



CAT ~ news

A publication from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada
Office of Education

ARE YOU A PERSON OF INFLUENCE?

Dennis Marshall, SDACC Director of Education

Tall, dark, slender and dressed in silk shirt, black tie and grey, well-seamed trousers, Wesley Jean stood before the class explaining how to find the area of a circle given its radius. It was a straightforward concept to grasp, but my focus was more on the person delivering the lesson rather than on the lesson being delivered.



How different Wesley was from all the other male teachers in the school! I thought. He had the right tone and pitch of voice to capture your attention, and his words were carefully chosen and woven into short sentences for easy comprehension. Listening to Wesley deliver his lesson was like listening to a gifted story teller using imagery to make his story come alive. I could not help but raise my hand when he asked for someone to explain the difference between the radius and the circumference of a circle. It was the first time I actually volunteered to answer a question that was not directly posed to me. What made me act in such an uncharacteristic manner? What was it that attracted me to this man?

Locked in conversation with Wesley years later during a casual meeting, I discovered some insights that made him the most influential teacher at the parochial school I attended in the early sixties. He said that people judge you and draw inferences about your character by your appearance. Therefore, if you want to make a good, lasting impression on people, you must dress the part; be a role model of excellence. Wesley said that as a teacher he was always careful to dress and act in an exemplary manner to win and maintain the respect of students and parents.

Attitude is a more powerful influence than facts, was the second insight I got from Wesley. I did not understand this concept until he illustrated it by referring to the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector recorded in Luke 18:9-14. The Pharisee prayed thus: "God I thank you that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." The tax collector, without even raising his eyes to heaven, beat his breast and said: "God be merciful to me a

sinner!"

Two men seeking justification but displaying different attitudes: the one arrogant and self-righteous; the other humble and penitent. How would Jesus respond? Which of the two would have the greater influence on Jesus? Jesus said: "I tell you, this man (tax collector) went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Jesus' response shows that having a positive, humble attitude is a more powerful influence for good than a person's status or accomplishments.

The third insight I got from Wesley had to do with performance. Wesley said that he never took his teaching for granted even though he was thoroughly versed in his subject fields. He scrupulously prepared his lesson the night before delivering it, and always tried to find interesting ways to make it stick. He preferred using short, crisp sentences as opposed to long, rambling sentences, and anchored his main points through questioning and repetition. "Your performance," he said, "is a transcript of your character."

The fourth lesson I gleaned from Wesley had to do with mentoring: taking time to listen to students and guiding them into personal success. Through mentoring, teachers help students take responsibility for their learning, thus making them become self-motivated. As a result of Wesley's mentoring, students saw their grades improve and their interest in education heightened. Mentoring makes a difference in a student's life; it's the highest form of influence. "A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they

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Featured Schools/Teachers/Students

GREAVES ADVENTIST ACADEMY

Julia Falla, Principal

Greaves was chosen to prepare and present a demonstration on Prevention Smoking, sponsored by the Quebec Council on Tobacco and Health and the SPVM (Service de la Police de la Ville de Montréal). Our school, because of the health values we represent, was given this opportunity to bring awareness to the youth about the dangers of tobacco. The program was presented to 600 Grade 6 students from different schools in Montreal on March 23-26.



For the past ten years, the SPVM has also sponsored a contest among schools on the theme "A World without Racism". Mary-Amala Thykootathil, a Grade 6 student at G.A.A, received the first prize for her drawing which depicted a huge fan blowing away racism.



In her comments, Hélène Charron, the SPVM chief inspector commented: "...Your work reflects a lot of courage and a lot of serious consideration. Above all, it also demonstrates your commitment to respect others which is always

the first step to being a good person and a good citizen."

