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Editorial

Do We Really Understand?

The speaker's voice rose and fell in convincing intonations. He spoke with urgency. I could hear every word; yet my mind wondered—I couldn't understand the speaker's language.

Seated in that large hall, one of a dozen tall white Americans among 5000 beautiful dark Hmong people celebrating their New Year, I thought to myself, "This must be how Mike feels in my class. He hears my voice, but apparently he doesn't understand my language. No wonder he tunes me out. No wonder he fails to turn the pages when I do—provided he even has the book open."

Then my memory flashed back to third grade, the year that I experienced a different kind of hearing difficulty. I remembered the painful humiliation of getting unreasonably low scores on a few papers and of starting the wrong paragraph in oral reading, until my perceptive teacher and my parents realized that I had a hearing loss. In spite of more than seven school weeks' worth of absences that year, I suffered no academic setbacks, thanks to my teacher's and my parents' wisdom in recognizing my problem and providing proper help.

Beyond that immediate benefit, I believe God was using that experience to give me greater understanding for my future students who experience learning difficulties.

Although many classroom teachers are not specifically trained in teaching students with learning disabilities, teachers need to be alerted to the symptoms of learning disabled students. As is evident from the increased response to this topic, information is available to help the responsible educator recognize and meet the learning needs of students with physical or mental disabilities.

The odds are great that within our classes we will find a Willy Wiggleworm, a Henry Hyper, or an Inattentive Ina in addition to students who are destructive, nonchalant, loud, sneaky, dishonest, forgetful, or defiant. How do we see these students? Do we view them merely as difficult kids who need "some good old-fashioned discipline like we had in school"? Could they be suffering from inability to think the way we expect them to do? Are their minds able to receive and process the messages we give them?

Hopefully we come to our classes supplied with patience, understanding, wisdom, humility, common sense, and the desire to serve any one of God's covenant children. We will be better equipped to fulfill our monumental task if we can keep in mind that behind each deviant behavior is a person crying to be noticed. The earlier we discern that student's real message, the earlier we can decide what kind of attention the student needs, whether academic, physical, or disciplinary.

Perhaps the first thing the teacher can do to help a student with a learning disability is to work individually with the student. With undivided attention and fewer distractions, many deviant behaviors disappear. Then the real problem is easier to discern.

A warm, patient attitude is vital in helping a learning disabled student. Few students will resist help when the teacher displays more care for the child than concern for his grades. In a low-key manner the teacher can help both herself and the student to reduce the frustration that usually accompanies this situation.

Common sense goes a long way in improving the instruction, even if the teacher has had no special training to teach the learning disabled. For example, if the student rarely completes the required assignments, why insist that he is able to meet your requirements? Try reducing the work load till he does seem to be able to complete the task and then gradually build him up to a level that challenges him without frustration. Be very specific in giving directions, and be sure to provide both a written and an oral version of the same directions. (Enroll yourself in a class in which you have no background, and you will learn quickly the value of this advice.) Avoid giving more directions at a time than the student can comprehend. Always provide a model before you expect the student to carry out new directions. If he fails to understand, think of another way to present the same idea.

Patience is essential. I suspect many parents and teachers have failed to see adequate growth in a child's learning because they have lacked the patience to sit down next to the child and "walk him through" the task, pausing often to give positive encouragement and patient repetition. Furthermore, sometimes they forget that growth is a process which includes both spurts of progress and plateaus of waiting for a concept to settle into the child's mind.

Finally, the classroom teacher has the responsibility to be accepting. She herself must see the learning disabled student as a special person in her care. She must help the student to see himself as an important member of God's covenant, and she must help the rest of the class to consider that student as a valuable member of the class. The more naturally the teacher can discuss the student's limitations with the class, both while the learning disabled student is absent and when he is present, the more likely acceptance will occur.

Perhaps we educators have the disability—perhaps we misinterpret the behaviors of our learning disabled students. God grant us loving acceptance, greater wisdom, and the desire to understand.

LVG

David R. Miller

Exceptional Child Exceptional Teacher

Practical Application of the Individualized Educational Program

An exceptional child is one whose development patterns and needs are noticeably different from most other children. Current notions of exceptionality recognize that while all children are unique and thus exceptional to a degree, some possess characteristics and/or limitations that place them outside normal parameters. This discussion is targeted to teachers in Christian schools who find themselves responsible for educating a child with special limitations.

The history of special education is not complimentary. We have collectively passed through periods of superstition and witchcraft, isolated institutions that were little more than custodial, special schools for particular groups (the deaf, the blind, the "feeble-minded"), special classes within regular schools, and now mainstreaming. We have by legislative fiat "normalized" children with special needs but genuine effective normalization remains only barely visible on the educational horizon.

While Congress has mandated movement toward a least restrictive environment by passing Public Law 94-142, the burden for implementing the program has fallen upon individual school districts, and for Christian schools, on individual teachers and administrators. The importance of this law is not argued, but its application in Christian and other private schools can present some severe obstacles to overcome.

The Individualized Educational Program at first glance seems like quite an obstacle in itself. In reality and practice, however, it represents a very detailed and carefully prepared lesson plan for one student. If approached one step at a time and with the thought that good teachers are already good lesson planners, the IEP should prove to be very useful not only in helping a student but also in keeping federal and state agencies out of curriculum development in private schools.

An Individualized Educational Program should be prepared with the following recommendations in mind:

1. The IEP must be in written form.
2. It must be reviewed at least once each school year.
3. It should be prepared jointly by the school administrator, a specialist in the area of disability, and the classroom teacher.
4. When appropriate, the student and his or her parents may also participate.

The IEP should include:

1. A statement, documented by test scores and teacher comments, of the present functioning level of the child.
2. A brief list of long-term (end of school year) academic and social goals.
3. A more elaborate compilation of specific daily, weekly, or monthly goals stated in behavioral, measurable terms.

Example: By the end of the first marking period, John will be reading at his grade level with 85% comprehension measured on the Smith test of reading comprehension.

Rather than: By the end of the first marking period, John will have improved his reading skills.

4. Evaluation methods must be stated including projected test dates and names.
5. Names, titles, and locations of specialists likely to be called on either in formulating the program, providing remediation, or evaluating progress.
6. Names and locations of special equipment that may be needed.

The effective construction and implementation of an IEP depends upon the ability of school personnel to accurately appraise the special needs of certain children, to decide which instructional elements can be adjusted, to develop day by day strategies for the child, and to organize it all into a coherent usable unit of instruction. Charles and Malian (1980) suggest the acronym, COATS, as a methodology.

CONTENTS—the course material must be adjusted to suit the individual needs of the mentally or physically limited.

OBJECTIVES—goals and objectives need to be varied to fit different achievement levels or special requirements in oral or written communication and physical abilities.

ACTIVITIES—recreational and learning activities must be adapted to include students who may have sensory or locomotive restrictions.

TIME ALLOTMENTS—plan to allow more time for a handicapped or learning disabled child.

SUPERVISION—oversight includes teachers, administrators, lunchroom personnel, and virtually anyone who may have even occasional or temporary responsibility for a child.

The importance of providing services for exceptional children was brought home to me a few years ago while teaching in another state. There were three good-sized Christian schools in that city, along with several smaller ones. Virtually all children of families connected with a particular ministry in that area attended a Christian school, in fact to do otherwise was cause for dismissal from employment.

A family in our aquaintance had two normal boys and a little girl with a serious learning disability. She was not retarded, not disruptive, but required a level of personal attention while being taught that was outside the norm in any Christian school in the city. This family, totally committed to Christian education, was forced to enroll their daughter in a public school for her to be taught at all. It was not a bad public school, but it was not Christian.

Christian education failed that family. Until the Christian community can provide a Christ-centered education for *all* its children, it has failed. *We* have failed. Perhaps the use of the Individualized Educational Program will in some degree make it possible for us to serve more of our own children with special educational needs.

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Patricia Schnyders

Computer Assisted Instruction and the Learning Disabled Student

Today's educational environment is marked by a knowledge explosion and rapidly advancing technology. Microcomputers are currently becoming a part of this dynamic environment. The new technology of the microcomputer has the potential to revolutionize the teaching/learning process in the classroom (Carro, 1982).

The primary goal of any instructional program is to have the students learn. While it might not seem worthwhile to put simple drill and practice activities on a computer program when the same activities could be undertaken using the much less expensive paper and pencil method, learning disabled students have certain characteristics which provide sound rationale for the use of Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI): 1) Learning disabled students frequently have short attention spans and are easily distracted. The computer can help the student focus on and respond to what is relevant and important by using visual cues (e.g., boxes, arrows, underlining) which direct the student's attention to the task. 2) Learning disabled students often need varying amounts of time to respond to written or verbal questions. A classroom teacher's inability to provide that needed time may cause fear and embarrassment to the student. A computer can be programmed to provide this extra response time. 3) Learning disabled students may respond impulsively without carefully thinking through a response. The computer can be programmed to encourage a student to think before he responds by displaying such graphics as a stop sign and a message to "think" before answering. 4) Many learning disabled students are unable to recognize their own errors. A computer can provide immediate feedback when a mistake is made, thus alerting the student to the error. This is done without any of the emotional overtones which can be conveyed by a teacher. 5) Learning disabled students may need several repetitions of directions before beginning an activity and may need many repetitions of the same skill before it is mastered. These can be provided by the computer, which can be programmed to meet the individual needs of each student. 6) Learning disabled students are frequently difficult to motivate. The computer often can assist when motivation is the problem. Computer programs can be personalized by use of the student's name, and positive reinforcement recognizes success and

gives encouragement to keep trying.

Besides these preceeding six characteristics and needs of learning disabled students, which can be met by the computer, there are two additional reasons for the use of CAI which pertain to students and teaching in general: 1) Not all students learn enough through regular classroom instruction. Many need a sequential, structured presentation of skills. The computer can accelerate, repeat, or skip steps depending on the student's responses. Thus, an individualized learning experience is provided for each student. 2) The computer can free the teacher to work with other students.

With CAI, motivation and enjoyment are increased, active involvement is required, and teacher time can be most effectively utilized (Thompson, 1980).

As part of the requirements for a master's degree, I conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of computer practice on the mastery of spelling words. In this study, spelling words were taught to a group of ten third grade learning disabled students, all of whom had experienced difficulty in this academic area. This group practiced the spelling words using the traditional paper and pencil method to complete four spelling exercises for the first lesson. They used CAI practice to complete four similar exercises for the second lesson. This procedure was repeated for six lessons, alternating paper and pencil exercises with computer exercises.

