

VOLUME 32
NUMBER 3
FEBRUARY 1992

The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

The Single Teacher

*I'm single because God in his love and wisdom
has blessed me with this state.*

A Parent's Perspective of Preschool

*As Christian parents we are very grateful for the
spiritual growth which resulted from our son's
participation in a Lutheran prekindergarten pro-
gram where the means of grace are
treasured and used.*

Science Safety

*We do not want to stifle their excitement about
God's world by a dangerous science
environment.*

The Lutheran Educator

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

ARTICLES

- A Step Update from DMLC** 68
Arlen L. Koestler
- Profiles of Ministry:
The Caribbean** 72
Dennis L. Needham
- A Parent's Picture of
Preschool** 77
Betsy R. Woldt
- The Single Teacher**
Similarities & Differences 80
John R. Isch
- Serving Singly** 81
Linda M. Berg
- Reaching Out to the Single** 84
Owen A. Dorn
- Attitudes and Safety
in the Science Classroom** 87
Paul L. Willems

DEPARTMENTS

- As We See It**
- A Little Learning ... a Dangerous Thing** 67
- Teachers Share Ideas** 92
- Reviews** 94

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A Little Learning ... a Dangerous Thing?

Our Lutheran elementary teachers are generalists practicing in an age of specialization. They know a little bit about a lot of things, but not very much about anything. Almost 60% of their baccalaureate program at DMLC is devoted to courses in general education, another 30% to their professional major, and only about 10% to an elective area of concentration.

Granted the importance of a broad-based liberal arts program to the ministry of the elementary teacher, just how important is that rather insignificant area of concentration? This question is one that has surfaced a number of times since the inception of the area of concentration in 1970.

Surprisingly, the question has most often been raised by graduates, especially administrators.

At least a century before the terms specialist and generalist came to be used in educational circles, Alexander Pope penned the famous epigram "A little learning is a dangerous thing; Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring" (source of inspiration for scholars, "Essay on Criticism," 1. 215ff.). Pope's concern was the "Causes hindering a true Judgment." However, "true Judgment" is not only important for the critic, but for the teacher as well, especially at a time when knowledge is increasing at a mind-boggling rate.

Committed as we are to telling the truth not only in the teaching of religion but also in every school subject, how can we neglect continuing to broaden and deepen our knowledge of the Word and his marvelous creation? "True Judgment" is called for in all the decisions we must make, from curriculum design at the top, down to individual lesson plans and their implementation in the classroom, as well as outside the classroom in our dealings with parents, members of the congregation, and our co-workers. So "drink deep," Pope advises, and goes on to explain the reason for his injunction: "There ('the Pierian spring') shallow drafts intoxicate the brain, And drinking largely sobers us again." General education ("shallow draughts") should stimulate our curiosity about the subjects we are to teach; an area of concentration ("drinking largely") should help to satisfy that curiosity and stimulate the desire for further private or formal study.

Admittedly, since it is not a full minor, the area of concentration at DMLC does not permit preservice teachers to "drink DEEP," so we have had to ignore Pope's alternative—"taste NOT the Pierian spring." While the sobering effects of specialized study may not be as dramatic, we have contended that a sizeable sip is better than an unquenched thirst. Pope's all or none perfectionism has little place in our educational philosophy. Yet he is largely right when he warns us that "A little learning is a dangerous thing" indeed in its adverse effect upon "true Judgment." Then let us resolve to drink as "largely" and "deep" as we can from both "the Pierian spring" and especially the "well of life."

MDS

S econdary **T** eacher **E** ducation **P** rogram

A STEP UPDATE FROM DMLC

Arlen L. Koestler

Yes! The Secondary Teacher Education Program (STEP) at DMLC is alive, growing, and reaching maturity. The program, approved by the 1987 Synod convention, was first offered to the freshman class in the fall of 1988. Thus the STEP is currently in its fourth year. Within one year all courses for this program will be in place; the first five-year students will be experiencing their secondary student teaching and their professional semester. Perhaps now is a good time to review the purpose, the planning, the program, and the participants of the STEP.

The purpose

The idea of extending the scope of DMLC's purpose to include not only elementary but also secondary teacher training was not new to the Synod convention in 1987. At various times over the past thirty years questions had been raised about the possibility of DMLC's including such a program. With the advent of more area Lutheran high schools and the corresponding need for teachers to staff those schools, constituents automatically looked to DMLC for its

Christian-trained teachers. As the current high schools continue to grow and as one hears of possible other high schools being organized, the need for teachers trained specifically for ministry in our area Lutheran high schools becomes both apparent and urgent.

The planning

During the summer of 1986 DMLC faculty members representing all divisions met to design the program which has become known as the STEP. This committee's goal was to produce a secondary teaching program that would be unique to our schools, yet incorporate the university-accepted standards for broad field major candidates. Therefore the committee took a two-pronged approach: 1) It requested all area Lutheran high schools to submit both curricula for all academic areas they offer and information regarding other academic and non-academic responsibilities, which they assign to their teachers. 2) The committee also reviewed other public and private college and university catalogs for academic requirements of broad field majors. The

resulting program, now called the STEP, is thus a blend which prepares our students for courses and responsibilities unique to our area Lutheran high schools, yet also provides the range of courses which legitimately deserves the title "broad field." This program was presented to the DMLC faculty for approval, modified and presented to the Synod convention for approval, fine-tuned and finally offered to incoming freshmen in 1988.

The program

While STEP is an acronym suggesting *secondary* teaching only, students who complete the program actually earn a double major and a minor. The first major is elementary education; the second is one of six broad fields selected by the student. The six broad fields currently offered are English, social studies, science, mathematics, music, and physical education. The minor will be in social studies unless the student is a social studies major; in that case the minor will be English. These minors are automatically determined because of the number of courses in those subject areas already in the current elementary education curriculum and because a number of these courses can be cross-indexed in both programs.

Each major consists of courses in the subject area required of all students plus courses taken by those students concentrating or majoring in the specific area. For example, the English major is allowed to apply the courses Introduction to Literature: Poetry and Drama, Introduction to Literature: American Fiction, and the English Language to the major program (composition and speech do not

apply). These courses provide nine of the required forty-five semester hours for the major requirement, leaving thirty-six hours (twelve additional courses) yet to be earned. Two of those twelve courses are required of all English majors: Adolescent Literature and Communications. The remaining ten courses (thirty semester hours) are chosen from among the sixteen other literature and language electives offered both STEP and English concentrate students.

