



FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY EL PASO, TEXAS HOSTS FIRST ICAA VISIT UNDER NEW RUBRIC EVALUATION MODEL

By Dr. Tom Agnew



Change brings about excitement and anxiety. Excitement that things will get better, instruction will improve, and the school will better meet the needs of the students. Anxiety in questions like, "What if this is too hard?" Or "I am not good enough." The ICAA team grappled with these questions as we attempted to accomplish two things during our visit to Faith Christian Academy in El Paso, Texas. First, ICAA was there to conduct a re-evaluation site visit. But just not any visit. The first visit under the new rubric and reporting system approved by the ICAA Commission in July, 2007. Second, the first attempt to produce a report that will be useful to schools and guide them in their improvement and development.

Faith Christian Academy courageously accepted the challenge of being the first ICAA school to be evaluated under this new process. Was it (the new process) perfect? Far from it. Was it without glitches? Hardly. But there was unanimous consent that this process was a giant step to move away from the subjective,

personal bias we all have about how to educate into a more professional, research based, data driven, biblical based model to help schools focus on what is really important.

I want to commend Faith Christian Academy and its administrator, Mr. Cesar Ramirez for taking on the challenge and allowing ICAA to work at the process in the real world setting of a Christian School. While the school may have felt things like *thorough*, *meticulous*, and even *picky*, in essence the process was a systematic and comprehensive look at FCA and how the school goes about the delivery of Christian Education.



Dr. David Hand and Cesar Ramirez

The school is to be commended for the care they have for students and the families in their charge. It is obvious that customer service ranks high and is appreciated by parents. The attention to detail in care of facilities is apparent. Students are prepared for life beyond FCA and the results of a mature school are shown in the alumni that are now working in the school and church. Thanks to FCA for your hospitality and the friendly way you answered our questions and provided the things we needed.

I want to personally thank the outstanding team of professional Christian Educators that made up the team. I felt like the coach of the Dallas Cowboys playing a high school team. I did not have to say much or do much. I also want to acknowledge the invaluable addition of Dr. David Hand and Dr. Kim Boyd. Their input into this process is taking ICAA to new heights. And finally, I thank the Lord Jesus Christ. We are His people, these are His schools, and ICAA is His association. ■



ICAA FCA Site Team: **Jeanne Zakem**, Rockwall Christian Academy (Rowlett, Texas), **Hans Gabre**, Livets Ord Christian School (Uppsala, Sweden), **Michael Pratt**, Victory Christian Center School (Charlotte, North Carolina), **Patricia Losey**, Covenant Schools of Albuquerque (Albuquerque, New Mexico), **Donnie Peal**, Christian Fellowship School (Benton, Kentucky), **Nancy Purtell**, Lake Country Christian School (Fort Worth, Texas), **Dr. Tom Agnew**, Chair (Tulsa, Oklahoma), and **Sue Tidwell**, Calvary Christian Academy (Fort Worth, Texas)



NO LONGER “OLD SCHOOL”

RETHINKING THE WAY YOU OFFER COURSES

Oral Roberts University eAcademy is the perfect complement to any Christian school. We offer a nationally accredited online Christian education program, serving grades 3-12, backed by the excellence of Oral Roberts University, and supported by the University’s School of Education.

We would like to offer Christian schools an opportunity to partner with the ICAA-accredited ORU eAcademy to enhance your learning community by expanding your course offerings. Do you have a group of students who need to take an upper level mathematics or science course, but you cannot find a qualified teacher in your area? ORU eAcademy can assist your school by providing the course online. We intentionally hire spirit-filled, certified/degreed teachers, who guide learners through the curriculum. You can enroll your students in eAcademy during the regular school day schedule. At the time they are to take their upper level course, they go to a computer lab, where they are supervised by an on-site teacher assistant, log into the ORU eAcademy, and work on the course with an eAcademy highly qualified teacher. Your students will be able to communicate with the teacher via instant messaging or cellular phone if they have questions and receive a response within 24 hours. Additionally, the teacher can “call” class meetings with the ability to conduct virtual meetings with your students via the internet, using a whiteboard, power point presentations, and group discussions to further explain concepts. Upon course completion, your school will receive an official record for each student with the course grade. Additionally, status reports are automatically updated and available 24 hours a day, while transcripts or grade reports are available upon request.