The words and exercises used were found in the *Sound Foundations Program II* published by the Developmental Learning Materials Company. The words selected for this study were those commonly used in written expression by students at this level and were also included in the basic reading material at this level. Each set of words selected for study had a common phonetic element which was repeated in each activity to facilitate learning the words. Only the mode of practice and the actual spelling words varied each week. The format of the exercises remained the same.

Evaluation was done using written pre and post spelling tests for each of the six lessons. The combination of pre and post test spelling scores and scores on the four practice activities were used to determine mastery of the spelling words and evaluate students' progress.

The CAI practice resulted in significantly higher test scores than the paper and pencil practice. The total gain difference in words was 54 for the paper and pencil practice and 122 for the CAI practice. Even though these results were positive in favor of CAI practice, other findings were also of interest.

The ten students who participated in the study were all students with varying types of learning difficulties and attention problems. Yet each student was willing to remain at the CAI station for periods of up to one hour in order to complete the activities. These students willingly gave up recess periods to work at the computer.

These easily distracted students were able to work at the CAI station in the Resource Room while other groups of students worked at a table in the same room. Also, these students responded favorably to the positive reinforcement statements given after each student response on the computer. They expressed a positive response to the immediate feedback given after an error. The students had no difficulty learning to use the computer equipment and experienced no problems reading the computer display screen. At the conclusion of the study, each student expressed a desire to continue the computer work, and each stated he felt it was easier to learn spelling words when using CAI practice.

The conclusions of this study led to the following implications. First, CAI is a viable approach to instruction for the remedial and/or learning disabled student. It can be a profitable means of instruction for the special education teacher as well as the regular classroom teacher.

Next, CAI instruction can be used to provide drill and practice in academic areas other than spelling. Mathematics is one area in which research has shown this to be valid. Various types of reading instruction have also been a focus of CAI programs, and many are available commercially. If meaningful CAI programs are available, they should be used. If not available in the curriculum areas or at the instructional levels needed, instructors should consider designing their own materials which would meet the needs and levels of their students.

Thirdly, CAI is an excellent motivator for students who might otherwise be difficult to motivate. Teachers may find that the reluctant learner or one who has experienced frustration during traditional instruction is an eager learner when presented with the computer as instructor.

Another implication is that computer work is feasible for all age levels of students. The third grade students in this study were attracted to the computer and were not intimidated by its mechanical aspects. Their self-confidence quickly increased as they became more capable and proficient with the computer.

Finally, the computer is sure to become an instructional tool available in an increasing number of schools. The decrease in the cost of the microcomputer, the flexibility in programming, its effectiveness as a mode of instruction for all levels of students, and the increase in the use of the computer in homes and businesses are factors which make computer knowledge a necessity rather than a luxury in today's world.

These positive results provide support for the conclusion that computer technology will be applied to the needs of the learning disabled student with an increased frequency in the immediate future and has the capability of becoming an invaluable teaching tool for the modern day educator.

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Eleanor Mills

Image of God and Self Image
Implications for Special Education

Overheard in the resource room: "At least this teacher doesn't make me feel dumb." Surely no Christian teacher would want her pupils to feel stupid or unable to learn. But we may be insensitive to the negative impact of some of the things we say and do.

We speak of the image of God in man as words descriptive of our view of the child. We treat the child with respect because he is made in the image of God. But what does this mean in our classrooms?

Certainly a mutual respect must be built between the teacher and the student, but it is difficult to treat a child with respect on the basis of a somewhat abstract concept of image of God in him. He must be taught to perform his task as a student respectably so that he will be worthy of respect.

Therefore, it is important for the special education teacher to help her students discover the best learning style to use for their own unique learning task. Even very young children can understand the concept that information and ideas can be learned through several different "channels to the mind." It is a great relief for a child to realize that he doesn't have a "bad brain" (as one seven-year-old remarked), but that he can learn if he finds out how his own brain operates.

Merely accepting the child where he is and showing him what he can do is still somewhat disappointing for the child who really wants to be able to do "what the other kids do."

There are long lists available of techniques for teaching self concept. Some of these are helpful in achieving moments of success with slow learners. But the core is missing. How can the student discover the way in which he can most successfully carry out his task of reflecting God. He must discover his own learning style. This process of discovery may be somewhat lengthy, and it may involve, to varying degrees, diagnostic teaching and self analysis. But the quest itself is an exciting one, and the steps along the way that develop an increasing awareness of the solution to the problem, provide motivation even when the way is long. The child with a learning disability can see that it is possible for him to carry out his task as well as anyone, though perhaps in a different way. By succeeding at the task of learning in school, the child feels fulfilled. He is accomplishing what he, as image bearer, is called to do. This deserves meaningful praise from the teacher. But the accomplishment of the task itself is a better motivator to further effort and success than the praise could ever be.

In addition to helping the student in this process of discovery, how can we promote in our students a feeling of confidence and accomplishment that will motivate them to achieve? I suggest the following ways:

1. Greet your students by name. Show by your tone of voice and an appropriate remark that you're glad to see them.

2. Give choices whenever possible. "Would you like to write on the chalkboard or on paper?" "Shall we work on spelling or reading first today?" Making choices promotes responsibility and implies a commitment to the task. It also helps us to discover how the student learns. The logical sequence of the teacher's lesson plan may not necessarily follow the student's pattern of learning.

3. Avoid negative statements. Monitor your speech and think of positive statements to replace the use of the words "not," "don't," and "no." "You have three of these right." "How did you figure out the right answer?" "What do you need to do to make these right?"

4. Tell the student only as much as he needs to know. Let him figure out for himself whatever he can. "How do you spell *ground*?" "The *ow* sound is spelled with *o u*."

5. Accept whatever remark a student makes in a discussion with a "Thank you." Any kind of sincere response should be welcome. An incorrect response should be corrected in a positive way, if possible.

6. Pray for all your students today, and especially for those who are difficult for you to love. You will begin to discover their lovable qualities.

Albert E. Green summarizes these thoughts when he says:

> "Human knowledge is possible because man is made in the image of God... He is capable of knowing God and consequently he is capable of knowing himself, who is made in the image of God."

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Expecting the Best from

In the ninth grade we teach *The Miracle Worker* by Gibson. It is the play about Helen Keller who had no verbal skills until she was six years old. She was seemingly unteachable, a virtual wild animal until Annie Sullivan came into her life with enough determination to tame the "wild animal" and call out the person. "She will live up to just what you demand of her and no more," Annie said to a pair of frustrated and indulgent parents; then she proceeded to demand many things of the deaf and blind child, not the least of which was language. History tells us the rest. It was through the perseverance, patience, and demand for obedience that Miss Sullivan was able to penetrate an otherwise impenetrable mind.

Such impenetrable minds face classroom teachers every day. The handicaps are usually not as obvious as was Helen Keller's but they demand the same dedication, the same demand for excellence, and the same vision for possibility that Annie Sullivan had. In any special education program the first and most important ingredient for success must be the belief in that possible success; and that belief, for us as Christian educators, must begin with the belief that every child is made in the image of God.

As God's image bearers, we know that each child is valuable and has gifts to develop. But, how do we teach these children to both recognize their gifts and learn how to use them to their fullest potential? The problem becomes even greater when the child comes to us on the secondary level since by that time he has some firmly imbedded attitudes and perceptions about himself, the most formidable being, "I'm dumb." At that point the battle almost seems lost before it can be fought; but we must never surrender to this defense.

At Eastern Christian High School there has been an on-going effort for the past six or seven years to provide for the needs of these special students. Some of our students have visual-perceptual difficulties, some are diagnosed dyslexic, others have auditory problems, and some are emotionally impaired.

These students have been identified through various testing procedures. The low verbal and math skills are identified by the ITEDs, (Iowa Test of Educational Development) the dyslexic students (those of whom we are aware) have had testing by professional educators dealing specifically with the problem, and others are identified on a daily basis by our own teachers' observation of classroom behavior and performance. Testing services in the form of child study teams are provided by local school districts and these are available to us also. To date no great strides have been made, but baby steps are becoming toddler steps and a sure-footed program appears to be emerging from the years of trial and error. Last year we introduced a corrective spelling class using an SRA (Science Research Associates) Directed Teaching program. This year we went a step further and began classes in both corrective reading and mathmetics, also using SRA materials. The programs are based on the age-old teaching methods of repetition, of "see, say, do." We also use a Skills Center to supplement the regular curriculum. The Center is staffed by paraprofessional and former teachers.

If students break through the barrier of their own attitudes about themselves, we have begun to do them a tremendous service.

Within the context of these special learning programs students with disabilities find both the success and the help they need. The SRA corrective classes offer students very strict discipline and instant feedback. This is done through a point system which is based on performance, cooperation, and achievement. The students are in constant contact with the teacher in that every response is verbal as well as written. The class size is also conducive to this approach since no more than 14 students are enrolled per class period.

The spelling lessons are designed to teach word units called morphographs. Each morphograph is memorized through the "see, say, do" method and repeated from time to time. The morphographs are then added for larger words, and meanings are learned with each new morphograph. Students cannot fail unless they want to. That is the beauty of the program. Before the student ever enrolls in the class, he is informed of the requirements and purpose of the course and is asked to sign a contract agreeing to cooperate with the entire class and the teacher throughout the school year. This builds the student's confidence and commitment as well as overall class cooperation. If at any time there is an unwillingness to meet the demands of the contract, the student is reminded of his commitment and either conforms or is removed from the class. Before such a drastic measure need be used, however, we have found that the student has already experienced some measure of success and is unwilling to give up the class.

The reading class is designed to work in much the same way with slight variations, depending on the level of comprehension of a given group. Students are expected to succeed; therefore, most of them do. The math conforms to the same process as do the reading and spelling programs. The teaching method de-

Agnes C. Fisher

All God's Children

Beth Van Rees

mands full cooperation at all times, complete attention to what is being done in the class, and total involvement in the lesson. In all three subjects there are times in each class period for the entire class to respond to the teacher in unison on signal. The classes of from seven to fourteen students are very structured and very demanding within the class period.

The Skills Center is designed to provide specific, often temporary supplemental help to students who are having a specific problem in a course they are taking. A student is assigned to the Center by individual teachers whenever a serious learning problem becomes evident. He stays in the Center until it is apparent that the problem has been remedied. The Skills Center teacher acts as tutor on a one to one or small group basis. There are tools available in the Center to deal with such problems as note-taking, researching, reading comprehension, and such skills as study, planning, and dictionary use. National Honor Society students are also volunteers as tutors for given subject areas in which they are particularly proficient.

