meeting of the steering committee (January 2012).
4. Self-study teams begin work of research, evaluation, and analysis (January 2012 through May 2012). Monthly meetings are called to get status reports from each team.
5. Steering committee gets drafts from Teams 1 through 10 (by May 31 deadline).
Steering committee begins to review the drafts from each team on the dates below:

A. Team 1 – June 4	G. Team 7 – June 25
B. Team 2 – June 6	H. Team 8 – June 27
C. Team 3 – June 11	I. July 4 – week off
D. Team 4 – June 13	J. Team 9 – July 9
E. Team 5 – June 18	K. Team 10 – July 11
F. Team 6 – June 20	
6. AAA draft revision and editing completed (by August 31).
7. AAA draft report circulated to faculty, staff, students, and board members for comment (September 1 to September 16).
8. Final editing finished and report sent to publisher (September 20).
9. WAU *Self-Study* report submitted to AAA visitation team (October 1).
10. Site visit by AAA team (week of November 5-9, 2012).

solution was to re-create that section again by referring to notes and personal memories.

Exhibit Room

An exhibit room is a useful way of displaying materials that are listed in the final self-study report to the visiting committee. The exhibit room speaks to school pride, spirit, community enthusiasm, and institutional professionalism. If carefully organized, it can identify the attributes and characteristics that directly communicate the school's mission and vision. Our institution's exhibit room displayed everything needed for the self-study team to read and evaluate. This room included many of the same exhibits used for our regional accreditation visit. For example, we made available all the faculty syllabi, previous regional self-study reports and university board reports. Several laptops played videos of school activities; and we provided a minibar for drinks, snacks, plus a printer and projector. The exhibit room was



The Washington Adventist University AAA exhibit room displayed and housed artifacts that would assist the visiting team in completing their work.

further enhanced by its display of school colors, mission posters, and the use of embossed tablecloths. Each item in the exhibit room was labeled and referenced in a master sheet distributed to the AAA visitation team.

The first meeting with the AAA visitation team was an overall orientation to the exhibit room and how the documents could be accessed. The AAA visitation team found the exhibit room useful as a conference room and workroom to produce their evaluation reports. Sometimes the exhibit room was used to host catered meals for the AAA evaluation team. The AAA report highly commended WAU's exhibit room as being exemplary in the range and type of evidence presented.

Reflections on the Self-Study Process

Many of the problems encountered during the AAA self-study process were minimized by the steering committee chair communicating frequently with all subcommittee chairs by using an e-mail distribution list. In addition, the self-study work was intentionally organized to allow much of the intense busy work to occur during the summer, when the workload for most committee members was less stressful. Because of the scheduling of the AAA team's visit, it was important to get much of the work done before the fall semester and to complete all the final editing work on time.

AAA specifically recommends receiving the finished *Self-Study* report one month before the evaluation visit.

Overall, participation in a self-study was an informative and lengthy experience. The report was posted on the school's Website prior to its submission to AAA. This allowed the administration, faculty, students, and board members to respond to it, and strengthened the final report. Once the AAA *Self-Study* was completed and shared, the campus community gained a better understanding of what the institution had accomplished and which areas the administration would need to address for future improvement. The AAA visitation team made several commendations and recommendations during their exit presentation to the university on the last day of their visit. We were commended for the substantial progress in achieving all major past recommendations and for a well-written narrative report. A major AAA recommendation cited the need for WAU's spiritual master plan to reflect how the uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist mission and message is expressed to the large number of non-Adventist students enrolled in the School of Graduate and Professional Studies (SGPS). The AAA visitation team was particularly interested in how faith and learning was integrated across the curriculum within the programs offered through SGPS.

An important component of the self-study process was beginning each steering-committee meeting with a devotional thought by the chair from the book *Education*, followed by a prayer offered by a committee member. One particular spiritual thought that gave direction and energy to the steering committee was this quote: “In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one.”⁵ While obtaining a quality education and a degree are very important for every student, even more important is for every student to personally know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The AAA self-study process is one formal method to determine how effectively the school’s spiritual mission is being articulated to the student population, and each employee’s responsibility to model the same. Examination of the institution’s curriculum, organized campus events, pro-

grams, and policies allows the school to evaluate its spiritual mission’s strengths and weaknesses.

We were notified by AAA during the spring of 2013 that we had been granted accreditation until December 2017. Our successful AAA report was made possible by adhering to the timeline and working with a supportive administration. Administrative officials provided the self-study chair with a budget, resources, and personnel needed to finish the task. As chair, I felt privileged to work collaboratively with WAU’s faculty, staff, administration, and students to ensure a coherent, meaningful, and high-quality report. ✍

This article has been peer reviewed.

