

VOLUME 36
NUMBER 4
MAY 1996

The Lutheran Educator



The WELS Education Journal

...preserve sound judgment
and discernment, do not let
them out of your sight;
they will be life for you...
Proverbs 3:21-22



The Lutheran Educator

The education journal
of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
edited by the faculty of Martin Luther College

ARTICLES

- Define the Job**
James C. Rahn 100
- Parental Involvement in
Early Childhood Education**
Faith E. Krug 103
- Run, Jump, and Hop for
Elementary School Students**
Dick Lemke 108
- Teaching Meaningful
Memory Work**
Larry S. Collyard 110
- B-Ball: Some Post-Season
Musings**
Ramona M. Czer 116
- If the Bible is Clear,
How Come So Many
Don't Get It?**
Paul O. Wendland 119
- A New Team on the Block—
Teachers and Technology**
Patricia M. Grabitske 122

DEPARTMENTS

- As We See It**
Through Children's Eyes 99

VOLUME 36 **NUMBER 4**
MAY 1996

Editor — John R. Isch

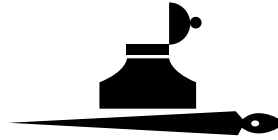
Editorial Board — Irma R. McLean, Mark J. Lenz, Gerald J. Jacobson

Editorial correspondence and articles should be sent to *The Lutheran Educator*, Editor, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Court, New Ulm, MN 56073. Phone 507/354-8221. Fax 507/354-8225 [e-mail: jisch@ic.new-ulm.mn.us]

Subscription service information on a new subscription, a renewal, a change of address, or an inquiry should be sent to Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. Phone 414/475-6600. Subscription rate for U.S.A. and Canada is **\$6.00 for one year**, payable in advance to Northwestern Publishing House, postage included. For all other countries please write for rates.

The Lutheran Educator (ISSN 0458-4988) is published four times a year in October, December, February and May by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226. Second Class Postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Educator*, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284.

Copyright © 1996 by Martin Luther College. Requests for permission to reproduce more than brief excerpts are to be addressed to the editor.



Through Children's Eyes...

As teachers we are called upon to make many observations. How essential it is for us to have the necessary professional training and wisdom to get a clear picture of what is happening in our classroom! We attend to the lessons we teach, to the learning that is occurring as our students listen and do what we expect of them, to the behavior of the children, to the clock that controls our schedule of activities, and to the countless details that require our attention during a school day. Our observations are required on many different things.

As we serve our Lord as teachers of his precious "little ones," we will get a clearer picture of our classroom if we also concern ourselves with the viewpoints of the children. We need to know if they are understanding the concepts which we present and mastering the skills which we are teaching. Of special importance are the viewpoints our students have of Christian blessings and values. Do you listen to the viewpoints of your students? Do you look at what is occurring in your classrooms through the children's eyes?

Ponder your responses to these questions as we examine the following statements of your Christian children in a primary grade classroom:

School ... is about God	God's Word is ...very important
...so you can read	...fun to listen to
...fun	...for us to learn about God
Jesus ...my Savior	Going to church is ...very important
...perfect	...very special
...totally nice	...good for everybody
...wonderful	...a time to pray
Special about books ...good to read	Special about me ...my soul
...fun to read	...that I can sing
...nice to have	...that I can breathe (by
...Holy Bible is most special	a student with asthma)

Through the eyes of these young children we see values which every Christian teacher desires for the students he or she teaches, especially the appreciation of God and his Word. The children also value books and reading, personal blessings and opportunities.

As you end this school year, remember to evaluate what you have achieved by taking a close look at things through your children's eyes. Their viewpoints, more than your own, may clearly point out strengths and weaknesses in your teaching. And as you look ahead to your next school year, use what you have learned from your students' viewpoints to help you plan for an even better year of teaching, one in which Christian values are conveyed more effectively, blessings recognized more clearly, and instruction completed more successfully.

IRM

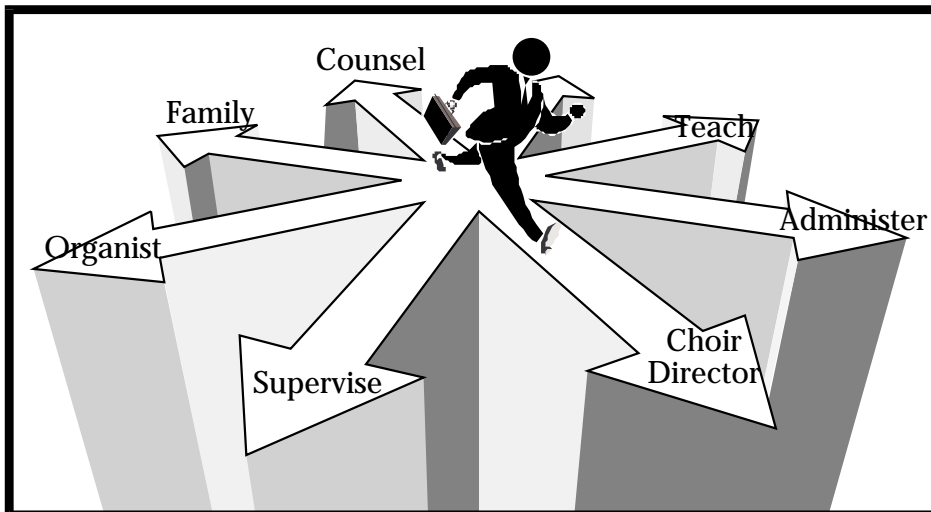
Define the Job

James C. Rahn

A HOT DISCUSSION topic in the WELS today is the role of the Lutheran elementary school principal. The discussion of this topic is fueled in part by the fact that it is becoming increasingly common for seasoned WELS elementary school principals to resign from the principalship. Some are leaving the office behind in order to focus attention on classroom teaching. Others are leaving the full-time ministry entirely. While many are leaving the principalship, few men are standing in line for the opportunity to serve as principals. The results: (1) an unaccept-

able number of elementary school principal vacancies in recent years (18 in 1994-95 and 9 in 1995-96) and (2) a large number of new principals, many of them very young (20% of elementary school principals have less than 5 years of principal experience).

The discussion of the role of the elementary school principal has begun. God-willing, the result of these discussions will be a greater understanding of the principalship, greater support and appreciation for the role of the principal, and an improved ability to recruit potential principals from among our male teachers. Such discussions have



already begun at the synodical level and in area principals' conferences.

While it is useful for various synodical committees and area principals' conferences to explore the role of the principal, these efforts in and of themselves will produce few tangible benefits to the LES principal. In fact, it is unlikely that the constituents of the synod or the members of an area principals' conference will ever come to complete agreement on what the principalship should entail. Even if one of the aforementioned groups can reach consensus on this issue, it is really somewhat of a moot point for a principal to know what the synod or a principals' conference thinks he should be doing. The principal is called to serve the needs of a particular congregation. What is essential is for the principal to know is what his congregation believes he should be doing.

Each congregation needs to study the role of its principal in the ministry of its elementary school. The local board of education is the natural place for this study to begin. The primary question that a board must ask when discussing this topic is this: What tasks must our principal perform in order for our school effectively to carry out its mission? From that will flow other pertinent questions—Do we expect our principal to be an educational leader? Do we expect our principal to regularly visit classrooms? Do we only expect our principal to preserve the status quo? Is the principal responsible for preparing board agendas? Does the principal manage the school's funds? The list of questions could go on and on.

Discussion of these types of questions should lead a board and congregation to establish a clear purpose for the principalship.