THANK YOU TANYA

Julie Nielsen, Teacher, Fraser Valley Adventist Academy

A person, who has influenced my life and many others, is my cousin Tanya McCreery Bradford. Tanya was born in Hazelton, BC, but was raised in Port Hardy, BC. Tanya was also raised as a Seventh-day Adventist. She went to Avalon Junior Academy for her elementary and junior high years, to Upper Columbia Academy for high school, and Southern Adventist University for college, where she met Wes Bradford. The two of them were eventually married and had three beautiful boys: Benny, Rafferty and Timmy. They dedicated their lives to the church's teaching ministry. Wes became a music teacher and Tanya taught piano lessons. They were both so musically talented. Both of them would sing, play piano, as well as other instruments, and Tanya would even play the harp for church. When Wes became the principal of Avalon Adventist Junior Academy in Port Hardy on Septem-

ber 2008, it meant that Tanya would be back in her hometown, where there would be family nearby to help her with the three little boys.

Just a few months after her move back home, on November 4, 2008, Tanya found a lump in her breast at the age of 29. Testing revealed that she had Nottingham grade III, BRCA 1 genetic mutation. The doctors gave Tanya a few months to live. Tanya did a lot of research on what to do. She opted out of chemotherapy and radiation. She went to Uchee Pines in Seale, Alabama, and then as a last resort, to Mexico for treatments.

Tanya was so determined to beat this, that she kept outliving her outcomes. She kept her faith and continued growing. People would ask "Why Tanya?" Her response was "Why not Tanya?" She stayed strong and an inspiration until the end. Tanya fell asleep at the age of 30, on Friday, December 4, 2009 just before sundown. The time from Tanya found out that she had breast cancer till the day she died, was exactly a year and one month.

In a sermon that Tanya gave just a few months before her death, she asked the question "Is God Fair?" "No," she said. Tanya said so often that "God is not fair. If He was, we'd all be destroyed for our sin. Because He's NOT FAIR, we have a Saviour." You may find Tanya's sermon at <http://www.vimeo.com/8643123>

In everything that Tanya went through, she continued to believe and trust in God. Tanya has set such an amazing example for me to follow, that no matter what is thrown my way, I need to keep believing and trusting in God. Thank you, Tanya. I can't wait to see you again in Heaven and watch you be reunited with your three little men.

ME? A TEACHER?

Teca Z. Cousins, Teacher, Greaves Adventist Academy

My call to the teaching ministry was once again affirmed when the SDACC honoured me in 2008 with the prestigious "Excellence in Teaching Award." Somehow, though, it may seem that I became a teacher quite by chance. One day a teacher at my school told me that I'd make a great educator and that he strongly recommended Northern Caribbean University (Jamaica). This young man found out that I was exploring career options, and that I had turned down nursing as well as the opportunity to study drama in London. I had also felt no passion for teaching, and would not have given any thought to entering this field, but the day after he had made the suggestion, he handed me an application form. "Let's fill it out right away," he said as he ushered me into the teachers' room. "I will take it to the admissions office this afternoon."



Featured Schools/Teachers/Students

From here on, Carol George Rochester became my *Inukshuk* who guided me in the process that led to my gaining acceptance in the Department of Secondary Education at NCU where I began my preparation to become a teacher. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you . . . thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*" I rejoice that the Lord has led me to a field of study where it is my privilege to cooperate with the Master Teacher in changing lives for time and eternity. I also thank Him for the power of a positive influence in my life.

MY FAVORITE TEACHER

Roxy Johnson, Student, Cariboo Adventist Academy

I can remember her classroom as being a bright and happy place. She loved frogs and had frog stuffies all around the room. During reading time, we would get to sit wherever we wanted, and generally everyone had a stuffed frog to snuggle with. The green reading loft in one corner was probably my favorite place in that whole school.



Even more vividly than the classroom, I remember how nice she was. She was always willing to listen. When someone was upset, she had a kind smile, comforting words, and a hug. Very patient, she would explain things again and again until we understood the concept. She rarely got upset at all, and if she did, then she would talk to the student in private, never in front of the whole class. She made learning fun and had a way of making us want to do well. We listened to her because everyone in that class loved and respected her.

The school was College Heights Christian School in Lacombe, AB. I was in grade five and my teacher was Karen Landry. I came partway through the year, and was only in her class for that grade. Even so, six years and three schools later, she remains my favourite teacher.

