

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION OF CURRICULUM

Interpreting the Biblical Perspectives of the Language Arts

Biblical Concepts Related to the Language Arts

God is a communicating God, speaking to create, to rule, to inform, to bless, and to curse (Genesis 1; Amos 4:13; Jeremiah 44:2-4; 1 Timothy 3:16-17).

As a communicating Being, God communicates to people through His creation, His Word, and His Son, Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:29; 3:9 Psalm 19:1-6; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3).

People are created in God's image as communicative beings, responsible for communicating with God and other people (Exodus 4:10-12; Isaiah 50:4; Jeremiah 1:4-9).

The truthfulness and wholesomeness of all other communications is to be evaluated by the Bible, since it alone is absolute truth (Psalm 119:89, 97-100; Isaiah 8:20; John 17:17).

People's communications reveal and express their inner attitudes and beliefs (Proverbs 10:18-21; 16:23; 17:7; 18:4; Matthew 12:34-35).

The communication skills of reading, speaking, and writing are invaluable in dispersing and growing in knowledge (Deuteronomy 17:18-20; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19:7, 8; Colossians 4:16; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Excellence in communication skills is a means of reflecting God's character to others (Proverbs 11:11; 15:1; 16:24; 25:11-13; 27:9; Ephesians 4:14, 15; 29).

Reflections of God in the Language Arts

The nature of God is revealed in His oral and written communications, which reveal He is a Personal Being.

God reveals His character in Scripture. This self-revelation serves as the divine ideal for human verbal communication.

The creative and moral nature of God can be revealed in the beauty, truth, and goodness of human literary forms.

The works of God throughout history are revealed in recorded documents. They are also revealed in literature that depicts the consequences of human cooperation with or rebellion against God.

The orderliness of God is revealed in the systematic structure and nature of languages.

Basic Values and Norms Related to the Language Arts

A Biblical perspective of the language arts focuses on the following values:

- Effectiveness
- Meaningfulness
- Authenticity
- Integrity
- Clarity
- Consideration
- Fairness
- Appropriateness
- Conciseness
- Aesthetic vitality
- Respect for those communicating
- Responsibility and freedom in the use of language

A Biblical perspective of the language arts decries language that violates:

- Love
- Truth
- Justice

Teaching Distinctives of a Christian Perspective of the Language Arts

The Christian teaching of the language arts focuses attention on developing students' oral and written expression to become more like God's in clarity, objectivity, logic, truth, persuasive force, and efficiency.

The Christian teaching of the language arts helps to develop students' linguistic and aesthetic judgment and comprehension according to biblical criteria.

The Christian teaching of the language arts uses both literature and Scripture to orient students to their culture from a Christian point of view, thus reinforcing their spiritual convictions and strengthening them against the negative influences of culture.

The Christian teaching of the language arts emphasizes that true literary criteria originate with God and have moral, theological, historical, and philosophical bases.

The Christian teaching of the language arts uses literature not only for personal enjoyment, but also to promote the formation of students' character and Christian worldview.

The Christian teaching of language arts helps students discern the worldview and meaning of literary works, to understand them in terms of a biblical worldview, and then to respond personally to such works.

Attitudes and Skills to Be Manifested in Students from a Study of the Language Arts

Students will develop and express the image of God within them through the development of distinct, logical, truthful, beautiful, and appropriate communication skills.

Through the development of comprehension and interpretation skills, students will be able to see more clearly the reflection of God in what they read.

Through developing the ability to read with understanding and to communicate effectively coupled with spiritual wisdom, students will dedicate their lives to serving God as agents of reconciliation and healing in their community.

Through the improvement of reasoning skill, students will be able to analyze and judge from a distinctly Christian worldview what they read and observe with reference to their own times.

By exercising aesthetic judgment in the analysis of literature, students will develop their own aesthetic discrimination, preferences, and creativity in harmony with God's character.

By acquiring knowledge of literary culture, students will develop points of contact for their testimony to unbelievers.

By learning accuracy, objectivity, honesty, and research procedures, students will gain a higher sense of responsibility for truth in details and perspective as well as factual investigation.

Through the development and application of language skills, students will more readily reflect the image of God in their specific areas of vocational service.

Through the development of language skills, students will be able to express their personal creative gifts and thoughts, thus affirming their uniqueness and calling as individuals created in God's image.

Points of Conflict with Secular Approaches to the Teaching of the Language Arts

The Christian teaching of the language arts does not sanction in oral or written expression unfettered spontaneity, frivolous, depressing, and sordid writing, and the unrestrained use of nonstandard language forms.

The Christian teaching of the language arts does not subordinate reading to nonverbal sensory apprehension.

The Christian teaching of the language arts, while appreciating the aesthetic and personal dimensions of communication, subordinates literary content and verbal expression to biblical principles of morality and human freedom.

The Christian teaching of the language arts avoids relativism in literary criticism and interpretation. Rather, it views literary expressions as a vehicle of meaning independent of the individual reader and accountable to interpretation based on external, objective, and permanent standards found in Scripture.

While acknowledging that vice and immoral issues can be portrayed in good literature, the Christian teaching of literature does not promote permissivism in its selection. Rather, it subjects all literature selection to the criteria of its ability to promote growth in godliness, reveal the purposes of God in creation, and affirm a structured and morally responsible world.

The Christian teaching of language arts precludes the use of pragmatism as the basis for persuasion. Rather, persuasion is to be based upon the logical integrity and honesty of Scripture as well as the urgency with which it speaks to the human dilemma.

Teaching Strategies That Can Help Communicate the Biblical Worldview in the Language Arts

Study the worldview and value system of various authors and relate them to the literature they wrote.

Balance the literature selections with sound, moral choices, especially where mandated curricula may include immoral or questionable pieces.

Study the influence of the Bible on everyday speech and proverbs:

Old wives' tales (1Timothy 4:7)

The sweat of your brow (Genesis 3:19)

Select biographies of authors who held the Christian worldview.

Study authors who have influenced people toward right or wrong actions.

In the study of *Hamlet*, find Scripture quotations or allusions. Discuss how they are used.

Study works of literature with direct Christian allegory, such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Paradise Lost*, etc.

Use fables that emphasize Christian values.

Study the religious and philosophical training of various authors, relating it to the influence on their writings.

Evaluate literature on the basis of traditional criteria that reflect a biblical understanding of the human nature and the cosmos.

Bibliography

Perspectives have been compiled from the following resources, each of which contributes much to the concept of the Biblical integration of school subjects.

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