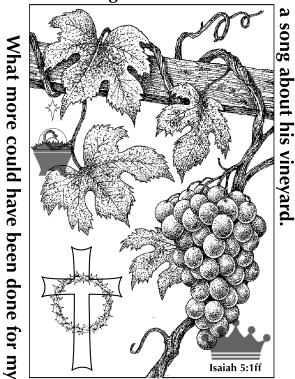
VOLUME 40 NUMBER 3 FEBRUARY 2000

The Lutheran Educator

The WELS Education Journal

I will sing for the one I love



vineyard than I have done for it?

The Lutheran Educator

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

VOLUME 40 NUMBER 3 **FEBRUARY 2000** ARTICLES **Volunteer Tutors in Reading:** Editor — John R. Isch Editorial Board — Mark J. Lenz, Gerald J. Taking the First Steps Jacobson, Cheryl A. Loomis Delores Heiden Editorial correspondence and articles 68 Vicki Riness should be sent to The Lutheran Educator, Editor, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Court, New Leadership for a New Era Ulm, MN 56073. Phone 507/354-8221. Fax 77 Scott A. Gostchock 507/354-8225. e-mail: thelutheraneducator@mlcwels.edu The Lutheran Educator (ISSN 0458-4988) is pub-**Using Course Contracts** lished four times a year in October, December, to Engage Students in the February, and May by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wis-**Learning Process** consin 53226-3284. Periodical Postage Paid at 83 Mark W. Dewalt Milwaukee, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Lutheran Educator, % North-**Future Trends and** western Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-3284. **Lutheran Education** Rates: One year—USA/\$6.00-single copy/\$1.75. 87 John R. Freese Canada/\$6.42-single copy/\$1.87. All other countries—air mail \$14.00; surface mail \$11.00. Post-How to "Invent" a Child age included, payable in advance to Northwestern Publishing House. Write for multi-year rates. For 92 Ramona Czer single issue only, Wisconsin residents add 5% sales tax, Milwaukee County residents add 5.6% tax. Subscription Services Information DEPARTMENTS 1-800-662-6093 (Milwaukee area 414/475-6600), or direct dial 414/614-5120 or 414/614-5160 or As We See It write Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 67 In Praise of the Consistently Competent 113th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. Copyright ©2000 by Martin Luther College. Requests for permission to reproduce more than brief excerpts are to be addressed to the editor.

THE LUTHERAN EDUCATOR



In Praise of the Consistently Competent

A startling blessing of our Lord in the 150 years of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is the number of men and women of singular gifts who have guided, taught, and inspired us. Theologians, hymn writers, teachers, writers, preachers, musicians, missionaries, linguists, evangelists, and scholars have served the synod with distinction and have graced the pages of our synod's history. Their names and deeds are familiar: Hoenecke, Schaller, Pieper, Koehler, Franzmann, Wendland, Uplegger (and at this point you may supply your own).

Let us also pause and reflect on those I call the consistently competent. They walked into the pulpit, they came to school, they sat at the organ bench, they rang the church bell, they brought the casserole, quietly and steadily, year after year, and we hardly noticed them. They baptized, married, and buried people in small parishes in Nebraska and Wisconsin, perhaps rising to serve on the district board of support. They taught children of children for thirty years in that second grade classroom, and they were there every Saturday putting up a new bulletin board. The taught the beauties of English and the love of Latin to thousands of high school students, and every lesson was new. They brought that tuna casserole to every potluck mission festival and funeral lunch, and the casserole dish always went home empty. They shoveled the snow, rang the bell, cleaned the church, served on the stewardship committee, and changed the altar cloths for 20 years and no one ever saw them. They did their work well; they were competent, and, in this world of uncertainty, they were consistent and faithful.

They did these things because they loved their Savior and they loved those for whom that Savior died. They were humble people so they served their Lord and their fellow Christians without fuss. They didn't expect recognition and they may have been a bit embarrassed when they got it. The only time they appeared in a synodical publication was when they died and their whole life was summed up in fifty words.

I believe that on the last day when they and all appear before the Lord of heaven and earth, they will be surprised when they are commended for the deeds that showed their faith. "Ah," they will say, "it was only a tuna casserole." And their Lord will reply, "But it was a good casserole and it was for *me*!"

So let us hear a cheer, modest, if you please, for the consistently competent. They deserve it.

JRI

Volunteer Tutors in Reading: Taking the First Steps

Delores Heiden Vicki Riness

Vicki's perspective

TV. Computer games. Nintendo. ADD. Working moms. Too-busy dads. No dad at all. No books in the home. No library card. Lack of appropriate models. Lack of interest. A smaller dose of God-given gifts. Developmental delays. What are the reasons that children find it difficult to learn to read?

Do children struggle as readers because the number of screens (TV, computer, hand-held games, PlayStation, etc.) sometimes exceeds the number of books in a home? Or because the number of hours spent in front of those screens exceeds the number of hours curled up with a good book? If parents assume their children will learn to read in school, and the child goes from school to sports to McDonald's to shopping and then maybe to home, when do they develop the skill to become fluent, successful readers?

More and more, children come into our classrooms without the requisite background for learning to read. Let's stop and think for a moment about the little, seemingly insignificant skills that beginning first graders either have or don't have that either allow them to be successful at learning how to read, or that hinder the whole process. I used to

think that adequate background for learning to read was if a child knew the alphabet and the sounds that the letters make. Not that the alphabet's unimportant, but I know now that there is a great deal more to being ready to read than just knowing the ABC's. Sometimes those other skills are so obvious and so simple, at least in our adult minds, that we may overlook them and even assume that everyone has them, to the detriment of the child who has yet to acquire them.

Let's think as simply as we can about the the very beginning of learning to read, as a child is "emerging into literacy." A child about to take his first steps into the wonderful world of reading needs to know where the front of the book is, where the first page is, and the next page after that. The child needs to learn that letters join together with other letters and make words, and that words go together and make sense. The child needs to recognize a word as a unit, and where each word starts and stops. The child needs to acquire a sense of "directionality," realizing that words start at the top left of the first page, move to the right and then start again at the left side of the next line and so on to the bottom of the page. The child needs to know that the pictures on the pages are there to help him read and understand the story.

If a child is read to in her preschool years, and if the person reading to the child discusses the book and occasionally points to the words as they're being read, those skills are usually acquired before the child comes into first grade. But, for a variety of reasons, many children have either not been read to very much or just never acquired those concepts about print. And, even among parents who do take the time to read to their children, not all of them know instinctively that talking about the story and the pictures and pointing to words and letters are critically important things to do.

