

To embrace, encourage and empower through a network of Christian educators.

Let the children play

Jan Wilton

Many children in today's culture have a very different concept of play than that of their parents or grandparents. Play has become electronic, rewarded and encouraged through sight and sound. Time is rarely given for a child to explore and engage in dramatic play and investigation. As early child educators, we have not only an opportunity to encourage play but we can help parents understand the importance of play for their children.

Parents will often choose a preschool/daycare for academic reasons. If, in the initial visit, children are observed playing with blocks, trains, dramatic play, or other "play" activities, some prospective parents go away feeling the children "only" play all day at this preschool. Are the children "only" playing or are they truly engaged in learning? This can lead to an interesting conversation, "When I Play I learn." We have the responsibility to educate parents of the learning that occurs through ordinary times of play.

I recently met Denise, owner/operator of a licensed childcare home. She recently moved into a house in my neighborhood. As I visited with her, the children in her care were finishing lunch, and they began to play outside and in the play room. When I asked her about the curriculum she uses, she replied, "We play. This is a free flow childcare home." My first thought reaction was, "What a shame not to have pre-reading or pre-math skills and a little guided play

time."

I went home and began to think through what I had observed: polite, happy, activity-engaged children. They were learning to share and care for each other. Could this free flow play childcare be giving what other preschools are giving? Since that day, I have talked to many parents whose children grew up at Denise's home childcare. Some of these children are now adult college graduates. The parents highly recommend the care and lessons learned at Denise's home. These children thrived and were well-equipped for school. Does play give learning a boost?

David Elkind, author of *The Hurried Child* and *The Power of Play*, discusses the importance of play in a child's life and education. Children who are encouraged to play are often better students in later school years. We have become so caught up in teaching our children to read, write, and do math, we may have forgotten that the very foundations of these skills are found in the act of play. May we remember what French philosopher Jean-Jacque Rousseau once wrote, "Childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking, and feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to try to substitute ours for theirs."

Allow the children to be children who learn through play.

Play gives the child experience with problem solving, working through frustration, cause/effect, as well as social skills. Children need the time to work out a plan with little or no intervention. Think of what could happen in a child who learns to do it by him-



self. There is a sense of accomplishment and reward that cannot be experienced when the child is assisted by even the most caring adult. Children need to play and explore. Big Mud Puddles and Sunny Yellow Dandelions

--Author Unknown

When I look at a patch of dandelions, I see a bunch of weeds that are going to take over my yard.

My kids see flowers for Mom and blowing white fluff that you can wish on.

When I look at an old drunk and he smiles at me, I see a smelly, dirty person who probably wants money, and I look away.

My kids see someone smiling at them, and

they smile back.

When I hear music I love, I know I can't carry a tune and don't have much rhythm, so I sit self-consciously and listen.

My kids feel the beat and move to it. They sing out the words. If they don't know them, they make up their own.

When I feel wind on my face, I brace myself

» continued, PG. 3

MEET
the
COUNCIL

Homeschool resources now available through Discipleship Place

Janine Wilkins

In a joint effort, Nazarene Educators Worldwide (NEW) and The Discipleship Place created a homeschoolers page on The Discipleship Place website (www.thediscipleshipplace.org).

The purpose of the page is to offer homeschoolers access to free resources and Bible curriculum. The idea came from a General Assembly NEW homeschooling workshop in 2009 where homeschoolers from across the U.S. revealed the need for Bible curriculum from a Wesleyan perspective. Discipleship Place leaders felt it was a natural fit because the website is designed to equip lay people.

Most of the available courses are best suited for high school age students, but with parental guidance younger children can also use the courses. Many courses include exams, and students can earn a certificate upon request.

In the future, homeschoolers will be able to sign up for 31 days of encouraging email devotionals written by homeschooling moms and alumni. NEW is also creating list of recommended curriculum from Nazarene Publishing House for distribution at General Assembly 2013.