Since the school is a learning community and does not make academic ability an admission criteria, we are convinced we must address the needs of these students. Our school has fewer than four hundred students in grades nine through twelve, and it is not always easy to schedule special classes. As long as the needs are there, however, we believe it is our duty to meet them and every effort is made to do so. None of our attempts have been going on long enough for us to know how enduring the learning actually is. If students break through the barrier of their own attitudes about themselves, we have begun to do them a tremendous service. The key to all these methods is the exercising of perseverance, demanding the best from the child that God has given him, and offering him proof that degrees of success are within his reach.

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Children with Learning Disabilities

Joe has been told he has average or perhaps far above average intelligence, but in some subjects of the school day and in certain aspects of the entire day for a reason that may not be at all clear to him, he just can't perform as do the other students. Joe is sure he has far greater intelligence than Johnny sitting in front of him, but when it comes to remembering his addition and subtraction combinations he simply cannot compete with the class, not even with Johnny. He frequently hears such encouraging words as: "You can do it." "Try a little harder." "Work at it, you'll get it." But he keeps finishing last—always last. And his teacher just doesn't understand. She is sure he is a bright boy. She finally concludes that "Joe just doesn't care." It's true that he's beginning to behave as though education doesn't have much value to him. His mind, very obviously, is frequently "checked out." He's in many ways a school dropout while still attending. What is happening?

Perhaps an analogy told by Dr. David Martin from UCLA many years ago at a conference for special education teachers will help us understand the pattern of Joe's thinking.

> Suppose an ambitious school principal decided that every morning all of his teachers would arrive a half hour early at school and have a race around the playground. Suppose, too, that he persuaded the local merchants to contribute a magnificant array of prizes for the first five to finish each day. Now, everyone knows about the prizes. Each day one sees his fellows reap the rewards. How long, though, do you suppose everyone would want to compete? How long do you think it would take for the fat, fifty, and physically limited of the faculty to drop out? And this in spite of the fact that they know full well that rich rewards await the victors. If the principal remains enthusiastic about his venture, those fat, fifty, and physically inferior might soon function under the cloud of their morning's experience all through their day.

By definition the L.D. child has average or above average intelligence. He has adequate sensory acuity. But there is a significant discrepancy between his apparent capacity and his ability to function. He may not be fat, he's certainly not fifty, but there are some limitations that makes the daily "race" most difficult. What can we do for such a child in our classrooms?

Let's look at a hypothetical profile of an L.D. child. We'll call him Jerry. As is true of many L.D. children, Jerry begins his education at age six in a public school's special education program. He makes good progress. After two years in a class for pupils with severe oral language difficulties he is transferred to an Educationally Handicapped Class made up of pupils with various learning disabilities. By the time Jerry is ten, it is recommended he be enrolled in a regular class with some pull-out resource help. After considering his total physical, emotional, and intellectual status, it is determined by the review committee that, although he is ten, third grade placement would best meet his needs. At this point his Christian parents request placement for their child in the small local Christian school. But now what is the Christian school's obligation to such a student if he is accepted for enrollment? Let's look at Jerry as an example of what might be done.

It is important that an open-working relationship be established with those in the public school who have worked with Jerry. The Christian School would profit from their insights and make the transition for Jerry into a regular class as smooth as possible. Up-to-date testing could be done to determine the child's current strengths and weaknesses. Let's say this is done for Jerry and the psychologist gives the following report.

> Jerry is often inattentive and frequently has to be steered to the task at hand during a single assignment. Jerry has many articulation problems and some word-finding difficulty when he attempts to express himself. He is easily frustrated. He has many gross motor problems as well as some fine motor difficulties that affect his writing.
>
> On the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children this ten-year-old boy's full scale scores are in the normal range of intelligence, but his subtest scores are widely scattered. With a low score of six in both the area of Information and Arithmetic to a high of fifteen in the area of Picture Completion, we find his abilities to span a range of approximately four years below his age level to five years above. He also scores above average in the subtest areas of Similarities and Picture Arrangement.
>
> In the opinion of the tester Jerry's low areas will certainly affect his academic performance; however, he has definite strengths in visual perception of detail. He is able to understand visually presented relationships and can organize such material into sequential, logical order somewhat

in Regular Classes

above his age expectancy. He also has high conceptual skills with respect to understanding relationships between common objects.

On the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test Jerry scores at the 95th percentile. This means that only five children out of 100 in the general population of his age score above him. His receptive vocabulary skills are highly developed.

His Bender-Motor Gestalt scores place him about two years below his age level, but this is believed to be due to his poor fine motor control.

The following is a brief sketch of the kind of program that might be developed in a regular third grade class to meet the needs of a child such as Jerry. The school's first goal is to remediate the specific learning disabilities—his weaknesses in reading, in math, and in retention of general information. A pull-out program with tutorial help for a period each day is developed. For the next several years, through the fourth grade and the fifth grade, Jerry is responsive to the remediation so that by the time he is placed in the sixth grade he is able to function reasonably well in the academic areas without outside remedial help. Everyone concerned with Jerry—his parents as well as the school personnel—are deeply grateful for and satisfied with the progress Jerry is making. But there is so much more to consider.

To attempt to remediate Jerry's weak areas is extremely important; however, Jerry's future success as an adult will not be dependent, first of all, on what has happened in his areas of weakness. It will be his strengths, if properly developed, that will make the big difference toward adult life successes.

In line with the principles from the parables in which Christ taught about the use of talents as well as the principles taught in I Corinthians 12, it is certainly important that our Christian schools be concerned about the development of the strengths of all our students. However, the L.D. child's severe weak areas appear, in comparison with the more normal pupil, to have a disproportionately debilitating effect on the development of his strengths.

. . . it will be through the indentification and development of an L.D. child's strengths that success, especially in the vocational area, can be expected in his adult life.

The really serious planning for a student such as Jerry begins as he enters the junior high and the more vocationally-oriented high school level.

We left Jerry at the sixth grade level. Now it is time to have him re-evaluated, hopefully with an instrument such as the Weschler Intelligence Scale or other tests that will redefine his strengths. It would be wise to re-evaluate such a child at the ninth grade level also. Based on the areas of strength he demonstrated on his testing as a ten year old and assuming these remain strengths, it is now important that certain questions be asked. What could a high score on the Peabody suggest as a strength that has vocational value? His higher areas on the WISC suggest he has good conceptual skills with respect to understanding relationships. If these are still strengths, what implications for further development would these strengths have for vocational preparation? For many L.D. children, their areas of weakness remain a significant influence on their learning. However, focusing the school's major efforts on the child's weaknesses without also developing his strengths, can become discouraging to the child. For some with success profiles such as Jerry's, their weak areas may again have a more debilitating effect as they face the heavier demands of a high school or college program, but, it's important to focus on their strengths.

Competent psychological testing can be helpful and is essential for sound educational and vocational planning for those students who have had and are having to deal with serious learning disabilities. To be comfortable with a functional degree of remediation in the areas of a child's specific disability is not enough. As indicated above, it will be through the indentification and development of an L.D. child's strengths that success, especially in the vocational area, can be expected in his adult life.

The demands for effectively working through the problems of L.D. children in our Christian schools can be quite heavy. However, to be able to observe a covenant L.D. child grow from what would be almost certain failure as an adult to becoming equipped to take on a responsible role in adult society is, I believe, one of the richest professional experiences educators can have.

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Asylum

"Of Honor and

The faculty of Omni Christian High School were clearly a disgruntled group on this Friday afternoon at 3:30. They milled around the coffee table of the faculty room grimly speculating about why Dr. Peter Rip would call a meeting of the faculty at such an inappropriate time.

"Maybe old Rip wants to pack as many faculty meetings as he can into his last months as principal," guessed Steve Vander Prikkel. "Over at Servant College he'll just be another one of the boys. He's in for a disappointment when he gets there, though. They have so many doctors that they don't even call each other doctor."

"Maybe we're going to learn whether Lucy gets an extended maternity leave," put in Sue Katje. "The Board has got to make up its mind about that pretty soon."

"Naw," said Bill Silver, shaking his head. "They just can't come to a decision about that. Part of the problem is that Den Denker has applied for Rip's job. Now can you imagine that? A principal whose wife is also on the faculty but who is on maternity leave? I think that if Den Denker wants the job, he'd better tell his wife to resign."

The door opened and Principal Peter Rip strode in, stepped to the head of the table, and knocked on the lectern with his pipe (since receiving his appointment to the Education Department of Servant College, Rip had been practicing smoking a pipe). "May I have your attention, please?" he said in a loud voice, and the teachers, with an eye on the clock, quickly moved to take seats.

"I'm sorry to keep you late on a Friday afternoon," apologized the principal, "but an important and very difficult matter has come up. Please bear with me in this, and we'll try to move right along." He then asked John Vroom, Bible teacher, to "open" the meeting with prayer, which Vroom, who was in the process of devouring a Milky Way, did, concluding with a petition that the teachers would soon be "blessed along their homeward way." Peter Rip then introduced the agenda.

"You are all aware," he said, "that Jennifer was caught last week cheating on Lucy Bright's six-week English test. Lucy, of course, gave Jennifer a failing grade in the test and then reported the matter to me. I am taking the matter to you. Here is the question, at least according to Lucy and maybe some others here. Can we permit someone who has been caught cheating in one of our classes to represent the school as an honor student, as the best student in the class? That is the question. I need some input from you."

The announcement was followed by a brief silence. Then there was some *sotto voce* discussion. Finally Matt De Wit, science and math teacher, raised his hand. "Dr. Rip, given the failing grade in the test, is Jennifer's grade point average still tops in the senior class? I mean, even if Lucy lowers her grade for the course a lot, will she still be the best student academically?"

Dr. Rip answered emphatically, "Yes, she will still be the best. Her academic performance in this school has been super, just super. As you know, she has been declared a National Merit Finalist as well. The answer is yes."

"Well, then," returned De Wit, "she is the valedictorian. That's all there is to it. This is a mathematical thing. By definition the valedictorian is the student who has the highest rank in the graduating class. Jennifer is that student. She is entitled to deliver the farewell address."

Rip smiled at Matt but said, "Some might still say it's likely that the word about Jennifer's cheating will get around the community. How will it look if Omni's honor student is a known cheater? What will that say about our standards? Won't people assume that she has cheated in other courses as well, and so on?"

"Right! You are right about that Dr. Rip," intoned John Vroom. "This is not an academic question. It is a moral question," he said with stress on the key word. "What is at stake here is the Word of God. Jennifer has sinned against the eighth commandment. She has stolen. She must be penitent. She must ask forgiveness. Until that happens, she is entitled to no honor from this Christian High School."