Once congregation members agree on the purpose of the principalship at

“

*What is essential
is for the
principal to know
is what his
congregation
believes he should
be doing.*

”

their school, the congregation should instruct its board of education to develop a written job description for the principal. The job description should make it obvious to the board, principal, and congregation what the definition of the principalship is to include at that location. The development of a job description will also make it clear to the board what sort of administrative time and other resources the principal needs in order to carry out his assigned tasks. For example, the job description may make it clear that secretarial assistance

is a must, not an option. The job description may make it clear that the principal needs time during the school day to devote to his administrative duties. A job description will provide some added benefits. When a vacancy in the principalship occurs, the job description will assist a congregation in clearly communicating its ministry needs to the district president. Male teachers may be more inclined to enter the principalship if the duties are clearly defined, realistic, and accompanied by sufficient time and resources.

What is the scenario in many of our schools today? Many elementary schools have no clearly written job descriptions for their principal. Principals are asked to define their own job. Therefore, many principals lead their schools in whatever way they believe it best. As result, there can be a drastic shift in administrative philosophy as a school changes principals. Such shifts are often more confusing than helpful to a school and its faculty. A clearly defined job description for the principal can provide needed continuity from one administration to the next.

A clearly defined job description will also help the individual principal. Most principals are very faithful in their calling. They want to do the very best job possible in carrying out their ministry. Since no one has told them specifically what the expectations are for them, they compose their own mental job description. In order to compose that job description, they consult books, attend workshops, and pursue graduate studies. All of these provide excellent

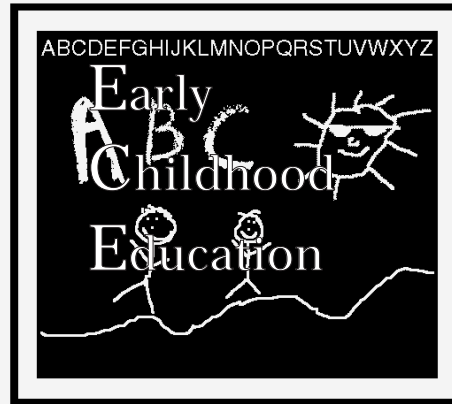
ideas on what a principal's job entails. The trouble is that most of those resources assume a fulltime principal status. As a result, I believe some principals expect too much of themselves. They strive to be the model principal—in addition to being a competent teacher, an effective coach, an able choir director. The all-too-common result...frustration for the principal, frustration in his home, and eventually burnout!

Help your principal! Clearly define your expectations of him in a written job description. Make sure he understands what tasks are expected of him in his role as your principal. Just as importantly (if not more importantly), make sure he realizes what tasks you *don't* expect him to perform. Then provide him with the resources (time and/or materials) he needs to get the job done as you have defined it. It is my belief that if congregations clearly spell out the job of the principal and provide him with the needed time and necessary resources to complete the task, there will be little difficulty in finding willing, capable candidates for the job.

James Rahn serves as principal and teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, Neenah, Wisconsin. He serves on the WELS Commission on Parish Schools and on the CPS Leadership Committee.

Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education

Faith E. Krug



IMAGINE WALKING into a room where the early childhood educators and the parents are working together on the year's curriculum. They are planning activities involving the parents and activities that provide training opportunities for the parents. When this is done, the parents gather the materials and equip the room. Throughout the year they meet with the educators to discuss and evaluate.

Such a scene is a reality in the Reggio Emilia schools of Italy. These early childhood schools have become a model for educators from all over the world to study. What makes the schools so effective? Many believe it is the high level of parental involvement.

The book, *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Edwards et al.), tells many ways the parents are involved:

Curriculum—Parents are encouraged to contribute information, materials, books, or to participate in school pro-

jects. The teachers, in turn, need to carefully document the child's experiences and communicate these to the parents. The teachers send home weekly letters concerning their observations, types of activities, as well as suggestions for home activities.

Environment—Before the school year begins, there are work sessions to build furnishings and equipment, to rearrange the classroom, and to provide basic classroom maintenance.

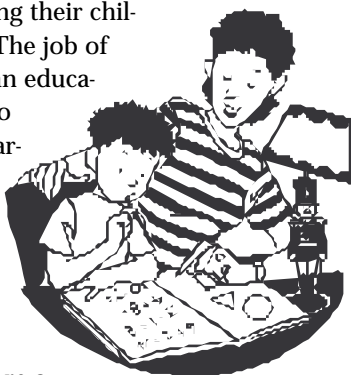
Activities—Scheduled throughout the year are activities involving the parents. These might be holiday celebrations, field trips, picnics, or "parents' day at school."

Training opportunities—Teachers and parents may attend talks by an expert on such topics as literature or children's issues. They may also attend labs for acquiring techniques in such skills as puppet making, using photographic equipment and cooking.

Evaluation—Parents' evaluation of the

school is of primary importance. Several times a year, meetings are held to discuss happenings and to show examples of activities. Smaller groups meet to discuss needs and problems. There are also individual parent/teacher conferences. Questionnaires are given out for parental input into the children's responses to and thoughts about project themes.

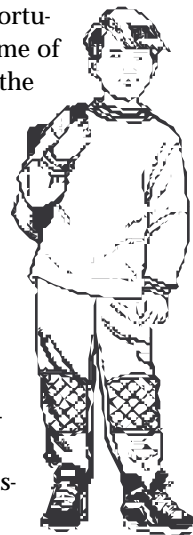
The WELS philosophy for Christian early childhood education says that "God specifically gives parents the primary responsibility for nurturing their children." The job of Christian educators is to assist parents.



Therefore a primary goal should be involving parents. Could any of the Reggio Emilia ideas of parental involvement be incorporated into early childhood programs? Such an ambitious undertaking might seem overwhelming to the teacher who has sole charge of a roomful of pre-schoolers. But in reality, many of the suggestions have been carried out, to some extent, in some WELS Lutheran schools:

Curriculum—One of the strengths of WELS Lutheran schools is home visits. The teacher can visit with the parents and child in their home setting and discover the interests and strengths of the

family. This gives opportunity to incorporate some of these ideas, as well as the parents' experience, into the curriculum. Do the parents have an occupation the children could visit? Or could the parents come into the classroom to talk about or demonstrate their work? Could they provide materials from their work for the classroom so the children could have familiar manipulatives for their dramatic play?



Environment—WELS churches have members with many different talents. Among the parents of the pre-schoolers may be people willing to build, sew, paint, clean or in some way contribute to the improvement of the classroom environment. Could teachers tap into this talent?

Activities—Some schools use their field trips as family events. Some offer holiday celebrations—Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, end-of-the-year parties, programs, or picnics to which other family members are invited. Even parents with busy work schedules will often take time off to celebrate a special occasion with their child.

Training—Many times Christian parents are looking for help and support in the difficult task of parenting. Sometimes WELS Lutheran churches, schools, or high schools will offer parent training programs, workshops, or seminars. Do the pre-school parents

know of these? Are they aware of the new *Lutheran Parenting* magazine? Perhaps the church or school could invite someone to talk to parents about the resources and helps available. Perhaps they could offer “parenting Bible studies” using the greatest resource of all, God’s Word.

Evaluation—Pre-school educators probably have individual parent/teacher conferences some time during the year. Teachers probably use this time to evaluate students’ strengths and weaknesses. Could this be a time when the parents also evaluate what is happening in the classroom? How does their child respond to the program? Are the child’s needs being met? Are the parents’ expectations being met? Do they have suggestions? What further opportunities would they like to see for parent involvement? If parents are receiving information concerning child development, as well as weekly communication about classroom activities, evaluation need not be threatening to either parents or teacher.

Another area where parents can be very involved is in home activities with their children using ideas or materials sent home by the teacher. A “dress-me” doll sent home can give extra practice

in becoming independent at zipping and buttoning. A stuffed animal and journal can aid in language development as the child dictates his or her experiences with it at home, then relates them to classmates at school. Books borrowed from a classroom library give parents something new to read to the child. An art or craft project sent home gives parents and child something to work on together. When parents provide the classroom snack, parents and child can work together in preparing it. Bible pictures with hints for reviewing the Bible story offer excellent reinforcement of the day’s lesson at home.