Introducing Jan Wilton

Jan Wilton is the mother of three children and grandmother to seven. She graduated from Olivet Nazarene University with a B.A. in Elementary Education in 1971 and an M.A. in Missional Leadership from Northwest Nazarene University in 2011. She was ordained in 2008 by the Church of the Nazarene and has ministered to children ages two through grade nine in both public and private schools and in churches for over 30 years.

Jan has been the director of two preschools, Noah's Landing Early Childhood Development Center, Lake Havasu Church of the Nazarene, in Lake Havasu City, Arizona and Noah's Ark Preschool and Kindergarten a ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Mesa, Arizona. In addition, she has served as a pastor to children and families in churches in Arizona and Oklahoma. Jan served at the Arizona/South Nevada Church of the Nazarene Camp Meeting as the elementary children's evangelist for 6 years and Nursery/Preschool director of the camp for 20 years.



» continued, PG. 2

WANT TO GET PUBLISHED IN THE NEW? WRITE TO US!

Has God placed something on your heart to say? Would you like to voice your opinion on an issue? Do you have questions that need to be answered? Put your thoughts into words and send them to the editor at mksauer13@gmail.com. We will choose the best articles and publish them in our newsletter! We can't wait to hear from you!

Dangerous data mining through Common Core

Mallory Sauer

Awareness is growing rapidly about the recent initiative to bring Common Core Standards to schools across America. Although the standards were supposedly proposed by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) — giving the illusion that the agenda is “state-led,” it was the federal government that endorsed the plan by offering \$4 billion in grant money through Obama’s Race to the Top program to cooperating states. Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.) recently decided to take action and write a letter to U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan and is currently seeking co-signers from congressional colleagues. Congressman Luetkemeyer addressed several issues of concern with Common Core — and in the last half of his letter he emphasized the crux of the problem: data mining.

“We understand that as a condition of applying for [Race to the Top] grant funding, states obligated themselves to implement a State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) used to track students by obtaining personally identifiable information,” Luetkemeyer said. “We formally request a detailed description of each change to student privacy policy that has been made under your leadership, including the need and intended purpose for such changes.”

Parents might reasonably assume that the “personally identifiable information” collected for the database will include students’ test scores and perhaps other measures of academic proficiency. But they would be much less likely to imagine that the federal snoops envision something far more extensive and invasive than merely tracking academic performance. According to the Department of Education’s February 2013 report *Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century*, “Researchers are exploring how to gather complex affective data and generate meaningful and usable information to feed back to learners, teachers, researchers, and the technology itself. Connections to neuroscience are also beginning to emerge.” (Emphasis added.)

So far, nine states across the country have already agreed to adopt the data mining process, with parents having no say in this decision. Schools in New York, Delaware, Colorado, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Illinois, Louisiana, Georgia, and North Carolina have committed to “pilot testing” and information dissemination via sending students’ personal information to a database managed by inBloom, Inc., a private organization funded largely by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This digital warehouse will store the data and then share it with “education technology companies, content providers and developers to support the creation of products compatible with this infrastructure,” according to the inBloom website.

The fact that Common Core Standards require children’s personal information to be provided to a database that emerged only three months ago and then sold to unspecified companies is worrisome to many parents and educators. “It leads to total control and total tracking of the child,” said Mary Black, curriculum director for Freedom Project Education, an organization that provides classical

make predictions about his or her future behaviors or performance, such as future course outcomes and dropouts.

Within the February report, the DOE displayed photographs of the actual technology that will be used on students, if the department’s plan is fully implemented. What they call the “four parallel streams of affective sensors” will be employed to effectively “measure” each child. The “facial expression camera,” for instance, “is a device that can be used to detect emotion.... The camera captures facial expressions, and software on the laptop extracts geometric properties on faces.” Other devices, such as the “posture analysis seat,” “pressure mouse,” and “wireless skin conductance sensor,” which looks like a wide, black bracelet strapped to a child’s wrist, are all designed to collect “physiological response data from a biofeedback apparatus that measures blood volume, pulse, and galvanic skin response to examine student frustration.”