A spit ball came whizzing from somewhere in the group, hitting Vroom in the right ear. His dignity momentarily shattered, the Bible teacher wheeled around to identify his attacker, but he found only bland faces pointed at Dr. Rip. Vroom, reaching for his half-eaten Milky Way, shook his head in dismay at the turpitude which permeated not just the student body but also, evidently, the faculty.

A new voice joined the discussion. Ginny Traansma, music teacher, now took the floor. "My heart really goes out to that girl," said Ginny with emotion. "She came crying to me this noon, just really falling apart with the fear that she might be disqualified. And there's no question about the penitence—she's got a lot to lose. She'd do anything to undo what she did."

Lucy Bright now wrinkled her brow and contributed: "What I want to know is why a student who already has the top academic honors in the bag would even consider cheating. That's what I'd like to know."

Dr. Rip responded, "A very good question, Lucy, a very good question. Why would that be?"

"That's not so hard to figure out," came from Steve Vander Prikkel, biology teacher and coach. "You know Jennifer's family, the Prices. They all have to achieve. They have study time in their home every night after supper, the way some people have devotions. Jennifer's two brothers and her sister Merrie have won top academic honors here. And the pressure is on Jennifer. And, frankly, I

Dishonor"

don't think she is quite as bright as the others in the family. She's kind of an over-achiever, if you know what I mean. She needed to have more than the honor of being valedictorian. She needed a four-point grade average—and I think she was trying to guarantee that when she cheated in Lucy's class. That's what I think." Vander Prikkel looked around him. Many heads nodded agreement to his opinion.

"But what do we do?" came from the principal.

"Tell her that she will be listed as valedictorian on the program, but that she may not give a valedictory speech," suggested Ren Abbot. "Wouldn't that solve everything?"

"No! came from John Vroom. "We must not back off from these cases. We did the same thing when half of the basketball team got drunk. Instead of doing something which shows where we stand on those things, we sweep it all under the rug. I say that we should show some Christian backbone. Lower the boom. Every sin has its price." There were some guffaws around the table, but Vroom wasn't even aware of his unfortunate pun.

"I say that we should show some Christian mercy—something to temper our justice," put in De Wit. "Jennifer and her family are suffering right now. I think Jennifer is sorry, and the whole family is embarrassed. That is punishment enough. But no matter what Jennifer did in Lucy Bright's class, she is, I say she is, the valedictorian of the class of '84."

Bob Den Denker cleared his throat. Everyone looked in his direction, expectantly. "Well," Bob began, "to Matt this is a simple issue of statistics. To John it's a simple issue of morality. Now it is true that Jennifer is an honor student. It is also true that she did a dishonorable thing. She thought in a weak moment that the end justifies the means. And that's a violation of everything Christian education has tried to teach her. We must forgive her, of course, as God forgives her if she's penitent, and as she has to forgive herself. But I would suggest that Omni has no valedictorian this year and that we begin to review the whole tradition and policy of valedictorians. It seems to me that whoever represents a class and this school ought to represent not only academic honor which is statistical and intellectual, but also the moral and ethical quality of being honorable."

Vroom hardly allowed Bob's words to sink in. He had finished his Milky Way and was getting restless. "Dr. Chairman," John piped up, "I would like to call for the question. It's almost 4:30 and I must pick up my Minnie at Penny's. I think we're ready to vote not to allow Jennifer the privilege."

Rip, looking somewhat pained, coughed in his hand, then said, "There is no motion before the faculty." He looked down at his notes and began to gather them as he concluded, "I just wanted your input. I will be in consultation with some Board members and will then try to make the best decision for all concerned. I will let you know next week. We are adjourned."

And before the chagrined staff had recovered sufficiently to respond, Dr. Peter Rip quickly moved to the door and disappeared.

Uniforms But Not Uniformity

Policemen, firemen, nurses and baseball players all wear uniforms, and perhaps that is what initially attracts the attention of children to aspire to such noble positions. Uniforms have added beauty and order to many areas of our lives. Many Christian school boards have discussed the need or desire for their students to wear uniforms. Certainly uniforms are neat and attractive and may very well, in fact, serve a good purpose within the school.

More important, however, than the issue of uniformity in dress is the issue of uniformity in education. Many of us, as teachers, have dressed our students in academic uniforms.

Webster defines uniform as "having always the same form; conforming to one pattern; consistent; not varying." For the average classroom teacher the issue of uniforms is not so much how her students will look to her, but rather how she will look at her students.

There is certainly something to be said with regard to educational objectives and curriculum guidelines. Schools as well as teachers need a basic format in educating their children; however, educational objectives are not biblical texts possessing that unique quality of inerrancy. An effective teaching program must take into account the individual differences of the students. Why is it that two students with similar Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores have different academic behaviors? The classroom teacher must be able to identify and understand the various factors that constitute the individual differences within a student.

We may require all students to label their papers with the same heading, leave the room by the same procedure, and perhaps even dress alike, but we cannot make them develop uniformly—intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally, or spiritually. We may prod them and encourage them, but our abilities are limited.

Fortunately, we are slipping away from the customary practice of having all children begin kindergarten at five years of age. We are realizing that just because a child arrives at a certain age it does not assure him the readiness to succeed academically. Educators realize that young children develop according to their own internal time clock. Just as a wise mother does not expect her two children to take their first feeble step at the same age, the equally wise teacher must understand that all seventh grade students will not necessarily be able to conjugate the verb "play" in the present perfect progressive tense. Children simply do not have uniform minds. Their mental capabilities are not all programmed for compatability with the established curriculum guidelines and educational objectives.

While we do not hesitate to recognize the variety in our students' abilities, generally we teach them in a uniform way. So often our academic instruction is geared to one mode of learning. We forget that to teach is not necessarily to talk, and to talk is not necessarily to teach. Children learn in different ways and at different rates. According to research conducted by Miriam Wilt, the typical elementary school student spends at least 57.5 percent of class time listening. Paul T. Ramkin in his dissertation research pointed out that "listening ability is the most frequently used of the forms of communication. Of the total time spent in communication with verbal symbols, it occupies almost three times as much time as reading, and four times as much time as writing." We forget that not every students' ears function as rapidly as the teacher's jaw bone.

Recent research and experience in education has brought us much further in the realization of academic differences. Parents and teachers are engaged in various attempts at teaching for successful learning. Our classrooms may not be demonstrating revolutionary changes, but alternative pedagogical practices are appearing.

Perhaps a more serious situation is diversity in emotional development manifested in non-uniform manners. These differences do not go unnoticed, but they are neglected too often. So many factors influence emotional development.

Two students almost the same age sit in the same classroom. Both students come from a single-parent family. For the one, the family situation has served as a contributing factor for her early emotional maturation. Her appearance and interests are further developed than those of her classmates. For the other, a similar family experience has caused his emotional development to be far behind that of his peers. His silly actions and immature speech become obnoxious and isolate him from other boys. It is easy to become irritated with such behavior from a junior high student. Certainly he should know better.

In the midst of the same classroom stands the class giant. Over the summer vacation his height has developed to nearly six feet. He stands head and shoulders above all the other boys. His sparkling eyes and handsome face quickly draw your attention, as do his erratic temper, unstable emotions, and unreliable behavior patterns. It would almost be possible to write him off as a "bad kid." Yet his heart is huge and his love is ever present. He desperately wants to please his parents and teachers, but he finds it difficult. His learning disability

makes it impossible for him to express his confusion concerning his development. He feels so much like the apostle Paul when Paul said, "For the good I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish" (Rom. 7:19 NAS). His emotional development has not kept pace with his physical development.

The emotional battles rage within our students. Often times the battles go unnoticed or undefined. The result may seem to be defiance or misbehavior, but the confused behavior may in fact be a cry from deep within a confused and frustrated heart.

We have little difficulty identifying various gifts and abilities among our students. It is absurd to think that all children will be gymnastic, athletic, or musical. We can accept that. The fact that some children are blond and others brunette is appreciated. There is beauty in variety. Without a question, Christian school teachers quickly recognize these characteristics as uniquely God-given. Perhaps the most individual characteristic we possess is our thumbprint. It is our biological signature. Mine will not be duplicated by any other person. So too, my mind is unique and individual. It is imperative that each teacher and parent see each student as an individual blessing and opportunity from God.

To you he may have granted five, ten, twenty or perhaps thirty individuals who compose your class. Teach them as individuals and your class will grow. Teach them as a group and the individual potential will not develop.

Uniforms?—perhaps, but, never uniformity!

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If

If I could have
perpetual spring—
a continual erupting
and
intermittent fall,
to lay at rest;
I'd be contented, graced
not to die nor
be in fullest bloom,
but always
leaning
on the crest
of the revolving wave.

Diane Karay

What Are Communication Disorders?

Sandra Ringsby

In Exodus 4:10 Moses said to the Lord, "Oh Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past or present nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." If being "slow of speech and tongue" hindered Moses from persuading his people to leave Egypt, this same problem could prevent a child from participating in a classroom discussion or, more tragically, cause him to fail academically. As educators, we need to be able to identify children with possible communication disorders and to be familiar with treatment alternatives.

Over 12 million Americans have speech and language disorders with estimates ranging from four to ten percent of the population. Perhaps one reason the estimates vary so much lies in differences of opinion as to what and what does not fit the definition of a speech disorder. Perkins in the opening pages of *Human Perspectives in Speech and Language Disorders*, says that: "Speech is defective when it is ungrammatical, unintelligible, culturally or personally unsatisfactory, abusive of the speech mechanism, or delayed in development." The term *speech* identifies what the speaker does to produce the sounds of communication. *Language* refers to the mental operations used in understanding speech and in formulating what to say and how to say it. Speech that is different, for any reason, is cause for concern. Jobs, promotions, social prestige—any aspect of social life—may be affected by the difference. An entire clinical profession, *Speech Pathology*, deals with these differences.

As an educator you may encounter some of the following common beliefs and questions about communication disorders.

1. *Isn't the child just shy and quiet?* This belief may have damaging results if in fact the child does need services, and those services are not provided. Children who have communication disorders but who are not behavior problems may get by with merely smiling when spoken to.

2. *Isn't it okay as long as I know what he means?* Often we respond to the message the child sends and ignore the way in which he sends it. For example, the child may ask, "Her coming too?" The response is, "Yes," to the question. The meaning is conveyed while the way it is conveyed is incorrect. Often we get used to hearing certain inappropriate speech patterns over time so that they no longer seem to be a problem.

