



Faith-Ann McGarrell

BEYOND WHAT OUR EYES CAN SEE

Globally, the world is in crisis. A convergence of several catastrophic events—one forged by COVID-19, another by the financial fallout from COVID-19,¹ and yet another wrought by an eruption of global protests born out of frustration over centuries of injustice and conflict²—continue to impact daily life, and only history will reveal the true toll on our world. In education, that toll will be seen in the lives of millions of educators who, in addition to learning how to instruct online and for many, managing at-home learning for their own children, face the prospect of becoming sick and possibly dying from COVID-19 or losing their jobs due to school closures or downsizing.³ The toll will also be seen in children and young adults whose academic pursuits have been disrupted. At the time of writing this editorial, the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted learning for more than 1.6 billion students in 190 countries on most continents.⁴

Particularly affected are students already living in challenging conditions—those from poor or rural areas, girls more than boys,⁵ refugees, individuals with learning and physical disabilities, or those displaced by war or natural disasters. Disproportionally represented in these categories are more than 94 percent of the world's student population, and 99 percent of learners in low- and middle-income countries.⁶ The pandemic and resulting crises not only interrupt education now, but may also impede students' educational progress in the future. Lack of employment means no money to pay for tuition, room and board, or school supplies. Some students may be unable to keep up with academic requirements due to their own illness or that of a family member. Other factors include the loss of basic skills due to absence from school and opportunities to practice skills, or the discontinuation of special interventions necessary to help meet learning needs; lack of motivation to restart educational activities after months away from school; or the general lack of certainty that education will help them move forward, given the uncertain economic climate.⁷

Educators had been on the front lines of this global education crisis even before the pandemic. However, now, more than ever before, it is imperative that students in public and private schools know with certainty that their teachers and administrators are committed to helping

them achieve their educational goals. This is no easy task! School administrators, boards, and those who set school policy are faced with this simultaneous collision of catastrophic events and are realizing that current policies do not meet the demands of the time. Educators in classrooms are faced with reconstructing how content is delivered—thinking carefully about what they do and why, learning how to use new technology, how to adapt lessons for online and hybrid delivery platforms, and how to create distance-learning protocols for students in remote areas with little access to technology resources.

A simulation conducted by the World Bank sought to explore possible outcomes resulting from the three-, five-, or seven-month absence from school as a result of the pandemic. A startling prediction is that the disruption will increase the percentage of children performing below minimum proficiency in elementary and secondary schools, with specific reference to those who are unable to read by age 10.⁸

For educators in Adventist schools, the challenge is even further heightened. Adventist educators believe in and practice the integration of faith with learning. A hallmark of Adventist education, faith-integrated teaching strategies seek to guide student learning by using best-practice methods not only to deliver content, but also to show the relationship between content and God's plan for humanity, both now and throughout eternity. Unfortunately, we do not have a similar simulation of how absence from schools that provide an environment that nurtures faith, spiritual growth, and a relationship with Jesus Christ will impact students. For students who come from homes where they have support from parents and a local church, we can assume that this nurturing will continue. However, annual statistical data show that an increasing percentage of students in Adventist schools worldwide come from homes where no such spiritual support exists.⁹

For the Adventist educator, providing faith-integrated curriculum and instruction is even more urgent during periods of distress. As educators in Adventist schools worldwide continue to provide access to Adventist education, even in these tumultuous times, most are learning how to respond to the various crises in real-time. We have heard stories about educators in remote areas walking through difficult terrain to students' homes to deliver

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and collect assignment packets; about teachers spending their entire summer vacation preparing lessons in new formats that are more readily delivered through an online platform, or learning to use new technology.¹⁰

For most, Adventist education is not just about delivering content; it is about seeing beyond the crises that will continue to assail humanity as long as we inhabit this earth. In *Education*, we are reminded that regardless of the circumstances, true education keeps foremost in mind what students might become, invests personal interest in each one, and sees beyond their current condition to God's eternal plan for them.¹¹ The apostle Paul says it this way, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."¹² As Adventist educators, we must press forward and embrace the challenge of learning how to provide faith-integrated instruction effectively during these difficult times.