Box 1. Accreditation Resources

The Adventist Accrediting Association has two protocols: Form A for newly established or developing institutions; and Form B for more established institutions. The Form A instrument is more detailed, covering curriculum, finances, infrastructure, etc., as well as the mission, purpose, and values of the institution. The Form B instrument assumes that the institution is accredited by an outside body such as a regional or governmental accrediting agency and is already accredited by AAA. Below are some resources that may be helpful in preparing for an accreditation visit:

NAD K-12 Chairperson Evaluation Tip Sheets

http://adventisteducation.org/downloads/pdf/1065_evaluationchairtips.pdf

Writing the AAA Report

<http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/docs/WritingtheAAARep1.pdf>

Regional Accrediting Handbooks

Western Association of Schools and Colleges – WASC -

Middle States Commission on Higher Education – MSCHE

<https://www.msche.org/publications/BecomingAccredited.pdf>

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

<http://www.nwccu.org/Pubs%20Forms%20and%20Updates/Publications/Accreditation%20Handbook,%202017%20Edition.pdf>

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

http://www.sacscoc.org/inst_forms_and_info1.asp

New England Association of Colleges and Schools

<http://cihe.neasc.org/standards-policies/policies-procedures>



Grant Leitma, PhD, is Professor and Chair of the Psychology and Counseling Department at Washington Adventist University (WAU) in Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A. Dr. Leitma earned his doctorate in experimental psychology from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, Illinois. He has published widely and is a member of the American Psychological Association, American Counseling Association, Maryland Counseling Association, and the Adventist Association of Family Life Professionals. In 2012, Dr. Leitma served as Chair of the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA) self-study committee for WAU and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Self-Study report for WAU.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy, “The Purpose and Function of the Adventist Accrediting Association,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 70:4 (April/May 2008): 15: <http://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae200870041505.pdf>.

2. The Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA) serves as the accrediting body for all higher education programs and institutions owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For more information about AAA’s function, see: “AAA Higher Education: What is the Adventist Accrediting Association?” http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49&Itemid=65.

3. For a detailed explanation of the accreditation process, see *ibid.*, pages 15-19.

4. Established in 1904, Washington Adventist University (WAU) was first known as Washington Training College, a liberal-arts institution. In 1907, it became Washington Foreign Mission Seminary, and then Washington Missionary College in 1915. The name was changed to Columbia Union College in 1961. In 2009, Columbia Union College attained university status, and the school’s constituency voted to change the name to Washington Adventist University. WAU was first accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1942. For more about Washington Adventist University, see “WAU History”: <https://www.wau.edu/about-us/history/>.

5. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 30.



Deril Wood



Caroline Lipman

FLIPPED CLASSROOMS

Improve Reading Comprehension of Science Textbooks

Mrs. Lipman's 10th-grade biology students are not completing their assignments and are doing poorly on tests. They complain to Mrs. Lipman that they are unable to understand what they read in the science textbook, and they do not always understand the meaning of technical terms. Although a few students complete their assignments, others either give up after partially completing them or do not even attempt to do the work. They are an ethnically diverse group of boys and girls with varied learning abilities and academic achievements.

A review of relevant literature and dialogue with other educators suggested that implementing a variation of the flipped classroom¹ might alleviate the students' reading comprehension problems, increase their motivation, and consequently improve study habits, homework completion, and test grades. This article shares an action research regarding the impact of the flipped classroom approach on a group of biology students at the secondary level.

Importance of the Research

While the specifics of this study relate to the discipline (biology) and its specialized vocabulary, the main emphasis is on addressing the reading and comprehension needs of the learners. Providing an environment for student success is the educator's responsibility. Many classrooms today are very diverse and include English language learners (ELL)/or students with limited English proficiency, as well as a variety of students representing different races and ethnicities, levels of socioeconomic status, learning disabilities (LD), and other exceptionalities.²

Referring to Christ's teaching ministry, Ellen White wrote: "In these first disciples was presented a marked diversity . . . they represented widely varied types of character."³ In the midst of this diversity, Christ met His audiences where they were, and men and women from various backgrounds found hope in His teaching. And "In the Teacher sent from God, all true educational work finds its center."⁴ Likewise, teachers today should devise and identify instructional methods that help them effectively reach all of the students entrusted to them. In an attempt to find

an effective approach, Mrs. Lipman implemented a flipped classroom model.

Flipped Classroom—Definition

Flipped classroom (flipped learning) is defined by the Flipped Learning Network as follows: "Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter."⁵

The term "flipped classroom" came into use in 2007 when Jonathan Bergman and Aaron Sams⁶ started using it in their high school science classes in Woodland Park, Colorado, U.S.A. However, as early as 1993, Allison King⁷ wrote an article promoting the use of class time to construct meaning rather than to transmit information. In 1997, Eric Mazur⁸ published "Peer Instruction," which described how he de-emphasized information transfer (lecture-driven instruction) in

BY DERIL WOOD and CAROLINE LIPMAN

the classroom, and used that time to coach students' learning. In 2000, Lage, Platt, and Tregila⁹ published "Inverting the Classroom: A Gateway to Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment." Their research focused on the benefits of moving information presentation out of the classroom into the realm of technology and media, where it can be more beneficial to individuals with varied learning styles. Salman Khan¹⁰ also contributed to the flipped classroom when he started recording video lessons in 2004.

