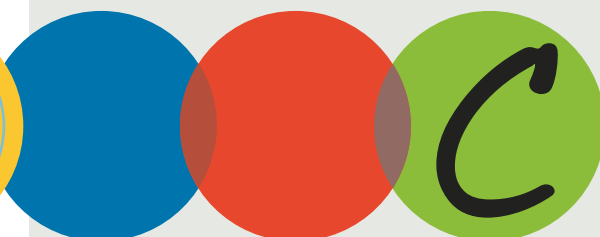
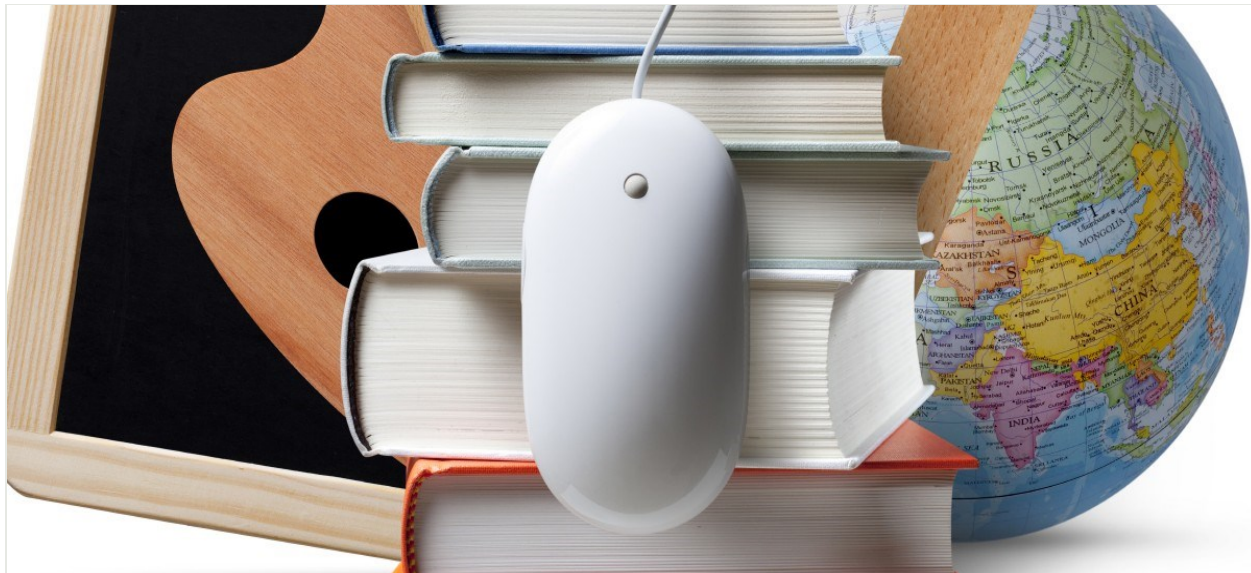


A monthly
newsletter
filled with practical,
research-based
articles for K-12
educators across the
North American
Division



the **crae** Connection

A Note from the Editor: Culture

Did you know:

In South America, arriving early to social gatherings is rude.

In Poland, everyone claps when the plane lands.

In Japan, it is considered an insult to receive a tip.

In Turkey, you are considered arrogant if you have one hand in your pocket.

In France, it is repulsive to blow your nose in public.

In Thailand, patting someone's head is extremely rude and disrespectful.



Culture is such a fascinating thing, isn't it? Beliefs, social structure, and traditions are woven into the fabric of a community's culture and serve to informally define who people are and how they live.

Do you remember when the term "America's melting pot" gave way to "America's salad bowl"? To some, it seemed like yet one more silly change in today's politically correct world, but I must say that I do agree with the sentiment. Rather than melding together into an unidentifiable mass of humanity, it is infinitely more powerful to bring all of us – our strengths, our weaknesses, our identities, our cultures – into one space to learn, grow and thrive in each other's differences.

In this month's issue of the *CRAE Connection*, we examine culture from three different angles. In *The Desk*, we urge administrators to explore ways of embracing their school's cultural diversity and providing teachers with excellent resources for the classroom. At *The Chalkboard*, we visit the idea of cultivating a culture of reading among your students and look at some significant statistics about reading proficiency. And finally, in *The Locker Room*, we encourage academy teachers to reflect on ways to strengthen your students' voices in class and to create a culture that applauds and invites all to speak one's mind articulately and respectfully.