Why the five-year, double-major program instead of two four-year single-major programs? The DMLC faculty, in designing the program, felt concern for graduates of DMLC. DMLC is a single-purpose college which trains teachers for ministry in our schools. It offers a degree accredited by North Central but its graduates are not certified to teach in public schools. The faculty, therefore, felt that being able to place graduates was a primary concern. With twenty area Lutheran high schools presently

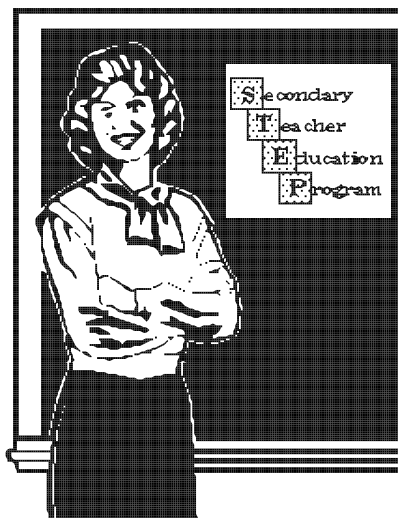


CHART 1
Enrollment in STEP Majors from 1988 to 1991

	English	Math	Music	Phy Ed	Science	Soc St	Total
1988	13 3	5 2	6 1	12 6	6 1	8 4	50 17
1989	7 2	9 6	8 5	11 8	6 2	10 2	51 25
1990	10 4	5 4	4 2	11 7	5 5	10 15	45 37
1991	10 10	8 8	7 5	18 17	9 9	10 10	62 59

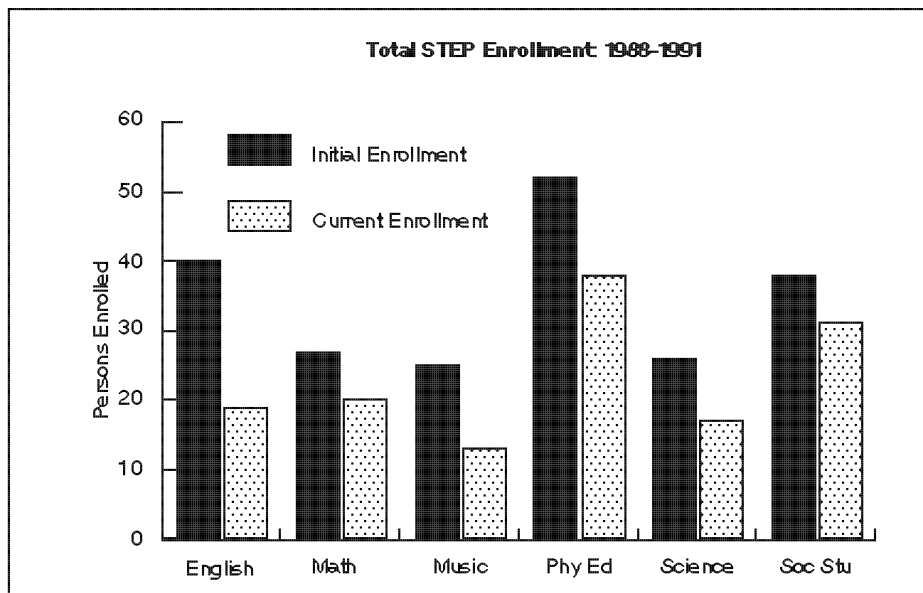
Italics indicates number enrolled in STEP majors as of 9/30/91.

in existence staffed by 327 teachers, the demand for secondary teachers is obviously not as great as for the 365 elementary schools with 1797 teachers. Since very little experience exists for assigning someone trained only for secondary teaching, the faculty felt the safe course was to require graduates to be trained in both areas.

When students request information about the STEP from DMLC, they are

told that no guarantee exists that they *will* be assigned at the secondary level. Realistically, the majority of graduates, both STEP and four-year students, may well be assigned at the elementary level. Past experience does indicate, especially in light of the current class sizes at DMLC and the continuing synodical need, that graduates are reasonably certain of being assigned into the teaching ministry when they

GRAPH 1



graduate.

Less certain, however, is the number of vacant high school teaching positions available in any given year. During the past few years, the number of new teachers in our area Lutheran high schools has ranged from six to more than twenty, depending on how part-time teachers are counted. Also less certain is the desire or willingness of high school boards to call graduates, however well-qualified, to teach an age level which is within five years of their students. As a matter of fact, during the planning stages of the STEP, the high schools indicated to the representatives from DMLC that they would *prefer* graduates from DMLC who have had experience in working with pastors, other teachers, and parents for a number of years and who have also prepared themselves in some major field. However, they did not rule out calling STEP graduates through the assignment committee.

The participants

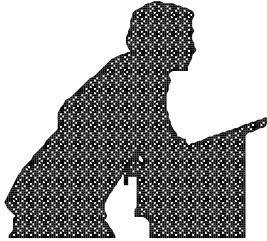
The accompanying chart suggests that the STEP continues to be popular with freshmen, with more than one third of each freshman class initially enrolling in the program. This writer is not surprised. As the former recruitment director, he encouraged students to indicate this program if they had any inclination to prepare for secondary teaching. The advice was practical; since STEP majors require at least seventeen courses in an academic area and have only eight academic semesters on campus, they must take two and sometimes three courses in their major subject area each semester (other required courses are delayed to make room for the

major courses). If an incoming freshman does not begin with a program designed to double up on major courses, he or she may not be able to fit all of them into the program later. On the other hand, if the student decides after a semester or two to discontinue the STEP, he or she will probably have taken only courses required also of four year students and will thus find the transition between programs more easily accomplished.

As indicated by the graph, a large number of freshmen who begin with the STEP later opt for the elementary program. Perhaps these students came out of grade school with the idea of teaching; they wanted to model their favorite grade school teacher. During their high school experience, they may have encountered a high school role model. After a year or two in college, they have had a chance to consider the teaching ministry from a broader perspective, to examine their own strengths and interests, and to realize that one form of the teaching ministry is not more glorious or important than another, regardless of grade level.

The initial popularity of the STEP among incoming freshmen and the students who are persisting after three years suggest that the program is successful. The first STEP students will graduate in 1993. At that time the assignment committee will have the opportunity to place these first STEP graduates. May, 1993, promises to be an important step in the future of the STEP.

Arlen Koestler teaches in the English division and is the Director of Developmental Education at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.



Profiles of Ministry: THE CARIBBEAN

Dennis L. Needham

We continue our series of Profiles of Ministry with Dennis Needham's ministry in Antigua, West Indies. St. John's, Antigua is 6000 miles from Wood Lake, Minnesota (our last Profile) and even further in terms of culture. But it really isn't so distant. Children in both places and both cultures need the same message of sin and grace, of law and gospel. In a personal letter accompanying the manuscript, Mr. Needham made a point well worth sharing with our readers. He thanked us for the opportunity to reflect on his ministry and he noted that the space we gave him could not contain the thoughts and words that resulted from this reflection. We are happy he had this chance to reflect, we know his reflections will be an encouragement to our readers, and we pray that other teachers will be prompted to do the same joyful reflection on their own ministry. (Eds)

Our Lord used rather unusual circumstances to bring our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to this tiny island in the northeastern corner of the Caribbean. In January of 1973, Mr. William O'Donoghue, a West Indian lay evangelist, received support which he had sought from the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. By October 1974, a four-classroom school opened with two teachers called from the WELS. In 1975, FAL recognized that it could not continue its support of the mission (one pastor and three teachers), and our Synod was asked to assume responsibility. Our Lord led the delegates at the 1975 convention to take a momentous step in voting to accept this responsibility. This "hybrid" mis-

sion was to be supervised by the Synod's General Board for Home Missions and the very young South Atlantic District Mission Board. By August 1976, a second pastor and a fourth teacher had arrived and a simple but spacious church had been dedicated. Since the 1979-80 school year, the expatriate staff has numbered five (two pastors and three teachers). A loan from *Reaching Out* funded a four-classroom addition to the school which was dedicated in November of 1984. The 1985-86 school year saw the humble beginnings (three pupils) of our preschool program which now provides for two classes (ages three and four) under the care of four young Antiguan ladies of our congregation. *Lift High*



the Cross offerings have funded a two-year assignment for Pastor Matthew Wobeck as he and our two resident pastors have explored the possibilities of expanding work in the Caribbean. With approval recently granted for manpower for the island of St. Lucia (Pastor Wobeck has resided there since January 1991), the outreach to the Caribbean seems about to be expanded.