In a traditional teacher-centered classroom, a lot of time is spent lecturing and very little time doing interactive activities. This creates the risk of either inadequately covering the curriculum in the required amount of time or overwhelming the students with homework that they have very little time to complete outside of class. In the flipped classroom, learning is more student-centered. This method improves student engagement with content, increases and improves faculty contact time with students, and enhances learning.¹¹

Although the literature bears rich evidence of the benefits of the flipped classroom for children with exceptionalities,¹² this approach does not substitute for pedagogy designed to meet the unique needs of children who have learning disabilities or those who are gifted and talented.

Action Research

Since reading comprehension of science textbooks was a problem localized to the 10th-grade biology class at Bass Memorial Academy in Lumberton, Mississippi, U.S.A., action research was considered the most appropriate investigative methodology. Action research is defined by the Richard Sagor as follows: "a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the 'actor' in improving and/or refining his or her actions."¹³ In this study, the actors

were the 10th-grade biology students and their teacher.

Action research focuses on a local problem and attempts to produce local change. It accommodates the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Action research is always relevant to the participants because it has the potential to make a real difference in the students' lives.

According to Sagor, action research should proceed as follows: Select a focus, do a literature review, ask questions, collect and analyze data, report results, and take action. Because action research is local, results are not generalized to other groups. Likewise, control or comparison groups are not usually involved. Sagor stated that the central principles of action research are professionalizing teaching, motivating and making faculty more effective, meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body, and achieving success with "standards-based" reforms.¹⁴

Problem Background

Students' reading comprehension struggles are generally less common and less pronounced in other content areas, most likely because of the uniqueness of terms connected with the sciences. Students need to master reading and understanding of expository text in order to perform well on tests, complete homework, stay motivated, and develop positive attitudes toward reading science textbooks. It is therefore crucial for educators to implement interest-building strategies to help students succeed.

Reading expository text in science may be a difficult task¹⁵ because many secondary students struggle with reading¹⁶ in general. Primary and elementary students often lack exposure to reading informational texts because teachers focus on stories.¹⁷ Reading expository, informational text becomes a challenge, then, when these students

enter secondary schools, and science textbooks, media, trade books, and Websites challenge students' comprehension skills.¹⁸

Johnson and Zabrucky¹⁹ criticize science textbooks for containing too many vocabulary concepts; presenting too many ideas at once, lacking clarity, and failing to transmit vital science knowledge. When students have difficulties understanding the text, it is easy for them to stop paying attention and not complete assignments.²⁰ In addition, students have difficulties in finding the necessary information to carry out specific tasks due to their lack of proficiency in what seems to them a "foreign language" as well as the lack of accuracy in scientific vocabulary.²¹ These are some of the factors that contribute to the difficulties Mrs. Lipman's 10th-grade biology students experience when reading biology textbooks.

The difficulty is magnified for students with reading disabilities, so they will need to spend most of their time trying to decode words and/or understand unfamiliar vocabulary.²² Students with learning disabilities often experience difficulty with fluency, decoding, and word recognition, which interferes with their ability to adequately comprehend text.²³ Based on the preceding revelations, it was necessary for Mrs. Lipman, the 10th-grade biology teacher, to implement an instructional strategy that would likely ameliorate and alleviate her students' academic problems.

Purpose

Consequently, Deril Wood and Caroline Lipman conducted mixed-methods action research to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Do flipped-classroom strategies influence biology students' performance on chapter tests?
2. How do reading-comprehension strategies used in flipped-classroom settings affect students' attitudes toward out-of-class assignments and in-class activities?
3. How do students describe their adjustments to a flipped-classroom setting?

4. How can the outcomes help educators who are interested in using the flipped-classroom strategy?

Significance of the Study

Researchers Wood and Lipman concluded that students are likely to benefit from the flipped-classroom approach and to improve their performance on tests and assignments. In addition, other educators can learn from the research and implement strategies to address similar problems that they encounter in their classes.

Research Design

Wood and Lipman obtained qualitative information by using the Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire with open-ended questions. The first set of quantitative data was also obtained from the same questionnaire, using questions on a Likert-type scale. The second set of quantitative data came from the participants' scores on three pre- and post-assessments that included intervention between pretests and posttests.

Participants

Twelve 10th-grade students (ages 15 and 16), five males and seven females, from a single biology class, participated in the study. They were randomly paired for in-class activities. Two of the students demonstrated grade-level reading comprehension skills in reading the science textbooks. The class consisted of two African-American, five Caucasian, and five Hispanic students. The five Hispanics were ESL students who lived in homes where Spanish was frequently spoken. Two students had been officially diagnosed with learning disabilities, and one with ADHD, which the Learning Disabilities Association of America stipulates is not a learning disability, but can make learning challenging.²⁴

Permissions

After securing the necessary approval from the school administration and signed consent from parents, as well as willingness to participate on

the part of the students, data collection activities began.