Blessings to you this month as you create a culture in your classroom that embraces diversity, champions love and reflects God's grace.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

"Your Responses for March"

pg 4

THE CHALKBOARD

"Reading:

An Antiquated Hobby"

pg 2

THE LOCKER ROOM

Following Their Lead: Developing
a Culture for Student Voice"

pg 5

THE DESK

"All For One and One For All"

pg 3

CRAE UPDATE



The Chalkboard: notes for the elementary educator

Reading: An Antiquated Hobby

"Do kids today even read anymore?" I hear this question often bounced around in conversations about the state of education today and the ensuing answers are generally not very positive.

Unfortunately, current statistics serve only to provide further evidence of our children's lack of reading time or interest.

Consider this data:

Children ages 8–18 spend the following amount of time in front of the screen each day:

- Approximately 7.5 hours using entertainment media
- Approximately 4.5 hours watching TV
- Approximately 1.5 hours on the computer
- Approximately 1.5 hours playing video games
- *Approximately 25 minutes reading books*

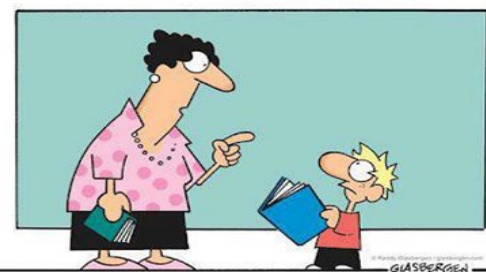
(Source: Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, "Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds," January 2010)

Modern technology has become deeply enmeshed in our lives, affording us a myriad of uses, conveniences and advantages. I, for one, love the fact that I can work from home, yet be connected to the world through the laptop on my coffee table and the iPhone at my fingertips. And if the internet happens to go down? I might as well toss out all productivity for the day as I can't seem to get anything done while offline.

So yes – technology is important – irrefutably so. But has it replaced our interest in reading for pleasure? For reading as a hobby?

And what are the ramifications of that when study after study continues to show strong correlations between reading and success – academically and professionally. Additionally, decreased stress levels are related to reading for pleasure, as well as lowered rates of delinquency, violence and crime among students who *enjoy* reading!

So how do we foster a culture of reading in the classroom and create an environment where reading for pleasure is expected, normal and fun?



It's called **reading**.
It's how people install new software into their brains.

Create time and space. The more you can integrate reading for pleasure into your school day, the larger your chance that students will learn to love it.

Build a unique reading nook in your classroom. Pinterest has enough ideas to overwhelm you after just ten minutes of browsing "classroom reading space". Provide opportunities for students to talk about their favorite books or current reading materials. Start a book club.

Model. When I taught 5th grade, I always had a 20 minute silent reading time built to the day – usually after lunch recess. Students would come back to the classroom, hot and sweaty and tired from playing outside, and cool down with a book; it worked well. I, on the other hand, would take advantage of the 20 minutes of silence and grade furiously in attempts to chip away at the always-towering stack on my desk or lay out materials for the upcoming lesson or file papers or any one of the other countless tasks that teachers always have waiting to be done. Twenty minutes isn't long, but all teachers know to take advantage of whatever "free" time they have in the day, right? But at the beginning of one school year, I decided that once or twice a week, I would pick up my own personal reading book and sit down alongside them to just read. I remember my students were taken aback the first time I did it; I don't think they'd ever seen me with my hands still and simply reading quietly. It ended up being a wonderfully positive habit for me; 20 minutes of leisure reading in the middle of a work day felt like such an indulgence! But I was surprised by the effect it had on my students – seeing their teacher read.

They'd hunker down next to me to read, we'd discuss what we were reading throughout the day, I'd take their recommendations and they'd take mine – it became a much-anticipated part of our day. The experience gave me newfound appreciation for the importance of modeling reading to my students. I could talk all day about how great reading was – the benefits, the skills developed, etc – but simply sitting down to read myself was far more effective than anything I could ever say.