The children who have not acquired the above skills and understandings are probably the same children who, despite the kindergarten teacher's best efforts, don't know all the letters of the alphabet, the sounds that the letters make, or the letters that they hear in a given word. They are slower than their classmates to learn even the most basic sight words. They have difficulty putting their own words on paper. These children need a jump-start to become successful readers. What's a first grade teacher to do? We certainly want to meet the needs of the lambs the Lord has placed in our care, but it's difficult to impossible to make up for such basic deficits in the classroom, especially when you have other students who are ready to fly and still others who are ready to soar. One-on-one intervention is the ideal answer, but who is going to do it and how will it be carried out?

Somehow, we need to fill in the gaps

that are left from the child's preschool years. We need to make up for some parents' lack of literacy. We need to get kids excited about their accomplishments in reading, no matter how small. We need to catch and remediate now before the child decides that reading is too hard and identifies him/herself as a non-reader. We need to help the lambs that the Lord has entrusted to us. But as busy as classroom teachers are, where does one find the time to provide the intense, individual help that a struggling young reader requires? We believe that the answer lies in the effort and talents of volunteers within our own congregations.

The purpose of this article is to describe the establishment of a tutoring program in reading at a WELS elementary school. This article is intended to be the first in a series of three articles on the topic of volunteer tutoring in reading. The second article will deal with training the tutors, and the third will describe the actual tutoring program which was implemented at First Evangelical Lutheran School of La Crosse, and the results after the first year.

Delores' perspective

Volunteer programs in reading have sprung up in increasing numbers across the country in recent years. College and university campuses have been called upon to allocate work-study positions to local schools for tutoring in reading. While a number of reading educators met this idea with healthy skepticism,

Heiden/Riness

and worried openly about how and how well such tutors would be trained, still others have described smoothly-functioning, successful tutoring programs (Herrmann, 1994; Johnston, Invernizzi & Juel, 1998; Pinnell & Fountas, 1997). Good volunteer programs can and do exist; but the key is in the training and organization. While I freely admit to having been a skeptic at first, believing that our neediest readers and writers should have the only the very best instruction from knowledgeable educators, I have come to realize the powerful impact that a well-trained volunteer can have on a child's reading/writing development.

I teach undergraduate and graduate courses in reading in the teacher education program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Although I am a former elementary teacher with 23 years' experience in both WELS and public schools, I needed to return to an elementary school to work directly with children, and to extend my own learning about Early Reading Empowerment (ERE), an early intervention program in reading. I approached the principal of First Evangelical Lutheran School of La Crosse, David Niemi, about the possibility of spending a semester working with delayed and at-risk readers in the school. Mr. Niemi took the idea to the faculty, who endorsed it, and then to the Education Committee of the Church Council for final approval. Next, I submitted a proposal to UW-La Crosse for a faculty development grant to support my leave of absence; the proposal was approved in the fall of 1997.

The leave was scheduled to take place from the start of the school year in August of 1998 until mid-January of 1999.

One component of the proposal was the possibility that, if the school faculty were interested, I might begin to set up a program for volunteer tutors in reading, so that the work I began in the fall could continue in the school after my semester's leave was over. In March of 1998 I made a presentation to the school's newly-organized parent-teacher organization, and called for volunteers. To my great delight, six volunteers stepped forward. And so it all began.

Identification of at-risk children

While a number of things were happening simultaneously, such as recruiting even more tutors and purchasing materials, one of the most important and pressing issues was identifying children who were at-risk of failure in reading. We believed that it was important to focus on the early grades, and that we couldn't spread our services too thin in an attempt to reach every child in need in the preK-8 building. However, as Hiebert and Taylor (1994) note, early interventions are necessary, but not sufficient. These authors believe that a second tier of intervention is urgently needed for children in second grade and the middle grades. We decided to target grades 1-5, and we used a number of indicators to help us identify the children who needed help in those grades.

The more information we had about the children as readers and writers, the more sure we could be that we had identified those children who needed the most help. School faculty had tested every class with a standardized achievement test the previous spring, and those results were one piece of information we could use. We looked for children whose stanine scores were three or lower on literacy-related subtests. However, knowing the limitations of standardized tests as but one isolated piece of information, and considering the questionable validity of achievement testing in grades K-2 (Kamii, 1990), we also sought information and referral from the child's teacher the year before.

A form was devised (see pages 73-74) for each K-4 teacher to make recommendations about which children could profit from extra help, and to identify the kinds of problematic reading/writing behaviors which those children had exhibited. Teacher recommendation was viewed as one of the strongest pieces of evidence we had to help us identify the children who would be tutored. In most cases, teachers' observations proved to be the best predictor of which children would ultimately receive help in the tutoring program.

Once a preliminary list of children had been compiled from teacher recommendations and achievement test records, each child on the list was tested individually. However, the procedure for identifying at-risk readers in first grade was a bit different than that for the older children. First grade was really a priority for us, as we believe that it is imperative to address literacy difficulties early, before they become entrenched,

and before children have developed problematic reading and writing behaviors that are hard to break. We also wanted to have baseline data to watch the development of the class as a whole across the year. For this reason, we tested every child in grade one, whether we had concerns about their literacy development or not. This testing of first graders was accomplished through the use of Marie Clay's An Observational Survey of Early Literacy Achievement. (1993). Clay outlines five subtests which provide a wide spectrum of information about children's emergent literacy behaviors: Letter Identification, Concepts About Print (conducted with the little books Sand or Stones), Word Test, Writing Vocabulary, and Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (Dictation Task). In addition, we asked the children interview questions to get at their attitudes toward books and reading, using a set of questions which Vicki had created for use with her firstgraders (see page 75). Some parts of the Observation Survey (writing vocabulary and dictation) Vicki was able to conduct with the whole first grade class at once. Other parts which had to be done individually were conducted by several of the first volunteers whom Delores had trained in administering the assess-

In grades two through five the children were individually tested by Delores with an informal reading inventory (IRI) to discover their use of effective strategies in reading as well as to determine each child's instructional level. There are many excellent IRI's on the

market which would have served this purpose. The one we used is the second edition of the Qualitative Reading Inventory, or QRI II (Leslie & Caldwell, 1995). It begins with a set of word lists, ranging from preprimer level up to junior high, which are easy to administer to an individual child and quickly scored. Word list scores then direct the administrator of the test where to begin with the leveled passages. Some passages are narrative, or story; others are expository, or informational in nature. There are prereading questions to help children anticipate what they are about to read, and comprehension questions to tap understanding after the child reads the passages silently or orally. As each passage is read by the child, the examiner determines if it is at the child's independent, instructional or frustration level. The idea is to see at what level the child is reading instructionally, so that appropriate books can then be chosen with which the child can experience success. At the same time, the examiner can note the kinds of reading behaviors that impede the child's progress. For example, the child may over-rely on context and be a wild "word guesser." Other children may over-rely on phonics and totally ignore meaning. All this information provides clues to the kind of individualized program that needs to be designed for a particular child.