Antigua (108 sq. mi.) with a population of approximately 80,000 is the "big sister" to Barbuda (1,200 inhabitants on 62 sq. mi.) in the two-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda. First settled by the English in 1632, the island was a British colony until it became an associated state in 1967 and took the final step to independence in 1981. Its government (public) educational system may be described in terms familiar to us. The primary level includes Infant 1-2 (K-1), Junior 1-5 (2-6), and Senior 1-3 (7-9). The secondary level contains Forms 1-5 (7-11). Pupils (public or private) passing exams at the end of Junior 5 are granted a scholarship to one of eight government secondary schools. Pupils not passing the exams have an opportunity at the end of Senior 3 to enter Form 3 or 4 by passing another set of exams. Pupils who do not pass these exams may "learn a trade" or attend the Antigua State College's two-year vocational program. Pupils who complete their secondary school training may write Caribbean-based proficiency exams. Grades earned on these exams are

factors in determining the job they might find or whether they may gain access to college or university training.

The teaching staff of government schools is comprised of persons who have received a college degree, a teaching certificate, or a recommendation from the Ministry of Education to teach based upon their secondary school proficiency exams. The Antigua State College offers a two-year teacher training program. While nearly every village has its own primary school, there are only eight government secondary schools throughout the island. A scholarship to one of these secondary schools provides the right to attend the school. Pupils furnish uniforms and books. Most government secondary schools have been constructed with significant amounts of foreign (British, Canadian, or U.S.) aid. School days regularly begin with "prayers": opening prayers and songs with a brief Bible reading. The *Education Act* provides for such religious activities with the clear understanding that the Bible is read with-





out comment. Since religion is seen as valuable in the schools, relatively few parents exercise their option to have their child exempted from “prayers.”

St. John's Lutheran School has changed significantly since its beginning in 1974. Pupils “older than their grade” are few. Most of our pupils leave after sixth grade upon passing the Primary exams or transferring to a Senior department of a government school or another private school. The small number of pupils in grades seven and eight will likely transfer to

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schools in the States. Antigua's booming economy of the late 1980s brought parents and their children from other Caribbean islands to seek employment. The most challenging are the Spanish-speaking children from the Dominican Republic. Our Lord used the high school Spanish of a daughter of one of our former pastors to help a pupil learn English. This association, as short as it was, seems to have been the point of contact for a continuing influx of Spanish-speaking adults and pupils who have come to us. We are

doing our best to serve them, despite the fact that none of the staff is fluent in Spanish. Following the enrollment of two such pupils, their respective parents participated in the pastors' Bible information class and later became communicant members of the congregation. The Arabic-speaking Syrian mother of one of our kindergarteners concluded her instruction class and was confirmed recently. Though an older daughter had attended the early years of our school, the mother had been sent to the large Catholic primary schools. Later she enrolled in our pastors' confirmation class. I do not know if we will ever know the specific cause of the mother's “change of mind,” but we can be sure that the Word of God—as taught and lived by the staff and pupils of the school—must have been the real cause for change. I continue to grow in my conviction that the Word of our Lord must simply be presented diligently, faithfully, and consistently whenever the opportunity arises. The timing for success is for the Lord to determine.

What the Lord has in store for our class of fifth to seventh graders can only be good. Since September of 1990, Arabic-speaking Sharif and Spanish-speaking Anacanoa, Yohanna, Eugenio, and Edwin have begun to learn and use English. More importantly, they have begun to learn and apply the Word of God to their hearts and lives. Currently, none of the parents is a member of the congregation. Here it seems will be the opportunity for the children to train up their parents. Whether Sabah will spend her adult years back in Jordan among her father's Muslim relatives is a big question. I pray that her



Spirit-given faith will continue to grow and she will hold onto the promises which her Savior Jesus has made to her. What an opportunity our Lord is providing us as Osama, Samito, Hakema, and Siyhem regularly attend Sunday worship despite the fact that both parents are Muslim! What a privilege for us to provide daily doses of God's Word for the souls of these children—children with whom I am confident of sharing eternity!

The kindergarten classes following two years of preschool Christian education are a particular treasure for our Jehovah's Witnesses pupil. The Lord has provided us with two opportunities to share his Word with this family: the Bible information class which parents are to attend and for the child the daily exposure to God's Word in our classroom. Parents and child now have the sure hope of eternal life which is not found in their former religion.

From its first day our school has been a mission arm of our congregation. Approximately 50% of our current 191 communicants could be considered as having their first contact with the congregation through our school. We do, however, face a problem in perception as people often wonder if we are simply a school which teaches religion or one that also teaches American subjects. We seek to use the best of both worlds in following the Antiguan curriculum. Since U.S. publishers provide better teacher-support materials, most of our supplies are from the U.S. We do, however, use Caribbean social studies



and science materials. If our emphasis on God's Word and its application is perceived as too strong, then at least someone is noticing that there is a difference at our school. For children living in such a sinful and corrupt society there can never be too much instruction, application, example, and exhortation from God's Word.

How effective has that Word been in the school and home life of our pupils, parents, and staff? Since late 1977, when one pupil deliberately hit another pupil with a stone, I cannot recall another such incident. Anger which erupted among the pupils from time to time in the late 1970s has all but disappeared. Where spanking was a common occurrence in the early years of the school, a quiet word of Christian admonition is now suffi-

cient. The unwillingness to forgive or apologize to one another or the teachers has long since been replaced with beautiful Christian love—often evident in unsolicited apologies and a willingness to forgive even before an apology is offered. As these children have been under the care of dedicated and loving teachers, they have learned by word and example how their Savior's love is naturally reflected in their dealings with each other.

This beautiful relationship which the Holy Spirit has worked among our pupils, parents, and staff might be attributed to the long service of some of our staff. However, the development of this joyful association is rightly attributed to God's law and gospel which continues to be present-

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ed and applied consistently by both pastors and teachers. The three expatriate teachers and four national teachers (each former pupils of our school) and the pastors meet formally and informally with the welfare of our pupils and adults at the top of our list.

We eagerly anticipate our WELS Board for Parish Education's "Mission-Focused Ministry" program. Being sinful humans, we have been less than perfect in establishing and applying policies and practices to help our school serve as a mission arm of the congregation. Few methods or policies are always successful. But we know that the simple message of law and gospel presented in word and action by the staff, pupils, and members must be the basis of our school policy and practice.