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Our motto: “No Longer Old School” speaks to the forward thinking at ORU eAcademy. Online learning continues to grow with a rise in enrollment among high school students, as well as middle school and elementary school students. Therefore, we are poised to offer schools more options for educating their learners.

Please visit our website at www.orueAcademy.com, send a message to our email address – eAcademy@oru.edu, or call our toll free number – 1.800.678.5899, for more information. ■



USING ASSESSMENT TO LINK TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING

Dr. Kim E. Boyd, Associate Dean,
Oral Roberts University School of Education

A major paradigm shift is taking place in ICAA schools. Schools are expected to move from an input-based model to a performance-based assessment model, where schools are challenged to provide evidence that answers the questions: How do you know students are learning; what do your students know; and what are they able to do? To answer these questions, ICAA schools are confronted with the daunting task of rethinking how they assess student learning and how they evaluate teacher effectiveness.

THE RESEARCH

The results of the research work conducted by Bill Sanders, has been pivotal in reasserting the importance of the individual teacher on student learning (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). It has been well documented that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor. Effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels (Stronge & Tucker, 2003).

THE VISION

Teachers should be able to demonstrate that they can deliver effective instruction, employ meaningful

UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 11, 2008

ORUEF Regional Conference – El Paso, TX
Faith Christian Academy
Cesar Ramirez, 915.594.3305

January 18, 2008

ORUEF Regional Conference – Fort Worth, TX
Calvary Christian Academy
Sue Tidwell, 817.332.3351

February 15, 2008

ORUEF Regional Conference – Baker, LA
Bethany Christian School
Carolyn DeSalvo, 225.774.0133

March 26-27, 2008

ORUEF Christian School Conference –
Monterrey, Mexico
Colegio Maranatha
Sandra Serna, 818.989.5777

classroom assessments and analyze and reflect on their experiences. Successful educators should have an impact on student learning. Their students should gain substantive knowledge and skills. An assessment of effective instruction should include an evaluation of the instructor's ability to evaluate the degree of impact they have on student learning by examining:

- The teacher's ability to construct and deliver instructional units.
- The teacher's ability to construct challenging, meaningful classroom assessments.
- The teacher's ability to analyze and reflect on the teaching experience to promote professional growth.

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Good Assessment should not only include evidence that students are learning, but an evaluation of teacher instruction that leads to professional growth. This requires teachers to look honestly at both their weaknesses and strengths as an effective instructor.

Effective instruction includes the following processes: a description of the learning context and any specific instructional adaptations needed to meet the learning needs of individual students; instructional goals that are based on the state content standards, and include outcomes in subject matter knowledge, skills, and reasoning abilities; an assessment plan designed to measure student performance before (pre-assessment), during the instructional sequence (formative assessments), and after (post-assessment); and the analysis and reflection of the instructional design, educational context and degree of learning gains demonstrated by your students.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

The process of using assessment results for student, instructor, curriculum, and program improvement, requires us to think differently about assessment. Assessments lead not only to thinking about how did the students perform, but how effective was the instructional strategies and materials. Assessments should lead to a reflective activity that includes answering the following questions:

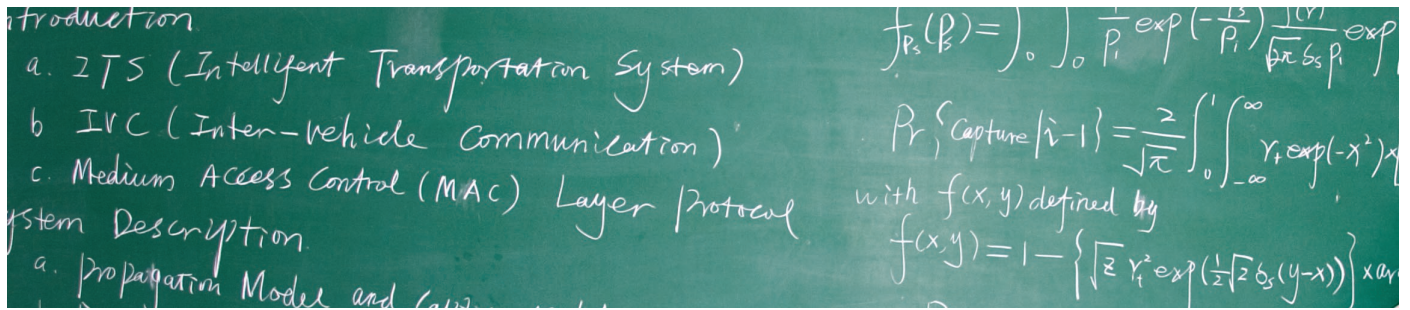
- What did your assessment results tell you about the degree to which each of your learning goal(s) and objective(s) were achieved for your whole class, and for each of your students?
- Do the assessment results accurately reflect the degree of learning students demonstrated during the classroom activities?