After all the assessments were conducted, which took place over the first month of school, and decisions were made about which children would qualify for the tutoring program, parents of

each child were invited to an individual conference to see the results and to hear about the tutoring program. They were asked to sign a permission form (see page 76) so that their child could be pulled out of the classroom for individual work with a tutor on a regular basis. All of the parents contacted gave permission for their children to participate in the tutoring program.

Next, we began to match each child with a tutor who could work with him/her for 3-5 times each week. By October of 1998 the tutoring program had begun with six volunteer tutors; it eventually grew to include 12 tutors, and served 13 children in grades 1-5. The tutoring program was instructional in nature, designed to teach children things they did not know about reading and writing. While some children were clearly in need of help with their homework, that was not the purpose of the program. We intended to go to the source of the problem, to help children learn to become good readers and writers in the first place. This meant we needed to recruit tutors who were willing to be trained in specific techniques to help struggling children develop their literacy skills. Our next article on the tutoring program will describe the recruitment and training of the volunteer tutors in reading.

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Teacher Survey: Identification of Struggling Readers Directions

1. Class Ranking.

Please take one of your class lists and mark either H (high), M (middle) or L (low) next to each child's name to indicate where you see that child as a reader compared to your general expectations of children at your grade level. (That is to say, if you have an exceptional class this year, try to rank the children compared to the usual performance you see for your grade level, not to this year's class in particular.) If you care to add comments to qualify any ranking, please feel free to do so, but it is not necessary.

2. Identification of Struggling Readers.

For only those children whom you rank as low readers at your grade level, please complete the form, Identification of Struggling Readers - May, 1999 by listing the children's names, descriptors of your particular concerns for each child, and whether or not you would recommend that the child receive services next fall from the volunteer tutors in reading. I have enclosed two copies of the form.

You will note that I have created a type of code you can use to describe each of the children; see the enclosed sheet labeled Descriptors. Use as many of the descriptors that apply to each child, and simply indicate the letter(s) that apply next to the child's name. Then please add any additional information, not covered by the list of descriptors, which might help me in determining which children are in greatest need of services.

Identification of Struggling Readers Descriptors

(Select all those that apply in the light of expectations for children at your grade level; list the letters of the descriptors on the sheet(s) of low level readers from your class)

- A has poor letter/sound (alphabet) knowledge
- B has poor concepts about print (directionality, voice-print match)
- C does not understand that print carries the message
- D has very limited sight word knowledge
- E is not interested in becoming a good reader
- F does not seek out books for enjoyment
- G has poor phonics skills
- H guesses wildly at unknown words
- I is not fluent or expressive; reads orally in a halting, word-by-word manner
- J does not read for meaning
- K does not self-correct oral reading errors
- L has not yet made the transition from oral to silent reading (grades 2-4)
- M does poorly on reading classwork (e.,g., worksheets, written answers)
- N does not appear to read outside of school
- O reads well orally but does not understand what has just been read
- P parents are concerned about their child as a reader
- Q is a poor speller
- R avoids writing tasks
- S written work is very brief and limited in content
- T makes many errors in punctuation and usage in written work
- U parents are concerned about their child as a writer
- V child's oral language is characterized by poor usage, ungrammatical expression/excessive slang/colloquialisms

Teacher:	Grade:
Child's name:	
Descriptors (from list, A-V)	
Additional Comments (if any):	
I recommend that this child recieve reading su I recommend that the reading support service:	• •
Small group	One-on-one tutoring

Attitude Inventory Reading Attitude Assessment

Please ask the child the following questions and indicate the response. If the child seems confused by the question, feel free to explain it differently to make it clearer. (For example, if she doesn't know what an author is, you could explain that an author is a person who writes books.) In the extra space provided, write down any reaction that seems significant, such as a response that is very enthusiastic or a facial expression that tells more than words. Thanks!

 Do you like books a lot a little not much? Do you like it when your parents read to you a lot a little not much?
3. Do you talk about books with your friends a lot a little not much?
4. Do you have library books at your house most of the time sometimes never? If possible, find out which library the child goes to.
5. Do you have your own library card? Show one if possible. Yes No Not sure
6. Do you have books of your own at home? a lot a few none
7. Do you ever see your parents reading books? Yes No magazines? Yes No newspapers? Yes No
 8. Do you know the names of any authors or illustrators? Yes No Not sure If yes, Name one that you like a lot. 9. What would you like to read about this year? (Dig for responses, such as, pirates, horses, princesses, football, fire trucks, etc., etc., etc. Try to get a feel for whether the child is more interested in fiction or nonfiction.)
10. What is your favorite book (or one that you like a lot)?
Draw picture that shows something from that book in the rest of this space. Find out what the child is drawing and jot a few notes when he is finished.

Parent/Guardian Permission for Tutoring Program in Reading (school name) Reading Support Services

Parent/guardian permission for tutoring program in reading

I have been informed that my child, ________, is eligible to participate in a tutoring program at ____ Lutheran School to develop

his/her reading skills. The program is designed for children who have been identified as being in need of support in literacy development. The benefits for my child may include improved reading ability and strategies which will help him/her become an independent reader.

I have been informed that the tutoring will be conducted by a trained volunteer who is supervised by school personnel. My child will participate in one-on-one or small group tutoring sessions several times a week, depending upon the classroom schedule. A program will be designed for my child based on classroom teacher recommendation, achievement test results, and individual and group reading testing.

I have been informed that my child will not be responsible for making up work missed in the classroom while he/she is being tutored.

I have been informed that specific information about my child will be kept confidential.

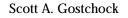
I have been informed that I may discontinue the tutoring sessions at any time. A copy of this signed agreement will also be given to the principal, Mr. David Niemi. Concerns about any aspects of this project may be referred to (teacher/principal)

(signature of parent or guardian)	(signature of classroom teacher)
 (date)	(date)

Circle One: Parent Copy Tutoring Records File Principal's Copy

Leadership for a New Era:

Curricular Planning for the Sake of Improved Student Achievement





Introduction

Have you ever tried to play a game without any instructions? Have you ever tried to go somewhere you have never been before with poorly written, inadequate directions? Chances are you have, and chances are you did not accomplish these tasks easily, efficiently, or get the highest level of quality. Plans and courses of action with clearly written, detailed guidelines make trips and games much better experiences. Education also needs directions and purposes that are clearly spelled out and applied specifically to individual students and schools.

