



Teacher *To* Teacher

BALANCED PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION

What's New?

SECONDARY MATERIALS

(Speech) Performing Literature: Oral Interpretation and Drama—Provides comprehensive instruction and skill-building activities that include eight fully developed performance projects and grading rubrics. Designed for one semester, the course prepares students for performance at school, in church, and in competition. Appendices contain performance pieces as well as resources to minimize research.

Teacher's Edition—Includes reduced student pages, flexible lesson plans, suggested activities, and optional improvisation ideas. Teacher notes will help the inexperienced teacher as well as the veteran; spiral binder; 413 pages (183459, \$27.00)

JOURNEYFORTH

Young Adult Novels

Over the Divide by Catherine Farnes—Being a wilderness tour guide with her dad brings some interesting characters, most of who are forgettable, into Jacy's life. When a young widower and his son join them on the trail, Jacy finds herself

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Getting By and Getting Beyond

I went through school as a dyslexic who struggled to read and who failed at all spelling beyond the second-grade level.

Like most labeled "Learning Disabled," I had ways of trying to get by. Throughout the elementary grades, I memorized passages (sometimes two pages long) in one night because I was afraid the teacher would ask me to read aloud in class the next day. When teachers compared my ability to

memorize speeches with my failure to memorize spelling words, they insisted I was not achieving because I was lazy.

By the time I reached high school, my parents decided to enroll me in an amazingly demanding college prep academy. If I were struggling at my

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little hometown school, how would I make it in such a disciplined, academic environment?

Instead of plummeting, my grades actually soared. I even made the honor roll several times. Had my dyslexia gone away? Was my spelling actually improved? No. Reading was still incredibly difficult. I have no doubt that I drained more than one teacher's red pen with my every composition and lab reports. Success came because the teachers had a totally different philosophy.

They made learning interesting.

For the first time in my life, I found myself reading beyond the requirement in a literature book. Reading was still my nemesis, but I got carried away because the text was actually interesting. I had never considered it possible to have an interesting textbook.

Beyond the books, the teachers were interested in their topics. The best ones kept learning interactive. In government class we became members of the senate—voting as would the current senator we were named for. We spent far more time actually writing instead of countless hours underlining parts of speech.

They made success attainable.

At my former school I had been caught for cheating in spelling. The teacher knew

there was no way I could have ever received a passing grade without cheating. The teacher could have divided the list for me so that I had fewer words to learn at one time. She could have given me words that were more grade-appropriate so that what I did learn would

also a more manageable size. I did not miraculously begin spelling at grade level, but for the first time, I could understand the steps to success.

My sophomore English teacher also gave specific praise throughout my journal.

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles that one has overcome while trying to succeed.”

Booker T. Washington

have actually had relevance to words I would write. She could have taught me how to teach myself words instead of assuming that by junior high I should know how to do that. Instead, week after week the bar was always above my grasp. There was no way for me to get a passing grade because the grade was based on a weekly test I could not pass. This in no way excused my cheating, but it did ensure my discouragement.

At my new academy my English teacher gave spelling tests, but she also gave a weekly grade for journaling. She gave bonus points for reading pages beyond the weekly requirement. If I were willing to put in extra time writing, I could actually get a passing grade. The weekly spelling tests were

This improved my confidence which, by some unknown but well-proven connection, improved my spelling to some degree.

During my junior year we wrote our first major term paper. We took a class field trip to the library where the librarian gave us a guided tour to all the places where we could find research on our topics. We had to turn in a certain number of note cards and bibliographical sources each week. We turned in our rough drafts (which was returned with teacher comments so that we would know how to improve it before we handed in the final copy). I still had a plethora of spelling errors, but I had received some credit for meeting the requirements at each stage of the project. Our report card

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BJU Press

EyeWire, Inc.

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Greenville, SC 29614-0060.

Teacher to Teacher is published five times a year by BJU Press and Bob Jones University School of Education. U.S. subscriptions are free. All rights reserved.

Send all correspondence and changes of address to **Teacher to Teacher**, BJU Press, Greenville, SC 29614-0060.

1.800.845.5731

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grades included weekly quizzes and other graded assignments. Somehow it averaged out to keep the Honor Roll achievable.

My early years of history instruction had been done in textbooks crammed full of miscellaneous dates and names and places with no clue as to ferret out what would be important for the test. Studying or not studying had always produced about the same results since what was required was not reasonable or well presented. Thus, coming into the academy, my history background was deplorable.