The Locker Room: notes for the academy educator

Following Their Lead: Developing a Culture for Student Voice

During my time as an administrator, I had many conversations with teachers about their passion for Adventist education and the impact they wanted to have on their students. When asked about the most important facet of their job, I cannot think of a single teacher who mentioned the content of their subject or making it through the textbook. Instead, their eyes would light up and their expressions would become animated as they described the positive, caring relationships that they developed with their students and the opportunities that they had in the classroom to reflect God's grace.

Furthermore, as these teachers talked about this aspect of their job, I was struck by the amount of work – the time, effort and energy – that goes into developing these relationships and cultivating a climate in which students feel comfortable talking about matters dealing with family, friends, God and their future. And what seems to be integral for these teachers and their classrooms – in the context of their goals and the emphasis on relationships – is the concept of *student voice*. These teachers are intentional about creating an environment where students are taught – encouraged! – to speak their mind articulately and respectfully, to listen to each other, to voice their concerns, and to feel empowered to effect change in their classroom and their community.

So how does this work? How do you foster this culture within your classroom – where students feel they *have* a voice and are comfortable *using* it?

Build unity. All too often, school communities are divided by an “us versus them” mentality where lines are drawn between staff and students. But in order for students to feel like their concerns will be taken seriously and that their voice will be heard, they must first feel like you are on their side or – better yet – there *are* no sides.



Ask yourself: What steps need to be taken in my classroom for my students to feel like we are all in this together?

Establish ground rules early. Make it clear to your students that your classroom is a sacred space for their voices, their opinions, their words. This means that there can be no tolerance for any student disrespecting another student's observations or ideas. Thoughtful discussions and stimulating debates are encouraged; put-downs and insults are not.

Ask yourself: Do my students feel that they can speak out in my classroom without fear of censure?

Provide opportunities. Be intentional about creating opportunities for students learn how to use their voices and to become comfortable speaking and sharing their ideas.

- As often as you can, build a presentation component into your assignments and projects.
- Create a student council where students can wrestle with school or class-related issues and brainstorm solutions.
- Collaborate with a colleague to have your classes share their work with each other.

Ask yourself: Does my classroom provide opportunities for students to learn to use their voices?

Follow through. If you are going to ask students to share with you their thoughts and ideas, then it is equally important that you *do* something with that information. Students can often be heard grumbling about how their voices are not heard and that nobody cares what they think – don't let that be true of you and your classroom! Issues that may seem trivial to us – dress code policy, field trip rules, off-campus banquet guests – can be of huge significance to our students. Affirm the courage that it took for them to speak out and bring an issue to your attention and do what you can to follow through with the situation.





The Desk: notes for the administrator

All For One and One For All

“All for one and one for all” – the rallying cry of Alexander Dumas’ famous Three Musketeers who resolved to stick with each other regardless of the differences they had or the difficulties they encountered. “United, we stand”, “two heads are better than one” and “there is no “I” in team” are other common sayings we hear that reiterate this idea of working together, collaborating, and pooling our resources.

And the intent is definitely commendable, right?

However, when you’re standing in front of your student body and looking out into the hugely diverse crowd – individuals of different genders, races, personalities, ethnicities, backgrounds and contexts, the task of unifying that community might seem a bit more daunting. How do you get such different people to become one?

Well. . . maybe you don’t.

Working together doesn’t necessarily mean eschewing individuality, and collaboration doesn’t have to equate uniformity of thinking. By celebrating a school’s cultural diversity and intentionally embracing the amazing variety of God’s creation, we are perhaps even more able to create a strong community made up of like-minded, similarly-focused, but *different* individuals.

Here are some ideas to consider as you continue to develop your campus’ climate of inclusion and individualism.

Nurture relationships. Almost everything that we read about promoting diversity – in schools, at workplaces, within communities – started out by stating

the importance on relationships. At the heart of cross-cultural awareness is an understanding and knowledge of the other person – and that can only come through cultivating a relationship with him/her.

Some ideas to build relationships: Make yourself available during drop-off and pick-up times, when you are most likely to be briefly chat with parents. One principal I know is the crossing guard once a week at the busy crosswalk in front of his school. Not only do the students get a kick out of seeing their distinguished school leader in a neon-colored vest, wielding two flashing stop signs, but it also provides him with a chance to greet parents. Be intentional about getting to know your staff better. Embracing diversity pertains not only to your students and their families, but also to your own professional team. Sometimes, we are so busy with the logistics of learning – schedules, curriculum, budgets – that we hardly know those with whom we work.

