

# SCHOOL LIGHT LINES



CHRISTIAN LIGHT  
EDUCATION



Fall 2019 | Volume 40 | Number 1

Carolyn and several co-teachers spent ten days in Ireland in the summer of 2018. The short inspirations in this series were sparked by that visit.

## Inspiration From Ireland | Part 1: Gather Out the Stones | Carolyn Martin

*“Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway, gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people” (Isaiah 62:10).*

One does not venture far into the Irish countryside before encountering rock walls. These walls line the narrow roads, fence in the small fields, and stand as a monument to a time when life was harsher and slower-paced.

Some of the oldest rock walls were built in the time of Roman occupation and have stood for over 1,300 years. Some rock fences have been reinforced with barbed wire, and many stone gates have been replaced with wooden or modern gates.

The rock walls remind me of a time when the daily rhythms of life allowed for the hours and days required to erect them, for the minutes it took to take down a rock gate and build it up again, a time of perseverance and patience, a time of making do with available resources. These walls are not just piles of rocks. The builders skillfully laid them, one rock upon another, to stand through the seasons.

Rocks are a resource that Ireland has in abundance. The land is covered with them. Before growing crops, farmers had to clear away the rocks. Trees were scarce, so wooden fences were not an option. Using the rocks to build fences and walls made good sense, especially since the fields were small and the rocks didn't

need to be carried far. Building fences and walls put the rocks to good use and cleared the land.

Originally, stone fences had stone gates. These consisted of stones stacked into a gap in the fence. When someone needed to get through the gate, he removed the stones from the gap.

[Continued on page 10](#)



© Carolyn Martin



### Understanding and Helping Students With Attention Deficits

How do we help students who can't pay attention?

Page 2



### Adventures in Peru

Let's take a closer look at this land of extremes.

Page 4



### Lightning Outdoor Classroom

Understanding the biggest spark of static electricity known to man.

Page 6

## Attention Please!

Attention Please! addresses an issue that many teachers struggle with—that of commanding and keeping the attention of students. In this first article Joshua addresses attention deficits, a topic we cannot evade as we address the subject.

# Understanding and Helping Students With Attention Deficits

Joshua Robertson

A pencil clatters to the floor. Teacher Sylvia automatically glances Richard's way—just in time to see him dramatically stretch into the aisle to fetch his pencil. *Crash!* Richard tumbles to the floor, attracting everyone's attention. He scrambles up clumsily, bumping a neighbor, and flops back into his seat, knocking his just-retrieved pencil to the floor again.

Richard is intelligent, active, and creative but cannot seem to restrain and focus his energy. He's not ignorant: he usually knows exactly what he did wrong. Neither is he rebellious. In fact, he's often remorseful or discouraged after he disturbs the class, lashes out at a classmate, or gets a 45 percent on a test.

Richard's report card includes many bad grades, but it also features some A's. He can rehearse correct information on a subject—and then miserably fail the test. By the time Richard has stopped wiggling, tapping, making faces, bumping into things, and dropping his pencil, he has offended several classmates and taxed the patience of his teacher. Their responses remind him of his reasons for resenting them, bringing his anger to the boiling point. When he finally realizes what his failures have cost him, he becomes frustrated and discouraged at his lack of self-control and the weight of his unfinished assignments. And then sometimes, *sometimes*, with a flash of brilliance, he completes his assignments in one impressive sweep and scores better than anyone else—minus the perfect handwriting.

In the next classroom sits little Josephine. Sweet, personable, and dreamy, Josephine finds it difficult to stay focused. Her eyes lead her mind away, and one thought leads to another . . . until "Josephine!" and she jumps guiltily back to the present. Constant reminders and constant struggles to focus plague her school days. Resolutely, she labors over her work—for a few minutes—until her mind wanders again. Discouraged by her own lack of self-control and frustrated by her slow progress and poor comprehension, Josephine becomes sad and uncertain.

Hyperactive boys and inattentive girls in American classrooms pose challenges for many teachers. Psychiatrists use terms like *Attention Deficit Disorder* (ADD) or *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (ADHD) to describe these kinds of attention-related behavior problems. However, many of the characteristics of children with ADHD seem like the "symptoms" of a poorly trained, neglected, or abused child. Is there a difference between ADHD and "plain old" lack of self-control?