Our ministry in Antigua is different in many ways from your ministry. Yet it is significantly similar—perhaps even basically identical—to your special calling. The Lord, whose ways are not always our ways, has given us a glimpse of his blessings here in Antigua. Like Abraham, we continue by faith toward a goal which is known only to our Lord. May we as *your* representatives here in the Caribbean and *you* as *our* representatives in your own congregation continue to find true joy and satisfaction in faithful and dedicated service to our Lord, whom we *all* represent.

Dennis Needham serves as principal (headmaster) and teacher of upper grades of St. John's Lutheran School in St. John's, Antigua, West Indies.

A PARENT'S PICTURE OF PRESCHOOL

Betsy R. Woldt

Our congregation operates a Lutheran elementary school and a prekindergarten program. For our family, the enrollment of our children in the Lutheran elementary school is taken for granted. As parents we know how important it is for our children to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a blessing for our children daily to learn God's Word from teachers who are committed to that Word.

But what about the prekindergarten program? State laws do not mandate attendance of four- and five-year-olds in an early childhood education program. Enrolling our children in the prekindergarten class would require a conscious decision and an additional financial obligation. Would prekindergarten be more beneficial for our children than staying at home? Could we justify the tuition expenses in an already tight family budget?

Our oldest son did not attend a prekindergarten program even though such a program was available. The idea of preschool appealed to us, but we were not committed to send him. We did not feel it was necessary in his case. He was very social and interested in learning. He enjoyed being home with his brother and sis-



ter. Besides, the closest Lutheran preschool program was seven miles from our home. Now, seven miles is not a long distance when you consider how far parents are willing to drive to see that their children are educated in a WELS elementary school. Yet, when parents are not committed to the idea of preschool for their child, the thought of the regular commute becomes one more factor in the decision not to participate in such a program.

When the time came, we did send our second child, Jacob, to prekindergarten, but circumstances had changed. A family move eliminated transportation concerns. The new local school district provided busing service. Still, we sent him, not because of the convenience of the prekindergarten program, but because of the benefits we perceived for our son as we considered his indi-

vidual circumstance and personality.

Jacob had a birthdate less than two weeks from the kindergarten cut-off date. Many people gave us the advice to “hold him back” and send him to school the following year. But we needed a better reason than an August birthday to delay his schooling. We decided to take a critical look at our son and come up with reasons why he should or should not go to kindergarten. It seems odd that the very reasons that kept us from sending Jacob to kindergarten were the ones that made us decide to enroll him in prekindergarten.

It's difficult for us to explain precisely why we did not send Jacob to kindergarten the first year he was eligible. His lack of interest in school and learning may have played a part in that decision. For Jacob school was a place he would maybe go someday, if he really had to. He was not interested in learning to write his name or other at-home efforts to develop reading readiness. He seemed to have a short attention span. He would listen to the first page or two of a story and then decide that it was time to do something else. He rarely finished playing a game or coloring a picture. Even the television couldn't hold his attention for more than five or ten minutes.

Perhaps another reason we did not send Jacob to kindergarten immediately was his retiring nature. He needed to become more comfortable with people outside the family circle. He was used to having his big brother around to play with all the time. The new friends that he made were his brother's friends. When it came time for going someplace new or trying to do something new, he would do it if

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his brother would too. There were even times when we'd ask him what he wanted for breakfast and he'd answer by saying that he would have whatever his brother was having for breakfast. These characteristics helped us decide not to send our younger son to kindergarten, but they also persuaded us that prekindergarten would benefit him.

Jacob wasn't very excited about the thought of going to preschool. We tried to build his enthusiasm by letting him choose his own backpack, paintshirt, and markers. School became a little more appealing when he found out that he would only have to go to school two days a week and that he would be able to ride a school bus. The outlook was improving. He met his teacher during a home visit. She explained prekindergarten to him. His face brightened. This might even be fun!

The year in prekindergarten did prove beneficial for our son. We noticed some changes. He enjoyed

being with the other children and he made his own new friends. He enjoyed listening to stories and joining in group activities. In short, he began to enjoy the idea of going to school.

Field trips were the best. The most memorable field trip for Jacob was an excursion to the local museum. His class had been learning about native Americans, and they went to the museum to see the Dakota Indian exhibit. That night our son could not wait to tell us about his day. He described the birch bark canoe, the Indian tools, the buffalo head, and one of the battles from local history. It had all happened right here in our own town!

It was thrilling for us to see his excitement and interest in learning. He was growing through his experiences in prekindergarten.

Jacob grew in another way. Jesus was at the center of everything that he learned and experienced. His love for his Savior grew because he had a teacher who presented God's Word to him every day in Bible lessons and focused his thoughts on Jesus in many other ways during their hours together. As Christian parents we are very grateful for the spiritual growth which resulted from our son's participation in a Lutheran prekindergarten program where the means of grace are treasured and used.

A prekindergarten program may not be necessary for every child, but we are very happy with our decision to send Jacob. Prekindergarten helped him mature socially and developed in him a love for learning and school. That's what we wanted.

To employ the terms educators use,

we weren't so interested in cognitive development as we were affective gains for our child. Jacob was not able to read fluently, speak foreign languages, or do advanced algebra when he graduated from the prekindergarten program, but that didn't bother us. Our son liked school, he was developing a love for learning, and his love and trust in his Savior grew. Jacob was ready for school and he had been given a good start on life!

Betsy Woldt is a mother and homemaker in New Ulm, Minnesota.

WELS National Literacy Convention

**Dr. Martin Luther College
New Ulm, Minnesota**



June 30-July 3, 1992

SIMILARITIES



DIFFERENCES

John R. Isch

What makes you different from others? This is a loaded question, particularly in American society today. We have racial differences, gender differences, ethnic differences, age differences, and socio-economic differences. All these differences can be and often are divisive. The vague ideal of a melting pot where all differences are assimilated may be as bad in theory as it is unworkable in practice. We are all different and these differences can often be irksome in our relationships with others, even in the church.

The two articles following discuss a difference among persons in the teaching ministry. The articles talk about the single teacher, a rare topic for this journal or for any other education journal. The Board for Parish Services has asked *The Lutheran Educator* to provide a forum to discuss this difference. They have also asked two authors, Linda Berg and Owen Dorn, to speak to this difference.

No one, to my knowledge, has ever reported on how many single teachers there are in WELS schools, although the Commission on Parish Schools does report on how many married women teachers there are. A simple calculation shows 386 unmarried women teachers in our elementary

schools in 1991. Forty years ago there were 218. In 1950 nine out of ten women teachers were unmarried; today only one out of three women teachers is unmarried. Male teachers have remained anonymously unclassified all these years. (Judging from the traffic between New Ulm and Watertown and between New Ulm and Mequon, single pastors must be an endangered species, if not extinct). So much for statistics.