Instruments and Academic Assessments

The instruments used in this research were teacher-made tests, based on a chapter in the biology unit. Two 15-item and one 25-item tests comprised the assessments. The tests consisted of selected-response items, which required students to select from among a list of answers provided by the teacher; and constructed-response items, including fill-in-the-blank and short answer, which required students to create answers to open-ended questions. One point was given for a correct answer to each item.

Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire

The Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire contained 10 questions. The first six questions asked participants to rate their level of involvement in, and commitment to, the activities of the research, using a Likert-type scale. These were followed by four open-ended questions on the second section of the Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire, which required students to create brief statement answers.

- *Validity:* The assessments were teacher-made tests, which sampled the content of the reading materials and videos. Validity further assumes that the results of the assessments were used appropriately. Both content and consequential validity were assured. In designing the study, it was required that the process be monitored to ensure best practices and evaluated for effectiveness of the strategy on students' academic performance. In accordance with the theory of Backward Design,²⁵ the academic assessments and Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire were in place prior to the beginning of the instructional activities. The assessments were carefully aligned to the content to be covered in the instructional activities. Students'

scores from these assessments were used to check the effectiveness of the strategy.

- *Reliability:* Because of the small number of participants, (N = 12), Test-Retest reliability would be invalid. Computing Cronbach's Alpha would also be affected by the number of participants. However, each pretest and posttest targeted specific domains within the content, and the items were representatives of the domain.

Preparation and Orientation

The biology class met three times per week: Monday and Wednesday for 90 minutes each, and Friday for 50 minutes. Data collection took place during these sessions. First, the students were oriented to the flipped-classroom procedures and how the research would proceed, including in-class and out-of-class activities and assessments. On the Thursday prior to implementation, Mrs. Lipman added each new concept and tools to eBackpack (a cloud-based learning-management system that makes it easy to assign, annotate, collect, and grade assignments on any Internet-connected device) to ensure student access. A majority of the 10th-grade biology students lived in the dorm or other campus housing and had e-textbooks that they could access online. Students from the community lived off campus and might not have had access to the Internet. If there had been students in the class who did not have Internet at home, they could have used their free periods during the school day and afterschool study hall to access the study information.

Implementation and Data Collection Procedures

During out-of-class activities, students were expected to read selected text from the e-textbook and other provided sources, and take notes using specified reading strategies. Participants were taught how to use reading-comprehension strategies such as KWL, morphemic analysis, anticipation guide, and SQ3R based on the text that was given. (See Box 1.) Fur-

ther, they were to watch short video clips and summarize the content of lecture videos and animated video clips. The videos were short—five to seven minutes each—with subtitles and engaging graphics, suitable for students with diverse learning styles and short attention spans. The students also had to write three questions about the content of the videos or the text that they read and provide answers for these questions.

In-class activities were designed to be engaging. These activities were aligned with out-of-class activities and provided individual, group, or whole-class involvement. They included completing study guides with different types of questions (fill-in-the-blanks, matching, true-false, etc.); inquiry-based learning and problem solving in labs; and peer teaching using jigsaw and discussions. In-class activities also included pretests on Mondays.

Students received feedback from the pretest, followed by several interventions: jigsaw group, class discussions, interactive activities, worksheets, and review. These in-class activities also included a question-and-answer period to address any misunderstandings and to clarify concepts; and pair drilling in preparation for the posttest. Peer tutoring and small groups were used for other interactive activities and labs.

A posttest identical to the pretest was administered each Friday.²⁶ The tests were done individually and independently. Students were not allowed to communicate during the tests or to use textbooks or other sources.

At the end of the research period, the students completed the Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire, working individually without communicating. At the end, they turned in the questionnaire anonymously.

Data Analysis and Results

The small number of participants (N = 12) restricted the analysis to descriptive statistics for quantitative data and clustering of statements for qualitative data.

Box 1. Terms, Definitions, and Links to Description of Terms Used in Implementation

Terms	Definitions
KWL	KWL is a strategy that guides students through reading a text or a learning process. K=what students <i>Know</i> about the text/topic; W=what students <i>Want</i> to know about the topic; and L=what students say they <i>Learned</i> in the process. http://www.nea.org/tools/k-w-l-know-want-to-know-learned.html
Morphemic Analysis	Morphemic Analysis is a strategy used to determine or infer the meaning of a word by examining its important parts such as prefix, suffix, and root. http://ci5451literacystrategiescollective.pbworks.com/w/page/6064036/Vocabulary%20Morphemic%20Analysis
Anticipation Guides	Anticipation guides are a reading-comprehension strategy that is used before reading to activate students' prior knowledge and build curiosity about the text. http://www.adlit.org/strategies/19712/
SQ3R	SQ3R is a reading comprehension strategy that helps students think about the text they are reading while they are reading it. http://www.adlit.org/strategies/19803/
Jigsaw	The jigsaw teaching technique is a way of organizing classes into groups so that students become dependent on one another to succeed. http://www.teachhub.com/jigsaw-method-teaching-strategy
Student Choice Activities	Student choice activities are activities that students chose when given the chance to select activities to reinforce the learning. https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/academic-choice/