3. *Is it really a problem?* It has been estimated that 3.5% of the student population has some degree of speech impairment, and 15% of the population has some type of communication disorder. A large proportion of the children with speech and language problems can be found within other handicapping categories. It is estimated that 10% of the emotionally disturbed and 50% of the learning disabled children ages 4 to 17 experience oral language disabilities. Much higher percentages are evident in severely handicapped children.

4. *Why can't he talk better?* Various physical, sensory, intellectual, and psychological factors have been found to be related to inadequate speech and language development. Other factors that may inhibit speech and language development could include: insufficient stimulation and motivation, improper training, impaired hearing, inadequate intelligence, excessive environmental or parental pressures, bilingual conflicts, inadequate speech mechanisms, and lack of good speech models.

5. *Won't they grow out of it?* A common misconception is that children's language and speech problems are due to immature development that they will "outgrow." Some children do outgrow language problems; most do not. Another belief is that children will be exposed to speech models every day in school and will learn to understand and use the English language through the process of education itself. These language models may or may not be adequate, and time alone does not solve the problem.

6. *What can I do about a communication problem?* As a result of federal legislation (Public Law 94-142), all U.S. children are given a right to education that will meet individual needs. A referral can be made through the school by the teacher, par-

ent, or other caretakers of the child. An assessment of the child's communication needs can be conducted by a school or private speech and language pathologist.

Communication disorders are commonly grouped in the following manner: disorders of (1) articulation, (2) language, (3) voice, (4) fluency, and (5) hearing.

1. *Articulation disorders* comprise over 70 percent of all communication disorders. Disordered articulation is the inappropriate formation of speech sounds in words, sentences, and conversational speech. Articulation errors are characterized by sounds that are omitted, substituted, or distorted. An example of a sound ommission would be, "I see a ____abbit." A *w* for *r* substitution would sound like, "I see a wabbit." Distorted sounds are close in approximation, but not close enough to be normal. For example, a slight slurring or lisp for the *s* sound would be a distortion.

The majority of articulation problems in children are due to functional reasons. In other words, there is no physical defect of the speech mechanism, however speech sounds are produced incorrectly. Possible physical causes could include deviation of the oral structures such as malocclusion (how teeth fit together), tongue thrust (improper swallowing), tongue tie (attachment of the tongue), or cleft lip and palate (unclosed roof of the mouth). There may be neurologic disabilities affecting articulation such as apraxia (motor control), cerebral palsy (brain damage), or dysarthria (muscle paralysis or weakness). Hearing impairment may be another physical cause for inappropriate sound production.

Articulation disorders are diagnosed and treated by a speech and language pathologist. Treatment usually consists of teaching correct production of the error sound in isolation with gradual transfer to practice in syllables, words, sentences, and conversational speech. Classroom teachers are often needed to monitor carryover of correct sound production in conversation. A secret cue, such as, "What did you say?", works well to remind the child to use newly-learned sounds in the classroom.

2. *Language disordered* children make up a large portion of a speech pathologist's caseload. These children are also identified within the category of *learning disabled* if their language disorder is comparatively mild. Disordered language may include deficiencies in the following areas: (a) shortened sentence length, (b) inappropriate grammar, (c) delayed maturity for the child's age group, (d) inability to express needs in an understandable manner, (e) inability to find the appropriate word, (f) the inappropriate use of words, or (g) inability to relate to others due to the inappropriate use of language.

Various physical, intellectual, and psychological factors have been found to be related to inadequate language development. Again, Perkins defines some disabling conditions that are significantly disruptive of natural language learning. They include:

> *Autism,* a form of childhood psychosis in which not only language acquisition is disrupted, but also perception, behavior, and the psychosocial ability to relate to the world.
>
> *Developmental aphasia,* also called *congenital aphasia,* and *childhood aphasia,* in which cognitive abilities seem reasonably intact, but auditory processing of language is impaired.
>
> *Trainable levels of mental retardation* in which cognitive as well as language capacities are seriously limited.

Language instruction is needed for many language impaired children to learn the rules and use of language. If the impairment is severe enough, a special day class for children with severe disorders of language may be recommended. Other options may include therapy apart from a regular class, a daily school program implemented by the classroom teacher, speech pathologist, and/or resource specialist, or a home program monitored by the parent.

3. *Voice disorders* comprise a relatively small portion of communication problems and will not be discussed in this article except to say that a person with a suspected voice problem should see a

medical doctor, preferably an ear, nose, and throat specialist, to diagnose and treat any physical causes. The physician may prescribe medical or surgical treatment, vocal rest, or voice therapy by referring the patient to a speech pathologist.

4. *Fluency disorders,* commonly known as stuttering or stammering, have been given more attention than all the other speech disorders combined. New "cures" are given media attention. Recent attention has been given to Mrs. John Glenn who has learned to control a severe fluency problem which handicapped her for many years. Mel Tillis, a country music entertainer, has even learned to capitalize on his "handicap." Perkins, (p.285) defines fluency as "the smoothness with which speech flows together." Rate and rhythm are involved in fluency. He defines stuttering as the "mistiming of speech sounds." When the speaker gives the impression that he knows the word he is trying to say is stuck, the listener perceives this as stuttering. Normal disfluencies typically involve hesitations that speakers make when forming ideas, as well as repetition of words and phrases that occur often enough to be considered normal. Young children between the ages of two and four often have normal disfluencies when they are learning language.

Many theories on the cause of stuttering have been proposed; however, a specific origin has not been agreed upon. These theories have included muscle incoordination, poor breath management, minimal brain disfunction, and emotional or psychological disturbances.

Unfortunately, no definite cure for stuttering has been discovered. However, there have been several methods which have helped stutterers deal more effectively with disfluencies and even reduce stuttering significantly. Some of these methods include removing all the pressures in the home and at school which involve speaking. Specific therapy involves letting the child communicate in a relaxed, reassuring environment. More direct approaches include alternative ways of speaking to establish fluency such as a whisper or easy speaking voice, breath management, or delayed auditory feedback (delayed tape recording of child's voice). These alternative ways of speaking are gradually faded until the fluency can be maintained in normal speaking situations.

5. *Hearing disorders* can adversely affect the development of speech and language. Without hearing, the innate capacity to learn speech by ear is eliminated. There is a wide range of severity in hearing disorders. Hearing losses can be mild, moderate, or profound. They may be temporary due to ear infection or exposure to loud noise.

Parents and teachers need to recognize children with hearing losses, particularly those children learning language prior to ages six to eight. A child with even a slight hearing loss may ask you to repeat what you say or not follow directions in class. More severe hearing losses may be evidenced by a failure to startle at loud noises or neglect to turn the head toward the direction of the speaker.

Hearing sensitivity is measured by an audiometer which is an instrument calibrated for specific loudness levels and sound frequencies. Hearing losses are classified by degree and loss. The following chart by Goodman shows the relationship between hearing loss, probable handicap, and needs that accompany the severity of the hearing loss:

Mild hearing loss — difficulty hearing faint or distant speech.

Moderate hearing loss — understands speech at a distance of three to five feet; needs hearing aid, or auditory trainer or lip reading, favorable seating, speech correction, or hearing conservation.

Moderately severe hearing loss — conversation must be loud to be understood, and there is great difficulty in group and classroom discussion; needs all of above plus language therapy and maybe a special class for hard of hearing.

Severe hearing loss — may hear a loud voice about one foot from ear, may identify environmental noices, may distinguish vowels but not consonants; needs special education for deaf children which places emphasis on speech, auditory training and language; may enter regular classes at a later time.

Profound hearing loss — may hear loud sounds, does not rely on hearing as primary way to communicate; needs special class or school for the deaf; some of these children eventually enter regular high schools.

The task of identifying and meeting the needs of students with communication disorders is not an easy one. More often than not a child will exhibit two or more types of communication deficits. Language delayed children often have articulation problems. Language and speech disorders often go undetected or untreated for years. It may not be until high school that a student failing in academic subjects is found to have a language deficit, or that a severe stutterer is given speech therapy. Parents, teachers, administrators, physicians, speech pathologists, and other professionals can meet these needs by keeping each other informed, consulting with each other, and asking questions—in other words, overcoming their own communication deficits.

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Susan Stegenga

The Values of Using Puppetry to Teach Learning Disabled Children

Any teacher who deals with learning disabled youngsters knows that these children often seem to "have ears but do not hear," "eyes but do not see." In other words, the child may experience auditory or visual problems which prevent the child from processing and understanding what is being heard or seen. A specific disability may involve difficulty in understanding what has been touched and felt physically. A learning disabled child may also experience problems in physical motor control and coordination.

Thus, it is vital, especially for the Christian teacher who works with learning disabled youngsters, to discover each child's strongest channel of learning (auditory, visual, or tactile) and to capitalize on the child's strengths. Nevertheless, the child must also be provided with the opportunity to utilize and strengthen the weaker learning channels.

Because the art of puppetry stimulates all of the basic channels of learning, (auditory, visual, and tactile) and requires active personal involvement, it can be used as a valuable learning tool to meet the special needs of learning disabled youngsters. Furthermore, puppetry is useful for working with children of all individual levels and needs and can be especially helpful if the learning disabled child is "mainstreamed" into a regular classroom.

Christ, as the "Master Teacher," understood the human need to learn through all possible channels. He told simple stories, or parables, so that the common person could hear and more fully understand important truths. He performed physical miracles such as healing the lame, blind, and deaf, so that people could see, hear, and feel his power (Matthew 11:5). He physically touched the children and adults who came to see him (Matthew 19:13) and always considered the human need to touch and be touched. For example, he allowed a bleeding woman to touch his robe to be healed (Luke 8:43-48) and he encouraged doubting Thomas to touch his scarred hands to comprehend the truth of the resurrection (John 20:24-28).

In fact, Christ continues to actively demonstrate his love for us in our daily lives regardless of our personal strengths and weaknesses. He also requires us to actively demonstrate his love through our lives (I John 4:19-21).

Let's consider then in the light of Christ's teaching example, the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual values that can be learned by disabled youngsters through the use of puppetry.

The use of puppets can provide meaningful and purposeful motivation for physical activity and movement. Using puppets requires active participation and physical involvement. It can help a child develop muscular coordination skills and manipulative abilities.

Fine motor (small muscular) control skills can be developed as the child manipulates small puppets and constructs them. Tracing, drawing, cutting, gluing, painting, sewing, braiding, tying, modeling, and carving can be involved in the construction process.

Gross motor (large muscular) control skills aare involved in the locomotive movement, flexibility, and mobility needed backstage. Muscular control is involved in lifting and hauling stage equipment as well as in the manipulation of larger-size puppets.