Most parents really want to be involved in helping their young children learn and grow. Some lack the education in how a young child develops and learns. Some lack experience or ideas. Some need encouragement to take the time. Christian educators have the wonderful opportunity not “just to teach little children,” important as that is, but also to assist the parents in some of these areas so that they can be even better equipped for the important task God has given them to “train a child in the way he should go” (Pr 22:6).

WORK CITED

Edwards, C.P., Lella Gandini, and George Forman. *The Hundred Languages of Children*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Pub. Corp., 1993

Faith Krug teaches pre-kindergarten at Our Redeemer Lutheran School, Madison, Wisconsin.



Run, Jump, and Hop for Elementary School Students

Dick Lemke



ONE OF THE many gifts the Lord has given us Lutheran teachers are the hundreds of elementary school students that we have in our Lutheran schools. These children represent fields to be tilled and sown with seeds of learning that will, with care, eventually grow into fruits that our Lord has destined for his work in his creation.

One of these seeds of learning is the development of motor skills. There are many learning experiences going on throughout the K-6 elementary physical education programs in our schools today. Physical education curriculums feature myriads of movement lessons that enable students to develop gross motor skills (with large muscles), motor patterns, and motor planning (movement) strategies. Even though we may all have our favorite gross motor skill curriculum, there are specific activities which can add variety and spice to the physical education setting.

If elementary school students practice these basic movement-centered activities, they will develop gross motor

skills which, over a short period of time, can be integrated into movement patterns. When these movement patterns are accomplished, students will move more effectively and efficiently and be able to participate more appropriately during their lifetime in any physical or recreational activity. The students will thoroughly enjoy participating in and practicing these activities.

There is minimal need for sophisticated equipment in this program. This certainly benefits the elementary school physical education teacher who has limited resources to invest in additional and expensive equipment. The creative teacher who wants to attempt this movement program needs only the following equipment: whiffle balls, hand paddles, sponge balls of various colors and dimensions, soccer balls, and a number of hula hoops. The instructor can also use two or three different musical sound tracks that range from slow to fast tempos to help the students develop some pleasurable rhythm expe-



periences from the different exercises.

As with all physical education activities, the curriculum should begin with various stretching exercises to increase the range of motion in the children's musculo-skeletal systems. The students should hold these specific stretches for a count of ten seconds (but not bounce the stretches) and then they should completely relax, close their eyes, and breathe deeply. The teacher should instruct the students in the following

- squats should not be lower than forty-five degrees
- lunges should be done with the toes straight out
- hurdles should be done with the foot tucked inward and not behind the leg
- quadracep stretches should be executed with the leg held behind the body
- sit ups should be done by raising the trunk only to a 45 degree angle
- toe touches should be executed in a prone position
- side bends are done by alternating the arms lifted over the head
- curls are performed slowly

A good finish would be with ten to twelve easy jumping jacks.

The lines on your gym floor are excellent to use for classroom control. The teacher should instruct the children to line up or take a position on the lines available to them. Have the motor skills listed below in your hand and begin.

- Walking This is the most used skill. If walking correctly is not mastered, other bipedal locomotion like running, jumping, and skipping may be

difficult or executed incorrectly.

There is a need for students to walk correctly since this skill also contributes to over-all body posture. Students should maintain a good thoracic curve (ear above shoulder, good lumbar curve), and the back, hips, and heels should be aligned; the hands should be moving in a easy swing and the feet pointed straight forward.

- Running Students who run poorly will have little success in skilled games. The correct foot placement has the heel, toe, and hip aligned in a vertical plane. The head and upper torso should be stable with little movement. The student should maintain a slight body lean forward and have relaxed hands, with the arms bent at the elbow and parallel to the floor.
- Hopping The ability to hop has a high correlation with balance. Students should hop to marks on the floor with one foot, then alternate feet, hopping from the right foot to the left. The student should elevate one leg rearward to a 45 degree angle point, while hopping on the opposite foot, then extending the elevated leg forward and land on that foot.
- Skipping This is the most complex of all locomotor skills. The student should take one walking step on the left foot, then one hop on the left foot; step with the right foot, then one hop on the right foot; step with the left foot again and hop, then continue alternating the pattern, with the arms moving in a smooth

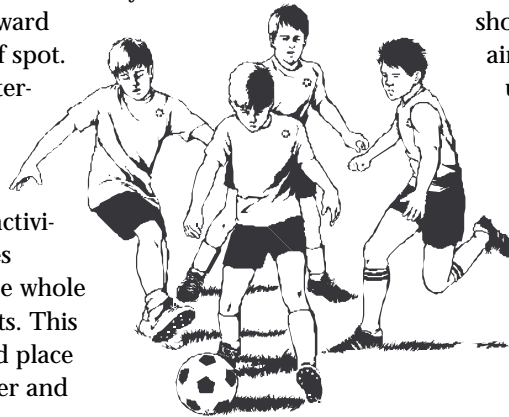
swinging fashion.

- Sliding Sliding is the best movement for laterality drills. The students face each other and mirror each other's lateral movements. Have the students slide on their right foot to the side and then draw their left foot to the right. The students can execute this skill in either a line or a circle. The drill can then be repeated with the students beginning the slide with their left foot.
- Galloping This is a modification of sliding. The teacher tells the students to step ahead with their right foot, then close their feet and step ahead again with their right foot, then close feet again, and continue in that manner. Then the students incorporate a slight hop to go with the step where they close their feet. This exercise can be done alternating the right foot gallop with a left foot gallop.
- Leaping This skill uses the alternating leg muscles to project the body forward. The students should take off on their right foot and land on their left foot. The students should attempt to project their body two to three feet forward from the take-off spot. They can also alternate the take-off foot.
- Jumping This is one of the best activities which utilizes integration of the whole body and its parts. This skill has the child place both feet together and

practice vertical, side-to-side, lateral leaps off both feet. The teacher places large hula hoops, in a circle or in a straight line. The students jump from the right foot onto the left and land inside a hoop. They then jump to the next hoop, landing on the other foot.

- * Kicking This is a basic soccer style kick. This skill has the child standing two or three steps to the rear of the soccer ball. The child then takes one step to the left while turning the right foot so that the instep (inner side of the foot) faces the ball. With weight on the right foot, the child steps forward on the left foot and kicks the ball with the instep of the right foot. The teacher can vary the distances the children are to send the ball. Different targets can also be provided.
- Striking This activity uses large muscles and hand/eye coordination. You will need whiffle balls and hand paddles. The student stands with the side of his or her body facing the target. The child grips the paddles with the dominant hand around the handle. The whiffle ball is tossed a

short distance in the air. The child should use his or her entire arm in the swing to hit the whiffle ball. The child should not be allowed to snap his or her wrist back. The teacher can vary the



- distances to the target.
- **Throwing** This is one of the most used skills in recreation and sport. Using the whiffle balls, the students should grip the ball with their fingers only, raise their throwing hand above their shoulder and project the ball forward with full extension from the shoulder. Again, the teacher can vary the distance the children are to throw.
 - **Catching** This activity uses hand and eye coordination. Using four to eight inch sponge balls, the students catch the ball with both arms extended, palms facing up with fingers slightly flexed. The ball is caught with both hands. The distances can be varied here also as well as the size of the balls to be caught.
 - **Rhythms** The students can progress to sequencing any combination of the skills together into a pattern or routine of master skills which are performed to music. This activity will help the children develop their sense of rhythm. The teacher



instructs the children to form a large circle. The students hop on their right foot, then hop on their left foot, and then stomp their feet four times.

Alternating right to left, the students slide right three

to four times, then slide left three to four times. Finally, they jump in the air off both feet three or four times. The teacher can also have the students twirl their body around to face the outside of the circle and back again to face the teacher in the middle of the circle. The teacher can also incorporate the skills of walking correctly, skipping, galloping, and leaping into this rhythmic activity.