Table 1. Scores for Pre- and Post-Assessments in Biology Class

Students	Pretest 1	Posttest 1	Pretest 2	Posttest 2	Pretest 3	Posttest 3
1	6	11	20	22	9	15
2	11	13	21	25	10	14
3	9	14	18	22.5	5	14
4	6	6	.	.	10	12
5	9	13	20	20	9	13
6	8	14	18	.	6	11
7	10	14	22	25	8	11
8	6	10	16	17	5	8
9	8	11	15	.	.	9
10	8	15	20	25	9	11
11	5	8	24	24.5	7	13
12	7	13	15	23	8	13

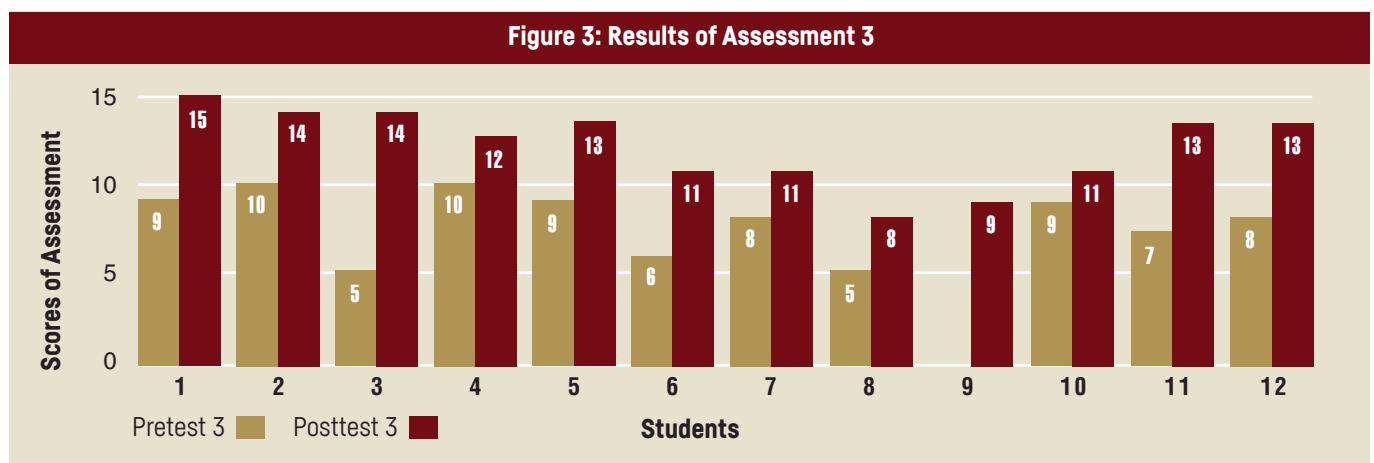
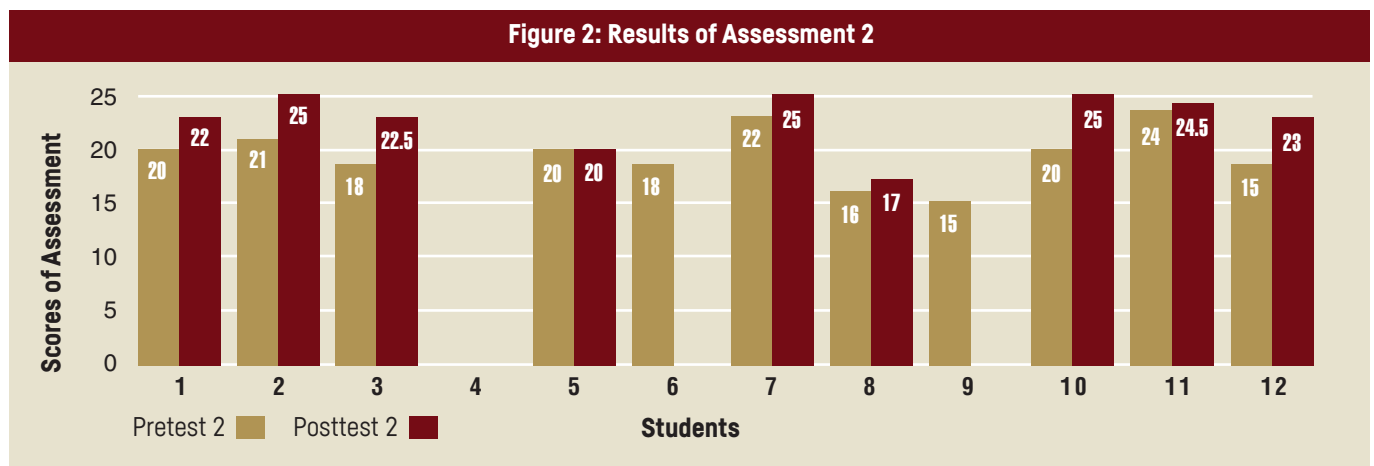
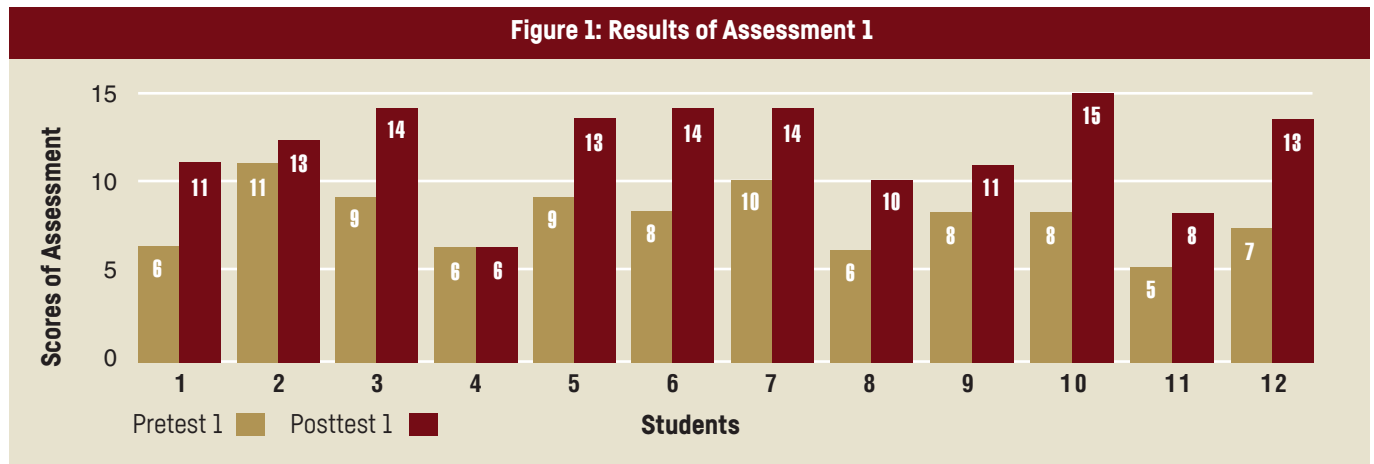
Table 1 shows each participant's raw score on each of three pretests and posttests. In this table, substituting the numbers 1-12 for their names protects the identity of the students. Missing