Education is a tumultuous field that seems to be at the beck and call of every new curriculum whim and fad. Whole language, brain research, cooperative learning, mastery learning, direct and indirect instruction are but a few of the recent innovative thoughts and ideas that have affected education (Ellis & Fouts, 1997). These innovative curricu-

lum ideas provide opportunities for learning, but without a plan of purpose and specific application, educators doom them to failure. In this article, I will look at curriculum planning as a means to help improve students' learning by providing direction, clarity of purpose, and consistent expectations for students, teachers, and families. I will also offer some thoughts for preparing and using curriculum plans in your school.

Review of literature

Curriculum and curriculum plans mean different things to different people. For this discussion, curriculum is defined as "the content and purpose of an educational program together with their organization" (Walker, 1990, 5), with the intent of improving student achievement and knowledge. This definition provides a definite outline for what is taught in schools, but it does not give the complete specifics on what has to be taught and when it has to be taught. Curriculum plans pick up this slack. Curriculum plans provide the overall framework for what should be

taught in a specific school or system by subject and grade level. Another way to put these definitions is curriculum takes care of the day-to-day "what is" and curriculum plans are the overall, long term "what-should-be." In understanding these two concepts, it is possible to look at what place curricular planning has in education.

Curricular planning resides as a central tenet of improved student achievement (Barnett, Gustin, & DuSel, 1996; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips, & Bentz, 1994; Peterson, Marx, & Clark, 1978; Schubert, 1991). Curriculum plans provide a complete and detailed framework for what a school, grade level, and teacher need to accomplish (Schubert, 1986). They give direction and focus to a school and everyone involved with it (Budnik, 1999; Fuchs, et al, 1994). By providing direction, clarity of purpose, definable and attainable goals, and unity, curriculum plans help improve student achievement (Fowler & Corley, 1996).

Not all people agree with these glowing descriptions of curriculum plans. Many argue that curriculum plans stifle learning and make teachers into lockstep robots with no freedom truly to reach children (Moore, 1987; Stahl, 1995). This, however, is a case of confusing curriculum plans with curriculum. The day-to-day curriculum (Walker, 1990) needs to be flexible and applicable to the students engaged in that curriculum (Brubaker, 1994). However, without a plan, the daily curriculum losses its effectiveness and efficiency. Without a curriculum plan in place,

every classroom and school program becomes an individual unit separated from the whole.

The curriculum plan is only a framework for what should be; it is not a prescription dictating how things should be done. The curriculum plan is accomplished through the daily curriculum and needs to be tailored to the classroom and the specific students in the classroom and the school (Brubaker, 1994; Moore, 1987; Peterson, et al, 1978; Rubin, 1989; Stahl, 1995;). A curriculum plan thus provides for individual flexibility in combination with specifically defined goals and outcomes. Student learning and achievement are enhanced (Slattery, 1995).

If a curriculum plan is designed with the proper focus of improved educational achievement, teachers will never be locked into one method and style (Kaplan, 1996; Williamson, Johnston, & Kanthak, 1995). Teaching actually becomes more flexible because teachers can focus solely on accomplishing the goals and objectives of the specific curriculum plan.

Teachers do not need to waste their valuable and limited time figuring out on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis the objectives students need to accomplish. The teacher's total focus is on the



students, their improvement, and the daily curriculum. Teachers hold the power with curriculum plans in place, and the power is reflected in the students and their achievement (Brubaker, 1994).

Curricular planning gives students, teachers, and families consistent expectations. These expectations help unite schools and families with common, shared goals and purposes. The students need family support to achieve. Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) showed a significant increase in student achievement where families were involved actively with student learning. Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) also found that those parents who knew what happened in schools and how it happened helped the overall learning process. Curriculum plans provide parents with a knowledge and understanding of what their children are doing by providing documentation of what each child should be learning and accomplishing through the school (Dye, 1989; Fowler & Corley, 1996). A curriculum plan furnishes a means to communicate with the families and helps bring together the students, teachers, and families in a constructive manner.

Curriculum plans take into account the whole picture of what a school's function and purpose are for everything that occurs in the school (Schubert, 1986). Schools need curriculum plans to provide for optimal student achievement and success (Barnett, Gustin, & DuSel. 1996: Fuchs. Fuchs. Hamlett. Phillips, & Bentz, 1994; Peterson, Marx, & Clark, 1978; Stahl, 1995).

Application: Curriculum plans for your school

It does no good to realize the positive effects of curricular planning and goal setting if schools do not apply this knowledge in a practical way. Textbook scope and sequences, prior success and student accomplishment, word of mouth, unwritten expectations, and other unofficial so-called curriculum plans cannot take the place of a wellwritten, specifically designed plan. In order to apply curriculum plans one must understand what constitutes a curriculum plan and how a school effectively implements one of its own.

It is important again to understand that a curriculum plan is a framework for what should be taught or accomplished by each grade level for every subject in a school or system of schools. What does this framework look like? What needs to go into a curriculum plan? Senge (1986) stated that a curriculum plan incorporates five essential components. First, the subject needs to be selected. Second, the subject's objectives need to be stated; these objectives should be centered on learning outcomes, not merely on what is put into the subject. Third, the subject's content should be designed in sequence with other subjects and future years or classes with the same topic. Fourth, the teachers need to take the plans and design activities that will accomplish the objectives of the subject. This fourth step is vital. If the teachers do not take ownership of the plans and personally incorporate them into their instruction,

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the plans will fail and the classes will not accomplish what needs to be done. We must also remember that teachers perform this function (Collins, 1997); they are in charge of accomplishing the objectives in their own creative, personal style. The plans give the outcomes, not the individual subject information. Fifth, an evaluation strategy and plan needs to be formulated to follow up on the effectiveness of the plans and the subjects being taught. The goals of the evaluation process should be to improve and continue to strive for the best. Curriculum plans should be treated as living documents that develop and grow over time.

These five parts are similar to the four formulated by Beauchamp (1982). His four parts were exactly the same as parts one, two, three, and five above, leaving out the importance of individual teacher creativity and ownership.