In this issue, we have several articles that provide best-practice recommendations for teaching. Leni Casimiro and John Wesley Taylor V share the first part of a two-part series titled "Nurturing Faith Through Online Learning" (see page 4). Part 1 addresses planning for instruction, and Part 2 (October-December 2020) will address implementing instruction. Annie Raney and Veronique Anderson share recommendations for teachers in "Providing Instruction to Students With Special Needs During Times of Crisis," a crucial topic that continues to develop even as this issue goes to print (see page 13). Charline Barnes Rowland's "Using Formative and Summative Assessments in K-8 Classrooms" provides several strategies for continuous assessment (see page 20). In our *Best Practices at Work* feature section, Gary Bradley, Stella Bradley, and Jeannie Larrabee discuss "Overcoming Five Challenges of Teaching in a Hybrid Classroom," and offer several practical suggestions based on best practices (see page 40). The remaining articles address topics that provide perspectives on Adventist education. Aimee Leukert shares research on the culture of Adventism and its impact on the choice to pursue Adventist education (see page 27), and Theodore Levterov offers his perspective on sharing Adventism in the classroom (see page 34).

How have you navigated the changes brought on by the pandemic? Consider sharing with our reading audience strategies that have worked in your classrooms and schools. Take a few moments to review our Guidelines for Writers and Calls for Manuscripts, specifically the call for articles about Adventist education during the pandemic. Your contribution to THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION can be a source of inspiration to colleagues and peers. And that is, after all, the role of a professional journal: to provide support for others in the profession. We hope to hear from you soon! ✍

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. It is estimated that more than 1.6 billion people have been impacted by job loss or reduced hours. See Harry Kretchmer, "How Coronavirus Has Hit Employment in G7 Economies," World Economic Forum (May 13, 2020): <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/coronavirus-unemployment-jobs-work-impact-g7-pandemic/>.

2. Ashley Quarcoo, "Three Takeaways on the Protests for Racial Equality," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (June 9, 2020): <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/09/three-takeaways-on-protests-for-racial-equality-pub-82021>.

3. According to research conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) using data from the 2018 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), within the United States, nearly 1.5 million teachers (one in four) are at greater risk of serious illness if infected with COVID due to factors such as age, having diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, a body mass index (BMI) above 40, and cancer-related limitations. For more, see Gary Claxton et al., "How Many Teachers Are at Risk of Serious Illness If Infected With Coronavirus?" (July 10, 2020): <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/how-many-teachers-are-at-risk-of-serious-illness-if-infected-with-coronavirus/>. For more on the global impact of COVID on teachers, see UNESCO, "Teacher Task Force Calls to Support 63 Million Teachers Touched by the COVID-19 Crisis" (March 27, 2020): <https://en.unesco.org/news/teacher-task-force-calls-support-63-million-teachers-touched-covid-19-crisis>.

4. United Nations Policy Brief, *Education During COVID-19 and Beyond* (2020): https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf, 2; UNESCO, *Education: From Disruption to Recovery* (2020): <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>.

5. Worldwide, more than 130 million girls are not in school due to factors such as early marriage and pregnancy, poverty, distance from a school, and social customs that make them three times more likely than boys to not learn to read or write. For more on what is being done, see Adventist Development and Relief Agency, "Every Child. Everywhere. In School: Girls Education" (2020): <https://inschool.adra.org/issues/girls-education>; UNESCO, "COVID-19 School Closures: Why Girls Are More at Risk" (April 2020): <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/covid-19-school-closures-why-girls-are-more-risk-13406>; _____, "Gender Equality in Education" (2020): <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/gender-equality-education>.

6. United Nations Policy Brief, 2.

7. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19): Education and COVID-19: Focusing on the Long-term Impact of School Closures" (June 29, 2020): <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/education-and-covid-19-focusing-on-the-long-term-impact-of-school-closures-2cea926e/>.

8. The World Bank, "Simulating the Potential Impacts of the COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning Outcomes: A Set of Global Estimates" (June 18, 2020): <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/simulating-potential-impacts-of-covid-19-school-closures-learning-outcomes-a-set-of-global-estimates>.

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10. Murray Hunter, "Students' Parents Say They Value Adventist Teachers During COVID-19," *Adventist World* (2020): <https://www.adventistworld.org/students-parents-say-they-value-adventist-teachers-during-covid-19/>; General reports from General Conference Education Department Associate Directors, 2020.

11. 2 Corinthians 4:18, *New International Version* (NIV). *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

12. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 232; See also _____, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1913), 496.



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