Why is this problem growing? What can be done for these children? This article lays a foundation for helping students with an attention deficit.

### **ADHD is not a disease.**

ADHD is not a medical condition that can be diagnosed and treated. It is a description of a certain set of behaviors. The oft-used terms *disorder* and *diagnosis* can be misleading. While some children with ADHD symptoms may have an underlying neurological condition, ADHD describes *how* a child is acting, not *why* he is acting that way.

### **Most causes of attention deficit are related to the child's environment.**

Home life, discipline, nutrition, and lifestyle all affect a child's attention and self-control. Researchers note much higher rates of ADHD symptoms in children in these situations:

- Foster and adopted children
- Children with alcoholic parents and children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Children of parents with depression, or mental or behavioral problems
- Children who lack consistent love, shelter, protection, and security
- Children who lack proper nutrition
- Children who have suffered neurological damage through misfortune or neglect
- Children from unstructured homes with poor parenting and discipline
- Children who live in urban areas, or with an intense, high pace, urban lifestyle
- Children who are regularly exposed to electronic entertainment and media
- Children who live with excess stimulation of speed, lights, noise, crowds, etc.

**Attention deficit disorder symptoms are more common in America than in other places.**

This list reveals that American culture is ripe for attention deficit disorders. And America has a much higher rate of ADHD “diagnosis” than other areas. Experts agree that normal American behavior is growing ever closer to ADHD-like behavior. Attention deficit disorders are in large part a lifestyle issue.

**An attention deficit can be related to the child’s natural makeup.**

Some children are naturally more impulsive or distracted, but they are often also more intuitive and creative. Such children may struggle to focus and function normally even in nearly ideal environments. We need wisdom to help them live fruitful lives with the unique set of abilities God gave them. We should recognize they will be more vulnerable to serious attention deficit problems if their lives include risk factors in the list above.

**God has wisdom for relating to every child.**

God marvelously designed our resilient but fragile brains. He invested each mind with different and useful gifts and abilities. He designed us for brotherhood, servanthood, and worship, not for independence, selfishness, and materialism. Humans operate best in a simple, structured, group-oriented, God-centered lifestyle.

Society, however, promotes complex, high-speed, self-centered

lifestyles designed to produce wealth and power. Such a lifestyle taxes our minds to the limit. Modern technology intensifies the pressure, overloading our brains with constant stimuli. Some people appear to thrive in this intense environment, but many simply cannot cope with it. Lifestyle has an immeasurable effect on us and our children, both spiritually and mentally.

God’s people must provide lifestyles that promote sound spiritual and mental health. Church, school, and home should cooperate to build and maintain simple, structured, group-oriented, God-centered lifestyles. In such settings, children find security and learn to contribute according to their unique abilities without being pressured to “be somebody.”

The next article will look at practical ways teachers can build on these principles to help students with attention issues. [u](#)

*Joshua grew up in western Canada and was homeschooled through Grade 12. He taught at two schools for a total of seven years, including serving as principal at an inner-city mission school focused on assisting African Christian immigrant families. He has also tutored high school students and taught short-term or substituted at several parochial schools. He is currently working in curriculum development and translation projects at Christian Light. He and his wife and two children live in Harrisonburg, VA.*



# Adventures in Peru

Part 1: Geographical Wonders | Luke Martin



“Time for Peru class!” Hermano Lucas announces. Nine eager students grab their chairs and form a semicircle around the big wall map of Peru.

Hermano Lucas has a twinkle in his eye. “To get started, what do you remember about the size of Peru?”

“It’s almost twice the size of Texas or slightly smaller than Alaska,” John responds.

“Good job! Yes?” Hermano Lucas nods to another waving hand.

“It’s South America’s third-largest country; only Brazil and Argentina are bigger,” Peter blurts out.

“Okay! Today we want to talk about a few of Peru’s extremes. First of all, Peru has 20 of the world’s 34 climate zones.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Peru has most of the different climates that exist in the world.

“For example, southern coastal Peru has some of the driest land on earth. In fact, Lima receives only 2/10 of an inch of rain annually. Interestingly, the headwaters of the huge Amazon River begin less than 100 miles away from this extremely dry coast. So, in just a few hours you can travel from arid desert to steamy rainforest.

“Are you still with me? The Andes Mountains contain more than 50 snowcaps higher than 20,000 feet. Now, guess where the deepest canyon in the world is found. You’re right! It’s here in Peru! The Cotahuasi Canyon is up to 11,000 feet deep, more than twice as deep as the Grand Canyon!<sup>2</sup>

“Don’t you think God must have been smiling when He put the finishing touches on this land of extremes?”

Let’s take a quick trip through the three geographical regions of Peru—*la costa* (the coast), *la sierra* (the mountains), and *la selva* (the jungle).

The **coast** is a narrow strip of desert land, with about 10 percent of Peru’s land area. But over half of the people in Peru live in this arid region. Summer here is very warm, with many days

of intense tropical sunshine. Thankfully the cool ocean breezes moderate the temperature, so that even on the hottest days you feel a light, refreshing breeze. In winter, the sun hides almost perpetually behind a heavy layer of low-lying clouds. The breeze turns chilly, and it feels cold—a damp, penetrating cold that makes even your bones shiver. After several winters here, you will no longer laugh at the natives who wear a jacket when it is only 60°F—you will be wearing one too!

Moving east into the **mountains**, we find that the scenery changes very abruptly. On the main road up over the Andes, we find ourselves among towering peaks and stunning cliffs with dizzying heights and nauseating switchbacks. On this highway we climb from near sea level to almost 16,000 feet in 3 or 4 hours! Is it any wonder that many travelers get sick on this road?

The sierra contains roughly a third of Peru’s land area and a third of the people. Only the hardest live here. The temperature varies greatly from night to day. The natives will tell you, “Here the sun doesn’t warm you; it burns you!” Of the thousands of lakes in this region, Lake Titicaca is the largest.

Heading down the eastern side of the Andes, we notice that the slope is not so abrupt on this side. The gray-green altiplano soon gives way to small hillside farms, and then to lush green jungle and rushing waterfalls. The **selva** makes up over half of Peru’s land area, but only about 10 percent of the people live here. Peru has some of the best-preserved virgin jungle in the world. Scientists estimate that the jungles of Peru contain more unknown animal species than have already been discovered!



The Tambopata jungle reserve, near Puerto Maldonado is nearly one-third the size of Costa Rica and contains more species of birds and butterflies than any other place of similar size on earth. [\[1\]](#)

Sources: 1. Adams, *Turn Right at Machu Picchu* (Penguin Group) p. 41  
2. Schlecht, *Frommer's Peru*, 4th Edition (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing) p. 331



© Eddy Van 300/Flickr.com, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/eddyvan300/> 2.0. Image boundaries, resolution, color and lighting were adjusted. Caption Source: Carroll L. Henderson, *Field Guide to Costa Rica*, University of Texas Press

The glasswing butterfly, or Greta Oto. Its name in Spanish, espejito, means "little mirrors."



Scarlet macaws: very beautiful and noisy birds.

Luke has lived in Peru since 2011. He is currently in his fourth year of teaching. He and his wife Grace (a former teacher) have four children. Luke teaches grades 6-9 at Escuela Menonita del valle de Huaral. Almost half of the 22 students in the school are Peruvians. Luke's hobby and current interest is Peruvian history and archaeology.

## Amazon Facts

- In its 2,200-mile length the Amazon drops in altitude an average of less than two inches per mile.
- Where the Amazon crosses the border from Peru into Brazil, it is 1/5 of the size it will become. But at that point, it is already the largest river on earth.<sup>1</sup>
- On average the Amazon discharges 55 million gallons of water into the ocean every second—the equivalent of over 100 miles of semitruck tankers bumper to bumper.

## Yungay—the Buried City

Peru's sierra region is subject to earthquakes and landslides and can be very unstable. The southern hemisphere's worst earthquake-related disaster occurred here in 1970 when a deadly 7.8 earthquake shook the Ancash region. The quake broke loose a section of Huascaran, Peru's highest peak. (At 22,205 feet, it's the highest tropical snowcap.) Thousands of tons of snow, rocks, and mud plummeted down the steep mountainside, picking up speed and mass and wiping out entire villages and towns. Just four minutes after the quake, the avalanche reached Yungay, a city of 18,000 inhabitants, totally burying it and leaving only a handful of survivors. The earthquake and landslide left 67,000 dead, 250,000 missing, 150,000 injured, and over 250 towns and villages destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

