

HOME SCHOOL HELPER

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“How Do You Say . . . Help?”

Foreign language study benefits both the teacher and the student.

We offer a few suggestions to help your child get the most from your study and to make it fun and rewarding for you as well.

The United States may be becoming its own foreign mission field. Over twenty-five million Hispanics called the United States home in 2002. French speakers *parlent* not only in France and Canada but also in Louisiana. Numerous immigrants from Japan, Korea, Romania, Germany, and Poland long for a friendly American who can speak their language. What an opportunity for the Christian young person trained in a second (or third) language! And what a challenge for home educators.

Parents usually choose one of three methods to teach a foreign language. The traditional method advocates that the teacher speak in English first then follow the instruction with drills in the foreign language. With the total immersion method, the instructor speaks very little English and supplements with gestures and other visuals, and the student is encouraged to use inductive reasoning to respond in the foreign language rather than in English. Both these methods require the teacher to be fairly proficient in a foreign language.

The learn-as-you-go method allows you, the teacher, to learn the language along with your child. You may want to listen to recordings of native speakers and study the material several months before attempting to teach it/learn it with your student. You might enroll in a community college to learn the basics of pronunciation and grammar.

A vital part of language teaching, however, is encouraging and complimenting your child's accomplishments.

But if you cannot study in advance and are unsure of your ability to teach the foreign language, BJ HomeSat offers distance-learning language courses by satellite that can help both you and your child.

You both will benefit from a strong foundation in grammar and vocabulary. The BJU Press Spanish and French student texts present grammar and vocabulary in logical progression and in a way that appeals to beginning learners. Study the vocabulary with your child in a meaningful context (for example, learn witnessing vocabulary, then visit a Spanish-speaking church or pass out tracts to Spanish-speakers) and practice the grammatical structures diligently.

All of the texts are designed to enable the student to achieve an intermediate level of proficiency according to the guidelines established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Although finishing the textbook is not the first

priority, the more exposure the student has, the stronger and larger his vocabulary and grammar foundation will be.

But what about pronunciation? The more you hear, the more you learn. Interactive CDs and cassettes will improve your child's pronunciation skills (and yours!). BJU Press offers the *El Pato Paco* CD-ROM for your young child, and audiocassettes are included with the BJUP secondary-level Spanish and French Home School kits. You should also be alert for opportunities to meet and talk with native speakers. Using your limited language skills to develop a friendship with a Spanish- or French-speaking family may result not only in additional ministry opportunities but also in a personal tutor for your child.

For those learning as they teach, a detailed teacher's edition will facilitate your teaching experience. BJUP's Spanish Teacher's Editions contain specialized explanations and translations and many helpful teaching suggestions. The Spanish TEs also includes games and activities—review and drill in disguise—that may be played one-on-one or one-against-several. Siblings (and parents) can work together through the Activity Manuals, which reinforce what the lessons cover.

Evaluating your child's progress may be difficult, especially if you do not know the language well. So BJU Press offers foreign language tests and answer keys for each lesson and chapter. A vital part of language teaching, however, is encouraging and complimenting your child's accomplishments. Since development and performance may not be evident until mid-year for some students, the textbook authors advise against assigning a failing grade during the first nine weeks of a language study.




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For exposure to customs and culture, take advantage of opportunities in your area. Students of Spanish can visit Mexican stores and restaurants. A taste of plantain, pickled Nopalitos cactus, or tortillas made from Mexican cornmeal may not improve their accents, but it will broaden their experience. Your child might even work up to preparing a real Spanish meal such as paella and gazpacho. French cuisine may not be so easy to access, but the child could find and follow recipes for French pastries or quiche. Cheeses such as Brie or Camembert are available at most local grocery stores.

Foreign language study benefits both the student and his teacher in a number of ways. Learning the grammar of another language helps a person to better understand the structure of his own English grammar. Vocabulary acquired in a foreign language sheds light on the meanings of English words and often raises reading levels. But perhaps most important, the person who learns how to communicate in another language broadens his horizons and enhances his future ministry and job opportunities. 

Virginia Layman, a member of Secondary Authors, and Lynnelle Rhinier, a former member of the Editorial Department, co-authored this article. Virginia served as the primary author for BJUP's recently released *Spanish 3* student and teacher's editions. Lynnelle teaches Spanish and English on the mission field of Mexico.