values on the table represent student absences when the assessment was performed. The highest possible score on each test was 15, 25, and 15, respectively. General observation of the

table reveals growth from pretest to posttest. Three participants' achievements were particularly noteworthy, one of whose test scores went up from 53 to 100 percent, from 60 to 100 percent, and from 33 to 93 percent. Figures 1-3 graphically present participants' performance on each of the three pretests and posttests.

On the Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire, a majority of participants gave positive feedback regarding their flipped classroom experience. Eighty-six percent of the participants reported watching the flipped videos on time. Sixty-seven percent said they found reviews at the beginning of class helpful. Seventy-

five percent reported needing the class activities after watching the videos in order to be confident about the material being studied. Ninety-two percent reported being "extremely confident" or "somewhat confident" after viewing the videos and in-class activities. Twenty-five percent reported that they neglected to take the



out-of-class activities seriously and were putting in little or no effort, and 17 percent reported that they neglected to put sufficient effort in the in-class activities.

The flipped classroom produced positive results among the students in the 10th-grade biology class where the action research was conducted. An overwhelming majority of the participants increased their test scores from pretest to posttest on pretest and posttest 1, pretest and posttest 2, and pretest and posttest 3. One student maintained the identical score on pretest and posttest 2. Students responded positively to questions about the implementation and benefits from the flipped-classroom strategy. A majority of students prefer the flipped classroom over a traditional instructional approach.

Responses to the open-ended questions were grouped by themes and are shown in Table 2.

Impact of Instructional Strategies

- **Out-of-Class Activities** (including videos, PowerPoint slides, KWLs, SQ3R, and Anticipation Guide)—prepared students to work independently and to contribute more during class time. These approaches also placed less demand on the teacher to provide information.

- **In-Class Activities** resulted in students taking responsibility for their learning and produced improved test scores.

- **Jigsaw Groups** required students to become knowledgeable about the content so they could share with their peers.

- **Cooperative Learning** allowed students to help one another. They had to first communicate with their classmates, asking and seeking answers to their questions, before going to the teacher for help. This approach was rewarding for both students and teacher since the students learned from one another, and this freed the teacher to help the students who needed more assistance.

