

Calendar poster contest.

Creative Teaching Through Community Involvement

By Frieda Mattson

Teaching creatively through community involvement has been an interest of mine for a long time. However, during the past seven years I have developed some strategies to provide creative learning experiences for my students.

Students in my class have won cash awards on poster contests, competing against pupils from their city or state and even from the entire country. They have won cash awards for building rockets, appearing on television to receive their awards. Some of their work has been displayed at dinners sponsored by organizations promoting the contests. Their achievements have been recognized in the local newspapers and in our church journals.

A Creative Environment

Like many other teachers I am not a

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born artist, but I do have an eye for art. If you, as a teacher, feel you are lacking in artistic skills, ask a parent or community resource person to come in and judge your creative projects.

Planning creative activities means allowing *all* of your students to participate if they choose to do so. Some stu-

dents just need a little encouragement and assistance to come up with creative ideas and projects. The students with natural artistic skills can be pace setters for your classroom. As they work, those who feel they are lacking in creative skills can watch and become inspired to create on their own. If you nurture a creative environment for *all* students, you will soon find your so-called "nonartists" producing works that surprise everyone.

The Cost of Art

But art supplies cost money, and many school budgets can't afford the outlay of funds. This is especially true in one- or two-room church schools.

Planning a special project with the school board or Home and School Association can help with planning and provide funds for supplies.

At one school, where money was tight,

I kept a special drawer of art supplies that I furnished or to which special friends contributed. Students received these items as a reward in a school point system I devised. They earned points for clean desks, completed assignments, and good behavior.

As people see creative things happening, they often ask how they can help. Tap into this resource for funds, materials, and volunteer assistance.

How to Become Involved

Because the community is often not aware of our small Adventist church schools, we need to let them know we exist.

A good source of information is the local newspaper. Ask for it to be delivered to your school. If it is too expensive, ask one of the church members to pass along his or her copy. The paper will keep you and your students informed about community happenings and promotions of events in your area.

Get acquainted with the education editor at the local newspaper. I have taken my students for a tour of newspaper offices and invited the education editor to our classroom to discuss editorial cartoons. As a result, my students

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entered the local paper's editorial cartoon contest. The education editor later returned to teach a very successful unit on foreign newspapers.

Most newspapers promote their publication through Newspaper Week. You can receive papers inexpensively, or even free as we did because we were involved with educational projects at our school.

Another way to become involved in community activities is to *read all the mail that crosses your desk*. That envelope that looks like another piece of junk mail could be information on a contest that your students could enter. I received one such item featuring a contest on Food Preparation from the U.S. Agriculture Department. One of my students (in a one-room church school of 12 students) made it to the national finals. This achievement was featured in our local newspaper.

... spon-
... Lung Association.

When your students win a contest or earn honorable mention, be sure to let your local newspaper know. They will often include the information in the local area or school news section of the paper. If you supply a picture, it may also be used. Your local church PR secretary can help you write up the news release.

Working Projects Into the Curriculum

At this point some teachers may say, "I don't have time for any more projects. I can't get through all the material now." These projects may take a little extra time, but the results are well worth the effort. In fact, some of them can save you time. Contest materials usually include worksheets, brochures, and pictorial materials, many of which can be worked into the curriculum.

For instance, you might want to enter an Arbor Day contest. This could lead to the following class projects:

- Study photosynthesis or the parts of a tree in science,
- Incorporate the planting of a tree into practical arts or science,
- Make posters for art,
- Write about the meaning of Arbor Day for English class.

Reports can be utilized for English, science, and social studies classwork. One year we planned our whole AJY Investiture Service around an Arbor Day theme.

In this way your students can participate in community beautification. Our classroom received a certificate from the governor of the State honoring us for our involvement. The certificate has been framed and hangs in a prominent place in our classroom.

Other contests that blend well into many school subjects include the following: Clean Air Contests sponsored by the American Lung Association, conservation themes sponsored by wildlife conservation groups or The Wildlife Federation, and community clean-up campaigns. We have entered contests ranging from "Just Say No" to Drugs, to the Young Astronauts Program.

Many of these groups will send people to the classroom to discuss their specialties, thus the children can become active participants and learn about topics that are currently in the news. In some cases teachers will want to bring spokespersons with opposing opinions so that their students gain a balanced view of the topic.

There are many creative ways to involve your students in the community.

Who's to Judge?

Some contests allow only one poster to be entered for each grade. Others allow every poster to be entered. These are preferable because children love to see their creative works sent off in the mail. Of course, all of the posters and artwork should be displayed in the classroom. Children will have little motivation to create if they feel no one sees their work.

You might even have the children make posters, quilts, or crafts for holidays such as Christmas, Easter, and

Adventist Heritage Week and hang them in the church atrium, if the pastor agrees. This will keep the school's activities before the church family and create positive attitudes.

If you have a contest to which only one or two entries can be sent, then ask an outside judge to come in and make the final decision. When my students participate in such a contest, I always award a small prize to all who entered.

I often use local artists as judges. This is a good way to reach non-Adventist artists in the community. Other resource persons include those in the local community who have an interest in the subject presented. People from the Retired Senior Volunteers Program are often willing to help as well as judge. Contact local businesses, Chambers of Commerce, or Rotary Clubs for potential judges.

