Spring 2008

Achievement Levels Hold

The results of the second year of returns affirm the achievement levels reported for the first year of the study. In addition, the second-year analysis shows that:

- High-ability students achieve above prediction and that low-ability students have an even greater difference between their level of achievement and the level predicted for them.

Information from the surveys shows that:

- Students who report getting eight or more hours of sleep a night achieve higher than students who report less sleep per night.
- The more involved parents are with the school, the higher the achievement of their children.

Kido and Cruise Speak to Unions

With their presentation to the Lake Union on May 7, Dr. Elissa Kido, Project Director, and Dr. Robert Cruise, Research Director, completed presenting second-year findings of the Cognitogenisis study to each of the nine unions. Enthusiasm for the study is growing among educators as they begin to see how the study not only affirms their efforts but also helps them offer an even better environment for achievement.

One of the outcomes of the presentations is that principals have become even more enthusiastic with their support than previously. The meetings have also been valuable in locating weak areas in data collection that can now be strengthened. The greatest benefit of the meetings is the heightened understanding between investigators and participants as to the role each individual plays in the success of the study. Morale is good.

After hearing the union presentation, conference superintendents have invited Cognitogenisis staff to share information with their conference educators at inservice meetings.
Getting Acquainted: Paul Brantley
Advisory Committee Member

When he first became a member of the COGNITIVEGENESIS Advisory Committee, Paul Brantley was an Assistant VP at Florida Hospital in charge of leadership development and diversity. Presently he directs the new Office of Assessment and Program Effectiveness of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In April, he also received the appointment of General Field Secretary.

Dr. Brantley started his career as principal and science teacher at Adventist schools in Jacksonville, Florida, and Washington, D.C. After his doctoral study, he took a position at Oakwood College where he chaired the Department of Education and helped the College achieve its initial National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation.

At Andrews University, his next academic assignment, he served as founding editor of the Journal of Research on Christian Education, the first juried research publication on the subject. In 1987, he also led in founding the North American Division’s Profile curriculum evaluation studies as well as inaugurating CIRCLE, the Church’s web-based educational clearinghouse. For those and other accomplishments, Andrews awarded him the J. N. Andrews Medallion in 2002.

At Florida Hospital, Dr. Brantley organized its first management-level performance evaluation system for its nearly 400 leaders at director and executive levels. He also inaugurated the Grass Roots Innovation Project where scores of front-line employees participated in assessment and improvement of hospital processes.

Experiences at Florida Hospital and prior work led to his current position, where his assignment is to help formalize assessment systems at General Conference headquarters and in the world divisions. He serves in the Office of the President.

A product of Adventist education through the Master’s degree, Brantley’s doctorate at Ohio State University was in the area of curriculum development and evaluation where he studied briefly under the legendary Ralph Tyler. He took post-doctorate fieldwork at the Evaluation Center at Kalamazoo, Michigan.

With his background and expertise, he brings valuable skills to the Advisory Committee of COGNITIVEGENESIS. He has worked with the sub-set of regional conferences in the North American Division on implications of COGNITIVEGENESIS for African-American Adventist schools.

Brantley is married to the former Lenore Spence, a professor at Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences. He has two adult children, Eileen and Neil. He has a passion for seeing Adventist education reach its true potential as a God-ordained institution of the Church. “After all,” he quotes, “Higher than the highest human thought can reach, is God’s ideal for his children!”

“Ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they are valued, prepared, and trusted.”
Cruise to the Bahamas

Bob Cruise spent the week of April 21 in the Bahamas Conference sharing the first 2 years’ preliminary results of the COGNITIVE GENESIS project. At different times he spoke to teachers, principals, pastors, administration, conference leaders, and constituents.

His presentations ranged from speaking at one of the schools for Grandparents’ Day to being interviewed along with John Carey, Director of Education Bahamas Conference, for a local TV feature news program. In addition, he talked to the administrative leaders of the conference about the viability of replicating the COGNITIVE GENESIS study in the Bahamas. He regrets that the only time he got sand between his toes was during a Friday evening walk on the beach as he watched the sun go down.

Small Schools Shine

Preliminary results of the COGNITIVE GENESIS study indicate that students in both large and small schools achieve above the norm. Knowing empirically that they are doing a better-than-good job is especially encouraging for teachers in small schools, who are isolated from a larger intellectual community and often feel unappreciated.

Schools and Parents Receive Survey Info

Robert Cruise and Elissa Kido met with parent and teacher groups at nearby schools when making presentations at union meetings. These groups had a chance to hear first-hand the results of the surveys and to ask questions about COGNITIVE GENESIS.

This kind of exchange helped parents and teachers better understand the overall goals of the study and the results.

Four Years for Data

At the meeting of the Union Education Directors in Daytona Beach, Florida, on April 15, the group voted to continue giving the standardized tests for a fourth year. Having four years of test data will allow the third-year survey results to be correlated with achievement for the same time frame.

Donor Support Remains Strong

COGNITIVE GENESIS continues to receive financial support from its generous donors. Renewing their gifts for additional years evidences their faith in the program.

One donor has already committed to partially funding a fourth year of the study, a very recent development for the project. Because the fourth year was not in the original plans, more money is being sought for its funding.
Teachers Meet at Keene

On March 17, Donna Berkner, principal of Keene Adventist Elementary School, arranged a joint meeting for the Keene elementary teachers, secondary teachers of Chisholm Trail Academy, and members of their boards to hear the preliminary results of the COGNITIVE GENESIS study.

The philosophy at Keene is to give students of all abilities the same type of extra attention that is usually given at other institutions only to high-achieving students. To implement this philosophy, Keene selects projects, whenever possible, that allow students in a wide spectrum of abilities to work on special activities, believing that all students benefit from this type of motivation. Teachers conduct regular team meetings to make decisions concerning modifications to curriculum that will include students of all abilities in non-traditional, as well as traditional learning experiences.

The result of the COGNITIVE GENESIS study showing that students of varying abilities in Adventist schools achieve above the level predicted for them is of special interest to the teachers at Keene. It validates the extra work they have invested in all students, not just their brightest scholars.

Donna Berkner remarked, “With the research from the COGNITIVE GENESIS study, we are gaining validation that indeed we are preparing our children academically to compete in the world around us.”

CG at Campmeeting

Attendees at two campmeetings this June will hear the latest results of the COGNITIVE GENESIS project. Dr. Elissa Kido will be at the Arizona Campmeeting, and Dr. Jerome Thayer will be at the Michigan Campmeeting. Requests for other camp meeting presentations can be arranged if the dates are open.

La Sierra University in partnership with the Office of Education, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists