New Center approved for Adventist education research

In response to the groundbreaking research conducted through CognitiveGenesis and the demand for ongoing study of the Adventist K-12 school system, the La Sierra University Board of Trustees voted during its November meeting to establish a Center to Advance Adventist K-12 Education as part of the University’s School of Education. Dr. Elissa Kido, research director and founder of the CognitiveGenesis project, has been named Center director with governing board and advisory board members to be appointed at a later date. The Center will begin operation in January 2011.

Adventist Education Gets National Media Attention

A half-page, three-column opinion-editorial appeared in the Christian Science Monitor (CSM) on November 15, citing the results of the CognitiveGenesis research. The article emphasizes the holistic approach of educating the mind, body and spirit inherent in the Adventist educational philosophy and suggests the Adventist K-12 system model as one to consider for educational reform. http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/K4_Impor/For real-education-reform-take-a-cue-from-the-Adventists.

The L.A. Times picked up the CSM article and cited it on November 17 in its online opinion journal, Opinion LA. The article was titled “The Conversation: Pursuing successful education reforms might mean going the way of Adventists.” The link to the article is: http://opinion.latimes.com/opinionla/2010/11/the-conversation-pursuing-successful-education-reform-might-mean-going-the-way-of-adventists.html
**Church leadership briefed on CogGen results**

In November, Dr. Jerome Thayer, principal statistician, and Dr. Kido reported the four-year results to the NAD K-12 Board of Education and to the Year-end General Assembly. For the first time, it was possible to include substantive findings from the student, parent, teacher, and school surveys.

**SDA education scores “big”**

A short summary of the results of the study over four years indicates that:

- Students are well above the national average in achievement.
- Students are close to the national average in ability.
- Students achieve higher than would be predicted based on their ability scores.
- Students do better the longer they are in an Adventist school; the gains in ability are even higher than in achievement.
- Students in smaller schools do as well or better than those in larger schools.
- It still holds that students score above the national average in all grades and all subjects.

**Surveys give insights into high achievement**

The four-year report contains more information from the surveys than previous reports. For example:

- Higher student achievement is associated with time spent reading for pleasure after school, positive friends, positive spiritual attitude, healthy relationship with parents, and exercise.
- Students whose homes have high expectations, discipline, and spiritual emphasis experienced higher achievement.
- Higher achievement is associated with teachers who use progressive teaching methods, give students extra help, interact with students about personal issues, and use differentiated instruction.
- Student achievement was higher in schools that have a good academic climate, have fewer discipline and drug/alcohol problems, and have good support from the church and the home.

The previous information is just a selection from the full report. For more information look at the four-year report on www.cognitivegenesis.org

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Researchers meeting at the Riv. Publishing Summit in Chicago include (from left): Dr. Alan Dolittle, Riverside Publishing Research Director; Dr. David Lohman, primary author of Cognitive Abilities Test and faculty at University of Iowa; Dr. Jerome Thayer, Cog Gen Researcher and Director of Andrews University Center for Statistical Services; Dr. Elissa Kido, Cog Gen Project Director and LSU faculty.
The first National Summit on Adventist Education took place October 20-23 at La Sierra University. Some 300 educational leaders attended representing all nine unions, 36 conferences, 20 Adventist and secular colleges and universities, and 100 K-12 schools from within the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Educators from Canada and Mexico were present as well as leaders from the North American Division and the General Conference offices of education.

Elder Dan Jackson, NAD president, sometimes called the “education president,” visited the Summit and spoke briefly to the attendees. The pace was fast, and the schedule tight.

CogGen goes global again

Last year Dr. Elissa Kido presented CognitiveGenesis preliminary results at the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists; this April, she was a plenary speaker at the Eastern Regional Children’s Ministries Convention in Jakarta, Indonesia. The convention encompassed four divisions: Northern Asia-Pacific Division, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Southern Asia Division, and the South Pacific Division. The children’s ministries directors said they face some of the same challenges as the North American Division and therefore want to explore the possibility of conducting a similar study in their divisions. During the convention Dr. Kido’s husband, Daniel Kido, M.D., who specializes in brain research, spoke on the brain and decision-making.