Many Creative Projects

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NEW AGERS INVADE THE CLASSROOM

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mately come down to a conflict between world-views. Christian teachers have a solemn responsibility not only to recognize but also to reject practices and beliefs that contradict Scripture-based truth.

Thus the challenge is not new. Through the ages, Christianity has faced attack on all sides. Secular humanism dismissed it as superstitious. The New Age lumps it with Western rationalism and scientism. But perceptive teachers experience Christianity in its true character, not in exaggerated caricature.

The comparisons on page 11 between New Age and Christian perspectives may help to dispel the myth of New Age innocence for an increasing number of Seventh-day Adventist teachers. □

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REFERENCES

- ¹ Frances Adeney, "Educators Look East," *Spiritual Counterfeits Journal* (Winter 1981), p. 28.
- ² George Isaac Brown, *Human Teaching for Human Learning: An Introduction to Confluent Education* (New York: Viking, 1971).
- ³ Adeney, p. 28.
- ⁴ Lynn Smith, "Adult Type Education for School Children," *Los Angeles Times* [Orange County edition] (June 24, 1982) pt. 5, p. 1.
- ⁵ Michael Bagley and Karin Hess, *Two Hundred Ways of Using Imagery in the Classroom: A Guide for Developing Imagination and Creativity in Elementary Students* (Gr. 1-8) (New York: Trillium Press, ISBN 0-89824-084-0).
- ⁶ Quoted in Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988), pp. 154.
- ⁷ Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy, Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, 1980), pp. 281, 314.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 284.
- ⁹ Fall 1987 calendar, California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco.
- ¹⁰ Robert J. L. Burrows, "Americans Get Religion in the New Age: Anything Is Permissible If Everything Is God," *Christianity Today* (May 16, 1986), p. 17.
- ¹¹ Celebration of Innovation Workshop, San Francisco, November 7, 1987.
- ¹² John Dunphy, "A Religion for a New Age," *Humanist Magazine* (January-February 1983), p. 26.
- ¹³ Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe-Hexham, "The Soul of the New Age," *Christianity Today* (September 2, 1988), p. 21.
- ¹⁴ Louise L. Hay, *You Can Heal Your Life* (Santa Monica, California: Hay House, 1987), pp. 7-9.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

ADDITIONAL READING

The following books and articles are recommended for further insight into the tenets and insi-

nuations of New Age teachings. Most are written from a Christian perspective, and will be more helpful for Christians than the New Age materials themselves.

- "Empowering the Self: A Look at the Human Potential Movement," *Spiritual Counterfeits Project Journal* Winter 1981-1982.
- Hunt, Dave, and T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity*. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1985.
- David Myers, *The Inflated Self*. New York: Seabury Press, 1980.
- Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*. Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson, 1983.
- Sire, James, *The Universe Next Door*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1976.

ORGANIZATIONS

Christian Research Institute. P.O. Box 500, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693-0500. Publishes a quarterly journal, *Forward*, which covers cults and New Age issues.

Jesus People USA. 4707 N. Malden, Chicago, IL 60640. Provides tracts warning about the New Age and publishes the magazine *Cornerstone*.

Spiritual Counterfeits Project. P.O. Box 4308, Berkeley, CA 94704. Publishes informative newsletter and journal. Has done some of the best work on cults and New Age issues.

HEALTH AND THE BIBLE: INSIGHTS FROM ARCHAEOLOGY

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vides an inspired guide.

Teaching about biblical health laws in the light of archaeological insights can help us and our students avoid the darkness of selfishness and superstition from which we as God's people are called. □

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Ralph E. Hendrix has just been named Managing Editor of *Archaeological Publications* for the *Institute of Archaeology at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan*. A recent graduate of the SDA Theological Seminary, he has served as a pastor and multigrade teacher in the Nevada-Utah Conference of SDA. During the time this article was in process, he was participating in an archaeological dig at Gezer, Israel.

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- ¹ J. H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt: From the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 101.
- ² S. N. Kramer, *From the Tablets of Sumer* (Indian Hills, Col.: Falcon's Wing, 1956), p. 60.
- ³ A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia:*

Portrait of a Dead Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), pp. 295, 296.

⁴ Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1969).

RESOURCES ON ANCIENT HEALTH

The following resources are introductory materials for the upper secondary and college level. Most are common works that can be readily ordered through local bookstores.

- Breasted, J. H., *A History of Egypt: From the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924.
- Harris, J. R., and K. R. Weeks, *X-raying the Pharaohs*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973.
- Kramer, S. N., *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963.
- Oppenheim, A. L., *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, rev. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977.
- Roux, G., *Ancient Iraq*. 2nd ed. New York: Viking Penguin, 1980.

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**Children will
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involve your students in the community. They can enter poetry or prose contests, declamation contests, and even building project contests. Two of my students, a second and fourth grader, won \$100 apiece building rockets for a state contest. In a declamation contest one of my students was a finalist for the county.

As you expand your creativity, you will find how much fun and reward these activities offer for you and your students. □

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