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Creature Feature

What could an animated slug, a toucan, and a chameleon possibly teach about science?

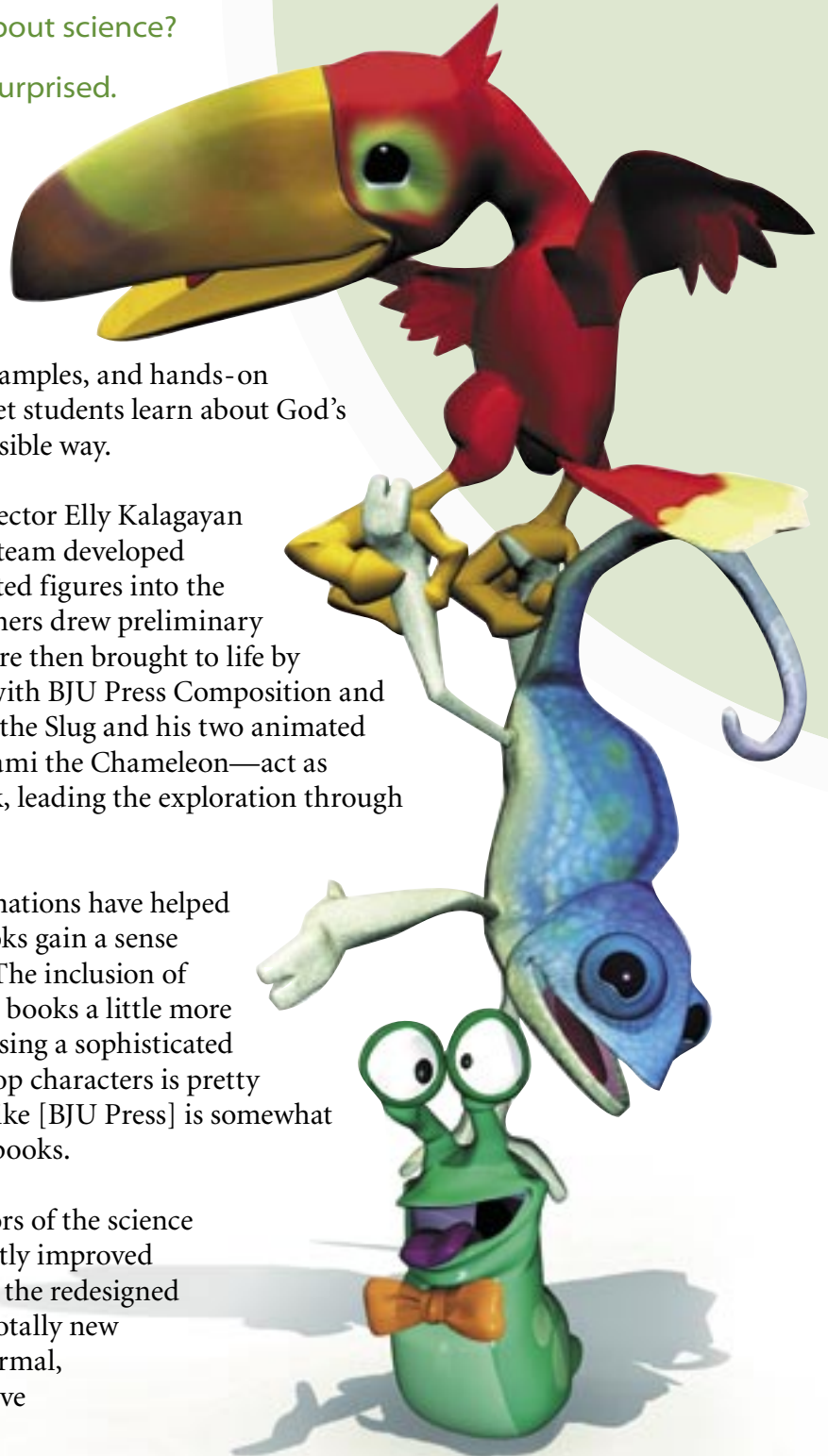
Actually, you just might be surprised.

BJU Press revamped its first-, second-, and third-grade Elementary Science textbooks in spring 2003, providing students with a fresh look at the world of science. With colorful texts full of pictures, examples, and hands-on activities, these updated books let students learn about God’s handiwork in the friendliest possible way.