Puppets can help a child develop physical perceptual skills. For example, the child's tactile (touch) sense is stimulated when using textured materials to create a puppet. A spatial awareness can be developed as the child is required to judge specific proportions and distances backstage. A sense of timing is also required in working backstage with other puppeteers and in synchronizing the puppet's mouth movements with the words and sounds being uttered.

Puppets can help a child improve both verbal and nonverbal communication skills. "Receptive" (input) communication skills are involved when the child must interpret the messages being communicated by the puppet's gestures or the puppet's spoken words. If the child is writing or researching a script, the child may also be motivated to read carefully and to interpret the written word.

Motivation is also provided for "expressive" (output) communication such as when the child must practice proper oral and manual expression (verbal sounds and nonverbal physical gestures for puppets). The verbal expression involves aspects of speech such as proper vocabulary and grammar, volume, pitch, and diction.

Oral storytelling through puppets can be used to help strengthen memory re-

tention and auditory and visual sequential skills when the child either actively views or actually participates in the puppet show. Active involvement can be encouraged by asking the children in the audience questions after the show such as, "What happened first, second, and third?"

Puppetry involves mental concentration and can encourage the child to develop organizational and planning skills. The child is encouraged to plan puppet shows in a logical step-by-step manner.

Puppetry can also introduce and develop difficult abstract academic concepts in a more understandable and concrete manner. The child can be motivated to learn specific academic facts through enjoyable repetition such as presenting a puppet show based on historical facts.

Puppets can be used by the teacher to enact "roles" to help a child who experiences specific perceptual and academic difficulties. For example, a water-loving "Puddles the Poodle" puppet can have water plugging its ears so that the teacher must repeat everything twice for the waterlogged puppy. This approach minimizes embarrassment for the young child who experiences auditory perceptual difficulties and who needs repetition of oral directions. The puppet can also be the one to correct mistakes while a child reads or speaks orally which is less threatening than if the adult corrects the child's mistakes directly.

Puppetry provides the opportunity for successful experiences which learning disabled children especially need. Puppets can stimulate new interests, provide immediate positive reinforcement, and allow the opportunity for positive creative expression and the use of the imagination.

Puppetry requires self control and personal discipline to handle the responsibilities involved in planning a puppet show. Through a puppet, a child can feel free to express personal emotions and then learn to identify and cope with them in a socially acceptable manner. A child's individual contributions to the total group effort are valued and this can contribute to personal self esteem. Emotional support and comfort can be provided when a child is able to whisper a special secret to a puppet friend or to give and receive hugs and kisses from a warm fuzzy puppet.

As Christians, we believe that spiritual values are eternal and especially vital to a child's total healthy development. Puppets can be used to teach specific Christian moral and ethical concepts. Puppets can be highly successful motivational tools and visual aids to enact Bible stories and songs. Certainly, Bible verses, devotions, prayers, parables, and stories such as "Noah's Ark" and "Jonah and the Whale" develop a special meaning when enacted by puppets.

As Christian educators, we can use puppetry as a valuable educational tool to teach the child through all possible channels of learning and to encourage total healthy development.

Numerous excellent resource books and materials are available in libraries and bookstores which provide specific details regarding the construction, manipulation, and uses of various types of puppets. Christian bookstores carry materials which provide creative ideas and scripts for the use of puppetry in Christian environments.

Whether the child is making, manipulating, or merely watching a puppet show, it is important to engage the child's active interest in what is happening. Christ, our example of the "Master Teacher," demonstrates this concept in his teachings. He requires active participation, active decision-making, and total involvement by commanding us to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

Therefore, it is imperative for us as Christian educators to constantly remind ourselves that if we merely hear and see we often forget, but if we *do* we can more truly *understand.* This is just as true for our learning disabled students.

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Jack and Judy Vander Plate

Laurie's Learning (Dis)Abilities

When Laurie started kindergarten, it became apparent to us that she was having difficulties. Following first grade, we were informed that she was not ready to pass on to the second grade. Tests showed that she had learning disabilities, but the schools in our area at that time were not equipped to deal with her problems. We were patient. Her teachers were too. But Laurie was failing. She could not do what other children her age could do. Words and letters twisted and turned; letters that were right-side-up one moment were upside-down the next. (Today at 14 years of age she still has to think before she knows which way is right and which is left.)

School was her daily torture. Other children could learn, but she could not. In Laurie's hurt, we hurt too. Most of the neighborhood children avoided Laurie. A few went out of their way to be friendly. But they were "being nice," and Laurie knew it instinctively. She developed her own little safe and private world. And we hurt even more.

We moved to Florida after Laurie's first grade, and found a place called the "Mailman Center" where pioneering work had been done with learning disabled children. Here, Laurie discovered that she could learn. Her attitude about herself changed. But it was an adult world. Children of her age still avoided her.

We moved to Michigan just as the Holland Christian Schools were introducing the Discovery Program for learning disabled children and Laurie was entering sixth grade. This program has helped her enormously in dealing with the work of learning. Every one of her teachers has told us how well she is doing and how much they appreciate her efforts.

School is no longer the horror it once was, but it is still very hard work. The homework other youngsters do during the bus ride home takes her all night to complete. Every night she works four, five, six hours because she does not want to go to class unprepared. A grade of C– is a personal triumph for her. She even works at having fun. When the physical education department was planning to test the students in jumping rope, basketball, and running, Laurie practiced these at home. Like many children with dyslexia, Laurie has no natural coordination—it is learned by endless repetition. But she learned because she did not want to look like a fool in front of the others.

In Laurie's mind, she is a struggling child with learning disabilities. To us, Laurie is first of all, our own flesh and blood. Her life proceeded from ours. We love her for who she is irrespective of her abilities or disabilities. We also love her for her special gifts to us. Her private tortures have produced a character of amazing perseverance. Her prayers are simple, but incredible in honesty. Her attitude towards others, particularly those with physical, emotional, and learning handicaps, is the personification of grace. Her walk of faith is a masterpiece of spiritual maturity. From these and many more of her gifts to us, we have learned how grace is indeed sufficient for every need.

From this admittedly personal vantage point, we have come to some firm beliefs about things that need to happen within our schools. Although we cannot speak for every parent of learning disabled children, a simple poll would show that most parents would agree with the following basic observations.

Most important in dealing effectively with learning disabilities is early detection. Once the youngster has become convinced that he is a failure, it is probably too late to meet his academic needs. What should happen when teachers, sensitive to these problems in learning, discover the children who need help?

The ideal solution is to develop a program for special learners within the school. Not every school will be able to do that since such programs are very expensive. Where it simply cannot be handled within the Christian school, there should be coordinated effort between the public schools (now mandated by government to meet the needs of special learners) and the Christian school. At the very least, the school should be able to make appropriate referral.

The special needs of the highly gifted learners also place demands on our schools. While our particular experience makes us sympathetic to the needs of learning disabled children, we know that the two are of one piece. So often the parents of either highly gifted or learning disabled children must bear the cost of the appropriate programs themselves. But we are a covenant community, and our schools are for the children of the covenant community. We are defined as a body that is under divine orders to "use our gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members" (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21). We dream of the day when all of God's people will understand and practice this teaching. If one of the measures of a society is the way it handles its least advantaged members, then one of the measures of the school is determined by its attention to its special learners.

In addition to academic concerns, the school also ought to develop a policy concerned with Christian socialization among all its students. So often, during recess, the lunch break, or while waiting for busses, youngsters behave in unac-

ceptable ways with no intervention by teachers or administration. This can be especially destructive for a learning disabled child who is already something of a social problem. We have appreciated those teachers who have explained frankly to their classes that Laurie has learning disabilities and that any mocking or ridicule will not be tolerated, and who have fostered an attitude of mutual help.

Finally, there is a need to be supportive of the parents. Teachers tell us that Laurie is doing well, or holding her own in their classes. But they do not see the hours of study at home, more often than not with parental tutoring. They do not see the frustration with the workload which causes temper tantrums or the need for full weekends of catching up on needed sleep. We have told both of our girls that homework may be done only up until a certain point and then no more. We realize that this sets us in opposition to some of their teachers, which we regret. However, the school has our children for nearly seven hours. To demand that our children's time with us be filled with schoolwork is expecting more than is reasonable.

Teachers should coordinate their test schedules and homework assignments to a far greater extent than is generally the case. This is particularly essential to the learning disabled child, and to her parents who must make sense of the academic requirements. This plan requires more time and more effort, but it would yield rewards to parents, teachers, and students.

Every one of our children are priceless gifts of God. As much as we teach them, we learn from them. What we have learned from our daughter has made us sometimes painfully and sometimes joyously aware of the love the Father has bestowed on us in making us his children. The gifts he gives, the personal attention, the forbearing and forgiving all come from an endless supply. Our limits stand in stark contrast, begging for his provision. Let our Christian schools be a loving part of that provision.

Judy and Jack now serve their third charge, the East Saugatuck Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan. They are the parents of two children.

Wormwood Reports

My dear Uncle Screwtape,

It's been sometime since I wrote you to report on progress here at Christian High. We're winding down the school year here and are looking back to measure the gains and losses of the past year. Frankly, Uncle Screwtape, it's been a year of frustration. Yes, we've made great strides and have a firm foundation for future work, but Christian High remains a disgusting stronghold of the Enemy. But this letter gives the picture as I see it—and as you will see—I feel there's much reason for hope that many here will be brought to a permanent relationship with Our Father Below.

One aspect targeted for destruction by me and my staff has been the insufferable atmosphere of goodwill pervading the school. So many of them like each other here. They're friendly and courteous. They actually wish each other well. It's enough to turn your stomach. But, progress has been promising. We're now trying to go beyond getting them to feel wronged by others—which as you know, Uncle, is a very basic process needing only a dash of pride and a bit of envy—what we want to do is to get them to dislike each other and to *enjoy* disliking: to nurture their dislike, to cultivate it until it smolders, and glows, and bursts into deep, black hatred. You should have seen the week after spring vacation, Uncle Screwtape. A whopping 63% of the students and staff were as crabby as I'd ever gotten them.

Another evidence of our work is the significant 18% rise in gossip. What satisfaction it brings me to see all the boys and girls, freshmen to seniors, sometimes teachers, too, all cutting each other down, ruining reputations, and taking delight in the misfortunes of others. And the beauty of it is that I can sit back and do nothing. Most are so concerned with self and have so little compassion for others that gossip is almost second nature. They don't even realize they're doing it. Oh, Uncle Screwtape, language is such a marvelous tool for the work of Our Father Below.