There are several good reasons for examining this difference among the teachers in our schools. The Board for Parish Services has a specific responsibility, and all of us have a general responsibility, to be sensitive to the needs and circumstances of those who serve in the public ministry. The importance and concerns of married persons and families have been discussed in seminars, conferences, and essays; the concerns of singleness also merit discussion.

We are also directed, as Luther tells us in the Table of Duties, to consider our place in life. We need frequently to reflect on who we are, the position we hold, the obligations we have toward others, and the obligations others have to us. By this reflection we acquire insight and understanding into how we have fallen short of God's law. We see how we

have neglected our responsibilities and abused the trust others have placed in us. We learn what sins we need to confess. But in reflection on our place in life—as married or single—we also see more clearly God's blessing on our specific circumstance. His grace is sufficient for us individually because our unique weaknesses perfect his strength.

Thus this discussion about the single teacher can be beneficial. If you are single, you may hear echoes of what you have thought or said. If you are married, you may be helped to understand better the lives of others.

There is a closing point, however. Differences in our lives and stations are important, but the similarities

are even more important. The most important characteristic of a single person is not his or her singleness, even as the most salient feature of Afro-Americans or women or elderly or men or Native Americans is not that label we use to identify them. The most important characteristic of all of us is our oneness in Christ—the same salvation and the same hope we all share. That unity is a similarity that makes a difference and that is also worth reflecting on and speaking about.

John Isch is professor of education at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

SERVING SINGLY

Linda M. Berg

I am a teaching single. I am a single teacher. Changing the position of two words may change the emphasis, but it doesn't alter the fact of who I am. Dabbling in more word-play raises some questions: Are my concerns as a teaching single different from those of a non-teaching single? Are my joys and frustrations as a single teacher different from those of a non-single teacher? I think not. Yet, this topic suggests that there must be something unique about that particular combination of identities.

Whatever else I am or am not, I'm first and foremost a Christian. My greatest joy is in knowing what incredible things Christ has done for me, a sinner. My greatest comfort is in knowing that he is my strength, my confidante, my healer, my inspi-

ration. His love for me does not depend on my occupation or my marital status.

But what aspects of my life are true because I am a single and a teacher? One of the most obvious is my physical separation from my family. My family isn't there for me when I come home at night. We seldom have a chance to worship together or to share Sunday dinner. If they need help, I'm not easily able to be there for them. We've spent more birthdays, Christmas Eves and Mother's Days apart than together. Had I not been directed through a divine call to live and work where I do, I could very probably choose to lessen the miles between us.

To my friends and co-workers who have welcomed me into their families

in so many ways over so many years—thank you! Thank you for the birthday suppers (yours and mine), the chances to babysit, the family devotions and family spats, the joys and sorrows you've shared with me. Thank you for not singling me out just because I'm a single, but for loving me because we have the same Father and Brother.

In a broader sense, no matter where I serve I have a built-in Christian family. True, the relationship I have with other congregation members isn't the relationship I share with my blood-relatives, but isn't it an even higher "blood-relationship"?

As a teacher I am, in a sense, a congregational leader, and therefore will, as time allows, take an active part in congregational life. I could concentrate on my singleness in the midst of family-oriented organizations and activities, and I could also start to feel very sorry for myself. On the other hand, I can take an honest inventory of the situation. What activities are actually prohibited because of my single state? Probably couples' club; maybe mothers' club. What's left? Bible class, choir, ladies'/men's groups, altar guild, evangelism committee, PTL, OWLS (if I've finally reached that state of wisdom and maturity), Pioneers, Sunday school teachers, singles' group ... the list goes on. I may have initially felt a bit awkward at going on my own, but I have never, ever been made to feel unwelcome. The choice is mine: I can sit at home and stagnate, or I can take advantage of the many opportunities for fellowship, service, and education that my church provides.

An attitude that I sometimes encounter as a single teacher used to cause a certain amount of hurt. It runs along these lines: how can a single teacher, a non-parent, possibly understand and have the same compassion for children that a parent does? In other words, how can I be as effective a teacher as one who is a parent? Having worked through the years with many teachers and parents, I can safely say that concern isn't necessarily valid. I can also say that my own understanding and compassion took on new dimensions with the beginning of a new generation in our family. I've also found that resources such as parenting books and magazines can be helpful to people other than parents. God supplies what I lack in an intriguing variety of ways.

A teaching single has a treasured opportunity that many singles miss. True, I have no children of my own, but it would take a long time to count all the children with whom I've been privileged to share Jesus' love. That indeed is a special blessing from a gracious God!

The matter of time is also an aspect of my dual role. It's no secret that teaching isn't a nine-to-five job. I've heard married workers and their spouses get down-right prickly over the implication that singles can be more effective in their ministry because they can devote more time to it. I've also encountered the double-headed beast who hisses, "Let the single teachers with more time do it—Why should I do all the extras just because I'm single?" I can't find the Bible verse that says my effectiveness as God's servant depends solely on how much time I expend. I can find

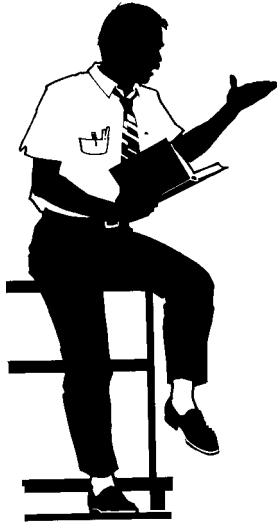
numerous verses which tell me to use my time and my gifts to do well whatever the Lord gives me to do. Whether I'm a married or a single teacher, I know that God expects me to balance wisely my time between meeting my obligations and tending to my physical, spiritual, and emotional health. While my married co-workers have the blessings resulting from family life, I have the counter blessings of more time and freedom. I can—not easily, but *more* easily—find time for Bible study, for attending summer school, for participating in other church activities, yes, even for putting up bulletin boards or doing more duties than someone else on the faculty. Rather than envying one another, my married friends and I probably need to become more sympathetic to one another's tensions and frustrations and then, to "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

It's old and time-worn, but it's good, the formula for finding JOY: first Jesus, next others, then yourself. It's a good philosophy for me as a single, as a teacher, and as a Christian.

I'm single because God in his love and wisdom has blessed me with this state. I'm a teacher because God in his love and wisdom has honored me with this calling. I'm a Christian because God in his grace and mercy has called me into his family. Like Paul, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances ... I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:11, 13). With such rich threads woven into the fabric of my life, how can I not find joy in my service as a single Christian teacher?

Linda Berg teaches fourth grade at St. Paul's Lutheran School, Lake Mills, Wisconsin.





REACHING OUT TO THE SINGLE

Owen A. Dorn

I married after a year of teaching in Cibecue, the most isolated area of the Apache Indian Reservation. My wife and I raised four children, and we became grandparents shortly before she entered heaven during the twenty-third year of our marriage. I remarried after two and one-half years. My second wife and I have completed two years of attempting to blend a family of seven children, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and new in-laws.

I haven't been single much of my life. Yet, I have been asked for my perspective on ministry to and by singles. Being abruptly thrown into a single life forced me to experience, re-evaluate, and empathize with the single life once again. I have gained some new perspectives.