CogGen data delivered at GC

Dr. Kido attended the General Conference session in Atlanta this summer where she represented both La Sierra University and CognitiveGenesis. She gave two reports on CognitiveGenesis in the exhibit hall.

Closer to home

Southeastern California Conference held a meeting in February for pastors to hear the latest CognitiveGenesis results. As a result of that report, four churches invited the CognitiveGenesis team to share the same information with their congregations. The pastors reserved their worship services for this purpose. The office has received a number of calls from parents who heard the CognitiveGenesis presentation for the first time at their various churches and were interested enough to call the office for more information. One family decided to enroll its two children in a church school as a result of hearing the good news about Adventist education.

Crossroads of Peril and Promise

The group was both enthusiastic and involved. Evaluations indicate that those in attendance viewed the Summit as well worth their time. One person was overheard saying, “At last, a conference where everyone is honestly facing the problems.”

Another person said, “I am impressed that the General Conference Director of Education [Dr. Lisa Beardsley] was here for the entire time. If she takes it that seriously, then the rest of us should, too.”
CognitiveGenesis: What’s Next?

The CognitiveGenesis team is asking questions and implementing projects based on research results. **Subject areas are receiving attention:**

- NAD has an ad hoc committee studying ways to raise mathematics achievement. Michigan conference is conducting an experiment with math instructional methods.
- Two dissertations have been completed using the CogGen database.

- Denise White used the CG database in her dissertation to show that achievement was not dependent on school size. In fact, in some cases students at small schools achieved higher than students at large schools.
- Dave Lawrence investigated the relationship between cost per-pupil spending and achievement and found that achievement was not based on dollars spent.

**There are over ten dissertations in-progress, some of which are investigating:**

- the effect of length of attendance at an Adventist school on emotional, physical, and spiritual growth.
- the effects of health and wellness on achievement and cognitive ability.
- the relationship between spiritual factors and achievement.

Models are being created that will attempt to predict achievement. They include:

- student-parent-home relationships that promote achievement,
- teacher characteristics that promote achievement, and
- school dynamics that promote achievement.

Kelly Bock, Education Director - Member of CG Advisory Committee

Kelly Bock, Director of Education for the Pacific Union Conference since 2002, is a valued member of the CognitiveGenesis Advisory Committee. He holds a B.S. in business administration and M.A. in counselor education from Loma Linda University – La Sierra Campus, and an Ed.S. and Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Idaho.

Kelly started his career in education as dean of boys at Milo Academy in Oregon. He then served as assistant dean of men at Loma Linda University. He was principal at Mile High Academy, Gem State Academy, and Columbia Adventist Academy before assuming the vice presidency for education in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. He served as associate director of education for the North American Division before joining the education office of the Pacific Union.

In addition to leading the largest education department in the NAD, he served on the steering committee for La Sierra University’s National Summit on Adventist Education. Kelly is an active and involved CognitiveGenesis Advisory Committee member. He is also a trustee on the University’s Board.

His experience as a U.S. army combat medical research photographer led to a continuing interest in photography, which he adds to his enjoyment of sailing, hiking, climbing, and biking.

CogGen moves into next phase

CognitiveGenesis is as busy as ever. However, the focus of the work has changed from collecting data to extensively analyzing and disseminating the results. The structure is changing as well. In January, the new Center to Advance Adventist K-12 Education will begin operating. While it will offer services for various K-12 education projects that advance Adventist education, CognitiveGenesis will comprise the bulk of the Center’s work.

Instead of an occasional newsletter, you will receive a monthly bulletin reporting on the work of the Center.

New Student Workers

If you call the office, you are likely to hear new voices. Ruth Claros, a senior bio-med major, and Andrea Barraza, a social work major have joined the staff. Antonio Carneiro has graduated with an M.B.A. and Noemy Cruz has finished a Bachelor’s degree in sociology. Both are continuing to work part-time to bring about a smooth transition.

CognitiveGenesis Research Team

Robert Cruise, Ph.D.
Elissa Kido, Ed.D.,
Project Director
Jerome Thayer, Ph.D.

CognitiveGenesis
La Sierra University
4500 Riverwalk Parkway
Riverside, CA 92515

951-785-2997
www.cognitivegenesis.org