INFLUENCERS

Akayla, Student, Peel SDA School

One teacher that has influenced me is Mr. Van because first whenever we are in class doing math (especially) or whatever subject it is, he always comes into the class and wants to know what the subject is. Then, when we tell him, he helps us when we need help. He is also very gifted in many ways and I look up to him like he is my



father because he is like one.

Another teacher that has and still is influencing me is Mrs. Terencio. She is like a mom to me because whenever I am failing in a subject she usually helps me and encourages me. Usually, I end up getting good grades. She also is a very good French teacher and she is like a mom to ME. She is very helpful and I love her just like I love my real mom.

FVAA's OLYMPIC INFLUENCE

Jim Gaull, Chaplain, Fraser Valley Adventist Academy

I enjoy God's creation every day, especially the freshness of spring. Each new bud and flower invites me to celebrate God's handiwork. The twittering of the returning swallows fills the air with delightful sounds to my ear. What He made is truly a gift to be cherished.



In the midst of all of this joy, I realize that God made me and purposed that I would influence others. Here's what the Bible says: "*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*" Ephesians 2:10 NIV

Since God has it all figured out for us, we need to let Him have His way in our personal lives and in our life as a school.

Can a whole school be a positive influence? Can our unique creative juices be released to influence those around us? Absolutely! At Fraser Valley Adventist Academy, where I serve as part time chaplain, Tammy Larson mentioned to the other teachers about a contest in the Abbotsford paper to build an Inukshuk and take a photo of it. This idea was part of our community encouraging the Olympic spirit. Submissions were to be judged by the readers and the winner would be recognized in the paper.



That was the spark that led us to ask the question, "What if we build our Inukshuk with the whole school?" A helicopter pilot and a professional photographer volunteered. The students and teachers volunteered. It was an exciting day when we all stood in colour-coded sections on our playing field while the photos were being taken from the air.

The results surprised everyone. The photos were impressive! Several had a sense that we might win. The paper postponed the contest to seek more entries,

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Featured Schools/Teachers/Students



while we waited to hear. Finally, we learned that the readers chose our school as the favorite "business/school entry". We won!

This built more desire to serve and so the whole school took part in the Aldergrove Olympic Torch Relay. All participants were dressed in red and many carried large flags representing all the countries participating in the games. It was an impressive and joyful display.

Our middle grade students were asked to create original artwork for the athletes. Tabitha Kahwema's work was chosen and placed in Jon Montgomery's room. He became Canada's gold medalist in the skeleton! He sent Tabitha an email to thank and encourage her. She's invited him to visit our school.

When the Canadian Adventist Youth Summit came to Hope, BC, with service opportunities during the 2010 Olympics, our students again got involved. They went on the streets as hosts and hostesses and gave scarves, Bibles, pins, hot drinks and much warmth and love to hundreds of visitors.

We'll never really know the full impact FVAA's influence has made until we get to heaven. I know that our influence is a powerful thing that God longs to use to help others experience His love. I believe that **each of our schools already is a powerful influence in our communities**. I like to imagine what God would do if we creatively and actively allowed Him to meet the needs of those around us. As leaders, we can set the pace for His good works. It's His plan!

MY LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

Juanita Neal, Principal, Pleasant Valley Christian Academy

"Influence 1: to affect or alter by indirect or intangible means **2:** to have an effect on the condition or development of"

It is not hard for me to remember a teacher who "effected [and] altered the condition or development of" my 6th-grade persona – and, in fact, my life. I was shy, introverted, bearing the "burden" of straight As in a small school, and at first he deepened my condition by incessantly repeating his favourite mantra, "An A student always does more than he is asked." However, that was counterbalanced by his fun-loving approach to the classroom. He laughed; he encouraged; he rewarded; he entertained us with his tales of summer travel in his old Dodge panel truck, turned camper. In it he reached the summit of Pike's Peak! – even though he had to back up the last few feet! Later, as I prepared to enter Indiana Academy, he convinced my parents that living in the dorm, rather

than at home, would be a life-changing experience for me. He was right! I will never forget, and always be grateful to, Mr. Stuart Teegarden – who, incidentally, became my academy English teacher.

INFLUENCE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Lee Ann Gordon, Gr. 12 Student, Crawford Adventist Academy

Dan Rather said: "The dream begins with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth." In relation to this quote sometimes in life we forget our purpose for being in school and lose ourselves in things that are time-consuming but really don't matter. We tend to be a little carefree and have the mindset that we can get where we want to be without hard work. We slack off, but we want to see that 90%; we don't come to class, but expect to keep our credit. Then we get a wake up call and our teacher makes us aware of the standards he expects; but we still don't meet them. The teacher sees potential but we refuse to acknowledge it and sometimes it doesn't go deeper than that. But then the teacher, instead of backing off, becomes something more than just a teacher and reaches out to us, leading us to the threshold and connecting with us on another level.



I have had many influential teachers in my lifetime and still do, but no other teacher stands out as much as my science teacher does. Mr. Marlon Sargeant has been, since the beginning of my grade 11 year, a man of wisdom who expresses his concern through love and experiences of what his standards are and what he expects of me. In many instances, we shortchange ourselves, settling for what we have and not rising above that. Whenever he felt my efforts weren't good enough, he would bring me aside and issue words of wisdom that I may not have wanted to hear but he let me hear anyways. It is teachers like these that influence because they took the time out to care. That alone can deter anyone from a path of self-destruction, helping to restore faith in themselves and others that it is possible to achieve what they want. He saw in me something I believed was not attainable but despite my disregard, he encouraged, pushed and lead me to aim high. The remarkable thing is that he does this for every student, taking time out of his schedule even when he's busy, to listen to them. As the quote says, some times what the teacher is, is more important than what he teaches.

North American Division News

VALUEGENESIS 3

Coming October 2010! This is the third Valuegenesis survey (1990, 2000) . . . an "extensive investigation of matters of faith, church involvement and commitment . . ." that is intended to help us identify significant trends that will assist in meeting our stated educational mission, goals, and student outcomes. Schools can choose to administer this survey any time during the month of October. Only one class period will be needed. Details can be found in a letter sent to all school principals. For more information on the content and importance of this study, go to www.valuegenesis.info; email questions to valuegenesis3@gmail.com.



WEEK OF PRAYER DVD

This DVD, consisting of 5 segments of approximately 20 minutes each, will be ready in August for use during the 2010/11 school year. Keep in mind that these segments, geared toward elementary students, would also be great for Bible classes, chapel programs, worships, etc., for those schools who plan a guest speaker for Week of Prayer.

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

June 24-July 3, 2010. The Hope Channel will air nearly 6 hours daily, including both Sabbath services, during this 59th GC Session in the World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia. See the programming schedule at www.hopetv.org. If you plan to attend in person, be sure to drop by the NAD Education booth and watch the 4-minute DVD report specially prepared for the GC Session.



NAD EVALUATION DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

This committee has begun to meet to review current school evaluation instruments and to develop integrated segments for Early Childhood Education programs and for Distance Learning programs. If you have any feedback or recommendations to share, please send them to Betty since she is a member of this committee. They will be meeting again in July.

MASTER TEACHERS NEEDED

As you may have heard, CIRCLE is seeking 40 master teachers to review one subject area in circle.adventist.org and sdaedspiritualresources.org and to prepare 3-5 previously-created resources for online publication. The work can be done during July 19-31 and carries with it a \$175 honorarium. If you are interested, please speak to your conference superintendent since recommendations are to be submitted to CIRCLE through the Conference.

ADVENTIST CLASSROOM POSTERS

The NAD is considering the production of various classroom posters that highlight the history and beliefs of the Adventist church (28 fundamental beliefs written for an elementary audience, series on Adventist pioneers, timeline of Adventist history). Your feedback is welcomed!

BY DESIGN UPDATE

The new science series is underway. The *By Design* logo has been finalized and icons have been developed as a visual organizational tool to assist in the incorporation of faith and action into science education. Kendall Hunt is planning to have a sharing website online soon to keep us informed on the progress of the new series including information on inquiry-based science and an area where Adventist teachers can submit original classroom photos and art work for possible use in the series. Stay tuned for further information.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH BOOKS 2011

The 2011 list is now available on the NAD website under the Teacher section (see the links at the bottom of the Educators Toolbox page). We have also posted it on CAT-net under Resources.

NAD SUMMER COMMITTEES

The following individuals will be representing our union at the NAD summer committees in June in Chattanooga, TN. If you have feedback or recommendations for any of these areas, please contact the respective reps.

Secondary Standards: Rod Jamieson, Connie Solomon

Multigrade Pathways (5-8): Lisa Clarke

Early Childhood Curriculum: Juanita Marshall

Small Schools: Betty Bayer

THE ADVENTISTS DVD

From the award-winning producers of *BONHOEFFER* and *The POWER of FORGIVENESS* comes a fascinating film about the body-mind-spirit connections and health message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A copy of this recently-released documentary will be sent to every school some time this summer.



MISSION CATALOGUE

As you consider your mission fund-raising projects for next school year, keep in mind that there are plans in place to produce an NAD catalogue of projects which will include such things as classroom supplies for the school in Maluti, solar-powered audio Bibles and short-wave radios for remote mission fields, etc.

SDACC News



21st CENTURY SKILLS

Betty Bayer, SDACC Associate Director of Education

Speaking of influence, we are living in an age where technology is exerting a powerful influence both on us and on our students. I am guilty of being caught up in the relatively recent furor over 21st century skills. Dozens of articles, videoclips, live chats, podcasts, and four books later, I've paused long enough to catch my breath and take a sober second look. What follows are my views at this moment in time . . . views that will likely continue to evolve as my research and experience change.



Most important, there is very little about 21st century skills that is new. What is new, as Andrew Rotherham points out, is that the changes in our economy and the world have made these skills even more critical to both individual and collective success.¹ These skills, which include critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and collaboration, are not intended to replace the traditional focus on content. I like the way Richard Hersh puts it: "Content is necessary but not sufficient. Because teaching time is finite and content virtually infinite, skills that allow one to continue learning and to make judgments about the meaning, adequacy, and accuracy of content are more important than ever."²

Let's take critical thinking as an example. Given the exponential growth of knowledge, critical thinking is essential, and we, as Adventist educators, have no excuses. One of Mrs. White's most quoted counsels on education, written in 1903, admonishes us to teach students "to be thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts"³. To do this, we need to reach beyond the content to "build in opportunities in the day for students to apply what they are learning . . ."⁴ Collaboration is another skill that resonates with me. I agree with the authors of an *eSN Special Report* that "too often, schools have been silos of isolation--classrooms isolated from other classrooms, teachers isolated from other teachers, schools isolated from the outside world."⁵

But, with tight schedules and a scramble as it is to fit in all the required content, teachers need practical tips for how to make this happen. Perhaps even more fundamental is the change needed in provincial (and NAD?) standards to reflect the incorporation of student-centered, real-world learning in combination with content, and perhaps, a reduction in some of the content required, especially at the high school level. And we must intentionally provide learning opportuni-

ties for teachers who have not, in general, been trained to teach or assess such skills. Andrew Rotherham is right: "What teachers need is much more robust training and support than they receive today, including specific lesson plans that deal with the high cognitive demands and potential classroom management problems of using student-centered methods."⁶ We need help in learning how to teach creativity, innovation, and collaboration because most of our methods classes did not include those things. Perhaps a course in 21st century learning should be a requirement for certification and recertification!

It's important to separate the skills from the technology. Our goal as educators is to teach the skills. Technology is simply a way of (1) reaching and engaging our students using a medium they are familiar with and comfortable using, and (2) facilitating the teaching of these skills by providing tools that make collaboration and creating and critiquing easier and more authentic. That said, the integration of technology is a 21st century skill that also requires additional teacher training.

So where do we go from here? Teachers, we need your input! How can the SDACC assist you in better meeting the needs of our "digital native" students and in better preparing them for a world that is rapidly changing? What specific ideas do you have to increase our own collaboration and communication as educators so that we can continue to be a positive influence on our students? Maybe we should set up a wiki on CATnet to share and grow our ideas. Let us know what you think and stay tuned for further information!