I was never meant to be alone. The year before my first marriage, and the year after it ended were the two loneliest years of my life. I need "a

significant other." I need an intimate relationship with a loving Christian spouse who makes me complete. The Lord has been gracious and kind in providing for that need.

Many single people are like me, but not all. Among single people with whom I have worked and socialized, I have noted that there are those who are perfectly content and comfortable with being single; there are also those who are content with being single but who need another compatible person to participate comfortably in the events of life.

Thus, single people seem to fall into three categories: those comfortable with being single, those uncomfortable with being single, and those comfortable with being single, but uncomfortable with doing things alone. Those who fall into each of these categories have very different needs. Therefore, no single-goal program will meet the needs of all the single people in a congregation. As a matter of fact, not even a program aimed at meeting the needs of each of the three categories just described is sufficient, for there are several distinctive subgroups within these categories, such as the unmarried, widows/widowers, and those who have been divorced.

There are even "sub-subgroups." Those who have recently divorced, for instance, have very different support needs from those who have had suffi-

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nificant.

cient time after a divorce to adjust to being single again. Divorced single parents must cope with the future much differently than the childless divorced. The recently widowed must deal with different issues than those who have had time to heal from their loss.

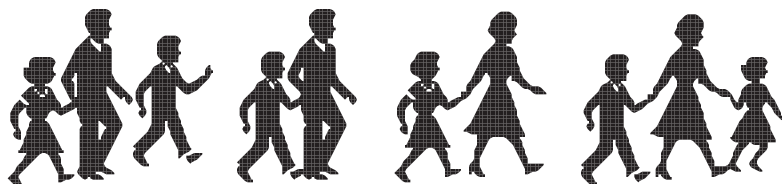
Even single called workers form no cohesive group. They view their status differently. Some find being a single called worker an asset in getting to know more people, thus making it easier for them to participate in life as a single. Others find being a single called worker a detriment. They feel as if they are in a glass cage, on display at all times, unable to have a personal life. Newly assigned called workers must often deal with suddenly being cut off from family and friends, while even single called workers with years of experiences may have difficulty finding someone

with whom they can share their frustrations and concerns.

What, then, given this diversity and complexity of the needs of single people, can the church do to meet these needs? I offer two suggestions. First, begin multiple support groups. One group might form to meet the needs of the lonely. Another might form to meet the needs of those who simply seek fellowship with other singles. Other groups may form because of a common need to deal with recent divorce, with the death of a spouse, or with the special needs of single parenting.

Some support groups may include the married as well as the single. Being parents of adolescents, for instance, is common ground for couples as well as single parents. A man who has married a widow may attend a support group for widows and widowers to help him understand and deal with his new wife's history. Called workers, married and single, may form a support group based on common concerns. A support group may even consist of people who just need mutual encouragement to study God's Word regularly. Support groups can take any shape or form. There only has to be a common need or interest.

The church has an opportunity to provide these support groups, using the Word as the basis for meeting the specific needs of each group, thus helping all groups to grow in their reliance upon their loving God as the source of all meaningful support. Of course someone must plan and organize the structure and curriculum. Our congregation is in the beginning stages of developing a flexible network of lay-led support groups. We



pray that it will be successful.

My second suggestion to congregations is to launch a “oneness” campaign. All of our congregational members need to develop the awareness that single people are often intimidated by couples and families. They are not a part of the close relationship within marriages and families, and thus feel that they are imposing on those relationships. To make matters worse, couples and families tend to “leave singles out.” Despite my loneliness when I was single, I was amazed at how quickly I became less concerned about the needs of single people after I married—both times!

Congregations need to develop a greater feeling of “the church family,” a family in which every child of God can feel comfortable and significant. If we understand how easily alienation can occur in congregations, we realize the importance of identifying ways in which singles, couples, and families can feel more comfortable worshipping, learning, and working together within the same congregational organizations and activities—

each reaching out to include the other.

Could the new-member welcome committee identify abilities, interests, and needs and then immediately channel single people into existing programs and organizations? Could couples and families be taught to introduce themselves to the single, asking them to sit with them at church dinners or even in church? Could the single be encouraged to reach out to families in the same way? Could single people be personally called to help with Christian day school events?

We all, in some way, need the support of our fellow Christians. As we grow in our efforts to produce a feeling of belonging, and as we strive to provide mutual support within our church family, may more of our efforts and prayers be directed towards our single Christian brothers and sisters.

Owen Dorn is the school administrator of St. Mark's Lutheran School, Watertown, Wisconsin.





ATTITUDES AND SAFETY IN THE SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Paul L. Willems

"Kindergarten child eats poison leaves in school."

"Boy cuts hand with razor blade in science class."

"Physical science teacher injured while diluting acid."

"High school science lab damaged as picric acid explodes."

These newspaper headlines may have caught your attention in the last few years. After reading the accompanying articles, you may have noticed these accidents could easily have been prevented if some simple precautions had been taken. Frequently these precautions are based on common sense, and often such common sense is based on attitudes about safety in the science classroom.

We can all become familiar with a list of poisonous plants, safety equipment, unsafe voltages, sharp instru-

ments, hazardous chemicals, and the like. If you are unfamiliar with science safety rules, consult the teacher's edition of science texts or laboratory manuals, buy science safety booklets, subscribe to science education magazines, enroll in laboratory science classes, and search out resources in your local library. However, this article will take a different approach toward safety in the science classroom. This article will focus on attitudes.

The teacher and safety

You, the teacher, are the most important safety feature in the science classroom. Not only do you make decisions about what will be taught, but you are also the student's model and mentor. Your attitudes toward science and safety will rub off on your

students. Your behaviors, facial expressions, words, and actions as you teach, demonstrate, and conduct science labs will be reflected in the students you instruct. Your expertise, knowledge, and professionalism will also permit you to bring the case for science safety to the attention of parents and your school board. As in many other areas of your call, you and your attitudes are the key.

The teacher is the most important safety feature in the science classroom.

As a science teacher, at any level, you need to anticipate problems so you can take action to prevent accidents. To anticipate problems you need experience. You need experience with the lessons you are teaching and with the behavior of your students. A beginning teacher or a teacher working with a new group of students lacks experience with the students' behavior. For that reason experience with the lesson becomes even more important. Working through the demonstration or laboratory experience before presenting it to your students is essential. It may become necessary for you to practice and become skilled with the activities of the science lesson. Also, reading, listening to the advice of more experienced

teachers, or studying various techniques of presenting the science lesson can be helpful.

Knowing and shaping the behaviors of the students you teach is important for the safety of your students in the science classroom. That is one reason why science lessons at the beginning of the year are less complicated and usually less hazardous than those you will teach toward the end of the year. The early experiences give you and your students the opportunity to grow together and to foster an environment of safety as you explore the wonders of God's creation in the lessons that follow.