Curriculum planning needs structure and well-documented, clear objectives and goals that are based on outcomes rather than on specific curriculum input. Schools and systems retain flexibility and individuality through adding or deleting from the structures mentioned by Senge (1986) and Beauchamp (1982). Rubrics, five-step plans, and other plans are helpful resources from which to glean ideas and formats. However, the curriculum plan needs to fit where it is being used. The design and information included should be homegrown and personally fine-tuned to provide for the highest level of student achievement at each school.

Parents, teachers, students, communi-

ty, and others should be included in the design process (Fowler & Corley, 1986; Fuchs et al, 1994; Ho Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). By including these persons and anyone else closely associated with the school or system,



ownership is taken and future success and support is more likely (Fowler & Corley, 1986). Community meetings, school board functions, round table discussions, parent teacher group gatherings, along with many other meetings can be used as a forum for developing and retooling curriculum plans. The more opportunities that are given for many persons to be part of the planning, the greater is the input and overall ownership, understanding, and use of the curriculum plans.

Once the curriculum is developed, implementation follows. Implementation should also involve as many people as possible. There needs to be clear and constant communication between the school, faculty, families, and community at large. This will facilitate a smoother and more successful change. There should be no surprises (Collins, 1997) because everyone is on board.

A new school year is the optimal time for implementing a curriculum plan. When schools take time with the design and implementation of the curriculum plans and include as many people as possible, they make sure that everyone is along for a successful journey, rather than a bumpy ride (Schubert, 1991).

Evaluation should occur formally and informally throughout the design and implementation processes (Senge, 1986; Beauchamp, 1982). Evaluation will be a part of the overall plan and will help students receive the best education possible. It is only through detailed and thorough evaluation that needed improvements of the curriculum plan will occur (Collins, 1997).

Conclusion

The future of education rests at least in part on what educators do with curriculum. Curriculum plans are a key to success. However, if education is left only to the curriculum (brain research, mastery learning, cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, whole language, and many others) without a plan, the future is uncertain and perhaps dangerous. As curriculum whims and fads continue to barrage educators (Ellis & Fouts, 1997), the time to fight back has come. Educators need to use these old and new curriculum ideas effectively and efficiently through proper curriculum plans. By focussing on improving student achievement and what is needed for proper growth and development of each child, curriculum plans can help schools meet their goals. Schools need curriculum plans to promote student achievement and success by providing clear directions, purposes, and consistent expectations for everyone (Barnett, Gustin, & DuSel, 1996; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips, & Bentz, 1994; Peterson, Marx, & Clark, 1978; Schubert, 1991).

Further research and information still needs to be gathered on the effects of curriculum plans and student achievement. The recent literature on this topic centers more on curriculums, rather than the overall plans. I encourage schools adopting and implementing plans to record student achievement levels and to keep detailed records of changes that occur in the school. The information that is gathered could be helpful to other schools looking to help their students improve and grow.

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Using Course Contracts to Engage Students in the **Learning Process**

Mark W. Dewalt

HE BUILDING of course contracts is an exciting and efficient way to gather student ideas at the beginning of any academic endeavor. A course contract will have three key sections, with the first being a listing of what students would like to learn in the class. The second is a set of learning strategies students are willing to be responsible for to acquire the course content. The third is a set of teaching strategies that students want the instructor to employ to help them learn the course content. The amount of time required to complete a course contract is brief compared to the increased interest and learning by the students and faculty involved. The technique is useful for elementary, middle, and high school students as well as adults. Class contracts may be used in semester long classes, units of study, and workshops. The process is useful because it generates student interest and it shows students that their ideas are important. This article will explore how to use the course contract with a variety of learners as well as address the positive outcomes one might expect when using the strategy.

There are several key steps to building a course contract. The steps may differ depending on the age of the group and/or the length of the course or

workshop. The article will focus on a college level class. This format would also work well with 7th through 12th grade students in courses that meet daily for 90 minutes sessions over the course of one semester.

When meeting the class for the first time, the teacher will state the name of the course or class and his/her name. Each student then receives an index card on which to share essential information such as home address, phone number, special interests, major, and email address. Next the students answer the following question in a notebook, "What would you like to learn in this course?" Students have about four minutes to generate a list. It helps to write an example on the board to get the students started. To draw closure, announce that the students have one minute to complete the list.

At this point it is possible to modify the process to allow students to get to know one another better. To do so, the instructor should have students find one other person to share their ideas with before the teacher collects information. Once students pair up they are asked to look for similarities and differences in the ideas they have listed. Next, the teacher states the main goals and objectives of the course. Students are asked to check off items from their list

as they are mentioned.

The subsequent step is to have students individually state other things they would like to learn which have not

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What would you like to learn in this course?

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been listed. The note cards, completed earlier, can be used to call on students by mixing the cards and pulling a card at random. All student responses are placed on newsprint. It is important to list all ideas without commenting that one idea is better than another. After everyone has had a chance to respond at least once, students may volunteer other items from their list. This will continue until all student ideas are on the newsprint. The instructor then checks off items that will be covered in the class. A rationale will be given for each item that will not be covered. For example, a student might wish to know how inventions are patented in the United States. The instructor might say that we would not be able to cover that topic in a general course on US History. If students are required to do projects or papers, one might suggest that this would be a good topic for their project.

The question "What would you like to learn in this class?" is important for several reasons. First, it allows the teacher to assess the interests of students in the class. For example, students in a high school physics class might want answers to the following: Does a baseball really travel farther in hot weather? Are molded cleats better during the rain? These types of student statements will indicate to the instructor that students have an interest in sports. Sometimes student ideas generate very interesting modifications to the curriculum, which the teacher may not have previously considered. Secondly, and of equal importance, student answers to this question allow one to assess the prior knowledge

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What are you willing to do to acquire that knowledge?

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of students in the class. Instruction can then be modified as needed. Sometimes one will find a class with very detailed content questions; other times one may encounter a class with limited knowledge and very vague questions.

The third reason that the question, "What would you like to learn in this class?" is of value is that it gives students ownership in the curriculum. Most students appreciate the fact that their ideas can shape subsequent topics of discussion. By helping to mold course content, student motivation to learn is augmented which leads to an increase in knowledge acquired by the students.

Some instructors may worry that allowing students to have input into course content will take away time from the content that must be learned. While this is a legitimate concern, students usually select topics that are similar to the con-

How can the instructor help you learn this information?

tent mandated by school or state curriculums.