Speaking of language, much progress is being made in the areas of vulgarities and obscenities. Vulgarities are up 13% from last year to 1525 per week. Obscenities are up 11% to 1250 per week. Unfortunately, profanities are stable at about 1400 per week.

Distractions, of course, remain our most effective weapon against the Enemy and his camp. I have never in my four years at Christian High had to argue someone away from the Enemy. It's much easier to simply distract them from the Enemy's business. That's because very few here are thinking at all seriously about their faith. It's astonishingly simple to fill up a teenager's life with a car, a little sex, some new clothes, and a stereo. And this of course helps you, Uncle Screwtape, in your work with adults on the national level. A teenager consumed with sensual and material things is much less likely to grow up concerned with justice or the Enemy's Creation or the Enemy's kingdom. I've found noise to be my best weapon so far. At the moment of silence when thoughts are in danger of turning to the Enemy, it's easiest to have a TV, stereo, or radio handy for instant annihilation of those thoughts. Music, by the way, has proven effective beyond our wildest expectations. As you know, we had censorship removed from the music industry in 1975, and today many of these fresh, good-looking Christian High students will listen to songs of fornication, drug-dealing, and Satanism without batting an eye.

Speaking of Satanism, the glorious worship of Our Father Below, do you remember

Steven Vryhof

from CHS

Led Zeppelin? They're the British group who are so thoroughly dedicated to our cause. I'm very proud to say that Led Zepp is the third most popular group among our student body, up 3 from last year's survey. Blue Oyster Cult and Judas Priest continue to hold the #2 and #1 spots, respectively. Pretty good for a junior devil, right, Uncle Screwtape?

Parties, especially drinking parties, also help us keep students from the Enemy's camp, although I confess I have to stay on my toes in this area. The danger is that some of the more sensitive students will often sense the stupidity and emptiness of the party-down lifestyle. It's my job then to quickly remind them that behaving differently from the group means *rejection* by the group and that following the Enemy is boring. "You don't want to be a goody-goody," I whisper in their ear. Nine times out of ten it works like a charm.

The outlook for the future here at Christian High is fairly good. We've had a beautiful shift in life goals the last few years. Not too long ago many seniors said that serving the Enemy in a special way was their life goal. Today, I'm happy to report, most of the seniors, 64%, will say that making the big bucks is their life goal. And this is something which I don't see changing dramatically in the near future.

Other miscellaneous items for this year: (among the 734 students and 43 staff members)

cheating—up 21% to 209 incidents per week
wasting time—up 9% to 18,450 hours per week
stealing from lockers—up 21% to 33 incidents per week
spiritual smugness—up 18% to 12,400 thoughts per week
fornication—up 13% to 24 acts per week

That sums up this year's progress. I'm pleased, but as I look over the whole situation here at Christian High, I realize we've got a lot of work to do.The power and presence of the Enemy is frighteningly obvious in the halls and classrooms. A depressing amount was done this year to the Enemy's honor and glory. Weekly songs of praise, studies by students and teachers, music concerts, athletic contests, chapels, club activities—all done with the belief that the Enemy grants every good and perfect gift. I tell you, Uncle Screwtape, it's not easy to work under these conditions. And what really irritates me is the little, penny-ante, daily acts of kindness—the thoughtful word, the friendly greeting, the hard work given to studies and responsibilities, the respect given to teachers and students. At times I'd like to chuck it all. They can go to heaven for all I care.

For example, there are some students here who are a little out of it. You know the type. They're not quite as smart or as beautiful or as fun as the rest. They've got some physical or emotional or social problems. Now, *usually*, the rest of the student body ridicules, teases, ostracizes, and ignores them—much to my own personal delight. But every once in a while some goody-two-shoes who's thoroughly given to the Enemy will go and befriend the weirdos and take a real interest in them. Yuck!

And *by far* the most deflating moments of all come at the end of the day. Here I've successfully lured many into bad language, perhaps some disrespect to parents, a little cheating, some lustful thoughts or sexual experimentation, and at the end of the day, dozens of them will get on their knees and sincerely, humbly realize what

Outline

The deciduous tree in winter
is a drawing of a brain,
blood vessels and nerves
charcoaled on the sky.
It outlines coming spring
lessons of birds
in architecture
and welcome songs,
outlines children
learning to climb
through summer,
outlines autumn leaves
that swirl
the children back to school,
the birds to warmer skies.

Dorothea Kewley

they've done and ask the Enemy for forgiveness. And a whole day's work vanishes before my eyes! Uncle Screwtape, is there any possibility of transfer to an easier assignment?

Anyway, although this remains a Christian school I remain pledged to working for Our Father Below in this place. Here are my goals for the summer:

Strategy #1—I will numb them with noise and chemicals. The busyness, the noise, the music, the booze, the drugs, the parties—all have proven effective enough for continued use.

Strategy #2—I will get them to concentrate on the *trivial* and the *sensual*. When the girl is wondering what new outfit to buy and the boy is wondering what the girl's fanny will look like in the new outfit, there's little room for thoughts of the Enemy.

Strategy #3—I will get them to reject all sources of help. Pastors are weird. Parents are old-fashioned. Teachers are unfair and out to get them. Cutting them off from those who wish them in the Enemy's camp is essential. I will pick their friends and heroes for them.

Strategy #4—I will keep them from the Enemy's Son—the awful Answer and Source of all the Enemy's blessing. I will work very hard on this because it is so crucial. I'll let them charge down every pathway that leads away from Him. And as the Enemy's Son Himself stated, "The way is wide, and the path is easy which leads to Our Father Below." (I don't know if that's exactly what He said—I never read His Word—but it was something like that.)

Strategy #5—The Huge Lie. Oh what delightful demonic wisdom when Our Father Below devised this strategy. Many here at Christian High already believe Our Huge Lie. They really don't believe the Enemy loves them and will accept them and will forgive them. They believe they've sinned so grievously that they now have no worth or merit to anyone—especially the Enemy. They therefore resign themselves to whatever happens. This Huge Lie I must keep in their minds. Because . . . if they ever truly discover the love and goodwill of the Enemy, they will inevitably respond to it, and then, all will be lost. I will do my best to keep that from happening.

That's all from here.

With warmest regards, your affectionate nephew,

Wormwood

PRAYER

God, let us prove our heavenly birth
In all we do and know
And claim the kingdom of the earth
For thee, and not thy foe.

Amen.

Steven Vryhof teaches English and also team teaches Christian Perspectives on Media at Illiana Christian High School in Lansing, Illinois. He is currently introducing an experience based curriculum called Landlopers.

Take the

The vacuum cleaner salesman at my door had a "valuable gift" for me if I would allow him just a few minutes of my time. Having recently prepared a study unit on advertising, I decided to let him in.

Before I realized what was happening, he had dumped half a box of salt on my living room floor and had worked it into the carpet. Deftly he guided his vacuum cleaner over my salted carpet, and as the tiny white granules disappeared into his machine, a confident gleam lit in his eyes.

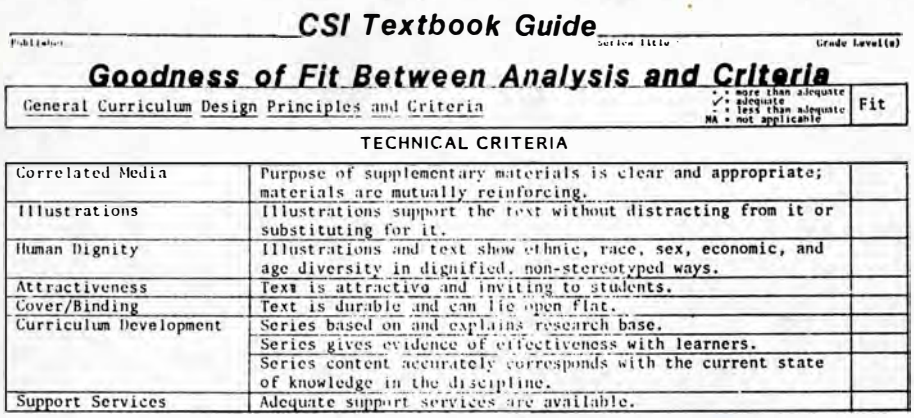
I gave my typical response: "Thank you. I want to think it over for a few days." Deflated, he began pushing for an immediate decision. Irritated by my refusal to buy such a "steal" on the spot, he left a little mound of dirt on a white filter to remind me how foolish I was to pass up this deal. A bit of consumer research, however, confirmed the wisdom of my decision not to buy.

As an educator I have not always been as cautious. Had my administrator been less wise or the budget more liberal, I might have made several costly mistakes in purchasing textbooks.

Knowing how difficult it is to thoroughly research textbooks, CSI invited twenty-two educators to work under three consultants in the summer of 1982 to set up Textbook Guides in the areas of science and reading/literature. The following summer a similar team analyzed language arts textbooks with both secular and Christian philosophies. Next on the agenda is the area of social studies, to be followed by Bible and then math. CSI intends to operate this project on a rotation schedule, reviewing each discipline every five years. Textbooks reviewed are on display in the CSI curriculum library.

A description of the content of CSI's Textbook Guides can be found in the Book Review section of this magazine, where the editor of that column has given an objective evaluation. In addi-

Eenie-Meenie-Minie-Mo Out of Textbook Selection



CSI Textbook Guide

Publisher _____ Series Title _____ Grade Level(s) _____

Goodness of Fit Between Analysis and Criteria

General Curriculum Design Principles and Criteria	✓+ = more than adequate ✓ = adequate ✓- = less than adequate NA = not applicable	Fit
TECHNICAL CRITERIA		
Correlated Media	Purpose of supplementary materials is clear and appropriate; materials are mutually reinforcing.	
Illustrations	Illustrations support the text without distracting from it or substituting for it.	
Human Dignity	Illustrations and text show ethnic, race, sex, economic, and age diversity in dignified, non-stereotyped ways.	
Attractiveness	Text is attractive and inviting to students.	
Cover/Binding	Text is durable and can lie open flat.	
Curriculum Development	Series based on and explains research base.	
	Series gives evidence of effectiveness with learners.	
	Series content accurately corresponds with the current state of knowledge in the discipline.	
Support Services	Adequate support services are available.	

tion, I have asked fellow reviewers to state their opinions of the guides, which consist of objective checklists as well as essay form evaluations for each.

Reviewers are highly enthusiastic about CSI's Textbook Guides. "My experience as a teacher is that I do get to know a textbook thoroughly—its philosophical orientation, its strengths, and its shortcomings—but only through years of teaching from it," says Joel Brouwer of Hudsonville, Michigan. "My experience is also that we don't spend nearly enough time in pre-evaluation, and we often make poor choices on the basis of subjective reactions. Or worse, we might not even really know what criteria to apply. Textbook guides can be helpful both in suggesting criteria and in measuring how well certain books meet those criteria."