The activities which are discussed in this article will help develop the individual motor skills that youngsters use in the games of low organization typically found in the upper grades. As children advance into team sports such as volleyball, basketball, and other multiple-skilled sport activities, they will use these fundamental skills in more complex motor patterns. When young children learn fundamental movement skills and they are able to practice these skills, they benefit many times over. Besides that, this program is fun for both the teacher and the child.

Dick Lemke is associate professor at Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska.

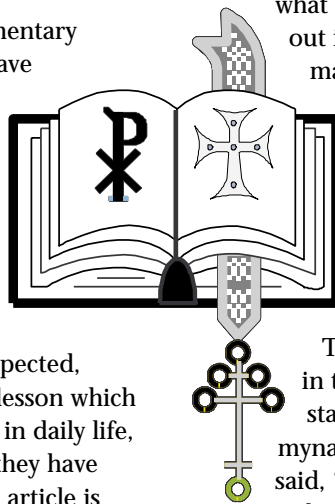
Teaching Meaningful Memory Work

Larry S. Collyard

ALL LUTHERAN elementary school students have memory work to learn. We want our children to know and cherish Bible passage gems, Catechism chief parts, and beautiful hymn stanzas. How can we make memorizing these invaluable treasures an expected, comfortable part of each lesson which will also become practical in daily life, as our students live what they have learned? The focus of this article is making memory work useful and purposeful in the lives of students outside the classroom. But, as I researched the topic of memory work especially considering this focus, I found a slight problem.

The problem

Much has been written about memory work. Articles and books deal with the objectives of memory work, the teaching of memory work, the value of memory work, the dangers of memory work, and the courses of memory work. But I found very little written about making memory work useful and purposeful to a student's "after school" life. It is not that dedicated Christian teachers don't want their students to carry



what they've learned with them out into the everyday world. It may be that not much thought has been given to how to get this done. The paucity of literature on the topic would tend to support this opinion.

Mynah bird religion

The mynah bird sat in its cage in the pet shop. The customer stared at it in silence. Finally the mynah bird cocked its head and said, "Can you talk?" People laugh at the mynah bird because it can imitate sound so well. You can teach it to say "hello" and "good-by" or even whistle a tune. One bird startles everyone by calling out, "Meow." It doesn't know how mixed up it really is. Another repeats, "I'm a mynah bird." But if it was taught to say, "I'm an elephant," it would do so without knowing the difference.

Jesus complained about people who have "mynah bird religion." Quoting Isaiah, he warned about those who "honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Mt 15:8). Jesus said that such people keep calling, "Lord, Lord," but it's only words. They do not do the will of their Father in heaven.

We and our students are sometimes

like the mynah bird. Prayers, hymns, creed, and passages are said or sung out of habit instead of from the heart. No thought is involved. We don't please God simply by speaking or memorizing religious words. We want to show the faith that is in our hearts. We want to "live" the words and lessons we learn from his Word as an expression of our love for our Savior, Jesus Christ. The devil can quote Scripture from memory, but he doesn't mean what Scripture means or do what it commands. Are we teaching our students to be "mynah bird" Christians? (Adapted from a devotion in *My Devotions* St. Louis: Concordia.)

Our objectives

I have found several lists of objectives for various religion curriculums. The list below is an edited compilation. The question after reading the objectives is this: "How does our memory work fit in with these objectives?"

1. Christian reverence for God—all glory to him for everything
2. Christian knowledge—students should know about their sin, their Savior, and how to lead a life of sanctification
3. Christian faith—through knowledge of the Word the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith
4. Christian character—living the will of God
5. Christ-like personality—attitudes and conduct of love to others
6. Christian participation—active in the work of the congregation and entire church

7. Christian worship—rich and varied, public and private
8. Christian witness—Can they share their faith with others?

Memory work rationale

Why have memory work? What do others say?

Memory work is taught so that the child will be able to

- a. Know the basis of his faith—
What do I believe and why?
- b. Worship more richly
- c. Defend and testify to the truth of God
- d. Proclaim and evangelize by telling of God's love and mercy (Isch 1990)

...The Bible passages, hymns, prayers, and the six chief parts of the catechism are marvelous treasures from which the Christian draws comfort and strength throughout life. Those priceless truths are most easily learned while one is young. They provide guidance already in the important teen years. They give strength to remember the Lord and His ways. They offer comfort in trials and tribulations. They provide a way to witness one's faith. ...That which they previously learned by heart comes back to them quickly. Because he has memorized it, he is more apt to remember it and use it. (Worgull 1972)

...The acquisition of a rich store of religious material for comfort, for strength, for worship, for readiness of understanding and the abil-

ity and habit of applying memorized materials for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness are objectives and goals which every Christian wishes to accomplish. ...An exact knowledge of these elements of Lutheranism [six chief parts of the Catechism] is necessary, so that our church will continue to remain doctrinally sound. ...The Psalmist has wisely said in Psalm 119, 11: "I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You." There we have sufficient ground and adequate purpose for giving precious minutes to this great work for children. ...How necessary for the Christian that he is able to recite offhand what he believes, that he carries his creed with him, not necessarily in a book, but in his memory! Luther's "A Mighty Fortress" might well have a fifth stanza:

And burn they all our books
Catechism, Bible, and Hymn
book
Let these all be gone
They yet have nothing won
Our memory is still with us!
(unknown n.d.)

Teaching memory work

There are certain principles that guide the teaching of memory work so that it can become more useful and purposeful in their lives. Again, others have made suggestions:

- First, the teacher must teach the children how to memorize.
- He will encourage exactness in both

word and enunciation.

- The teacher will allow for individual differences by adjusting the assignments.
- The child must be helped to find personal meaning in the passage. If the child finds in the selection little relevancy to life, his life, he sees no value in learning it. It is at this point that the teacher must expend every effort to help the child find truth and pertinence for his immediate and future life. (LC-MS 1964)
- The emphasis on teaching should be on quality rather than quantity.
- There are only two ways of reciting something: correctly or incorrectly. The goal should be perfection.
- Memory work should be used in the classroom (devotions, hymn singing, applying to other class discussions).
- Teachers can help children use a variety of retrieval cues to the memorized material—first words, Bible references, the thought of the selection, mnemonics.
- Memory work can and should be an enjoyable learning experience for children. Motivation is an important component of success: "The love of Christ compels us." Make it fun and interesting with such things as flash cards, games, puzzles, teams, charts, and computers.
- Stay with one translation for all worship and religious activities. (Isch 1990)

Problems and pitfalls

To give you an example of one pitfall that we could face when teaching mem-

ory work, here is a discussion that was in our church periodical a few years back. Listen and form your own opinion.

Question: In our LES we force children to memorize passages from the Bible and parts of the Catechism. If they don't, they are punished. In essence, we tell them that they have sinned. Since memorizing the Bible is not commanded by God, why is this practice not considered legalism?

Answer: Requiring children to memorize portions of the Bible and Catechism as part of the school's religion curriculum is no less legitimate than requiring them to memorize multiplication tables in the math curriculum. A child's refusal to do either is sinning against the Fourth Commandment and should be identified as such. ...If memorization of the faith is no more than a mechanical exercise in fulfillment of religious requirements, it risks becoming the worst form of legalism—work righteousness. I trust that memorization in our schools is accompanied by the interpretation and application of that Word that produces love for the truth as well as faith in the truth. I trust also that meditating on God's Word is offered as a treasure of the Christian's life with God, not a course to pass. (Kelm 1990)

In our LES we force children to memorize passages from the Bible. ...If they don't do it, they are punished," said a letter writer to "I

Would Like to Know" (June 1). I have the same concern. ...Often, even after I had thoroughly explained a verse to the students, a child who had memorized it perfectly would not be able to give an example of how it might apply to his own life. On the other hand, a student who had a hard time memorizing often gave a beautiful, heartfelt explanation of what the passage meant. ...I would cringe when students would whip off precious verses at lightning speed. ...During the final months of my teaching career, I no longer graded memory work. Nor did I give homework in Bible history. My wish was to elevate Bible study above every other subject. ...I wanted children to find God's Word a pleasurable, longed-for haven during the school day. I wanted them to know that Jesus does not grade their efforts. He just wants to love them and hold their precious lives in his hands. As we read and studied in this way, I could see how the children were led to a desire to learn God's Word. (Merton 1990)

Collective wisdom

The following suggestions on making memory work more meaningful and useful to students in their everyday life were gathered from others and from my own experience:

A few gems memorized well are more meaningful than a great number learned haphazardly.

