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Pathways to Excellence



ERMA LEE

In its search for a curriculum to replace the current Life Reading Series, in use for more than 25 years, the North American Division Office of Education established a Reading Steering Committee to evaluate available reading programs. Using the established criteria, not one was found that would meet the needs of the Seventh-day Adventist school system without excessive compromise and expense. The prognosis was grim, and it did not seem an answer could be found.

After some time and infinite patience on the part of one Reading Steering Committee member, a classroom teacher, the committee asked for one more presentation from a company whose product seemed to have the potential for adaptation. The company made a presentation that encouraged us to dream. It offered a research-based, innovative, and yet traditionally structured program, broad in concept, with the potential to change the way curriculum in general and reading in particular is approached in the classroom. The mission of this publishing company, to meet the needs of the marketplace in a unique and progressive manner, matched our need for a program that could be adapted to meet our needs.

The Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company offered us the opportunity to develop a reading program specifically for Seventh-day Adventist schools. By adapting their core program, we were able to create a quality reading program for our teachers and students.

The Reading Steering Committee chose the name *Pathways: Journey to Excellence Through Literacy* for the series to indicate that the learning adventure extends throughout one's lifetime. The purpose of reading is to bring joy, entertainment, edification, enlightenment, knowledge, and personal and professional growth. It leads to a better understanding of self and a growing knowledge of the purpose for which we were intended: to know, appreciate, and love our Creator and Redeemer.

The *Pathways* series uses quality literature to develop cross-curricular themes that explore the many aspects of curriculum. This thematic integration gives teachers in single-grade or multigrade classrooms the opportunity to instruct students at varied ability levels but who have common interests and experiences. Given the scope and sequence of the language-arts skills integrated into this curriculum, it provides a comprehensive instructional program. It also includes a management system that uses a variety of formal and informal assessments.

Pathways also provides instructors with an abundance of teaching tools and strategies to use in other areas of the curriculum. While the focus is on reading, there is potential cross-over into other areas that will enhance and infuse the rest of the curriculum with new understanding and a broader scope. Specific guidelines and strategies are also provided to help students with deficient reading skills.

As each grade level of *Pathways: Journey to Excellence Through Literacy* is introduced, NAD elementary educators will be in-serviced. NAD college and university professors who teach reading methods courses received an orientation in December 2004. A strategic planning institute was held in January 2005, followed by an October 2005 in-service for all lead teachers for the conferences and unions. Those who have received the materials and been in-serviced have expressed acceptance and support for the series. With the vision of what *Pathways* can mean to our church's instructional program, we look forward to an exciting phase in Seventh-day Adventist education.—Erma Lee.

Erma Lee is Associate for Curriculum at the North American Division Office of Education in Silver Spring, Maryland.