## Pozuzo

Tucked away in a valley of the eastern slopes of the Andes lies Pozuzo, a remote village whose beginning is a harrowing tale of bureaucracy at its worst and enterprising survival at its best. In 1855, the Peruvian government signed a contract with an Austrian noble to bring European settlers to the jungle of Peru. He recruited 300 settlers and arrived two years later. The Peruvian government quarantined the group, informing them they had to settle on the desolate coastal desert. After discovering that the official who had received money to build a road over the mountains to their jungle abode had squandered the money and never built the road, the group took things into their own hands. They set out on foot to claim Pozuzo, their original destination, without knowing exactly where it was. They climbed the steep Andean slopes to dizzying heights, crossed the frigid altiplano with its thin air and accompanying altitude sickness, and finally descended into the high jungle on the eastern slopes. Twenty-four months later the survivors arrived at their destination: an empty and remote jungle valley. There they successfully established a self-sufficient village that survives to this day.<sup>3</sup>

Sources: 1. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon\\_River](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_River) 4/8/19  
2. *Gran Atlas Universal #3* (Empresa Editora El Comercio, S.A., Lima) p. 36  
3. Leon, *Rutas secretas del Perú* (Servicios Editoriales del Peru) pp. 48-69



## Outdoor Classroom

# LIGHTNING

What natural phenomenon can contain 1 billion volts of electricity and can heat the air to more than 50,000°F? Lightning! Lightning strikes somewhere on the globe about 100 times per second, making it one of the most common weather phenomena.

We do not fully understand the processes that create lightning, but a lightning bolt is basically just a giant spark of static electricity. The same principles of electricity that cause a static spark to jump between your finger and a doorknob also cause a bolt of lightning to jump between a cloud and the ground. Let's take a deeper look at how this works.

For lightning to occur, a cloud must become electrically charged. Scientists believe that interactions between moving water particles create the electrical charges in a thunderhead. First, water on the ground evaporates and rises into the thunderhead in the form of water vapor. As water vapor particles rise through the lower part of the thunderhead, they collide with other particles in the cloud. These collisions knock negatively charged electrons off the rising water vapor particles, leaving the rising vapor with a positive charge. The electrons remain in the lower part of the cloud, creating a negative charge in that area.

As water vapor rises toward the top of the thunderhead, it cools and begins to freeze. The water in this part of the cloud takes several forms: water vapor, tiny ice crystals, and larger frozen particles called graupel or soft hail. The graupel particles are heavy enough that they settle back to the lower part of the thunderhead. As they drop through the cloud, the graupel pieces strip electrons off rising particles and carry these electrons to the lower part of the cloud. This increases the separation of charges in the thunderhead, creating a stronger negative charge at the bottom of the cloud and a stronger positive charge at the top.

Meanwhile, the negative charge at the bottom of the thunderhead attracts positive charges on the ground below. (Remember, opposite charges attract and like charges repel.) A positive electrical charge builds up at the ground's surface and in objects that

rise above the ground, such as buildings, trees, and telephone poles. This charge is significant, but it is weaker than the charges in the thunderhead.

Air normally acts as an insulator. However, when the electric field in the thunderhead becomes strong enough, the field begins breaking down air particles. This process, called ionization, leaves positively and negatively charged particles that conduct electricity. The thunderhead's electric field does not ionize all the surrounding air; instead, it only ionizes little channels or paths of air called stepped leaders. These stepped leaders race at up to 200,000 mph toward the positive charges on the ground, forking and zigzagging to follow the paths of least resistance through the atmosphere.

As a stepped leader travels toward the ground, a positively charged streamer reaches up from the ground (or an object on the ground) to meet it. The stepped leader and positive streamer connect a couple hundred feet above the ground, allowing electric current to flow freely between the ground and cloud. This results in an enormous discharge of electricity called the return stroke. The return stroke heats the surrounding air to tens of thousands of degrees and creates the bright flash we see as lightning.

Most lightning never reaches the ground. The process that creates cloud-to-ground lightning also creates lightning between areas of opposite charges within clouds or between neighboring clouds. Since the electric charges within thunderheads are much stronger than those on the ground, about 80 percent of the lightning in a thunderstorm stays within the clouds.