Care should be exercised with the

student who can repeat a selection perfectly after only a brief time for study. Superficial repetition is valueless. Memory work requires the entire attention of the learner. Last minute “cramming” lasts a minute!

Try to associate the memory work with subsequent experiences in and out of the classroom. The more often a selection is repeated, the more indelibly you will have impressed it on the memory, and the more useful it will become in everyday life.

Show your students the reason and value of memory work. Call attention to personal, neighborhood, or classroom situations in which it may prove helpful. Use everyday situations, e.g., The 7th commandment—when tempted to steal; the 5th commandment—when tempted to disrespect parents or others in authority; the 8th commandment—when tempted to speak evil of someone.

Provide frequent opportunities in class discussions and devotions for the use of memorized selections so the students get used to using their memory work rather than just reciting and forgetting. Joint chapel services afford an excellent place especially for the younger students to join in with a printed service folder by sing their memory work when they can't read.

As an example to their students, teachers should use their own store of memorized Bible passages and hymns as they deal with students and parents individually in and out of the classroom. Be good examples!

Use visual aids such as Christian symbols as mnemonic devices when you

teach memory work. That way when students see those symbols, they will be reminded of their memory selections. Students could draw memory work or make a bulletin board depicting the message and application.

Fit memory work to everyday situations and use role play, or other creative dramatics to act out ideas in the memory work or ways to use the memory work in everyday life. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Teach a class in “evangelism techniques” to your students. Here they will see one situation where they will be able to use their memory work to serve God.

Have some place in your Bible history lessons for dealing with people who have loved ones sick or dying and teach the children about comforting the sick or grieving. Here is another everyday experience they will face where memory work is useful and purposeful.

Here are some additional suggestions from various district teachers' conferences:

- Make a Memory Work Card Pile—recipe box with 365 days worth of passages, parts, and hymn stanzas. On back of card suggest places in everyday activities to use the work.
- Use the “Wordless Book” evangelism technique which associates colors with passages students can use in personal evangelism. (black—sin; red—Christ's blood; white—cleansing by Christ; green—growth of faith; gold—heaven)
- Refer often to memory work that has previously been learned. Bring it up again and again in applications in

any subject.

- Send cards and letters to shut-ins. In conjunction with this, make a memory work passage list to use for various occasions such as for strengthening or comforting.
- Use themes in the classroom (e.g., annual, monthly, weekly, daily, for sports, science, social studies). Introduce class topics with memorized Bible references. Use the Bible. Get the students into it.
- Use Bible passages put to song.
- Develop learning center activities centered around previously learned memory work stressing its use in everyday life.
- Enlist the help of parents to talk about applications for memory work at home. Have them try to apply it to current world issues or TV situations. Encourage family devotions that apply it.
- Talk to students "one-on-one" about memory work applications or have students discuss them in cooperative learning groups.
- You and your students can build classroom devotions around passages learned. Use their memory work in daily classroom prayers.

Conclusion

Don't become discouraged. The devil is working hard here also. He places many stumbling blocks in our way as we try to achieve our desired goal of having our students love the Word and find purpose and use for it in their lives. This is hard work. Don't forget to pray for strength and guidance for

yourself and your students. It's important and comforting to remember this statement: When children give evidence of growth in sanctification, it is not the methods, materials, teacher, or students that have been successful. All credit belongs to the Holy Spirit who is calling, enlightening, sanctifying, and keeping through the Word. We may not have solved all the world's problems here today. But I hope that, if nothing else, this article has made you think a little more about your goals and methods for teaching those little ones his precious Word.

WORKS CITED

- Isch, John. *The Generation to Come: Teaching Religion in the Lutheran Elementary School*. New Ulm: Dr. Martin Luther College Printshop, 1990.
- Kelm, Paul. "I Would Like to Know." *Northwestern Lutheran* (June 1, 1990).
- LC-MS. *A Curriculum Guide for Lutheran Elementary Schools, Vol. II*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1964.
- Merten, Pam. "Let's Not Grade Memory Work." *Northwestern Lutheran* (September 15, 1990).
- Unknown. Sunday School Conference Paper, n.d.
- Worgull, David. "Individual Memory Course." *The Lutheran Educator* 12 (February 1972):15-17.

Larry Collyard is teacher and principal at St. John's Lutheran School, Watertown, Wisconsin



B-Ball: Some Post-Season Musings

Ramona M. Czer

DEAR TEACHERS,

God, I love the sport! And I'm not misusing my Lord's name when I say that because I am thanking him for the blessings of this past season: for healthy teenage daughters who worked with a fire and a skill that left me breathless, for coaches who gave so much of their energy and time to make the players surprise themselves at what their well-trained bodies (and minds) could do, for the dedication of throngs of parents who sold popcorn and cheered in the stands and created a sense of community for our school once again this winter.

I will admit, however, that's it not beyond possibility that I may have taken his name in vain a couple of times this season. I rarely do, but if there is a time I may have, it's when the whole fan section held their collective breath while my daughter's toes sprung up in back of the freethrow line and the ball sailed elegantly arched towards the rim, over and down through the part-

ing, swaying strings only to have a shrill whistle blow and the referee claim her toes crossed the line—how could they, not my daughter? “Oh, God,” I may have wailed in the heat of the moment because I've noticed during b-ball season I do become someone different. I lose sight of some things, get a little weird—I wonder why.

Maybe I should ask myself why do I love this sport so much? In fact, why do WELS schools in general invest so much time and energy into having ten sweaty kids running up and down the court for sixty minutes or so? Thinking about this, I came up with some reasons that may explain the phenomenon.

Well, first of all, we're good at it! WELS schools often win tournaments against bigger private and much bigger public schools, and for a synod that may have a slight inferiority complex anyway, that makes us proud. But perhaps it isn't so amazing that we can win these games. After all, if you take this many dedicated parents, children, and workaholic teacher/coaches and get them focused on one sport, perhaps it's inevitable we'd excel. Public schools spread their dedicated parents and children over many sports, especially those time- and money-consuming ones like football, hockey, and baseball. Also, since our schools are smaller, b-ball can

include far more children who wouldn't get to play in the public schools and start them far younger, so by the upper grades, we have solid, experienced, deep teams. By high school, our children often have five or six years behind them of confidence-building, skill-honing b-ball games and tournaments, and, not surprisingly, they win.

We also have wonderful gymnasiums our congregations have rallied for and sacrificed to build and maintain. So it makes sense we need to get our money's worth out of them, and what better time than during the bleak, long winters? Basketball bequeaths to our schools a viable reason to need state-of-the-art buildings. Schools without gymnasiums compete, of course, especially if they communicate their needs to their local public schools or community centers, but usually at tournament time they're still the schools who so nicely round out the losers bracket. Twenty years ago we got along well with multi-usage buildings with three feet of floor space beyond the rectangular black lines, but now we laugh at these places when it's their turn to host a game; we call them tin barns and feel so sorry for them. Why they can't even host one of the social events of the year—the lucrative grade school tournament.

We also love basketball because it's relatively inexpensive, requiring only a few balls and some uniforms ranging from t-shirts and shorts in the same general hue to shiny wonders with perfectly

matched warm-ups, but this is up to individual schools, or usually the PTO's, and either way, the uniforms have little to do with the level of ability.