Last summer, BJU Press Art Director Elly Kalagayan and the BJU Press Book Design team developed the idea of incorporating animated figures into the text. After brainstorming, designers drew preliminary sketches, and the animations were then brought to life by Matt Bjerck, a digital illustrator with BJU Press Composition and Design group. The result: Louie the Slug and his two animated friends—Bill the Toucan and Cami the Chameleon—act as “theme characters” in each book, leading the exploration through an exciting world of science.

Kalagayan believes that the animations have helped the early elementary science books gain a sense of identity and appeal to kids. “The inclusion of [Louie and his friends] gives the books a little more personality,” Kalagayan said. “Using a sophisticated 3D animation program to develop characters is pretty unusual in this field, and I feel like [BJU Press] is somewhat pioneering it,” in Christian textbooks.

Dawn Watkins, one of the authors of the science books, is impressed with the vastly improved marriage of graphics and text in the redesigned books. “The new books offer a totally new design that has moved from a formal, upper-level format to an attractive



and fun format, which is much more exciting for the kids but still academically sound,” she said. Watkins also noted that the animations help teach students a very important pillar of the scientific method: observation. “If the kids are looking for the character, it’s helping train them to be observant in a way that’s fun for them.”

Some students have already begun to express such enthusiasm. After attending a recent BJU Press Home School Science and History Fair, one student wrote the Press to say “I love Louie the Slug and I can’t wait to get my new science book for third grade!”

If positive results continue and the characters continue to be a success, more animations may be forthcoming. Kalagayan hinted that animations might be used in future BJU Press textbooks—possibly for other tasks besides just static roles in print. “The beauty of the 3D program is that we

can generate one character and use him in any number of ways and perspectives. The versatility of the characters allows [them] to be used eventually in multimedia applications, whether it is a digital rendering or greater applications.”

Aside from the addition of Louie, Bill, and Cami, the BJU Press science textbooks remain the same in philosophy and are still written from the ground up with the belief that the Bible is true, God created the world, and God runs the world. The books take a narrative approach and, like all BJU Press products, pose questions to help kids learn to think. And they are hands-on, encouraging kids to get involved. The updated books are now available: call 1-800-845-5731 or shop online at www.bjup.com. Help your child experience the fun-filled world of science today! 📺

J. Bennett Harris is a writer for Marketing Communications.

Carnival of the Animals

First-grade readers will journey with Cami the Chameleon through *Science 1* and study the five senses, parts of the solar system, basic principles of gravity, plants, matter and air, animals, heat, flowers, weather, and sound. *Science 1* is a 176-page hardback book, which also includes a lesson on good stewardship of natural resources and a glossary of useful terms for students.

Bill the Toucan travels with second-grade students in *Science 2* as they study plant life, history, gravity and forces, bone structure, the shape of the Earth, light and shadows, living organisms, properties of length, the movement of the Earth, muscles, layers of the Earth,

environments, motion, and shorelines. The *Science 2* text is 184 pages long and includes a glossary of useful terms and a lesson teaching students that even little things affect the world around them.

Third-grade students will meet Louie and expand their studies in the fields of sound, cells, tissue, organs, animal groups, vertebrates and invertebrates, mass and weight, birds, work, skin, plant life, and the solar system. The *Science 3* text is 200 pages long and also includes a glossary of useful terms and a lesson on recycling. 📺



Learning and Delight: Looking for the Right Balance

Recently a home schooling mom asked me what I thought of Delight-Directed Learning (DDL). As she described it, DDL's "philosophy of education is to follow the Lord's leading for their children's education."

(No argument from me there!)

However, according to her, this method also requires that the family move away from "traditional curriculum"—i.e., textbooks—and spend only one to three hours on "formal learning" each day. "Anything that is needed will come up in the normal day-to-day life"; there are "more important things to do than study [text]books," which are "an inferior form of learning."

Okay, now we had a problem.

So, my curiosity piqued, I did some research on DDL.

Some Caveats

Clearly, I have a vested interest here. I'm a proponent of BJU Press materials, which work together as a coherent whole, from preschool through twelfth grade, to give children a thoroughly scriptural, unified education, one that offers flexibility within structure for the home school parent. That brings great security—and delight!—to home schooling families.