Lightning kills a few dozen people each year in the United States alone, so it is wise to take shelter during a thunderstorm. According to the National Weather Service, you should go inside if you can hear thunder. If a storm is close enough that you can hear thunder, you are within reach of the storm's lightning. Buildings and hard-topped vehicles are the safest places to be

during a thunderstorm because the metal in their structures typically conducts electricity into the ground if they get struck by lightning. However, you can still get shocked inside a building or vehicle, especially if you are touching a metal structural component. Using the plumbing or electrical systems inside a building also increases your risk of getting shocked.

Lightning is more complex and varied than the simple description given here. Even scientists of today have not unraveled all its mysteries. Lightning powerfully displays the creativity and greatness of our God. [L](#)

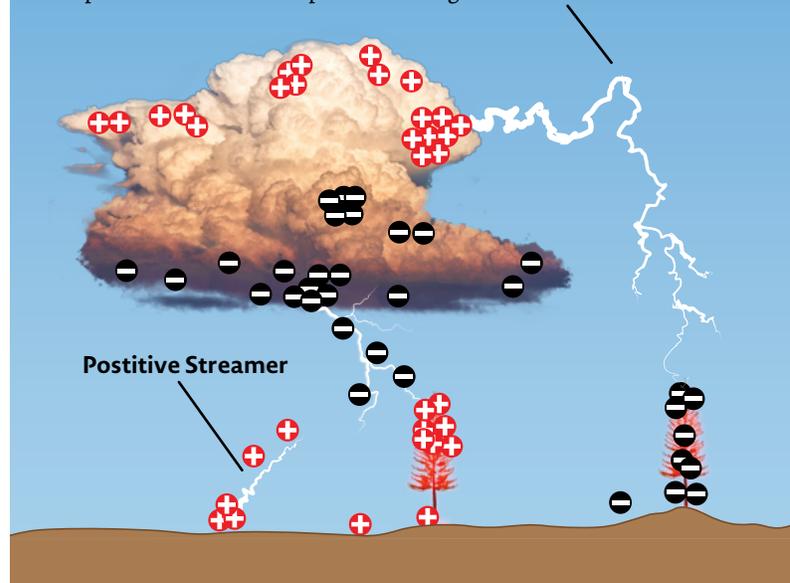


© Darin Vance

This bolt of lightning struck a tree that was roughly 275 yards away from the camera. If you examine the enlarged photo closely (below), you can see two upward streamers to the right of the main strike that are reaching up from the treetops.



**Accumulated positive charges** can also strike negative charges on the ground. These lightning bolts are often much more powerful than lightning that originates from a negative charge, because far more energy is required to reach through the extreme distance to the ground from the top of the cloud where positive charges are stored.



- ✦ Thunder is an aftereffect of lightning. Lightning superheats the air it travels through. As the air expands and contracts, it cracks and BOOMS!
- ✦ The word *lightning* is found thirteen times in the Bible.
- ✦ Around the globe at any given moment, there are forty to fifty lightning flashes a second.
- ✦ Lightning can occur in extreme forest fires, in snowstorms, in hurricanes, and during volcanic eruptions.
- ✦ Really interested in lightning? Check out red sprites, blue jets, and elves.



## Classroom Application

- ✦ Make lightning in a jar. Cut a 12" x 12" piece of aluminum foil. Fold it and push it into the bottom of the jar. Poke several thumbtacks through a dryer sheet with their heads facing the top of the jar. Place the dryer sheet over the mouth of the jar and screw on the lid. Rub a balloon on your head or on a piece of wool. Turn down the lights. Touch the balloon to the top of the jar. If the balloon has enough charge, you'll see several flashes of "lightning." This works best on a dry day with low humidity.

# Developing and Evaluating Reading Fluency

*This brief discourse on reading fluency is related to the question and the answer of “Ask Another” on page 12.*

**F**luency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Students who can read fluently have moved beyond decoding syllables and words and read in phrases, with understanding and coherence. Here are some signs of a fluent reader:

## **I pay attention to detail.**

- I stop at periods.
- I pause at commas.
- I emphasize italic and bold words.
- I recognize dialogue and quotation marks.

## **I use appropriate expression.**

- I don't sound like a robot. I avoid monotone.
- I use my voice to show characters' feelings.
- I change my voice up and down, louder and softer.
- I read for effect.