- **KWLs, SQ3R, and Anticipation**

Table 2. Responses to Open-ended Questions	
Open-ended Questions	Grouped Participants' Responses
What have you liked best about the flipped classroom this past two weeks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of videos helpful • Cooperative and collaborative learning • Weekly assessment and feedback on growth • Better time management • More resources were available to learn from • Nothing
What part of the flipped classroom would you like to see changed for the next year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to traditional teaching methods • More videos, more group activities • More variety in classroom activities
What could I do for you to help support you more in the flipped classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More explanation of videos and activities • More help with homework and classwork • Inclusion of worksheets after activities • More videos
What is the most helpful part of the flipped classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating the information over and over again • Visuals of the video • Time saved • Information from PowerPoints and videos • Discussions • Nothing

Guides prepared students to get the most out of the content they read. These reading-comprehension strategies helped the students analyze content and take notes in order to comprehend what they read.

- **Videos and PowerPoint Slides** provided different perspectives on the concepts covered by the content.

- **Resources** were made available for students to refer to whenever necessary.

Influential Factors

Certain factors may have influenced the positive outcomes from the strategy. The students had the opportunity to complete the out-of-class activities such as watching videos and reading selected texts before taking the pretests. However, they took the posttests only after participating in several out-of-class and in-class activities such as jigsaw, group discussions,

labs, and reviews, which resulted in higher scores than on the pretests. Thus, it appears as if the in-class activities had a positive influence on students' performance on the chapter tests.

Factors such as inclusion bias/non-probability sampling,²⁷ and response bias²⁸ may have impacted the study in other ways. Inclusion bias occurs when the group that is used for sampling is the one that is available. Inasmuch as the biology class was the class with the problem, it was also the available group. The pool of available participants was small and prohibited random sampling of participants. A larger group of participants might have produced different results. Response bias on the Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire could have occurred consciously or unconsciously. For example, students who declared in class that they did not watch the videos did not record an opinion about the usefulness of the

videos on the questionnaire, probably because they did not want to be the only ones to respond in a negative manner. Perhaps they thought that their response might affect their grade, even though the questionnaire was anonymous. In addition, the Flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire was administered at the end of the last day of class, during the week of finals, so the stress of finals could have caused some pressure on the students to respond without having given much thought to the question.

Limitations

The results of the research must be viewed in light of these limitations, which should be considered in attempts to replicate the study:

- Time factor—This research was conducted within a short period of time; therefore, students didn't have sufficient time to deeply absorb the effects of the flipped-classroom experience.
- More resources—It was challenging to find videos and activities that addressed the content being studied. Students complained about the non-animated videos. They preferred the animated ones, but those were scarce. If the strategy was implemented for a full semester, finding resources would be even more challenging.
- Reliable technology—Reliable technology, particularly Internet and Wi-Fi, are necessary for access to on-line learning materials.
- The number of participants—A minimum sample size is required for inferences to be drawn, even at the local level. The number of participants did not meet the criteria for t-test analysis of the pretest and posttest scores.
- Reliability of assessments—It was not feasible to establish a reliability estimate, due to the small number of participants.

Box 2. Additional Resources

For readers who wish to learn more about the flipped classroom, the following starter list of resources is provided, along with the references:

Flipped Learning Network (FLN), The Four Pillars of F-L-I-P™, “What Is Flipped Learning?” (2014): http://flippedlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FLIP_handout_FNL_Web.pdf.

Patricia J. Tattersall, “‘Flipped’ Classroom: Benefits Versus Challenges for Communicative Sciences and Disorders Faculty and Students,” *Perspectives on Higher Education* 18:10 (June 2015): 4-15. doi: 10.1044/ihe18.1.4: <http://sig10perspectives.pubs.asha.org/article.aspx?articleid=2320025&resultclick=1>.

Wan Ng, “Flipping the Science Classroom: Exploring Merits, Issues, and Pedagogy,” *Teaching Science* 60:3 (September 2014): 16-27: <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1048772>.

Betty Love et al., “Student Learning and Perceptions in a Flipped Linear Algebra Course,” *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology* 45:3 (April 2014): 317-324: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0020739X.2013.822582>.

Flipped Classroom Workshop, “Eight Articles Exploring Benefits of Flipped Classroom for Special Needs Students”: <http://www.flippedclassroomworkshop.com/benefits-of-flipped-classroom-for-special-needs-students/>.

Flipped Learning Workshop Video, “The Purpose of Technology in the Classroom”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGPednPvm0E&list=PLyAluQnV5H5llhd4mR8a-XvY-OmEyngHf>.

- Better planning—More time would have made it possible for better planning. This might have allowed for gathering and archiving sufficient online learning resources; arranging for reliable connectivity to the Internet and Wi-Fi for off-campus students who did not have reliable Wi-Fi at home; and reassessing the data-collection instruments.

Implications

The findings of this research are limited to the participants in this study. Nevertheless, after conducting this research, we believe that certain recommendations can be offered to educators:

1. Become aware of the diversity in the classroom.
2. Identify students' specific needs.
3. Identify the resources and strategies that will meet the needs of the students.

4. Intentionally plan differentiated instruction.

5. Consider using a variety of strategies such as Science WebQuest, a glossary diary, learning centers, independent study, tiered assignments, student choice activities, and group presentations.