My academy U.S. History teacher was not slack in her

requirements, but she did have clear expectations on what we were to learn. Her lectures and her textbook (she was the author) were cogent and interesting. Study as I did, I could survive but not thrive. What made success attainable was the little bulletin board by the back door. Every week she put up current-events articles. If we came by between classes or in the afternoon, we could read the bulletin board and write a paragraph summary for bonus points. Not only did my teacher give me the confidence that comes from having earned an above average grade, but she also gave me a current-events background that was invaluable once I started into debate.

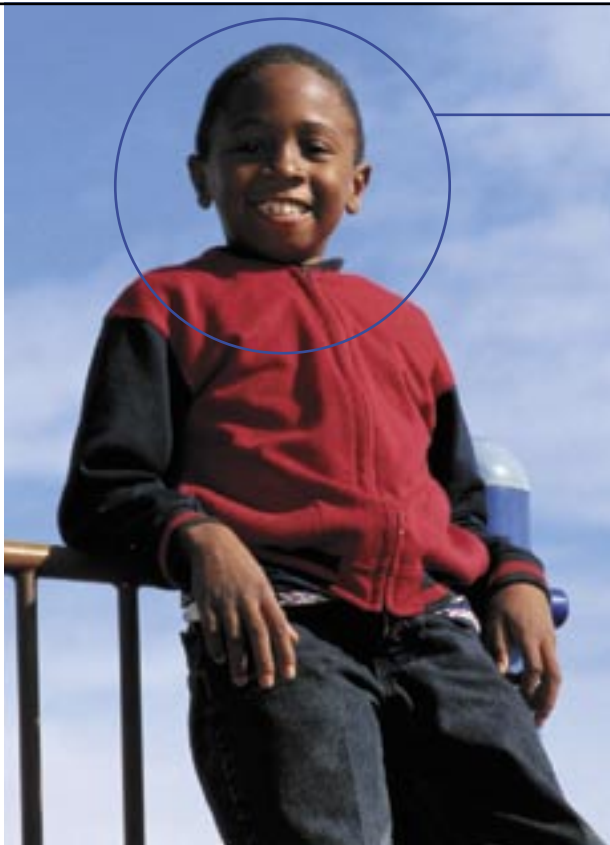
Typing was another example of amazing teaching. Timed tests of any kind have always tended to shut my brain down for the duration. Typing class, of course, was all about timed tests. My teacher noticed that I whizzed along during practice and then froze up in the stress of the tests. She could have hidden behind the standard teacher logic, "Well, if they can't handle a little pressure in typing class, they can't handle typing in the real world." Thankfully, this was not her approach. Instead, she picked me up at my house well before school started. In the morning quiet, as the only student, I took timed tests over and over. Sure enough, without the distractions and pressure of the

room full of peers, I passed the tests.

They made me faithful.

The academy was not easy, but for the first time I could make up with hustle what I lacked in skill. Did the five-talent students have an easier time of it? No doubt. But the teachers allowed the two-talent students an opportunity to make good on their investment. They rewarded us for using what God had given us. And so I was more prepared for real life than many others who can only spell *faithful*.

Esther Wilkison is a freelance writer and educational speaker in California.



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So You Have a Student Teacher!



For the next few weeks, you are not only going to be a teacher but also going to be a cooperating teacher. You have a big opportunity to expand your service by teaching someone else how to teach. Be a great mentor for the student teacher. The student teacher is not placed into your room to do all of your work and for you to have a free ride. You should count it a great honor to help and mentor him to be the best teacher possible. This is teamwork.

1. Before the student teacher arrives

Prepare a desk or table for him. Provide copies of the textbooks, workbooks, manuals, classroom rules, and class roll. Include a list of students who need special care, such as students who regularly take medication.

Explain to the students what will be the student teacher's role within the classroom. Point out that this other teacher is a teacher and should be shown respect.

Ask students to write letters of introduction, addressed to the student teacher. Encourage them to tell about themselves, their hobbies, and their interests. This activity will help the student teacher become familiar with students quickly.

2. Right from the beginning

Keep communication open. Don't let things go on that are not right in hopes that they will improve. Keep the accounts short and take care of problems right away.

Refrain from making corrections to the student teacher in front of the class. Take notes and discuss things when students are not present.

Keep in touch with the university supervision at all times. If there is a problem, the university should be involved immediately. Conferences should be held between the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor several times during the teaching experience.

Plan to go over written reports on the student teacher with the student teacher before they are turned in to the university. The student teacher should not have any surprises.

3. The first day

Make introductions to the administration, school personnel, and other faculty members.