You must set the tone of the science class. Reading and posting a list of rules is not enough. You must constantly model science safety and monitor the behavior of your students as they learn the skills in the science classroom and as they become more safety conscious. Teachers who allow chemicals to be mixed together to "see what happens" are encouraging horse play instead of teaching safety. Teachers who drink coffee or soft drinks from a beaker or graduated cylinder can hardly expect their students to take them seriously when they talk about warning labels on hazardous chemicals. Teachers who are too busy adequately to prepare their science lessons or who cannot be bothered to know their students and their individual problems and habits are themselves the major hazard in the science classroom. Their ignorance of what is going on and their indifference toward the dangers and potential problems will allow preventable accidents to occur.

Avoiding paranoia

Being concerned about science safety is one thing, but becoming paranoid over all of the possible dangers and harm that could happen in the science classroom is something else. Older teachers not experienced or trained in laboratory science may fear science and approach its teaching with dread. Such teachers may decide to eliminate many science labs from their classes and skip demonstrations altogether. Extreme cases of this type of teacher behavior may even prevent any science from being taught in the classrooms.

However, there are ways to prevent this problem from arising. Science is a unique subject that not only requires that knowledge and information be taught, but also demands that skills and methods be taught in laboratory situations. Science is both product and process. Teachers who lack confidence in teaching science may exchange classes with a teacher who is more comfortable in this area. Many larger elementary schools choose to do partial departmentalizing in the areas of music, art, physical education, and science. This is especially true if a teacher on their staff has a special interest in an area like science.

If such an exchange is not possible in your school, then you must make individual adjustments so the teaching of science can be done confidently and without fear. Ideally those teachers who feel inadequate about science labs and demonstrations will continue their education through summer course work. DMLC offers a secondary education major in science taught by dedicated Christian instructors who are concerned about

you and the students you teach. Local colleges also offer science education courses and offer workshops in laboratory techniques, science demonstrations, and lab safety. Teacher conferences and inservice work days may also be planned to include science topics. Become involved and seek out resources in your area. Public school science teachers can also be very helpful and are often happy to offer advice.

Our goal is to
develop students
who work without
fear and with
confidence in the
science classroom.

Whether or not you are convinced of the necessity of laboratory science in your school, such courses have become a reality in our nation. We live in a highly technological society. More and more colleges are insisting on a broad science background for their incoming students. By 1994 the University of Minnesota will demand at least three years of high school science (including one laboratory science course) for admission. We cannot hinder our students' future success because of our fears. We need to begin to change our attitudes about science so we can positively influence the attitudes of our students.

Science equipment

Your knowledge and professional judgment about science safety can also influence your school board. They are responsible for your school's curriculum, facilities, equipment, and supplies. Too often an indifferent attitude about science education by parents and school board members can have a serious effect on safety in the science classroom. Providing few funds for science education can mean peanut butter jars instead of beakers, household chemicals instead of proper reagents, poor equipment, no equipment, or home-made science equipment. These can cause harm and may become a threat to safety in the science classroom.

School board members should not ask you or your students to furnish science supplies, nor should they ask the science classroom to be so poorly equipped that safety is endangered. Proper supplies and equipment are necessary to teach science safely. You can make sure the school board understands that science is an important part of the school's curriculum and not just a frill. Your job includes keeping the school board informed of the importance of safety in the science classroom so students are not injured and lawsuits are not filed against you or your school.

Performing laboratory exercises on slanted-top desks spells trouble. The smaller elementary school can buy and stock a portable science table which can be moved from room to room. The larger elementary school and high school should have a special room provided with chemical resistant table tops, sinks, gas hook-ups, and proper ventilation. A separate storage room should also be included.

These larger schools are frequently equipped with gymnasiums, band rooms, cafeterias, and libraries. The safety of students in the science classroom should also be considered when schools are planned and built so that a special science room can be included. Attitudes of building committees need to be tuned in to the safety needs of the students who work in the science classroom. Again resources can be found in your area to help you become more knowledgeable and confident in persuading others to become more conscious of science safety.

You may have to
begin teaching
safety in the science
classroom by first
changing your own
attitudes.

Outcomes

The final product or outcome of safety in the science classroom is our students. The students come filled with curiosity and wonder about the world which God has created and into which he has placed them. The Lord has called you to encourage, instruct, and teach these students to use their God-given talents to the best of their ability to serve God and their fellow beings. Our goal is to develop stu-

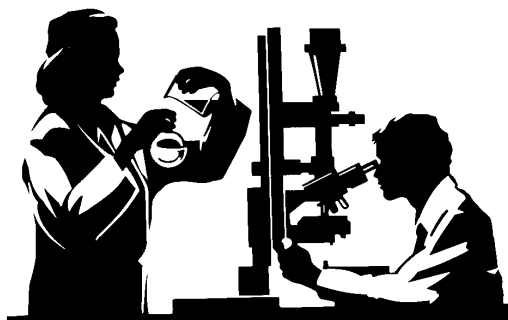
dents who work without fear and with confidence in the science classroom. Our goal is to develop students who can follow directions and are careful as they go about their work. We do not wish to extinguish that natural spark of curiosity by pretending science is unimportant or not for everybody. We do not want to stifle their excitement about God's world by the use of poor equipment, a lack of science classes, or a dangerous science environment. We do not want to hurt or harm these students through our ignorance or through poor safety measures in the science classroom.

We are all familiar with the dangers involved with driving an automobile, but we also know the usefulness of such a skill. That is why we carefully instruct young teenagers in driver safety and driving skills in a classroom setting. We also provide supervised practice in driving a car with behind-the-wheel instruction. This same caring and trusting attitude should be followed in our science classes too. We teachers need to teach and model responsible behaviors. We must also provide opportunities for our students to demonstrate and practice these responsible behaviors so they learn, understand, and perform safely in the science classroom.

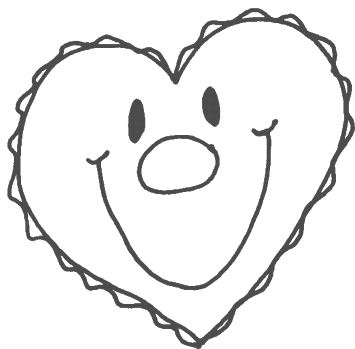
Teaching means changing attitudes. You may have to begin teaching safety in the science classroom by first changing your own attitudes. This takes courage. The Christian instructor knows he does not stand alone before his students. His Savior is always at his side. We also have the sure word of God: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Php 4:13).

So take charge. Be sure you understand safety measures in the science classroom. Be able to anticipate problems and correct them before accidents occur. Become informed and skilled in laboratory science techniques. Do all in your power to insure a safe environment in your science classroom by requiring proper supplies and equipment and adequate facilities. Lobby for safety in your school. Become even more sensitive toward the safety of the students God has placed in your care. Faithful instruction implies teaching them correct attitudes about safety in the science classroom.

Paul L. Willems is science instructor at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minnesota.



Teachers Share Ideas



Quiet Time Signals

Often there are times during the school day when “quiet” needs to be signaled. Perhaps this need exists during a lesson, but often it comes between lessons or activities. There are many different ways to let your students know that “quiet” is needed and expected. Here are just a few suggestions which I have used:

1. Draw a sad face on the chalk board when it is too noisy. Change it to a happy face when all is quiet and learning is to begin.
2. Use music as a quiet time signal. A tape of classical music in a tape recorder can be played for a brief time to announce quiet time.
3. Flick off the lights as a prearranged “quiet” signal.
4. Have a special hand puppet that “whispers” (talks) to the class when a quiet time signal is needed.