Notes:

¹ See Andrew J. Rotherham and Daniel Willingham. "21st Century Skills: The Challenges Ahead." *Educational Leadership*, September 2009, Vol. 67, No. 1, pp. 16-21.

² Richard Hersh. "A Well-Rounded Education for a Flat World." *Educational Leadership*, September 2009, Vol. 67, No. 1, pp. 50-53.

³ Ellen G. White. *Education*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903, p. 17.

⁴ *Education Week's Live Chat with Craig Jerald and Patte Barth, "Making Sense of 21st-Century Skills," Thursday, January 21, 2 p.m. EST.*

⁵ "Report: Reinvent Schools for Digital Age." *eSN Special Report*. Thursday, April 2, 2009. Downloaded from: <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2009/01/26/report-reinvent-schools-for-digital-age/>

⁶ Rotherham and Willingham.

SDACC News



continued....ARE YOU A PERSON OF INFLUENCE?

could." (Unknown) The mentor does just that.

I was fortunate to have Wesley as my teacher and mentor for his influence on me has been tremendous. Now being in a position of leadership, I find myself replicating in my daily life the principles that Wesley has taught me. These principles are timeless and life transforming, and anyone in a position of leadership, whether classroom teacher or school administrator, would be wise to adhere to them. "The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority." (Kenneth Blanchard)

EDUCATION COUNCIL TECHNOLOGY INSERVICE

SDACC Education Council members were the recent beneficiaries of an information-packed professional development day, thanks to the expertise and influence of Colin Hill and Adrian Schmidt from Canadian University College. In a packed presentation that left little room for breaks or lunch, Colin and Adrian introduced members to Web 2.0 tools and their educational applications. The learning differences in today's "plugged in" generation and ways to use technology to engage these students were discussed. Members explored a variety of social networking tools (Gmail, Facebook, Twitter) and cloud tools (iGoogle, Google docs, etherpad) as well as various audio and video resources for producing podcasts, videocasts, etc.



Thank you, Colin and Adrian, for sharing your time and talents with us and for using your influence to strengthen our educational practices. May we, in turn, make a positive impact in our own spheres of influence as we continue to learn new ways to engage and prepare our students.

HAITI UPDATE

A big thank you to each and every school that participated in the Haiti Disaster Fundraiser. We are so proud to let you know that the SDACC schools raised \$24,581.75 towards this worthy project. Way to go!!



K.I.D. SCHOOL TRAINING

On October 14-17, 2010 the SDACC will be sponsoring a K.I.D. School Training workshop at Camp Hope in Hope, British Columbia. Each conference is selecting schools to par-



ticipate in this training session. The participating schools will be sending a principal, teacher, parent and pastor. Please check with your conference to see if your school will be attending.

SDACC EDUCATION MARKETING BROCHURE

The SDACC Office of Education is in the process of developing a marketing brochure that will be sent to each conference for them to distribute to schools. Each conference and boarding academy will be highlighted in this brochure with a pocket in the back for schools to include their information. We are hoping these will be available for the upcoming school year.

MISSION MALUTI FUNDRAISING

We are happy to announce that we have sent the \$16,000.00 to the NAD as the SDACC schools portion of the Mission Maluti Fundraising. Thank you to the following schools that participated during the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 school years:



College Heights Christian School
College Park Elementary School
Coralwood Adventist Academy
Cornerstone Christian Elementary School
Curtis-Horne Christian School
Greaves Adventist Academy
Lakeview Christian School (Grade 5/6 Class)
South Side Christian School
Windsor SDA School

NAD K-12 TEACHERS' CONVENTION 2012

The NAD K-12 Teachers' Convention will be held at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, TN from August 5-8, 2012. If you have any ideas for breakout session speakers please send an e-mail to Brandy at bperkins@sdacc.org.



STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

The SDACC produced a booklet entitled 'Standards for School Success' that was sent to each conference to be distributed to all schools. This booklet was generated by the SDA Church in Canada Education Council Executive, and is designed as a springboard to encourage all our schools to engage in ongoing visioning, growth, and development as we continue our *Journey to Excellence*.