Give the student teacher a tour of the building, pointing out where materials and other resources for teacher use are kept. Also advise him about any local resources that may be available through the county, the state, or private organizations.

Present a notebook for the two of you to write in. Explain that you will update the journal daily, commenting on the student teacher's performance and offering suggestions. In return, the student teacher is also to write comments or questions to be discussed.

4. As the days progress

The student teacher will move into teaching gradually, spending some time observing you and becoming familiar with the class before taking over duties.

On the elementary level, let him begin with some routine activities, such as getting lunch count, reading stories, checking homework, and monitoring bathrooms. On the secondary level, he may take attendance, pass out papers, grade quizzes, and record grades. In two weeks let him take on the responsibility of teaching one subject area and the following week add another until he has assumed all of the teaching responsibilities. Leave the classroom for short periods of time and eventually leave the room for the day. The student teacher should always know where the cooperating teacher will be in case of an emergency.

After he has taught a lesson, ask your student teacher to write down how things went during the class. He should include things that went well and ways that he would change the lesson if he were to teach it again. It is impor-

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TEXTBOOKS:

MESSAGES SUBTLE & NOT SO SUBTLE

Is it just me, or does it seem we may be partly to blame for the battle we are in for our students' minds? No, this is not an article about television. I'm referring to the textbooks used in most public—and many Christian—schools nationwide.

I recently surveyed secular textbooks and found the following topics discussed: the oppression and subjugation of women by the male "Establishment"; the glorification of pop culture icons including rock/rap/R&B stars, humanist authors, and fierce feminists; the acceptance of evolution as scientific fact; the affirmation of the primacy of environmentalism. And it's not just the secondary textbooks that worry me. Secular elementary books routinely encourage students to "be your own person" and "think of yourself first."

So what to do? To redeem our students' minds for God's glory requires us to acknowledge that "in Him [in God] we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) and that whatever is done must be done "heartily as to the Lord" (Colossians. 3:23). This acknowledgment makes significant the use of explicitly Christian textbooks—those texts that do more than merely purport a "moral emphasis" or tack a Bible verse onto the title page. A thoroughly Christian textbook helps a



"Education . . . has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading."

George Trevelyan

teacher to support the spiritual growth of Christian students and to equip that student for God's service.

Why are Christian texts so crucial? Foremost, Christian texts promote a biblical worldview. For example, when discussing the women's rights movement of the 70s, a Chris-

tian history text would not include a poem proclaiming disappointment as "a woman's lot" or praise a woman's "right to choose," as I saw recently in one secular text. Instead, a Christian textbook factually discusses the positive and negative outcomes of the movement, basing all such evaluation on Scripture. Christian textbooks do not, as do their secular counterparts, include statements that deny God as Creator ("millions of years ago," "before civilization got started,") or that worship the creature more than the Creator (Romans 1:25, 28-32) by proclaiming humans the "greatest destroyers of all time" or apocalyptically stating that the earth is in the midst of a "garbage crisis." In short, using a Christian text, a teacher can spend time teaching rather than unteaching.

Sometimes more harm is done by what is left unsaid. A secular science textbook discusses babies and bees and rainbows but never mentions the God Who made them all (Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3). It is this absence of even an acknowledgment of God that is perhaps most telling—and most damning—for the reader. For how can a student, daily bombarded with humanism, materialism, hedonism, socialism, and pragmatism, withstand the unstated premise that "God can't be too important since He isn't mentioned anywhere in this scholarly-work"? Here Christian textbooks can effectively combat an anti-Christian worldview.