6. Encourage students to write their own storyboards and create their own podcasts/videos to share with their classmates.

7. Investigate how out-of-class activities could improve student participation and course effectiveness. While implementing these strategies, work collaboratively with your grade-level colleagues to ensure that students aren't overloaded with assignments and thus experience chapter reading, video, and PowerPoint slide overload. If several teachers are using

the flipped-classroom approach with the same grade level, they may need to integrate and streamline the out-of-class work so that the strategy does not become counterproductive. ☞

This article has been peer reviewed.

Deril Wood, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education at Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.A.

Caroline Lipman, MA, is a Math and Science Teacher at Bass Memorial Academy in Lumberton, Mississippi, U.S.A. She earned her bachelor's degree in Education from Oakwood University and her Master's from Western Governors University, Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A.

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Editorial *Continued from page 3*

then the "sound of sheer silence" through which God spoke and asked: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:11-14, NRSV). In the stillness, God spoke . . . and still speaks. His words encourage renewed focus on mission and promise wisdom to help us (re-)envision effective ways to accomplish the same. As educators, we MUST make time for physical restoration, mental renewal, emotional balance, and renewed focus and zeal for the rendering of faithful and fruitful service to God.

In this issue, Joel Raveloharimisy offers an invitation to step away from the busyness of life and consider spiritual imperatives that will strengthen the Adventist teacher's relationship with Jesus and impact student-educator interactions. Also, Ty-Ron Douglas (available on the JAE App and online) challenges educators to (re-)envision and reclaim the "Big Truths" that guide our practice and help us reaffirm our purpose as Adventist educators.

The remaining articles are written by teachers who currently utilize various best-practice approaches in their classrooms: approaches to teaching writing to English as a Second Language (ESL) students (Laurie Stankavich and Amanda Livanos; and Christian Stuart); specific examples of integrating the Bible when teaching a foreign language (Francisco Burgos); integrating faith education into an academic tour (Daniel Reynaud and Wayne French); how to prepare for an accreditation visit (Grant Leitma); and the impact of a flipped classroom on reading comprehension (Deril Wood and Caroline Lipman). Implementing any of these approaches will take time, planning, and intentional action—as all good practice should.

Purposefully taking time to regroup—finding moments of silence to recharge, reflect, and plan—is a must. Refocusing the future and charting a new course amidst the demands of our hyper-busy lives will not only benefit us as educators, but also our students, many of whom face the same challenges. May these last few moments before a new academic year or semester give us pause to respond to

God's call to "'Come and talk with me'" (Psalm 27:8, NLT)⁸ and may our response be "The Sovereign LORD has spoken to me, and I have listened . . ." (Isaiah 50:4, NLT).

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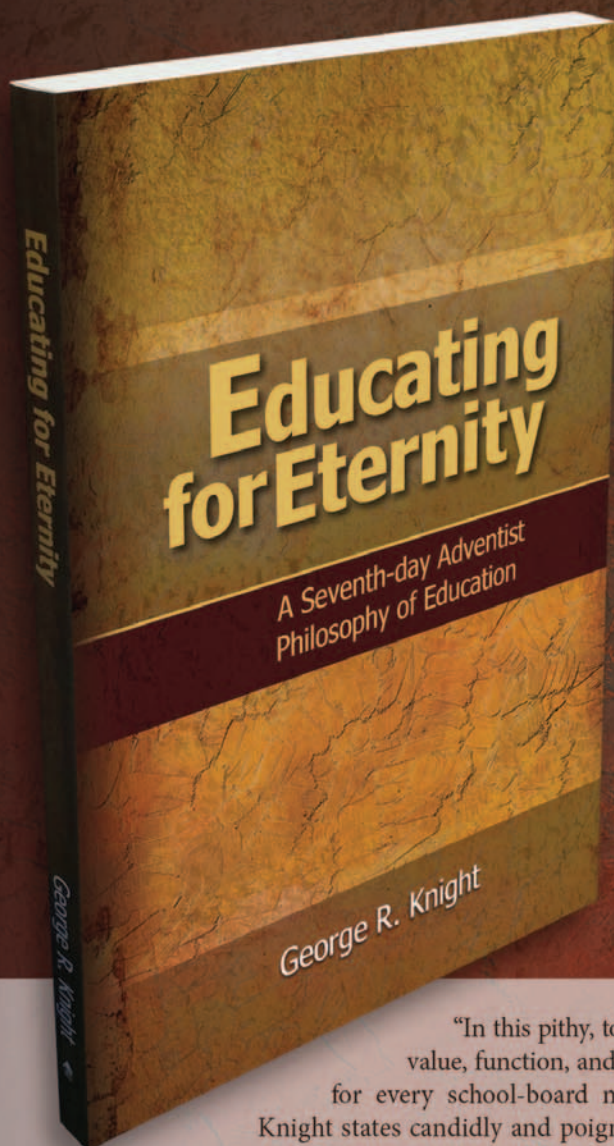
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