What's New on Our Web?

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**Union Votes to Use New Standards**

As teachers plan their lessons for the coming school year, a recent action of the Southern Union Conference Elementary Advisory Committee should be noted. At their spring meeting, the committee took an action to replace the Southern Union standards with the North American Division curriculum guide standards for **Science and Social Studies** as they are more current than the Southern Union’s and are written with measurable learning outcomes. The committee also voted to replace the Southern Union Language Arts standards with the Pathways Target Skills.

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**There is Something Extra Special About Song**

by Louise Hendrickson, Mount Dora
SUMMER TRAININGS SHARPEN TEACHER SKILLS

The Florida Conference is well-known for its high level of professional development and this summer has been no exception. Using the Forest Lake Academy campus as our base, we have offered five different workshop opportunities for our teachers, who have eagerly accepted the invitation to spend part of their summer learning new strategies that will boost classroom performance.

We began the summer with our popular CrISS workshop, with national trainer Dr. Jennifer Rosenboom presenting a variety of methods to improve reading comprehension in the content areas. Highlighting, sticky notes, Venn diagrams, graphic organizers, two-column notes, Spool papers, and seed discussions are just a few of the strategies the teachers will be implementing in their classrooms this fall.

The following week found Chris Juhl, principal/teacher from the Kentucky-Tennessee conference, working with a group of our literacy teachers, instructing them in ways to make whole group instruction with theme books relevant and engaging.

Next door, small-schools teachers worked together with Associate Superintendent Nury Perez, mapping out their integrated curriculum for the entire year. "Working together as a team makes being a one-room school teacher in the Florida Conference interesting and exciting for me," said John Sufficool of Okeechobee. "By spending two weeks with other teachers over the summer, I'm good to go when the school year begins." (Pictured: John Sufficool and Vicki Turner)

Down the hall, the chatter of excited children's voices could be heard as Rose Thomas, vice principal of Forest Lake Education Center and BJ Bertram, second-grade teacher, led out in a writing workshop, where teachers honed their skills.

Long before iTunes, Michael Jackson, or Bach, song existed. It was God who placed this incredible gift inside us from the very beginning. As a pre-school teacher, I find the power of song to be an effective, engaging tool to use in the classroom.

Watching young children grow and develop through music is one of the most exciting facets of my job. Far greater than ‘music to our ears,’ song has the miraculous ability to touch our mind, body, and spirit. For many years now as an SDA teacher of little people ages 4 and 5, I have come to know how to power the song. Wanting to fill their hearts with HIS WORD, I would recycle some oldies but goodies like, "Row, Row, Row Your Boat". In fact, I set Isaiah 6:8 to the happy tune. I challenge you to get your Bible and make it fit.

The blessings of song greatly exceed the small effort required to learn the tune. With smiles and giggles, the children are eager to grab the words and sing the melody. God gave us this predisposition, this innate ability to receive song into our being. As teachers, it is our responsibility to help children grasp the meaning behind the words.

Once songs are memorized, the information is expertly stored in the brain, which allows easy recall. An adult mind is able to recall songs from early childhood and that particular song ‘can take you back to a certain time and place’. The total experience has been uniquely stored in our minds.

"If You're Happy and You Know it" can be fashioned for phonics. During class time, the teacher raises a Fundation alphabet card for all to see. Then she begins to sing... “If you think you know this letter say the name. If you think you know this letter say the sound. If you think you know this letter then write what you have seen. If you think you know this letter, write it now.”

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Our final June seminar was directed by Associate Superintendent Mayra Rodriguez, with new teachers becoming trained in the Responsive Classroom model that defines who we are as educators in the Florida Conference. Cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control are the key social skills identified by this program that creates a positive, affirming environment for children to learn, according to Rodriguez.

The Office of Education looks forward to presenting additional workshops for teachers during the first week of August, including: Hands On Equations, Study Group Leaders’ Training, and DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy).

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Education Department
Welcome to the Florida Conference—a great place to teach and learn! Browse our site or better yet—come join us to discover what makes our schools so vibrant. Here you’ll find the latest in technology, coupled with hands-on learning and research-based practices all wrapped up in a warm, Christian environment. The mild weather and natural beauty of the state provides an ideal setting for field trips, nature walks, and outdoor science lessons. Students plant vegetable gardens, cultivate flowers, participate in archaeological digs and collect shells along Florida’s 1200 miles of coastline. Eight thousand lakes provide increased opportunities for the study of natural flora and fauna from Jacksonville to Miami.

In the Florida Conference, we value every child as a unique individual, created in the image of God with distinctive gifts, talents, and abilities. As Seventh-day Adventist educators, it is our belief that the work of true education is to equip students to think and to act with breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. We believe that each child has a special purpose for being placed on this earth. With this in mind, we seek to provide every opportunity for the spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth of every student entrusted to our care. It is our fervent prayer and aim to perceive infinite possibilities in our students—inspiring them to love learning, respect others, and develop a character in the likeness of the Creator.

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  - Adult Sabbath School
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  - Disabilities Ministries
  - Health Ministries
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  - Men's Ministries
  - Pastoral Ministries
○ Prison Ministries
○ Publishing
○ Retired Denominational Workers' Ministries
○ Stewardship
○ Women's Ministries

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○ Camp Ministries
○ Children's and Family Ministries
○ Office of Education
○ Youth/Pathfinders/Adventurers Ministries

**Service Ministries**
○ Communication
○ Community Services
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○ President
○ Executive Secretary
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○ Human Resources
○ Membership
○ Service Records
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  ■ Payroll
  ■ Accounts Payable
  ■ Accounts Receivable
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Site last updated June 20, 2011 @ 4:26 pm
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