The Back Page



THE POWER TO TEACH

Dr. Frank Trujillo

The Power to Teach is reprinted in CAT~news with the expressed written permission of the author. Copies of his frameable 17" x 22" poster are available in quantities of 20 or more for \$2.50 each (shipped to your stateside address) by calling 916 601-5414. For information regarding Dr. Trujillo's esteem-building writings and speaking, log on to www.ProTeachPublications.com.

I feel sometimes powerless and small, overwhelmed and inadequate, engulfed in thoughts and feelings that perhaps what I am doing is insignificant, that my life's pursuit, that my teaching, is futile.

And I say "Who am I to change the world? Who am I to think that I can make a difference?" And then I reflect on the young people under my charge, and I think about my role and about what power, if any, I have.

And I find that I am not devoid of resources or strength, that I am, indeed, endowed with talent and ability and strength. I do, after all, decide what will be taught. No one else. And it is largely my prerogative when it will be taught and how, and where, and why it will be taught. To a great extent I determine the curriculum. And the richness and intensity with which it is taught is in my hands. I have that power.

And I have the ability to think and to plan and then to implement; to select from my repertoire of skills the one best suited to my purpose, yet still able to adapt myself to student needs with the dexterity of an artisan. Most adults would be fortunate to perhaps last out one day overseeing a roomful of kids. My orchestration makes enlightened music of the chaotic din. I guess you could say this is power!

I have the power. I have the vigor to motivate, the fullness to laugh, the courage to control. I have the power to uplift and to create and, when I'm red-hot, the intensity to inspire! I can form my students into lines or circles, triangle or squares. My influence is such I can turn their very feelings into F's or A's.

With just one look I can let a student know that everything is well with the world and that he or she has a perfect right to aim for the very top of it all! And I can use my hands, turned up to lift them up. Or turned down to keep them down.

What power do I have in the system? In the eyes of my students **I am the system**. And I have the power to lead them places they did not know existed, to build them back up when society tears them down, to catapult them higher than I myself will ever reach; and to push them gently, but assuredly, into the unknown, painting for them in broad brush strokes a future I can never hope to see.

And every day I have the wherewithal in my classroom to build walls or to build bridges between the generations. And it is within my discretion to design a rigid, competitive structure or a cooperative, helping network in my classroom. I even affect the weather! What I do every day determines whether their world will be indifferent cold or sweat-house hot, or warm, inviting, alive and vibrant with learning. **I have an awesome power.**

If I succeed I pass the knowledge about what is important to the next generation. And, because their world will be the better for my labor mine is an important service to a just cause. Mine is a present power **and** a future power. If I can reach the children of today I touch the children of tomorrow. Mine is a giving power.

All that I know about the world and about how one learns about the world I must give. And in the giving of my gift, I receive my greatest power: the power to teach my students to learn how to learn.

Empowering them is the essence, for if their teacher feels sometimes powerless and small, how insignificant must they sometimes feel?

And when the last day comes, and it is time for us to part we gather together, say our good-byes, and separate. After that there is sadness but a certain contentment that I am sure only teachers feel.

It is a happiness that comes from knowing that a part of us forever, **transplanted**, lives... No, **thrives!** inside of each individual who has gazed at us across tired brown desks and called us "Teacher."

Even on a down day -- when I'm feeling puny and insignificant -- even I try hard to remember that all it takes is one person -- just one person! -- to make a difference in their lives.

And, there is no reason in the world that that person cannot and should not be me! **I can make a difference!** That is my power. That is the power to teach.

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Dates of Importance

General Conference	June 23-July 3, 2010
NAD Commission on Accred.	July 26, 2010
ECEC Advisory	October 4-6, 2010
NAD Union Directors Council	October 5-7, 2010
K.I.D. School	October 14-17, 2010
NAD Year-end Meetings	November 4-8, 2010
SDACC Year-end Meetings	November 15-18, 2010
SDACC Curriculum Committee	November 16, 2010
Education Council Executive	November 17-18, 2010
K-12 Board	November 21, 2010
NAD Advisory/Curr. Comm.	Nov. 30-Dec. 6, 2010

Dates are subject to change. Please confirm with your local conference.