It's also a fairly simple game rule-wise and even the strategies are graspable by non-athletes, especially after a few years of eavesdropping on coaches and players. I can even translate most of the referees' bizarre handwaves now which qualifies me to give intelligent critiques to my seatmates and allows me later to nod and throw in a few terms like "rejection" and "bounce pass" when I rehash the game with my daughters. It gives us something to bond over, all of us. I just love it.

Then why this unease, why am I writing to you? I'm worried we may all love the game just a tad too much. I'm worried our zeal and commitment may seem to some of those other private schools and the public ones especially like someone showing off their jalopy when supposedly there's a Rolls Royce in the garage. Do they laugh at our brand of Christianity, wonder if we're really so different as we claim to be when we yell at the refs as loud as their fans do, when we have grade school teams playing a high school level sched-

ule though we're in danger of burning out their young love of the sport, when we don't teach our daughters and sons that kindness and fairness can go hand in hand with competitiveness?

After years of watching my own husband coach teams at three levels, after



years of sitting poised on the edge of my seat willing balls into baskets so that fragile egos would be rewarded, I've learned a few things. I've learned basketball is a game which must be played by all five people on the court working together. I've learned that sometimes it takes unpopular decisions to get that idea through to players, such as benching players who won't listen despite their talent; or having a broader view of what winning is, what success is, beyond this one game, this current season, or even a few years of seasons. Sometimes it's good for a team to lose, surely to be behind, to find out what they need to call up out of themselves to rally back, or just to play their very best even when they're losing. Sometimes it's good for fans to see a coach building for the future, playing less-qualified players, even in the clutch, so that next year they'll be ready to assume more leadership.

But don't get me wrong—I too am all for excellence. I too want my daughters' coaches to work hard at winning games, not half-heartedly playing at the sport by putting every player in for exactly the same amount of time. That's horribly unfair to the better players, and it isn't kind to the lesser skilled players who also want to win and will suffer socially after the game besides. No, I'm aiming for something less tangible, a kind of balance that covers everything from parents not being so critical of the referees or the coaches or the athletic directors to our schools supporting more endeavors beyond sports. I suspect that the very strengths we see coaches pulling out of our

young people on the court could also be achieved at forensics tournaments, science and art fairs, musicals, math meets and spelling bees and a host of other events we haven't yet invented because all our balls are in one basket. I bet we could see the same fire and skill in our children intellectually and in the arts if we as teachers and parents invested some of the same time and energy we now give primarily to b-ball.

I do love the sport, and part of me would be sad to lessen the focus and excitement I feel every winter. Yet, our sons and daughters deserve a kind of wholeness we may be denying them, our neighboring schools need to see us more balanced, and perhaps we need to reevaluate our own behavior as the whistles shrill on the court. Do we scowl and complain, checking constantly who's subbing in for whom and for how long, peeking at the stats after the game to make sure our daughter got every basket she was entitled to? Is that normal? Or has this amazing game of b-ball somehow blinded us to our flaws for a few months, made us forget that other team of boys or girls on the court are also God's precious children, that there is more than one way to run a sports program than always at full court press? Ah, yes, I do love the sport, but God help me love me it in perspective.

A Fan

Ramona Czer is currently teaching at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota.

If the Bible is Clear, How Come So Many Don't Get It?

Paul O. Wendland



I can get no farther than their ears, their heart I cannot reach. (Luther on returning to Wittenberg to deal with the iconoclasts)

It must be observed that when we speak of Scriptural clarity, we do not wish to say this, as if everything entirely and wherever it has been set forth in the Sacred letters should be thus ordained as to be understood fully and completely by anyone at first glance. What we rather confess is that certain things in Scripture have been said more obscurely and are more difficult to understand. But this is what we say and wish to assert by every possible means that the clarity of Scripture is so great that from it certain firm propositions concerning doctrines can be held, the recognition of which is necessary to our salvation. Some things are said more clearly in one place in Scripture, others in another place; and what is said more obscurely in one place is explained more openly in others. (P. Gerhard)

More often than not, the unbeliever, and frequently even the believer, lets his own prejudices and misconceptions hinder him in ascertaining even the outward meaning of Scripture. Such failure to understand is, of course, due to the sinful depravity of man's inborn nature. It is not due to Scripture's lack of external clarity. (Carl Lawrenz)

The doctrine of the clarity of Scripture was declared from Scripture in order to encourage people to treat the Holy Writings as a reliable source of eternally valid information about God and his will to save us in Christ.

It was first confessed in the context of a Roman Catholicism that denied one could derive certain, foundational

meanings from Scripture without the aid of tradition and the magisterial office of the church. It is still God's truth, and must be confessed whenever someone is repeating what our Enemy once said in Eden "Yeah, hath God said?—Can anyone be sure what God has said or what God has done for us?" In this situation we are bound by a love for truth and a love for our neighbor to repeat Scriptures' claim of clarity for

itself.

In such a situation, it has the function of calling people to repentance. Even though one may reject the message, even though one may not submit his life to Christ in faith, one must still bear the responsibility for not having understood Moses, for not searching the Scriptures and finding Christ.

“Thus saith the LORD,” makes people accountable; they cannot evade their accountability by saying, “But I didn’t get it!”

This doctrine also has a gospel function for believers: With it God gives us the heart to believe that, when we search our Scriptures, we truly will find Christ, we will know the truth that sets free, the light will rise and produce a spiritual clarity of faith in our hearts, and we will be able to guide our steps by the Word and by it avoid the lies that crowd in on us from every side.

So the clarity of Scripture is closely related to its sufficiency: All other words of man may perish, but this word we cannot do without. There is no other to whom we may go. Only this word has the message of eternal life. It is the word of our God, our Savior.

This objective clarity, however, does not take away the debt of love we owe our neighbor as we seek to bring him the Word, just as it does not remove our need to study the Scriptures with great zeal and care to grasp fully what

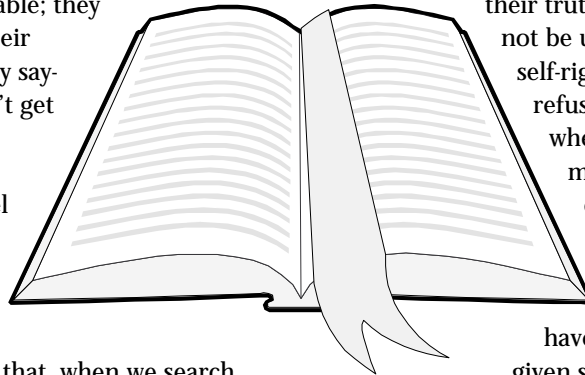
they are saying. The doctrine of Scripture’s clarity must not be used as a device by which I evade the debt of love I owe to all to preach the gospel as clearly as I know how. It must not be used as an excuse to justify complacency or laziness, so that I end up merely parroting words I have discovered to be safe expressions of doctrine, whether I

am inwardly convinced of their truth or not. It must not be used to disguise a self-righteous zeal that refuses to examine whether one’s own manner of expressing God’s truth is the most loving one could have hit upon in a given situation, say, for

example, when explaining ‘close communion’ to ELCA relatives or when trying to reach people of another culture.

Who can deny that in situations of stress like that, it is all too easy to reach for the pat answer, the familiar formula that worked before and doubtless would have worked again—if only my listeners had not been so deaf! (We are reminded of the story of the Englishman who, when trying to address his workers in English, was told that they did not know a word of English. Silent for a moment, eyes blinking, he quickly resumed by shouting out his commands!)

In situations where I may have failed in this way, the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture presents itself as an easy road of escape from a difficult situation. It



soothes my wounded feelings and spares me the rigor of penitent self-examination: "All this stuff is so clear; why can't they get it?" Well, perhaps while Scripture is clear, your own particular formulation of it may not have been to those you were addressing. Scripture is clear, but perhaps your

“

*All other words of
man may perish,
but this word we
cannot do without.*

”

manner of presenting it did not breathe with the same love as its Author. Scripture is clear, but you may be blind to some things in your own make-up that confuse and garble the message you're trying to proclaim.