Diane Enter
Mount Olive, Appleton, Wisconsin

Encouraging Cooperation

My students sometimes need encouragement to follow directions promptly. (Naturally, the teacher must explain carefully and thoroughly the task to be completed.) Some things that have worked for me in my classroom are

1. Count to 10 or 5/10/15 ... with the goal of task completion by the time the count is made.
2. Set a timer. When the buzzer rings, everyone must be done.
3. Decide on a signal word with your class that means all must now do as directed. This signal word could be a foreign word of appropriate meaning, or just a secret word for your class to use and for others to be curious about.
4. When immediate cooperation is essential, the most effective attention getters

Teachers Share Ideas

are saying "heads down" or writing names on the board. Consequences may be necessary.

Joyce Loeck
Mount Olive, Appleton, Wisconsin

Tally Marks for Motivation

I have found a fantastic way to challenge my students' thinking skills. Every time a student, on his or her own initiative, mentions something learned in the past, some new learning, or relates something to the present lesson, a tally mark is made. By the end of the month, some students have received as many as 600 tallies. The children enjoy this and student-helpers keep track of the tally count. I give little treats to anyone who has tried to earn some tallies. Some examples are the following:

1. One word in our science lesson today was in a spelling test we had. May I spell it?
2. We learned about story problems in math yesterday. Last night we went to the grocery store. Here is a story problem of my own which I wrote down in the grocery story.
3. We had this Bible story in our home devotions last evening.
4. Last week we learned about punctuation in a language lesson. I found a mistake in this punctuation in our church bulletin.

Duane Behn
Emmanuel, Tempe, Arizona

Share your ideas and clipart sketches by sending them to

Teachers Share Ideas
The Lutheran Educator
Dr. Martin Luther College
1884 College Heights
New Ulm, MN 56073



Clipart courtesy of Joy Klatt

REVIEWS

Teaching With Documents: Using Primary Sources from the National Archives. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, D.C.

Frederick H. Wulff

This book resulted from a collaboration of the National Archives and the National Council for the Social Studies. The end product was a spiral bound book containing fifty-two source documents—maps, letters, memoirs, drawings, and photographs—that will help teachers guide children into the past. History becomes real for the students as they learn to look at the evidence left by the participants. Students can read brief eyewitness accounts, usually one page in length, from significant moments of our nation's history. This provides opportunities for them to realize that a study of documents requires interpretation and a recognition of bias and subjectivity. It is hoped that students will then employ these evaluation skills as they confront information in daily newspapers and television programs.

This book was made for teachers. Every document is preceded by introductory historical information. The documents, photographed reproductions of the originals, are usually full page in size and easy to duplicate for handouts to the students. The documents are followed by a number of helpful teaching suggestions and

activities for the classroom. The preface to the book also offers suggestions to teachers on how they might locate and assemble documents on their own. The book offers a wide variety of interesting and worthwhile documents. There are a number which could enhance history classes. This book is worth investigating as a useful social studies tool for grades eight through twelve.

Frederick Wulff is professor of social studies at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Nathan, Ruth, et al. *Classroom Strategies That Work.* Heinemann, 1989.

Rolland R. Menk

As the title indicates, *Classroom Strategies That Work* is a "how-to" book in process writing. A primer it is not, but for the teacher well-versed in process-writing philosophy, the book is a useful teacher's guide offering a variety of both theoretically and practically sound teaching suggestions.

After reviewing the process writing principles, the authors proceed carefully to lay the procedural groundwork for the lessons. The suggested lessons are varied in content material and in applicability across grade levels besides being "tried and tested" by the authors in their own classrooms. The lessons are not presented as

recipes, but are easily adapted to a variety of classroom uses. Section 3, "Writing Across the Curriculum," is an extremely useful chapter for the teacher seeking ways to integrate writing into the total curriculum. Almost all procedures and suggestions are complete with a variety of examples.

The authors are well qualified. Frances Temple and Kathleen Juntunen are elementary teachers, Ruth Nathan is a writing consultant, and Charles Temple is a college instructor of future teachers as well as an author of other books on reading and writing.

Written for teachers of grades one through six, the book is useful for seventh and eighth grade teachers as well.

Rolland Menk is professor of education at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Discrete Mathematics Across the Curriculum K-12. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1991.

Harold D. Yotter

Discrete mathematics is an important subject matter for our students, especially when the classical measurement of quantity is insufficient. How and when discrete mathematics should be included are immediate problems for any crowded curriculum. This book besides addressing such problems offers many reasonable suggestions as well.

Discrete is commonly defined as "separate, distinct, or countable." The importance of discrete mathematics

as a relative of and supporting influence on the computer industry is documented from a quarter-century ago to the present. Many connections are drawn among mathematics, algorithm exploration, critical thinking, technology, and applications of the same.

One of the many valuable features of this 1991 yearbook (a publication of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) is its suggested timetable for the introduction of topics, both at the elementary and secondary levels. Topics considered appropriate for the elementary school are supplemented with activities grade by grade. This active involvement, considered an essential ingredient to learning mathematics, is dovetailed neatly with recommended curricular change. These changes are realistic with many of them requiring no extra class time, simply a revision of topical emphasis.

The authors propose numerous reasons for including discrete mathematics in the curriculum: it is ideal for investigation, especially with computer assistance; it is well suited to concept development (with minimal emphasis on computation); it is a means for advancing problem solving strategies. Heeding their advice could affect curriculum improvement in step with suggestions from *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics*.

Harold Yotter is professor of mathematics at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Talking About Books: Creating Literate Communities. Short, Kathy Gnaeig and Kathryn Mitchell Pierce, Eds. Heinemann 1990.

Beverlee M. Haar

Research, textbooks, and professional journals focus on the importance of studying literature-based reading programs. There is, however, some confusion over what to do with literature. *Talking About Books* brings together the ideas of fourteen teachers from kindergarten to junior high, who have taught in inner city, suburban, and rural schools. The title, *Talking About Books: Creating Literate Communities* reflects a dual focus: classrooms that support readers as they read and interact with others, and encouraging literate talk about literature.

These authors believe in the power of dialogue within a community of learners. They share their methods of engaging children in literature study groups, daily reading to children, having older students read with younger children, poetry enjoyment,

and choral reading. These teachers realize the importance of having children link story characters and experiences to their daily lives.

Literature has the power to help children become readers. *Talking About Books* recommends a variety of literature-based conversational activities whereby children connect literature with learning. Children come to a deep understanding of what can occur in a language-rich environment. These confident readers become confident learners.

Do we signal to our students that we, too, are learners as well as teachers? These authors give twelve lists of excellent literature with ideas for teachers to encourage children in talking about books. As you read, you will share the experiences of literature with your students. *Talking About Books* will inspire you to grow as both teacher and learner.

Beverlee Haar teaches in the education division and is dean of women at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.