Provide resources. Communication is key. Sometimes finding resources to encourage diversity can be right at your campus’ doorstep: Parents are a great untapped resource. Engage them and welcome them as volunteers and speakers in the school classroom. Conducting research on your campus’ demographics can help your school develop new ways to develop and revamp cultural strengths.

Encourage teachers to get to know the diversity that exists within their classroom and appreciate the differences. Furthermore, encourage teachers to recognize their own cultural biases that

may damper their learning of their students. Different cultures bring about different and unique behavioral and socialization patterns. Understanding these differences can help to broaden perspectives.

Consider and display community events that are taking place in your community. Make this information available at your school.

Celebrate community. Celebration and tolerance are two different things. Tolerance is an acceptance and willingness to endure something. When we celebrate community, we make an effort to appreciate or do something special for a community. There are always reasons to celebrate! Provide a safe space to celebrate and recognize what is great about a community—your community by: Finding out what are some ways your student populous celebrate different cultural events in your homes. This is a great way to include your ELL students! Give them the space to share their culture and community.

Inviting parents and local community members to educate and enjoy diversity events like a Culture Night at your school.

Implementing service days. Working for your community is always a surefire way to get to know them better.

Acknowledging that teachers are always doing great things in their classrooms. Find ways to acknowledge them, either through newsletters, public or private recognition, etc.

Discovering ways to harness the power of community and *use* our differences to our advantage is beneficial to all parties involved. We become better: better administrators, teachers, and community leaders and members.



The Bulletin Board: *notes for the whole community*

Last month, we asked the **CRAE Connection community**:

“Every morning as soon as I walk into my classroom/office, I _____!”

Here are a few of the responses we received:

“Pray for wisdom and discernment as I prepare to meet and work with His kids.” – Ric Peinado, principal, Meadow Glade Academy

“Thank God for a chance to make a difference another day.” – Branon Shea, PE teacher, Newbury Park Adventist Academy

“Shake my head, turn around and go to the right classroom.” – Mark Witas, pastor, PUC Church

“Enjoy the quiet while it lasts, and meditate/pray to guide these kids as Jesus would.” – Val Torres, substitute teacher, Southeastern California Conference

“Ask God to walk in with me!” – Lori Dickerson Rusek, 3rd & 4th grade teacher, Northwest Christian School

“Pray for each one of my students in front of their seats.” Deborah Baroi, 3rd & 4th grade teacher, San Fernando Academy

“Pray I made enough copies of the right assignment!” – Jason Wymore, adjunct English professor, La Sierra University



Thank you for your responses!

Next month’s question:

“In my experience, a struggling student most often needs _____”

CRAE: keeping you informed

(Editor's Note: Based on recent feedback, we are going to include a small column each month about the goings-on at the Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education.)

The Hanson Place Elementary SDA School held their annual School Day on March 9, 2016 at the Hanson Place SDA church in Ft. Greene, Brooklyn, NY. The HPE Day tradition began as a way to highlight the accomplishments of students and the hard work of principals, teachers and other faculty. Dr. Kido was featured as a special guest for their Christian Education Day. "Dr. Kido brought a nice and refreshing approach to the benefits of Christian Education", said Dr. Samuel Jones, former School Board Chairperson and present School Board member, by sharing the study data, parents' testimonies and her own personal experience. Dr. Kido masterfully drew parallels between our Christian commitments in life and our duty to the children in our midst. Many parents were pleased with the performance of the students and appreciated the information shared by Dr. Kido in both the divine worship hour and in the evening's presentation of "Secrets to Success for Students". A parent was overheard saying that "this was a very special day, I'm proud of my kids and the school and I am encouraged by what the speaker presented during the day."

Lynna Scott Carnegie
HPS Home and School Coordinator



Brain Blurb

42% of college students will never read another book after they graduate. 80% of families in the United States did not buy a book this year. Is reading an antiquated hobby? Read more about the culture of

4500 Riverwalk Pkwy, 951.785.2997
Riverside, Ca 92505 www.crae.lasierra.edu