If, for example, someone cannot read, all the holy letters in the world still will mean nothing to him. God's message will be encoded in symbols the recipient cannot understand. Therefore, we either will teach him the symbols, or we will declare to him orally what is written. Love demands no less.

So, too, if there are concepts in the text which a person does not grasp, we will explain them, just as parents teach-

ing Bible stories to their children patiently deal with their questions and their misunderstandings of what has been said. If the Scriptures are written in a language the recipient does not understand, we will remove every cultural and linguistic barrier we can in translating it for him and expounding it to him.

In the process of trying to communicate with someone from another culture in this way, we often discover that much of what they did not understand in our initial attempts to declare Christ was not so much what Scripture was saying, but pieces of our own cultural baggage that we unwittingly packed up and sent along with timeless and transcultural Law and gospel

None of this is said in any way to deny the obvious. The main barrier to understanding the truth of what God has done will always be spiritual. This spiritual blindness comes in many forms. One current example of it is the way many avidly read Scripture without grasping the chief intent of the Author. They see Scripture as the ultimate Christian how-to book. From it, they fashion 'divine' principles that make an easier job of everything—from rearing children to getting free of codependency. In all their jury-rigging of principles from Scripture, they somehow miss the main point. God has given us these words to find Christ, that we may gaze in the full joy of faith upon his loving face.

To such a one I pay my debt of love when I tell him that what he is doing is wrong, and by declaring to him God's true reason for giving us his Word. I

will encourage him to search the Scriptures so as to find his Savior.

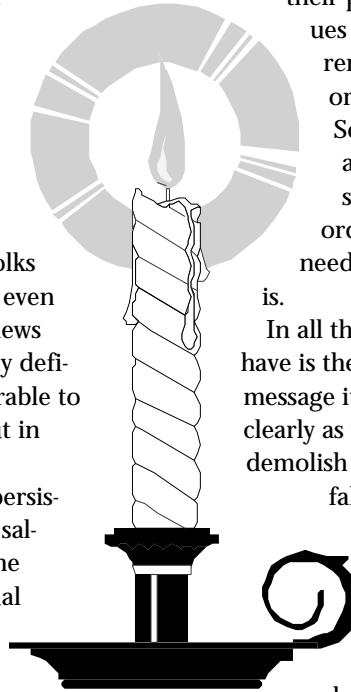
The biggest spiritual barrier is often a lack of understanding of what the world needs to be saved from. As this millennium winds down, it is not just Christians who lament what has happened to us all, or how uncommon common decency has become. In such circumstances, it's no wonder many even fall for the "truths" of Mormonism or a thousand other 'isms'. Folks are in such bad shape that even the law sounds like good news to them. Striking out in any definite direction seems preferable to continuously looping about in aimless spirals.

We must patiently and persistently declare that there is salvation in none other but the Christ who died for spiritual bankrupts, destitute of any other help. We will not consider our debt of love paid until we have fully announced the wrath of God on sin, the sentence of death as sin's consequence and, if they are open to it, the power of Christ over all of it.

Removing these barriers with patient persistence is a matter of removing the subjective lack of clarity which exists in every sinful human being, not a matter of impugning the objective clarity of Scripture. Some of these barriers may exist due to the active aspect of original sin: Men prefer darkness to the light because their deeds are evil. Others

may be due to the inherited corruption of our natures, the fact that we are fallen creatures living in a fallen world in bondage to decay. The decay may work itself out through generations, so that some children inherit a world from their parents in which their values and concepts are so far removed from the moral order presupposed in Scripture that those values and concepts first must be scripturally asserted in order to help them see the need for a Savior such as Christ is.

In all this, the greatest power we have is the power of the scriptural message itself. We will declare it as clearly as we know how in order to demolish whatever strongholds of fallen thought or of prideful culture hold men captive in unbelief. We will wield the sword of the Spirit as pointedly as we are able, as those whose hearts are penitently open for the piercing of that same sword. Above all we will herald the happy news that the Kingdom of God has come in Christ: he is our peace now and forever, here and hereafter.



Pastor Paul Wendland teaches in the foreign language division at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.



A New Team on the Block— Teachers and Technology

Patricia M. Grabitske

“Neat!”
“Cool!”
“Look at this!”

These are but a few enthusiastic exclamations made by students reading Mercer Mayer’s *Just Grandma and Me* and Aesop’s fable “The Tortoise and the Hare.” The enthusiasm came not from the words and pictures on the printed page, but images displayed on the computer screen. These young readers were using the Random House/ Broderbund Company’s editions of *Living Books* put out on CD-ROM available for IBM and Macintosh.

The display on the computer screen followed the printed book page by page. Arrows in the lower right and left corners of the screen allowed “turning

pages” in either direction. An electronic voice read the words as they were highlighted on the screen, urging young eyes to keep pace. Once the words were read, young imaginations were stimulated and the readers delighted by the on-screen animated antics of the characters pictured on each page.

By using the mouse to move an arrow that appeared only after the reading was completed, the CD-ROM user could make nestlings sing as a barbershop quartet, starfish do the soft shoe, doorbells ring. The children thus initiate a multitude of delightful antics by both creatures and inanimate objects such as trees and mailboxes.

Exploring the antics on-screen by using mouse and arrow not only entertained and stimulated imaginations, but challenged individual creativity as well. In exploring the animation and sound on a page featuring a picket fence, one student discovered that each board of the fence sounded a different note of the musical scale. After a few minutes of experimentation the delighted squeal went up, “Listen to this! I can play ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb!’” The newly found skill was promptly demonstrated to anyone who would take the time to listen.

All students were fascinated and delighted with the imaginative animations which they found entertaining. But the animations were also subtly instructing. Whereas the traditional printed page may present difficulty in

distinguishing the differences in meaning between words such as skip, jump, hop, spring, sprint, and lope, the animation on screen verified that "a picture is worth a thousand words." This visual reinforcement of word meanings carried over to recess activities on the playground as children challenged one another to a loping or skipping race and a sprint to the swings.

Teachers want their students to enjoy reading and have fun with it and the CD-ROM certainly fostered that goal. The question keeps nagging the educator's mind: Does the CD-ROM teach reading?

If teaching reading means developing word attack skills, then the answer to that question is probably not. Word recognition may be aided by the combination of highlighting words on screen and the audio pronunciation, but word attack skills are not directly addressed.

However, if we are to foster an enjoyment and love of reading, students need more than word attack skills. Somehow we need to stimulate those visual images which dance through the minds of skilled readers. Perhaps the technology of computers is an ally that will encourage the development of that capability.

The CD-ROM offers great flexibility in use. Children can read back a page which has just been read to them. Words they cannot decode can be highlighted and pronounced by the computer by simple use of mouse and arrow.

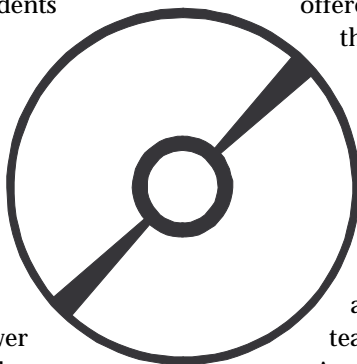
This provides immediate assistance for the students and minimizes the interruption of thought and context.

Expression is modeled by the electronic voice and can be emulated by the child. Imagination and visualization are enhanced. Perhaps the greatest benefit witnessed was an increase in the enthusiasm and interest levels of the struggling reader who enjoyed the support offered by the computer. Using

the mouse and arrow to highlight words and activate the animation also produced a sense of control and self-reliance. One young man said it this way, "I like being able to get help by myself and not always ask the teacher."