Like nearly any movement, DDL has its good points but can be dangerous if taken to extremes. This article of necessity deals with the topic in broad strokes. I am not dismissing DDL in its entirety, nor do I intend in any way to portray all its adherents alike. DDL, when handled carefully by a skilled home school teacher, can be profitable and, I'm sure, a blessing to the entire family.

But let's be careful not to toss out the infant with the tub water. Are we convinced that textbooks are "an inferior form of learning"? Certainly there are poor textbooks out there, both secular and Christian, and some poor uses of good textbooks. The majority of texts, however, have been written by experts in their fields who possess more of three things than children do: knowledge, experience, and wisdom.

Some Common Ground

Certainly a child's learning experience should be delightful when viewed as a whole. BJU Press has always adhered to that philosophy, producing colorful, interactive materials that help children learn inductively while avoiding an over-emphasis on drill. And first on our list of goals is to produce materials that are

Bible based so that children can know and love the Lord, whether they're studying Galatians or the mayfly.

DDL also ostensibly puts control of the child's learning in the hands of the parent—another tenet with which we at BJU Press would agree. The parent, not the curriculum materials, should be the ultimate decision-maker in the home school setting.

Some Concerns

American Heritage Dictionary (Fourth Edition) defines curriculum this way: "1. All the courses of study offered by an educational institution. 2. A group of related courses, often in a special field of study."

So all schools—whether public or Christian, classroom or home school—have a curriculum. Whether that curriculum uses textbooks is another issue.

The DDL curriculum generally includes Bible, history, writing, and language. However, the emphasis seems to be on the teaching of skills more than on providing a broadly based liberal arts education. Since our society offers nearly unlimited freedom of choice regarding one's occupation, a liberal arts background—one that focuses primarily on the "why" rather than the "how to"—is of paramount importance.

Another concern I have is that, if taken too far, DDL may give the child an unrealistic view of life. Let's be honest—how many of the things you do during a day are directed purely by delight? For most adults, life consists of tasks undertaken out of duty or responsibility. One of the earliest lessons teens learn in college is that even the best professors minor on "delighting" their students. (And few work supervisors consider "delighting" their employees to be the primary point of their job descriptions!)


Some Conclusions

Are we really ready to say that for generations most of our society has been wrong about using textbooks? Are we willing to build our children's future on this new assertion? And what does the Bible say about the things children might delight in?

Proverbs 22:15—"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child."

I Corinthians 13:11—"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

Ephesians 4:14—"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness."

Certainly we want our children's learning experiences to be delightful. Scripture indicates that accomplishing a task or acquiring a skill is "sweet to the soul" (Proverbs 13:19). However, delighting the child must not overtake requiring him to accomplish accepted educational objectives that will serve him as he goes on to college—and life beyond that. 

Steve Skaggs (M.Ed.) serves as Director of Product Development for BJU Press. He has been involved in Christian education for nearly twenty years. He and his wife, Cindy, have five children.

Tech Tip from BJ HomeSat

A nice feature for quickly checking your signal strength and quality is the signal button on your satellite receiver remote control. When you press this button, you will see your signal strength and quality on the bottom of your screen. Press the signal button again to remove that indicator. A little-known fact about this feature is that you cannot change channels while it is operating; so just click it off, and then change channels as usual.





207720

What's New!

ELEMENTARY LEVEL



El Pato Paco by Anna Turner and Beth Kitching—Paco the duck has lost all of his animal friends, and he needs your help to find them.

Join in his surprise and begin learning Spanish the fun way. Sing along with two lively Spanish songs; then, finish up with color-your-own pictures of Paco and his friends.

Book (076398, \$5.49)

Cassette only (22 min.) (078022, \$5.75)

Read-along set: book and cassette (078865, \$9.98)

CD-ROM (183384, \$29.95)

System Requirements: Pentium® processor,
Windows® 98/NT/ME/XP, 32 MB RAM



¡Buenos Días, Carlitos! by Melody Moore Holmes—Help Carlitos Rabbit find just the right outfit for his scarecrow and learn simple Spanish along

the way! Instructions for making a simple homemade weathervane and a recipe for Spanish cakes are included in the appendix.

(115022, \$5.49)



¡Buenas Tardes, Carlitos! by Melody Moore Holmes—Carlitos Rabbit teaches simple Spanish vocabulary words for animals and household chores as he

gets ready for the arrival of special company. As time runs out on him, his friends pitch in to help get the work done on time.

(180455, \$5.49)