## **I read with comprehension.**

- I understand what I read.
- I make connections.
- I read to learn.
- I “see in my mind's eye” what I read.

## **I read accurately.**

- I make sure that what I read makes sense.
- I pronounce words correctly.
- I don't add, leave out, or substitute words.
- I use my lips and tongue to form words correctly.

## **I read with proper pace and rate.**

- I don't read too fast or too slow.
- I can vary the speed of my reading.
- I read like I speak. (It sounds natural.)
- I read in smooth phrases.

*- compiled*

## **Evaluating Reading Fluency**

Because reading involves more than the phonics that is taught and tested, it is important to evaluate fluency also. Rubrics can be used to assess reading ability that cannot be measured by quiz and test scores alone. The following rubric was developed especially to evaluate students using Christian Light's Learning to Read program, but can be used profitably with other programs too.

Assessment using the rubric should be done during normal reading time, especially when the student is not aware that he is being evaluated. Assessment should be made as the student reads a paragraph of three sentences or more. In first grade it is recommended that students read the story silently before you use the rubric to evaluate their oral reading. Assess regularly—at least once per Lightunit in Learning to Read. Students who score poorly should be assessed more frequently to check progress.

To assess a student, match his reading ability to the description that best fits his performance for each skill on the rubric. Record the number for each skill in the correct column of the Student Reading Assessment Record and average the numbers. The Student Reading Assessment Record can be copied and included with the student's report card. (It would be helpful if parents would also have a copy of the rubric and would know the recommended goal for the student.)

At the completion of Learning to Read, a first grader should be able to score a three in each category. By the end of first grade, a four should be attainable. A second grader should score fives at the end of grade two.

## **Why It's Important**

Since the reading rubric is a better overall evaluation of a student's reading ability than his grades, it is an important tool in evaluating his readiness for second grade. If at the end of first grade, a student scores significantly lower than the goal of four in each category, consider having him rework some of the course or retain him in first grade. [■](#)

*—adapted from the introduction to Christian Light's Learning to Read Teacher's Guide*



# Reading Rubric

	1	2	3	4	5
Rate	Reads slowly; word by word; frequent pauses or hesitation between words	Reads slowly; uneven; word by word	Mixture of slow and fast	Reads well; reads smoothly most of the time	Reads at a rate close to normal conversation; few unnecessary pauses
Word Recognition	Sounds out most words	Sounds out many words and/or makes many careless mistakes	Sounds out some words; makes some careless mistakes	Infrequently sounds out words	Knows most words; usually self-corrects mistakes
Phrasing	No sense of how words are connected	Does not sense proper word connections; little observance of punctuation	Few pauses at inappropriate places; observes some punctuation	Uses two or three word phrases; observes most punctuation	Uses sensible phrasing within the sentence structure; observes punctuation
Expression	No expression; monotone	Uses little expression; saying the word is more important than understanding the concept	Attempts expression at times	Reads with expression, but does not always use correct expression	Uses appropriate expression throughout the reading; sounds like natural conversation

## Student Reading Assessment Record

Name of Student: _____ Grade Level of Student: _____	Date	LightUnit	Rate	Word Recognition	Phrasing	Expression	Average of the Categories



© Carolyn Martin

Continued from page 1

Then he refilled the gap, one stone at a time. Obviously, life did not move at today's rapid pace in the days of stone fences.

Rocks last a long time. Not only do the stone fences still stand, but skeletal houses—stone houses with no roofs or doors or windows—also still stand. Ancient churches such as Gallarus Oratory were built entirely of stone laid upon stone, so closely fit that no water seeps in even today. The ancient beehive huts the Irish monks lived in also stand as monuments to skillful builders in stone.

Are we teachers today building with stone? Or do we sometimes use hay, wood, or stubble? Do we willingly put time and effort, with God's help, into things of eternal value? Or do we impatiently grab for the nearest and easiest solution today without thought for tomorrow?

Ireland's sturdy rock walls remind me as a teacher to build carefully and purposefully for the long term. [L](#)



© Carolyn Martin

*Carolyn Martin has taught first graders for twenty-five years at Hickory Hollow Christian School in Dayton, Virginia. Her first twenty years of teaching were in a chicken house that was converted into a school. She has particular interest in reading and how reading works in the brain. She enjoys children's books, story time at school, and reading stories to her nieces and nephews. Carolyn lives in Harrisonburg, Virginia.*



⇒ A student in my English Lit class gave a big thumbs-down to the autobiography he'd read. His reason: "The author talks about only himself."