- What conclusions can be made about the extent to which each of the learning goals was met?
- What were the greatest barriers to achieving the learning results?
- Do the assessment results show a connection between the learning goals, instruction, and assessment?
- How did the instructor's decisions, practices, and actions effect student learning?
- What were successful activities or learning experiences and why were they successful?
- What activities needed strengthening or modification?
- Reflect on your own abilities and identify what professional knowledge, skills, or dispositions (e.g., attitudes, values, and beliefs) would improve your instruction.
- What was the most significant learning insight?
- What professional development activities are needed to improve the effectiveness of your instruction, and describe your plan for meeting your professional goals?

Using assessments to collect and use data to determine the impact on student learning is common practice for most P-12 schools; however, using multiple assessments and linking assessment data to teacher evaluations and for improvement in instruction, curriculum, and program improvement is a less common practice for most schools. ICAA schools can help lead the way and become the models if they are willing to challenge the present paradigms and take a leap of faith into the future. It is time to think about the growth and the development potential within the ICAA schools. It is time to stop clinging to the security of past accomplishments and to take on the challenge of rethinking how to use assessments to not only measure student achievement, but to evaluate teacher effectiveness. ■

References

- Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement* (Research Progress Report). Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center.
- Stronge, J. H. & Tucker, P. D. (2003). *Linking teacher evaluation and student learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



DEFINING THE PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL EDUCATOR

Dr. David B. Hand,
Dean of the School of Education



I realize that the ORUEF/ICAA members have often heard me refer to NCATE, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the standards of accreditation that the association has developed for the purpose of raising the level of teacher preparation as well as the classroom practice of teaching. I would like to share with you the latest developments in NCATE

as they relate to the improvement of teacher preparation, the quality of teacher performance, and the professional dispositions required for teachers.

I challenge you, the ICCA administrators and teachers, to reflect on the following information and consider the quality of teaching, standard of educational performance, and the level of professional dispositions that are taking place in your Christian school. See if you would agree with me, that it is time for a maturing and development of a higher level of professional expertise to take place in our Christian schools.

NCATE HAS DEFINED “PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS” AS:

Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as teachers and administrators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development.

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES HAVE COMPENSATED FOR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Christian school principals and administrators need to be speaking into their schools by addressing their teachers’ knowledge base, teaching skills, classroom performance, and the quality of their teachers’ professional dispositions. Yes, the qualities of the Christian lifestyle, role modeling, and biblical integration are the hallmarks of the Christian educator. However, many times we have used the spiritual qualities to compensate for a lack of the teacher’s knowledge, skills and the dispositions required to be a professional educator. It is time to understand and act upon what research has demonstrated; the most important determinant of high quality education is a well-prepared teacher.

To achieve this goal NCATE has stated that teachers and administrators should be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to work successfully with children of all races, ethnicities, disabilities/exceptionalities and socioeconomic groups. Does this not equate to what those of us in Christian education desire as the qualities of a good teacher and administrator? Christian educators should have these qualities and even more when you add the Spirit-filled Christian component.