As responsible educators wage war on illiteracy and apathy toward reading, we need to use any and every weapon available in the educational arsenal. Since children seem to possess an inherent fascination for computers, electronic images, and all the bells and whistles offered by technology, it seems wise to secure an alliance between teacher and technology to accomplish the ultimate goal: pleasure in reading.

Pat Grabitske teaches middle grades at Trinity Lutheran School in Belle Plaine, Minnesota.



REVIEWS

REVIEWS

Moldenhauer, Adair. *The Story of Our Church (revised)*. Milwaukee: Kremer Publications, Inc, 1991.

The author, a veteran teacher in the Lutheran elementary school, answered a felt need for a simple text to recount the "story of our church." True to the title, Moldenhauer concentrates his efforts on the Lutheran church. About forty percent of the text relates to the Reformation, including a fifteen page biography of Martin Luther.

Preceding the Reformation history is a cursory treatment of New Testament times and the early Christian church (9 pages), followed by a longer section on the medieval church (17 pages). The final pages (12) of modern church history in post-reformation times moves from the English dissenters to the story of American Protestantism and specifically to the Lutheran church in North America.

The publisher prints the workbook-sized text in a large letter format, interspersed with small maps, black and white pictures, and some wood cut illustrations. Each of the thirty-two sections is accompanied by three kinds of questions for discussion: "His story" relates the text to the Scriptures, "Learning from History" seeks to draw practical inferences from the text, and "A Passing Thought" poses brain teasers for the pupil's personal reflections.

The text is less tendentious than the publisher's questions accompanying the

author's text, which call on the pupil to reflect on questions, such as "Did the apostles have a sense of humor? What would they joke about? Who was the funniest?"

All writers of history, like teachers, wrestle with the question of selectivity. In search out details, the author often leaves the young reader to fill in the gap between the facts and their significance. In the case of this text, the author manages to bridge the gap between superficiality and selectivity by using anecdotal material.

The skilled teacher will be ready to fill in biographic material and flesh out the significance of events to avoid an encyclopedic understanding of the life of the church. The well prepared teacher can use this narrative as a springboard for interpretation and to show connections and contexts that are necessarily limited in a readable but compressed text.

(AK)



Juern, John. *A Christian Educator's Guide to the Attention Deficit Disorders*. Milwaukee: Kremer Publications, 1995

This 52-page booklet by Dr. Juern addresses the most frequently asked questions about a complex and challenging disorder facing from three to

five percent of the school-aged population. Children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) present unique challenges to parents and teachers. Dr. Juern helps us understand these challenges, and more importantly, what we can do to help meet the needs of these special learners.

The booklet is divided into twelve chapters which deal with topics that describe the condition, causes, and treatment of ADHD. There are excellent case studies of children with the disorder, which help the reader identify atypical behaviors which are often found with children who have ADHD.

Dr. Juern provides very readable summaries of the causes of the disorder. I was especially pleased, from a professional viewpoint, with his caution regarding attributing hyperactivity to food allergies, a belief held by many persons.

The chapters on treatment are exceptionally well developed. The author handles the medication issue in a thoroughly professional and knowledgeable manner. This is often a highly debated and misunderstood topic, cluttered with misinformation. Dr. Juern informs the reader of the facts.

Teachers are sometimes reluctant to make modifications for one child. The author provides an excellent rationale for doing so and, interestingly, points out the effect on other children when they are not informed as to why this is occurring.

Nowhere does the author overstate the problems which may arise when trying to teach children with ADHD. In fact, he may err on the side of modera-

tion, if that can be considered a shortcoming. For example, when describing the role of teachers in providing help in diagnosis, he states, "It is often times extremely helpful to get information about the child from the teacher or teachers who are directly involved." This is almost always a critical component, since the disorder is usually considered for treatment only after school behavior is noted.

It is this reviewer's opinion that the issue of where the needs of the child with ADHD can best be met is not dealt with in a helpful manner. Dr. Juern states, "Assure the parents that you will try to put as many of the recommendations [of the M-team] into effect as is practical so that the child may continue to attend your school." Unfortunately, this may imply that the public school may be a better place for the child. This is so rarely the case that it should only be considered after all other options are exhausted.

Perhaps the feature of the booklet which will be of most benefit to teachers is the wealth of tips and recommendations for strategies in teaching children with ADHD. Very practical and easy-to-implement suggestions ranging from assignment completion tips, to behavior management, to "attitude shifts" make this a very valuable resource for teachers. Checklists are included which can be used immediately to help children with motivation and organization. An ADHD screening instrument is also included.

This booklet is written by a fellow believer, who understands the role and unique qualities of WELS teachers. He

states that the most significant variable in determining the success or failure of any educational program is the individual teacher. He notes that sinful behaviors must be pointed out as sin and cannot be “psychologically glossed over.” The Christian educator will be able to show God’s love and forgiveness for those sinful behaviors. The book concludes with an excellent summary in the form of a letter to teachers from a mother of a child with ADHD. The letter concludes:

Ask Matt who his favorite teachers were. He will name those who were patient and caring, who took their time to explain it again and again, who adjusted the material and verbally tested him. They did

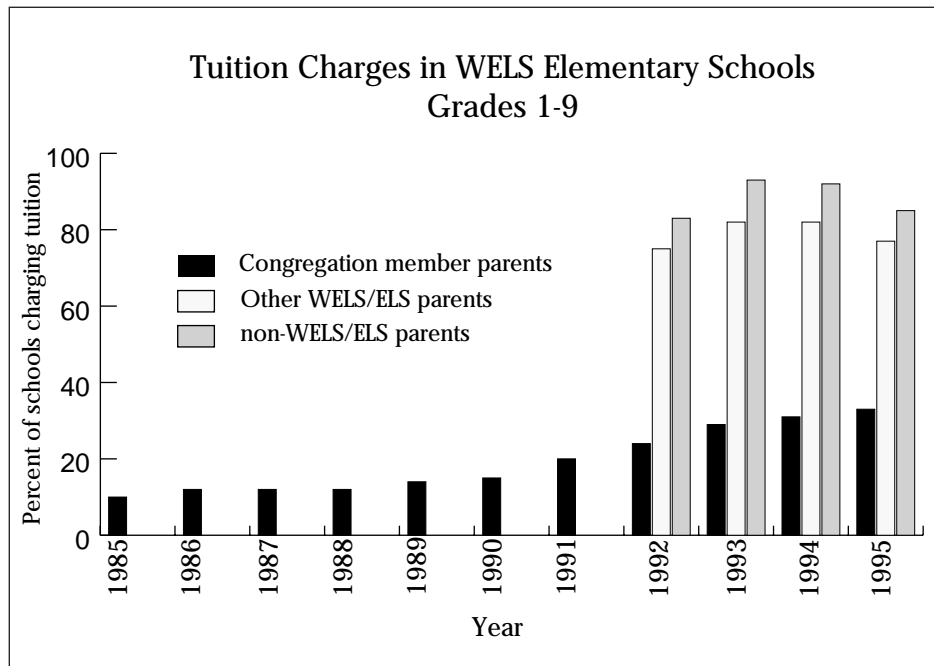
not demean or derogate him. They did not deal with him by ignoring him and placing him in the back corners of their classrooms and their minds. But neither were they lax in their expectations. They were the ones who disciplined most definitely. God bless them for their loving efforts.

This booklet can be wholeheartedly endorsed for use by our WELS teachers who want to know more about this perplexing condition, and especially those who are looking for strategies for teaching these special learners.

(DH)

Reviewers: Arnold Koelpin, Daryl Hanneman

A WELS Factoid



The Martin Luther College curriculum library is in need of elementary texts (1990 or newer). These are used by our students in their methods courses. If your faculty is doing a curriculum study and have preview texts that you don't have to return, please consider sending them to MLC for the curriculum library.

Is your faculty attending the Teachers' Convention in New Ulm this summer? Does your congregation have students attending the regular or summer session at MLC? They might be able to bring those books to the campus.

Thank you for your help,
The Library