—selected

⇒ On the last day of the year, my first graders gave me beautiful handwritten letters. As I read them aloud, my emotions got the better of me, and I started to choke up. "I'm sorry," I said. "I'm having a hard time reading." One of my students said, "Just sound it out."

—selected

⇒ My three favorite things are eating my family and not using commas.

⇒ My first graders were thinking up new words with the *cl* blend. A little girl suggested "claps." I responded, "Yes! as in 'she claps her hands.'" Another girl offered, "Or, like the house will claps in an earthquake."

—Martha Kornelsen, Boley, OK

⇒ During snack time, a kindergartner asked why some raisins were yellow while others were black. I didn't know the answer, so I asked my friend, a first-grade teacher, if she knew. "Yellow raisins are made from green grapes, and black raisins are made from red grapes," she explained. One little boy suggested, "Maybe that's why she teaches first grade, because she's just a little bit smarter than you."

—selected

⇒ A rule of grammar: double negatives are a no-no.

⇒ What's the longest word in the dictionary? *Smiles*. Because there's a *mile* between the first letter and the last. (Smiles go a long way.)



## To Learn or To Teach

I am a logophile. (I like words.) And I know there's a fine line between learning and teaching. So when I heard "learn" sometimes being used instead of "teach," it intrigued me, my limited knowledge of Pennsylvania Dutch making me curious.

For example, after glancing at achievement test results, a teacher might pout, "I'm afraid I didn't learn them very much this year."

Here is what I found after speculating and digging a bit.

### English etymology

**Teach:** Old English *taecan* "to show, declare, point out, demonstrate . . ." was partly from Proto-Germanic *taikijan* "to show." (Notice that to *teach* was to *show*.)

**Learn:** Middle English *lernen*, from Old English *leornian*; akin to Old High German *lernēn* "to learn."

(Notice that both words have Germanic connections.)

### German rendering

**Teach:** *lehren*

**Learn:** *lernen*

Notice the similarities in spelling. Pronunciations (to our English ears) are similar but distinct.

**Pennsylvania Dutch** apparently doesn't bother with differentiating between the two German pronunciations.

*laerne, lanne, larn:* 1. to learn 2. to teach 3. to educate

So there you have it—a word transposition. In Pennsylvania Dutch *learn* and *teach* can be the same words. When speaking English, a Pennsylvania Dutchman might use *learn* in place of *teach* until he *learns* otherwise from someone who *teaches* him. I suppose this is excusable and perhaps even defensible because it would make sense in the mother tongue. (I wouldn't say the same for using "taached" rather than "taught" for the past tense.)

### Students (and Parents) Rebel Against Online Curriculum

Summit Learning is an online curriculum that is used in many public school districts nationwide. It is funded by Mark Zuckerberg (co-founder and CEO of Facebook) and his wife Priscilla's charity. It is hailed as revolutionary and is highly acclaimed as a way to customize a child's education. Students supposedly can learn and progress at their own speed.

But it is not received well everywhere. For example, in January 2019, about fifty students walked out of McPherson (Kansas) Middle School, in protest of the program. A number of parents were against it, naming lack of privacy, excessive screen time, and less student-teacher interaction as reasons to reject it. Some

even pulled their students out of the district altogether.

**Source:** <https://www.kwch.com/content/news/McPherson-superintendent-addresses-backlash-with-new-online-curriculum-508976591.html>

### Give and Ye Shall Recieve

Peter Tabichi, a teacher in a remote part of Kenya, gave 80 percent of his meager income to the poor in his village. His school had no library, no laboratory, and only one computer with shoddy Internet access. Tabichi teaches science to high schoolers in the semi-arid village of Pwani, where 1/3 of his students are orphans or have only one parent.

Tabichi was awarded the Global Teacher Prize, selected from among 10,000 nominees around the world, and was given \$1 million. He plans to give most of his prize money to help the school and students. Tabichi appears to have a real heart for the students, saying, "At times, whenever I reflect on the challenges they face, I shed tears." In his acceptance speech, he credited his father, a primary school teacher (who received a long ovation when Tabichi gave him the trophy to hold up), for teaching him Christian values. Tabichi's mother died when he was 11, and his father raised the children alone.