The ICAA member school leaders and faculty would do well to accept the concepts and goals set by NCATE of achieving continuous school improvement, accountability, development of qualified teachers and administrators, and the improvement of sound school governance. At a minimum the ICAA school leaders need to assure their constituents that the school has employed teachers who:

- have the content knowledge needed to teach students
- have the pedagogical and professional knowledge needed to teach effectively
- practice and internalize the belief that all students can learn
- demonstrate fairness in educational settings by meeting the educational needs of all students in a caring, non-discriminatory, and equitable manner
- understand the impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability/exceptionality, and language on students and their learning
- can apply their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a manner that facilitates student learning

COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLING FOR ALL CHILDREN

Christian educators need to recognize the existence of an unacceptable achievement gap based on race, ethnicity, disability/exceptionality and socioeconomic status. The gap is exacerbated by some children being assigned well-prepared teachers and other children being assigned unprepared and under-prepared teachers, this is happening even in the ICAA member schools. Closing the achievement gap requires that all children be educated by teachers and other professional personnel who meet rigorous professional standards. We as Christian educators need to renew our commitment to professional schooling for all children by demanding well-prepared teachers for all children.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LEADERS NEED TO ASSURE THAT:

- all teachers are well-prepared before children are entrusted to their care
- all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions needed to help all children learn
- their schools assure that every child has a caring, qualified, and effective teacher

At a time when more Christian parents are demanding that their children be taught by well-prepared teachers, it is time for the ORUEF/ICAA Christian school leaders and teachers to realize the need for continuous individual teacher professional development as well a continuous school improvement. ■

ICAA SCHOOLS WITH A SCHEDULED VISIT FOR THE 2007-08 SCHOOL YEAR

(OFFICIAL, CANDIDATE, PROVISIONAL, OR RE-EVALUATION SITE VISIT)

It is a busy year for ICAA schools.

Agape Christian Academy

San Pedro Sula, Cortez, Honduras

Agape Christian School

Wichita Falls, TX

Central Christian Academy

Houston, PA

Christian Faith Center Academy

Creedmoor, NC

Christian Fellowship School

Benton, KY

Christian Heritage Academy

Madisonville, KY

Christian Outreach School

Hillsboro, MO

Claremore Christian School

Claremore, OK

Colegio Monterrey

San Jose, Costa Rica

Cornerstone Christian School

San Antonio, TX

Destiny High School

Milwaukee, WI

Eagle Heights Christian Academy

Pearland, TX

Faith Academy

Gonzales, LA

Faith Christian Academy

El Paso, TX

Faith International Academy

Chennai

Fellowship Christian Academy

Ft. Worth, TX

Gimnasio Campestre Beth Shalom

Bogota, Colombia

Gimnasio Campestre Cristiano

Chia, Cundinamarca, Colombia

Grace Christian Academy

Maryland Heights, MO

Greenhill Farms Christian Academy

Norfolk, VA

High Point Preparatory Academy

Arlington, TX

Integrity School

Reynosa, Mexico

Kings Grant Day School

Virginia Beach, VA

Lake Country Christian School

Ft. Worth, TX

Legacy Christian Academy

Alamogordo, NM

Livets Ord Christian School

Uppsala, Sweden

Living Stones Christian School

Alvin, TX

Morning Star Christian Academy

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Mt. Zion Christian Academy

Durham, NC

New Covenant Christian Academy

Colmar Manor, MD

New Life Christian Academy

Sanford, FL

Redemptive Life Academy & Preschool

West Palm Beach, FL

River City Christian School

San Antonio, TX

Rosehill Christian School

Tomball, TX

Summit Christian Academy

Broken Arrow, OK

Texas Bufkin Academy

Milwaukee, WI

Victory Christian School

Tulsa, OK

William Bradford Christian School

Pryor, OK

RECOMMENDED READING

Recommended by Dr. David Hand, Dean, ORU School of Education and Sue Tidwell, Administrator of Calvary Academy (Fort Worth, Texas)

Healing ADD

by Daniel G. Amen, MD

(Author of Change Your Brain, Change Your Life)

Dr. Amen has discovered that there are six types of attention deficit disorder, each with its own distinctive brain dysfunctions and treatments. He details each of the six types in his book and gives strategies to help the individual who suffers. He is board certified in child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry and licensed in nuclear brain imaging. The book is cutting edge in that he shows actual nuclear imaging of individuals with ADD and can prove scientifically that it is a legitimate brain disorder. Through his research the lives of many have changed. His combination of psychiatry and psychology along with the medical research has brought innovation into a misunderstood and challenging disorder. ■



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Accrediting Early Childhood, Elementary & Secondary Christian Schools