After gathering the information for question one, the instructor states that to learn this information students in the class have to be willing to do certain things. The second question, "What are you willing to do to acquire this knowledge?" is then posted. An example such as "come to class" may be given to get students started. Again, students have about four minutes to list responses. At this point information is gathered from the students in the same manner that was used for question one. After everyone has had a chance to share their items, the class is asked to review all the thoughts that are on the newsprint. As a group, the class needs to agree on which items they are willing to do. Any item not agreed upon is removed from the list. This does not mean that whoever stated that item can not still do that, it just means that the class is not held to

that expectation. After this step is completed the class is given another question: "There is another person in this room that needs to do certain things so that you can learn the material. "Who might that be?" Most classes readily answer "teacher."

This leads to the third question: "How can the instructor help you learn this information?" The information is generated and gathered in the same format as used for question two. All student ideas are listed on the newsprint. The instructor then goes through the list of ideas and checks off those that he/she is willing to do to help the students acquire the course content. Students usually list things such as have interesting classes, give timely feedback, be open to questions, use visuals, and give realistic examples. On occasion they might list things such as no tests or no long papers. These will be removed from the list and a rational is given for the removal. At this point one may wish to also talk about class rules and school rules that are non-negotiable. In the case of a semester-long course, it is suggested that the teacher type up all the information for distribution to students the next day. If one is working on a short unit or a weekend workshop, simply place the newsprint on a bulletin board or wall until the study is completed.

The second question "What are you willing to do to acquire this information?" is important because it notifies the students that to acquire this knowledge will require some work on their part. Finding out what students are willing to do sets the tone for the class. One will also get an idea of the seriousness of the group and what they see as legitimate expectations. The third question "How can the instructor help you learn this information?" is helpful because it gives the instructor very clear information about what students expect from the teacher. For example, the students might state, "use visuals during lectures." The instructor now knows that this is important to remember for each class session. This question should not be asked if the instructor is not interested in using student input.

Most students enjoy the course contracting experience and actively participate in the process. In fact, students often write about this experience in their class journals. For example, one undergraduate student wrote, "It's nice to be asked what we would like to learn." A graduate student stated, "This was a good way to start the class, I will try this with my next 11th grade English class." In addition, students often list this as something they liked about the class on course evaluations at the end of the semester.

There are several modifications one might make to this process depending on the group and one's needs as a teacher. If you really want students to get to know each other you can have the students share their answers to questions 1, 2, and 3 with another person before gathering information from the students. One might do this in groups of two or four. It is recommended that groups of two be used at the beginning. This allows the more reserved students

get a chance to speak in a less threatening setting. After students become comfortable with the process they can work with groups of four or five. A good modification useful with a short church seminar or class is to simply ask question one, "What would you like to learn in this class?" Elementary, middle, or high school teachers could use this process as a way to set the tone for the school year. Elementary teachers who use the process in this manner will only need to use question one with later units because class routines have already been established. In some cases a teacher may need to redo the process at some point in the year if students are not holding up their end of the agreement.

The process of building classroom contracts is an easy and fun way to gather student input. More importantly, the use of class contracts sets a positive tone for the class at the beginning of any educational endeavor. This will result in a more cooperative spirit during instruction and will send a clear message to students that their thoughts and ideas are valued.

The techniques described in this article have been honed over a number of years beginning with the author's undergraduate work at Muhlenberg College. Dr. Jeny Edwards at Adelphi University and Larry Caffro, a school principal in Columbiana, Ohio, were very instrumental in formulating many ideas expanded upon in this article.

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Future Trends and Lutheran Education

John R. Freese

Introduction

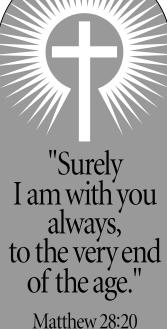
Predictions are nothing new, but as we are about to begin a new year, a new century, and a new millennium, these efforts to forecast abound. Ever since humanity's fall into sin, a continuing transgression has been to try to predict the future in such a way that ignores the richness of God and emphasizes only

the material in this physical world. Ancient Chinese burned animal bones and turtle shells to read and interpret the resulting cracks. Astrology, still used widely today, was important to ancient civilizations from the Mideast to Pre-Columbian America. Roman seers read animal entrails. Medieval alchemists sought eternal youth and gold, as well as insight to the future. Nostradamus is quoted to this day. Charlatans have used, among other things, tea leaves, tarot cards, palm readings, crystal

balls, even bumps on a person's head. All of these efforts sought to discover future joys and avoid future difficulties. God clearly hates such practices (Ex 22:18; Dt 18:10-12; 1 Sa 15:23; 2 Ch 33:1-6; Na 3:1-4; Gal 5:16-21). These sins display contempt for God, a denial of his grace, a willingness to consort with Satan, and a coveting heart. God's children are not to "play" with "telling the future." (cf. Siegbert Becker.

> Wizards That Peep [Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1978] chapter 1)

> > Scriptural truths tell us that no one knows the future except God. Inspired guidance states, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Pr 27:1). James similarly notes, "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanish-



es. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'" (Jas 4:13-15).

Our Savior, addressing souls consumed by the things of this world, lovingly told them, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt 6:34).

All Christians certainly can appreciate this observation by our Lord. Each day truly does have "enough trouble of its own." Every saint has experienced that truth, and there have been numerous times when believers earnestly have prayed for God's strength and guidance to help them get through the next five minutes, much less the rest of the day, much less tomorrow.

Keep watch

This article is not intended to add guilt to souls already burdened with large work loads, too much responsibility for too many details, and too little time and resources to address adequately current obligations. The purpose of this article is to encourage those called into positions of responsibility for proclaiming God's Word to take some

time, to
pause, to
look at what
is going on
around us, to
reflect, to
apply
Scripture, and
to pray. These
are timeless

acts of devotion, and they serve us well.

This too is scriptural. God tells us not to be consumed with the things of this world; rather, we are told to be aware of issues that affect souls. Good stewardship calls for anticipation and awareness. The Lord often tells his people to "keep watch" (Mt 24:36-46; Mk 14:3738; 1 Co 16:13; Col 4:2 to cite just a few references). "Keep watch" for the Lord's return, "keep watch" for the souls you are called to serve, "keep watch" for Satan's attacks, "keep watch" for false doctrine. Faithful stewards sit down and "estimate" and "consider" future efforts (Lk 14:28-33). Jesus condemned the Pharisees for testing him by asking for signs from heaven, while ignoring truly important conditions around them, with the admonition, "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times" (Mt 16:1-3). There is value for the called worker to keep watch and to consider what is currently being discussed around our country and around the world—not to foolishly follow every commotion and fad of the moment, but to "keep watch" and to respond in a God pleasing manner.