**Source:** AP News

# Don't Miss Out!



Want to receive your own copy of LightLines? It's free and available by mail or email. (Specify your preference when you subscribe.) Subscription information on back page.



*“Ask Another” is a question-answer forum for teachers. Teachers are invited to pose questions (on school-related subjects) and offer responses to questions. LightLines will sometimes assign questions to experienced teachers and will print their responses. If you’d like to respond to the question or reply to a response, you are invited to send it to us for consideration in following issues of LightLines. (Try to keep responses under 400 words.) Please send your questions or responses to [lightlines@clp.org](mailto:lightlines@clp.org) or mail to LightLines editor, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.*

## Ask Another

**Q** It is nearing the end of the term. My first grader is not an independent worker. His reading is not fluent, and he makes many mistakes. He will find second grade a large hurdle. However, his test scores are not failing. What is the best course to take in a situation such as this? How do you satisfactorily communicate his needs to his parents?

**A** There are many reasons a first grader may struggle with reading. Has he had the practice he needs to become fluent? If he knows the material but is not fluent, more practice will probably improve his fluency and his independence. Is there a learning disability? Has he just gotten lost in the process as the lessons got harder? Sometimes slowing down and adding more review is needful.

Why might a student test higher than his actual ability? Possibly because he spends extra effort on making sure of what he is doing. (He doesn’t always have that extra energy or desire in his daily work.) Tests measure what a student has mastered; therefore, a test may be easier than his daily work, which is teaching him one more new concept.

How can a teacher keep the parents informed of what the test grades aren’t saying? One way of doing this is through fluency assessment. Christian Light’s reading program has several fluency assessment helps. In Learning to Read students are to read lists of words on a daily basis with a recommended number of words per minute. One sign of a reading issue is a continued lack of meeting the recommended goal. Another assessment help is the oral reading rubric in the Teacher’s Guide. This assessment is somewhat subjective but if used carefully can let parents know when and where the issues lie.

I include the reading rubric with our quarterly report card along with the child’s cumulative assessments. Parents can then track their child’s progress. I also record a fluency score on their report card, taken from the student’s daily word lists. This factual evidence and alerting parents early on to a potential reading problem makes it more likely that they will work with the teacher and school in correcting the problem or in accepting the possibility of repeating first grade.

It is not unusual for children to start out strong in Learning to Read, but as time goes on and the work becomes harder, their grades drop. If they are struggling to be independent workers by the end of the year, second grade will be an even bigger struggle unless intervention takes place. This intervention may simply be more reading practice over the summer. Intervention may also mean repeating first grade. —*Carolyn Martin, Dayton, VA, first-grade teacher, 25 years*

**Next question:** “I feel I need to grow in building rapport with my students. How does that happen? What are some ways to build (or not build) rapport?” Please send your responses to LightLines by September 15. [📧](#)

**CLE School LightLines** is published four times each year by Christian Light Education, a division of Christian Light Publications, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22803-1212. (540) 434-0768. Ken Kauffman, editor.

Two copies of LightLines are sent free to schools who are active Christian Light curriculum customers. Other schools and individuals may request a free subscription. To request a subscription, or to change mailing addresses or quantities received, call (800) 776-0478 or email [subscribe.school.lightlines@clp.org](mailto:subscribe.school.lightlines@clp.org). LightLines is also available by email, delivered directly to your inbox. Please indicate your preference when subscribing.

Copyright © 2019 Christian Light Publications Inc. For permission to reproduce any material in this publication, contact us at the above address. Comments and materials being submitted for publication can be mailed to LightLines editor, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA, 22803-1212, faxed to (540) 433-8896, or emailed to [lightlines@clp.org](mailto:lightlines@clp.org).

Photo Credits—Image of lightning bolt in thumbnail on page 1 and on page 7 is © Darin Vance. The image of a waterfall and of mountainous terrain at the bottom of page 4 are © Luke Martin. The illustration of lightning on page 7 was created by Christian Light Publications, Inc., and was made partially using images from Getty Images. The images in the header of page 12 are property of Christian Light Publications, Inc. All other images are a courtesy of Getty Images unless otherwise noted.