Most reviewers consider the guides valuable tools in helping educators limit and verify their choices. Randall Heeres of McBain, Michigan, states, "A field of ten or twenty possible texts could be narrowed considerably with careful use of CSI Textbook Guides."

As John Monsma, science text reviewer, also from McBain, suggests, "Those doing local selection of books can compare their thinking on these matters with someone who they know has done a detailed study of the textbooks they are considering. When a selection is ultimately made locally, those involved will know that they have not made their determination alone, thereby reducing personal prejudices and excess subjectivism." Two reviewers find the guides helpful for inexperienced educators. George Faber reports that pre-service teachers at Dordt College are pleased that textbook guides are available. Pat Oostenink mentions, "In working with student teachers at Calvin I find they are eager to learn as much as they can about the books they and their students in their first job assignment will be using."

CSI is open to suggestions from users as to how the guides can be improved. Although the reviewers strongly maintain that the essay is the most helpful aspect of the analysis, opinions vary on the format. William Vander Kopple, from Calvin College's English Department, suggests that each essay be compiled by several people whose names appear on the guide. Lillian Eiten of Walnut Creek, California, feels that minor matters are laid out in such detail that they tend to obscure major areas. She suggests omitting the technical data side of the long sheet and including that information in the essay. "Insure that the essay covers major areas of philosophy and sequence first," she says, "and then continues—in inverted pyramid style—to those items of less importance."

Although the reviewers are highly supportive of CSI's project, probably every member of the three analysis teams experienced initial frustration over the terminology on the objective forms. Therefore, it seems likely that subscribers will experience similar feelings. Says Gerty Heinen of Lethbridge, Alberta, "Some of the terminology used in the guides will not be meaningful to teachers unless they have recently taken courses in the area of curriculum design, or have been personally involved in the text analysis conferences." She cites the following terms as examples: goodness of fit, strands, genres, controlled language patterns, domains/dimensions, concept map, instructional validity.

Already some modifications have been made in the forms; the newer version is a shorter and a more convenient format. CSI is interested in making the guides as useful as possible to subscribers.

Several team members offer caution about improper use of evaluation guides. Says Paul Erffmeyer of Hudsonville, Michigan, "Teachers should never count checks and pluses to compare. Teachers should discuss what they are looking for in a textbook before using the forms."

CSI's own language arts consultant, Sheri Haan, sums up CSI's purpose concisely. She concludes, "We publish texts as closely aligned with our own statement of purpose and principle as we humanly can. The reviews reflect how close others think we come. We review ours and others' texts to guide schools in making wise choices. But the choice, indeed, is theirs."

Many of us scurry to *Consumer Reports* and library pamphlets before we buy cars, computers, vacuum cleaners, and breakfast cereals, and that is wise. Would that we were as diligent about the philosophy of Scott Foresman as we are about the flavor of Wheaties.

LVG

Book Reviews

Donald Oppewal, editor

K-9 Reading/Literature Textbook Guides
by Joan Stob et al
CSI Curriculum Dept., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1983, loose leaf sheets, $50.00

7-12 Literature Textbook Guides
by Henry Baron et al
CSI Curriculum Dept., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1983, loose leaf sheets, $50.00

Reviewed by Donald Oppewal
Calvin College
Book Review Editor

Help from Christian Schools International for those who choose textbooks is now here. Whether as an individual or as a curriculum committee member you are sooner or later going to face the task of textbook selection. Taken seriously the task is formidable, because in every curriculum area numerous companies compete for your attention, and checking out their claims calls for great expertise. Taken less seriously the task is simply one of comparing a few alternatives most easily available (because a textbook salesperson has provided a free copy or a neighboring school uses it) and choosing one that is closest to what you want to teach. If you are a language or literature teacher you no longer need be driven to such measures.

Each of the *Textbook Guides* consists of a packet of three sheets covering both Christian and secular textbooks, totaling about two dozen in each packet. The publications of secular companies more than double the number from Christian publishing houses, but together provide a good range of what is available.

The reviewing teams (3-5 for each grade level) used a common set of categories for all texts and all grade levels. Although the system seems complicated at first glance, since it covers so many aspects of textbook content, once the meaning is clarified through usage the comparison points become clearer.

Sometimes using a simple checklist for what is included or omitted, sometimes using a rating with pluses and minuses for aspects of the text (like organization), each analysis includes several paragraphs of overall assessment of strengths and weaknesses. The team in the latter does not hesitate to judge harshly texts that are poorly suited to needs of learners, strongly biased concerning the goals of literature teaching, or that make promises that are not kept.

CSI is to be applauded for such efforts, even if the results are less than satisfying and not readily usable by a teacher or administrator untutored in the complexities of textbook analysis. In their desire to be complete they have lost some intelligibility.

Some of the problem is the format. Given a company and grade level that is specific to your interest, you are confronted with at least three sheets: on the front page you see boxes with headings, the meaning of which isn't immediately clear, although some explanation of the terms does accompany the whole packet. However that accompanying explanation never tells you what is meant by "Goodness of Fit," which is the heading of the fourth page. While the format is intimidating and not sequenced well, the payoff will come as you master the various terms and codes by comparing several texts on the same box or under the same heading.

If the school budget allows for a substantial investment of money in this packet, and if the users will take the time to figure out the system of analysis, they will be rewarded with substantial help from the team of fellow teachers.

It's a step beyond being left to your own intuitions and subjective estimates when you draw on the Christian professional community to make a textbook choice and whether you end with a secular or Christian textbook you will be more confident that you have made a wise choice.

As in all professional decisions, to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Soundings Literature Series, Grades 6-8
Editors: Henry Baron, Lillian Grissen, Bruce Hekman, Daniel Vander Ark
CSI, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1976

Voyage (8), 317 pp. $6.00 softcover
Teacher Guide, 124 pp. $7.50
I Am Waiting (7), 161 pp. $4.00 softcover
Nothing Ever Happens (7), 196 pp. $4.00 softcover
A Smiling Hippopotamus (6), 168 pp. $4.00 softcover
The Nest (6), 229 pp. $4.00 softcover
Teacher Guide $5.50

Reviewed by Ruth Broersma, junior high English teacher Creston-Mayfield Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Where does a *Voyage* take you? Why, all the way from beginnings in home and family to its ultimate end, with lots of acquaintances and adventures in between. This is the organizing theme of the *Voyage* text, the final one of the CSI *Soundings* series. The titles of the units indicate how the book develops this theme: Home, Bearings, Daring, Mates, In-Sights, and Journey's End. In other words, we begin our voyage at home, in the family, and move from there, after taking our bearings, to the broad world of adventure, choosing companions along the way, gaining insights from all that we encounter, until we reach the journey's end. The book encourages students to make their voyage with God as their guide, or, to use the imagery of the journey, their compass.

The promise to students at the outset is a large one: that *Voyage* is about beginnings and endings and everything in between, about life and death and the meaning of both. Each unit includes stories and poems, many of them contemporary and representing authors from a variety of cultural backgrounds. James Thurber, William Saroyan, Ray Bradbury, and J. R. R. Tolkien are some of the better-known storytellers repre-

sented. Poets include Nikki Giovanni, Robert Hayden, and Phyllis McGinley as well as Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost. Some older classic pieces are poems by George Herbert and John Donne and Hawthorne's retelling of "The Three Golden Apples." There are also songs, fables, a play, and some nonfiction.

Students find almost all the selections appealing—some because they include characters with whom they can identify, some because they are funny or action-packed, and some because they touch students' feelings. Each unit also includes thematically appropriate selections from the Bible, reinforcing "going with God" and allowing students to see the Bible as literature. The story of Esther is as exciting as that of Corrie ten Boom.

The *Voyage* book is generally intended for eighth-graders, *I Am Waiting* and *Nothing Ever Happens* for seventh, and *A Smiling Hippopotamus* and *The Nest* for sixth, although the publisher suggests that the series is flexible in grade levels from fifth to tenth.

Like *Voyage*, these four texts are also thematically organized. *A Smiling Hippopotamus* (intriguing title!) explores the human imagination through fables, fantasies, and fairy tales, and encourages students to look through and beyond their physical senses. *The Nest* begins with the student's own nest and branches out to neighborhood and community. *I Am Waiting* explores the need to belong, in spite of cultural or other differences; an especially fine feature to note is its section titled "Beginnings and Endings," which presents myths and tales from African and American Indian cultures. *Nothing Ever Happens* tries to prove just the opposite of its title by presenting stories of encounters with adventure.

Throughout the series, some selections express a Christian viewpoint; others do not. According to the preface, the editors hope that students will be able to use these selections to measure the depth of human experiences for themselves, to make their own "soundings," and as they do, to grow in Christian grace and wisdom. Delightful poetry-like introductions distinguish the units. The literary selections themselves are introduced by a headnote and followed by a reflective question designed to elicit a personal response from the student. The first book concentrates on appreciation and enjoyment; each succeeding one introduces basic literary terms as these are pertinent to the selections—metaphor, narrator, irony, for example.

This series' appeal to students must lie in the literature itself rather than in a glossy, colorful text, for the books are printed exclusively in black and white except for the covers. The layout is attractive with good proportion of white space to print, and the black-and-white photographs are appropriate to the selections.

The teacher guides for this series are not only helpful but essential. Because the student texts are limited to the literary selections themselves, one must go to the teacher guides for all definitions of literary terms, discussion questions, vocabulary suggestions, information about authors, and other materials often found in student anthologies. Certainly this is a disadvantage (though it may have helped to keep costs low), for teachers must find some way of reproducing those materials that students rightly need available to them.

Each unit in the teacher guide begins with an overview and a sentence statement about each selection. Each lesson follows a Readying, Reading, Responding, Reaching format and gives suggestions for each of these steps, including analytical and interpretive questions to aid the teacher in guiding discussion. Brief review sections appear at the ends of units as well as lists of related projects. These are interesting and varied enough so that all students can make choices appropriate to their abilities and interests. Activities include creative drama, research, creative and expository writing, and art-related projects.

The *Soundings* series fulfills a unique function by offering literature textbooks which provide a Christian worldview and offer literature which is both of high quality and high student interest. They may, by themselves, not be enough. Teachers will want to give their students a great many more experiences with fine literature than these rather slim volumes provide, but they do make a good start, and teachers should not find it difficult either to supplement the offerings here or to use this as a supplementary series. In either case, the teacher has the advantage of a very teachable series that rests on a strong philosophically Christian base.