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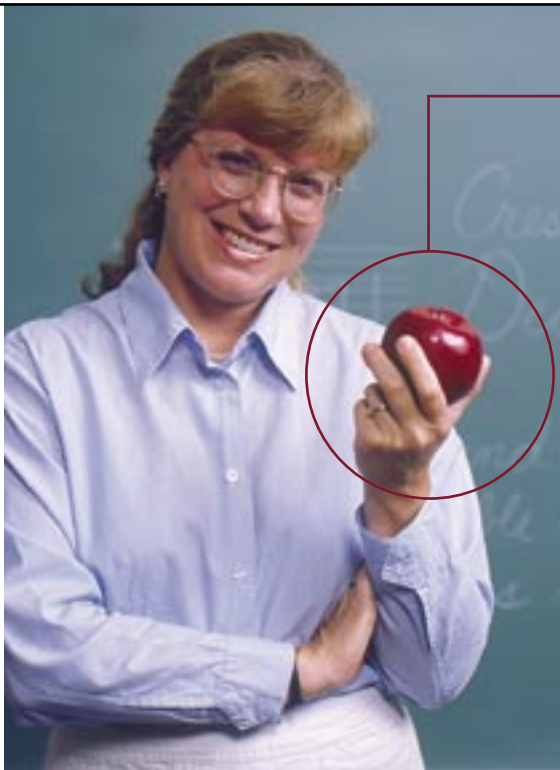
Christian textbooks emphasize the characteristics of God and principles of godly living. They recognize for each branch of study the traits of God that it manifests. A writing textbook reflects a God of creativity and beauty, a science book reflects a God of infinity and order, and a Christian history text presents world history not as a series of random acts but as events planned by an omniscient, omnipotent God. Students understand the conflict between righteousness and unrighteousness, how it is played out, and how truth and righteousness ultimately triumph. They read real-life examples of the principles of sowing and reaping and of the providence of God. Their text illustrates that God knows and plans the beginning, middle, and end (Hebrews 4:12-14, Colossians 1:16-18) and that His ways are perfect (Psalm 18:30).

Christian textbooks further support and equip Christian students by encouraging discernment. Far from being merely a “lock-step” series of exercises, Christian textbooks go beyond the presentation of facts to give students the tools necessary to detect the differences in the wisdom that is from above and that which is earthly (Proverbs 1:7). The books encourage analyzing content, using biblical principles rather than blindly accepting anything presented. For example, in a Christian literature text students are asked to compare and contrast Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* with various biblical accounts. The book also examines scriptural principles governing the consequences of Macbeth’s actions and evaluates the advice of Sir Francis Bacon’s essays in light of God’s Word. In effect, the text itself encourages students to discriminate between the good and the bad (or between the excellent and the merely

good) and to choose the one over the other.

How can we best counter the philosophies that stunt students spiritually and prepare them for nothing nobler than an increase in this world’s wisdom? With God’s help, we can use Christian texts to give students access to a higher wisdom. But Christian textbooks, even excellent ones, are not the lone answer to our educational woes. For that, we must look to Christ alone: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). He is still the best answer—still our only Hope. Why use a textbook that undermines that Hope, subtly or not?

Kim Stegall is a former Christian school teacher and is currently an author at BJU Press.



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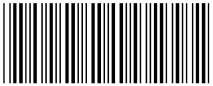


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200618

What's New? ...cont.

unsettled by their presence. Watching them causes Jacy to start some soul-searching, and when crisis strikes, she learns where true strength lies. Young Adult (183475, \$6.49)

ELEMENTARY RESOURCES

BookLinks

Derwood, Inc (Level 2)—Teaching guide and novel (124438, \$13.99); teaching guide (124420, \$7.99); novel 027458, \$6.49)

The Bridge (Level 3)—Teaching guide and novel (124453, \$13.99), teaching guide (124446, \$7.99), novel (030148, \$6.49)

SECONDARY RESOURCES

The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan—The Teacher's Guide includes full-size pages from the student text as well as introductory essays, marginal notes, vocabulary glosses, and discussion questions.

Teacher's Guide—(125278, \$20.70)

Novel (Barbour)—(188250, \$3.97)

(Prices are subject to change without notice.)

The 2003 Textbook Catalog and Order Form

—They include Press materials and textbooks. For more information, call 1.800.845.5731 or write to BJU Press, Greenville, SC 29614.

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tant that he have a self-evaluation of the performance.

Include in the daily journal pictures of different lessons—bulletin boards, visuals, games, field trips, or special occasions that the student teacher has been involved in planning or participating.

Open your files to the student teacher.

He will be able to benefit from the valuable resources that you have collected through the years. However, the student teacher should be creative and come up with some ideas, games, strategies, and visuals and not rely on cooperating teachers all of the time. You may be able to glean many new ideas from the student teacher.

Include him in all extra duties that a teacher performs. He should attend all faculty meetings, parent/teacher

conferences, PTA meetings, fairs, field trips, and bus and lunch duty, workshops, home visits, and any other meetings that are required of the teacher. Student teachers on the secondary level should attend at least one athletic event and perhaps a school play or concert.

Let your student teacher handle all discipline problems when he is teaching the class, following the guidelines that you have set down.

Involve the student teacher in writing newsletters or notes home to the parents. You should approve them before they are sent out to the parents.

Above all, enjoy the time you have with your student teacher, helping him, challenging him, and even learning from him. For he too is a student in your keeping.

Joan Hill is a former elementary teacher and principal and currently teaches education courses and observes student teachers for BJU.