Consider the following.

Society is changing. Those who have served the church for a number of years already know this from the conditions they have experienced over the past decade(s). Those new to the



field probably have heard this so many times they have become numb to it. Accepting the reality of a changing soci-



We can ... work with renewed vigor realizing that time is short.

ety, what can we do about it? We can pretend it's not happening and do nothing. Or, we can wring our hands over the loss of some perceived "golden era of good times" and move on to something else—like correcting the next stack of papers while simultaneously planning the next school event. Or, we can cling tighter to God, his promises, and his presence, interpret the signs of the times," and work with renewed vigor realizing that time is short. This article encourages the latter. The harvest is great and we have much to do. We have been called to reach out to souls meant for heaven. Watch, and pray for God's will in our work. Think about new means through which to proclaim the gospel.

Past examples of futuristic insight

Many have tried to guess what the future of the economy, entertainment, science and technology, or society might be. Bold men and women have staked their reputations, and often other people's money, on such efforts. Some have been incredibly fortunate. Others have failed miserably. What follow are several notable "bombs." (A more complete listing can be found at http://www.phs.princeton.Kl2.oh.us/ Public/Lessons/future.html>. This is a rather fun site, and with some discernment, you can find some good lessons.)

- I think there is a world market for maybe five computers. (Thomas Watson, IBM chairman, 1943)
- But, what is it good for? (Unnamed) engineer at IBM, commenting on the microchip, 1968)
- There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home. (Ken Olson, founder and president of Digital Equipment, 1977)
- This "telephone" has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us. (Western Union internal memo, 1876)
- 640K ought to be enough for anybody. (Bill Gates, founder and president of Microsoft, 1981)
- We don't like their music, and guitar music is on the way out. (Decca Recording Company in rejecting the Beatles, 1962)
- impossible. (Lord Kelvin, president of the British Royal Society, 1895)
- Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau. (Irving Fisher, Yale University Professor of Economics, 1929)

Freese

- Everything that can be invented, has been invented. Charles Duell, U.S. Office of Patents Commissioner, 1899)
- I'm just glad it'll be Clark Gable failing on his face, and not Gary Cooper. (Cary Cooper on not taking the leading role in Gone with the Wind)
- A cookie store is a bad idea. Besides, market research reports say Americans like crispy cookies, not the soft and chewy cookies you make. (Loan rejection received by Debbi Fields, founder of Mrs. Fields' Cookies)
- ** The concept is interesting and wellformed but in order to earn better than a
 "C" the idea must be feasible. (Unnamed
 Management Professor at Yale
 University in response to Fred
 Smith's project proposing the
 Federal Express Corporation)
 Get the idea? We all fail miserably

Get the idea? We all fail miserably when it comes to "knowing" only that which God has the power and the right to possess. The best we can do, what God himself has told us to do, is "interpret the signs of the times," plan faithfully, pray for his continued grace and guidance, and trust him.

Signs of the times

As noted earlier, society is changing. There are many issues that could qualify as "signs of the times" warranting our attention. The issues that follow are just the one person's list. Others may be important, perhaps more pronounced than these. Local issues specific to your area and your service may be more pressing. The encouragement is to evaluate issues and develop your own list of

items. The list below, however, contains issues significant to "keeping watch" in our called work. These are not "predictions for the future." Rather, these are issues that seem to be on the increase. Think about these, or your additions, and evaluate them from a scriptural perspective. Are these good or bad? What can we do to prevent, or deal with, the bad? What can we do to use the good in going forward in Christ?

- Issues affecting nature are becoming more pronounced.
- Local, state, and federal zoning and land use restrictions may increase.
- Groups that worship nature are growing in membership.
- Ultra-violet radiation and temperature and moisture extremes might build.
- Planned communities may become more acceptable and commonplace.
- Conservation and recycling might continue to increase.
- Wind and solar energy may develop due to pollution and power shortages.
- Water and air pollution may more significantly impact our health.
- Chemicals in foods may increasingly affect our health.
- Water shortages may affect the population of the Western United States.
- Global connections are expanding
- More world mission prospects are coming to the U.S. for college.
- International trade and communication may grow in volume and speed.
- Spanish language usage might increase even in rural America.
- Immigration to the United States,

- legal and illegal, is exploding.
- Sin will not be as recognizable to society as in the past
- Individual mobility might continue to increase.
- U.S. salaries may decrease significantly due to Third World competition.
- More of the world might become conversant in English.
- American music, TV, and movies will influence more of the world.
- The current rate of de-population in the American Midwest may increase.
- Terrorism from abroad might increasingly impact the U.S.
- China and Muslims may become increasingly aggressive opponents.
- To meet worldwide military commitments, the U.S. may reinstate the draft.
- Family issues are becoming more confusing and stressful.
- The percentage of absent fathers is increasing.
- Child abuse in all its various forms in increasing.
- Sexual activity is beginning at younger and younger ages.
- More children are born with alcohol and other drug-induced damage.
- Rates of mercy killing and euthanasia may increase.
- Same-sex and multiple-partner marriages may become legalized.
- Abortion at home might become much more prevalent
- Increased child and elder care may be demanded by society.
- Children and the elderly may interact even less than at present
- Medical technologies and mistakes

- may cause social anguish.
- Government activism is increasing.
- Government may expect faith-based organizations to be more responsible for social work.
- Schools may become community centers for food, health care, shelter.
- School-to-work pressures might impact secondary education.
- Concerns about communicable diseases may limit some school practices.
- Demand may increase police presence and technological surveillance. Again, these are not predictions.

These are current issues that seem to be starting, or may be on the increase, in various locations. Other items in your area of service surely can be added. The encouragement is to "interpret the signs of the times" and consider how these may impact your current work and the church's outreach.

Conclusion

Only God knows the future. We take comfort in knowing that whatever unfolds God is in control, and he is using those developments for the good of his people. People will continue to be in need of a Savior. People will continue to go to Hell without Jesus. Our Lutheran schools have the most precious, the most valuable information anyone can possibly desire for their future joy and peace. Eternal life awaits all who know Jesus as Savior.

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Ramona Czer

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. (Pr 22:6)

Step one

When your child is still womb-warm, begin to imagine how perfect he or she will be. By age two...pitching like Nolan Ryan, dressing like Martha Stewart, pirouetting like Isadora Duncan.

There's no stopping your protege. Then imagine the future: streams of visitors, the mailman's awe, mad dashes to the telephone. Who is it this time? Larry Bird with an even sweeter deal? Harvard outbidding Yale? Bill Gates investing in your son or daughter's Pokemon-like brainchild?

By the time your baby emerges, it's not the floor of the delivery room that lies at his or her feet—it's the world! Cold and sterile it may be, but this child is a writhing bundle of energy and wit, so he'll be okay, she'll be fine—better than that, fabulous! This child will possess rare beauty, intelligence, and grace. This child will shine at everything she does or obtain everything he desires. So

it must be. Amen.

Talk yourself into
these scenarios. Implant
such images in your subconscious for future consolation.

when the real child begins to emerge, when belief in your creative powers wavers, when you feel faint pricks of disappointment and later deep stabs of regret because this child pitches like Martha Stewart or pirouettes like Larry Bird. These images will help you to stand firm. After all, it takes years and years of patient blindness to invent a child.

Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common ones? (Ro 9:21)

Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves...' (Ge 11:4)

Step two

During your child's first, second, and

third year, watch carefully. Note down every characteristic, talent, passing interest, everything! Gather all observations in a special book, your child's Personal Profile Journal. This record will contain vital information to help you eventually formulate an effective and comprehensive Life Plan for your child (see Step three).

What exactly should you note? Describe everyday habits, peccadilloes, rule infractions, clothing preferences,



Note down every characteristic, talent, passing interest, everything.



food obsessions, any endearing or profane utterances—get the idea? If your daughter loves to hug her daycare provider frequently, write it down. This tendency could indicate future success in a service occupation or signal a need for counseling to free her from a debilitating dependency on the approval of others. If your son slams cars into walls, even after his teacher yells, this could show leadership ability and courage in the face of opposition. You may want to steer such a tike towards the Armed Forces or being governor.

Recording and studying this data is a

time-consuming and exhausting endeavor. I cannot pretend otherwise. Both you and your spouse will need to sublimate your own needs, for at least two decades. Most of your future conversations and all of your social life will revolve around Jane or Joey, Elizabeth or Trent. Remember, you have decided to invent a child, to mold a being into the image in your mind, and great art requires sacrifice, doesn't it?

God created man in his own image. (Ge 1:27)

All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall. (1 Pe 1:24)

Step three

Before your child enters school, sit down and formulate the all-important LIFE PLAN. This plan will be your architectural blueprint, your mission statement for your child's future. Obviously, you can tweak such a plan as you learn more and more, but children need to be "envisioned" by their parents. How else can you ensure the outcome? Without a specific plan, God only knows how they'll turn out!

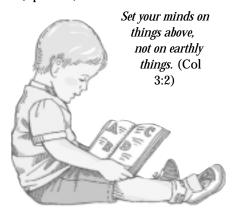
Next, to put the plan into action, carefully consider what activities, coursework, friendships, part-time jobs, and social gatherings will steer your child in the direction of your dreams? Map them out meticulously and remain true to them. If your child is destined to be a lawyer, go ahead and involve her in a few seemingly useless activities like

Little League (future networking contacts must not be minimized), but be sure to force her into Chess Club and Debate. As soon as possible, she needs to think of herself as a brain among brains, as a nerd who rules the world with a sneer and a clever tongue. Your motto: it's never too early to be compulsively focused.

If your child has a knack with stick figures, never buy him any less than the 128-crayon boxes and enroll him in every Community Education art course possible, even the bits-and-bobs kind. If he complains of boredom, tell him that to become the next Picasso or Van Gogh, he needs to scribble and glue so much that everybody assumes he *must* be great—who else would spend hours making matchstick palaces?

This LIFE PLAN deserves every particle of your imagination and worldly understanding. Spend yourself for your child, pour out your lifeblood, crucify your own desires. Only in that way can you hope to bring about a New Creation.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works....
(Eph 2:10)



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Most of your future conversations and all of your social life will revolve around Jane or Joey, Elizabeth or Trent.

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Hints and warnings

Don't worry about training your child spiritually or controlling any sensual urges. If kept busy, your child will have little time to mull on the big questions of life, like Who am I and Why am I here? Plus, if you talk about God too much, a child may conclude that he is the guy in control, not you.

"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen." (Rom 1:25)

Teach her by your own disinterest in meaningful or probing conversations that life is pretty much a physical feast. Surface is everything.

Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. (1 Pe 3:4)

Get across to him that he's never really guilty or wrong-people simply misunderstand him or his learning curve is different. He may need to work hard at keeping healthy and physically fit, but his soul is fine the way it is.

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (1 Tim 4:8)

Never ever ever mention the "D" word to your child. It will just depress or worry him, and there's absolutely nothing to be gained.

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Ps 90:12)

By fulfilling all whims and sedating your child with ease, you'll ensure that by adulthood, she's entrenched in materialism. Oh, a vague sense of purposelessness may surface now and again, but when the mortgage comes due, the next ladder rung beckons, the kitchen needs wallpapering...the yen for something more will fade.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Mt 6:30)

Day by day convince your child that believing in himself first and foremost is

the best religion of all. Do this by second-guessing coaches, complaining to teachers, always assuming your child has the whole picture, never allowing him to suffer hardship or live with consequences. Also, make sure he hears you boast about his talents and abilities often. If a child worships himself, he always has a constant Best Friend.

May I never boast except in the cross... (Gal 6:14)

Do not allow your child to be alone, to enjoy unscheduled hours, or to daydream. Every minute is precious! Direct each action toward the future. Control all stray thoughts and emotions. In this way, we win the prize of a blank mind, an empty heart, a robotic passivity. It is imperative that your child grows up immediately, no dilly-dallying allowed. It's time to join the bustling world of do, do, do. That's how you invent a child—by smothering his or her child-like desire to simply *be*.

I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Lk 18:17)

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. (Lk 5:16)

Well, I'm finished. That's my advice. Do all of this, keep it up for years and years, and I guarantee that you will invent a child. However, this child-monster will be steeped in egotism and secularism. This creature of your tinkering

may not even hear God's call to repentance when it comes. This child, like all of us, is desperately in need of a Savior from sin and may die hopeless. Could this be the future you planned?

Wondrous are your ways, O God!
No one can escape you!
Farthest space nor greatest depth
Cannot hide me from you!
Long before I came to birth,
Your eye saw and knew me.
Even in life's darkest hour
In your hand you hold me.
Search me, God, and know my heart,
Lord of truth and mercy.
From afar, O Lord, you know
All my thoughts, my secrets.
And if any wicked way
Should be found within me,
Cleanse, forgive me by your grace;

By your Spirit guide me. (CW 307)

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' (Jer 29:11)

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