In an attempt to assuage such fears regarding students’ privacy, the February report stated the following:

Privacy is always a concern, especially when leveraging data available in the “cloud” that users may or may not be aware is being mined. However, another emergent concern is the consequences of using new types of personal data in new ways. Learners and educators have the potential to get forms of feedback about their behaviors, emotions, physiological responses, and cognitive processes that have never been available before. Measurement developers must carefully consider the impacts of releasing such data, sometimes of a sensitive nature.

Even when using their most eloquent language to sell us the product, the DOE’s explanation is more disturbing than comforting. They openly admit that students under Common Core will be poked and prodded for information of a “sensitive nature.” But what

specifically is this information?

In 2010, the National Center for Education Statistics released a technical brief about “Guidance for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS),” which formulated a detailed plan for “data stewardship” in education. The SLDS created a grant program in 2005, each grant lasting three to five years at up to \$20 million per grantee. In 2012, a combination of 24 states and territories struck a deal to implement data mining to receive grants. “Personally Identifiable Information” will be extracted from each student, which will include the following data: parents’ names, address, Social Security Number, date of birth, place of birth, mother’s maiden name, etc. On the other hand, according to the SLDS brief, “Sensi-

» continued, **PG. 3**



K-12 online schooling. “It completely strips the child of his or her own privacy.”

Schools will not only collect objective facts about students but gain a more intimate knowledge as well — even profiles of students’ attitudes and predictions of their futures that could then be used by the schools to shape outcomes. The DOE released a brief in October 2012 entitled “Enhancing, Teaching and Learning Through Educational Data Mining and Learning Analytics,” in which the following was stated about data mining procedures:

A student learning database (or other big data repository) stores time-stamped student input and behaviors captured as students work within the system. A predictive model combines demographic data (from an external student information system) and learning/behavior data from the student learning database to track a student’s progress and

Introducing Jan Wilton *Cont.*

She and her husband, Bob, have shared in outreach ministry through Joy Unlimited Children’s Ministry— through puppetry, creative storytelling, teacher training, VBS, and presenting chapel services/special children’s events for schools and churches. Jan is currently the pastor at Bread of Life Church of the Nazarene in Commerce, Texas, where she continues to invest in the lives of children and their families in the church. She also ministers to her community through Mommy and Me Time and Kidz Bible Klub, an after-school activity time for school-age children and through substitute teaching in the local public schools.

Jan has served as an early education representative for the executive council for NEW, Nazarene Education Worldwide, for the past 4 years.

Sources

Mary Black, Curriculum Director for Freedom Project Education

"SLDS Technical Brief #2" <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011602.pdf>

"Why Conservatives Object to the Common Core" www.Truthinamericaneducation.com

"Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century" <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/files/2013/02/OET-Draft-Grit-Report-2-17-13.pdf>

"New York parents furious at program, inBloom, that compiles private student information for companies that contract with it to create teaching tools" <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/student-data-compiling-system-outrages-article-1.1287990#ixzz2PXFijzkV>

"Our Vision" <https://www.inbloom.org/our-vision>

"Luetkemeyer Addresses Common Core Concerns with Arne Duncan" <http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-state-standards/luetkemeyer-addresses-common-core-concerns-to-arne-duncan/>

"Enhancing, Teaching and Learning Through Educational Data Mining and Learning Analytics" <http://www.cra.org/ccc/docs/learning-analytics-ed.pdf>

"Common Core eGuide" <http://www.assessmentsforcommoncore.com/pdf/Common-Core-eGuide.pdf>

"About the SLDS Grant Program" http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slids/about_SLDS.asp

"Grantee States" <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slids/stateinfo.asp>

"Race to the Top" <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/k-12/race-to-the-top>

"NGA and CCSSO Comment on CCSS Governance Suggestions" <http://www.corestandards.org/articles/9-nga-and-ccsso-comment-on-ccssi-governance-suggestions>

Dangerous data mining through Common Core *Cont.*

tive Information" will also be extracted, which delves into the intimate details of students' lives:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or parent;

2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;

3. Sex behavior or attitudes;

4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior;

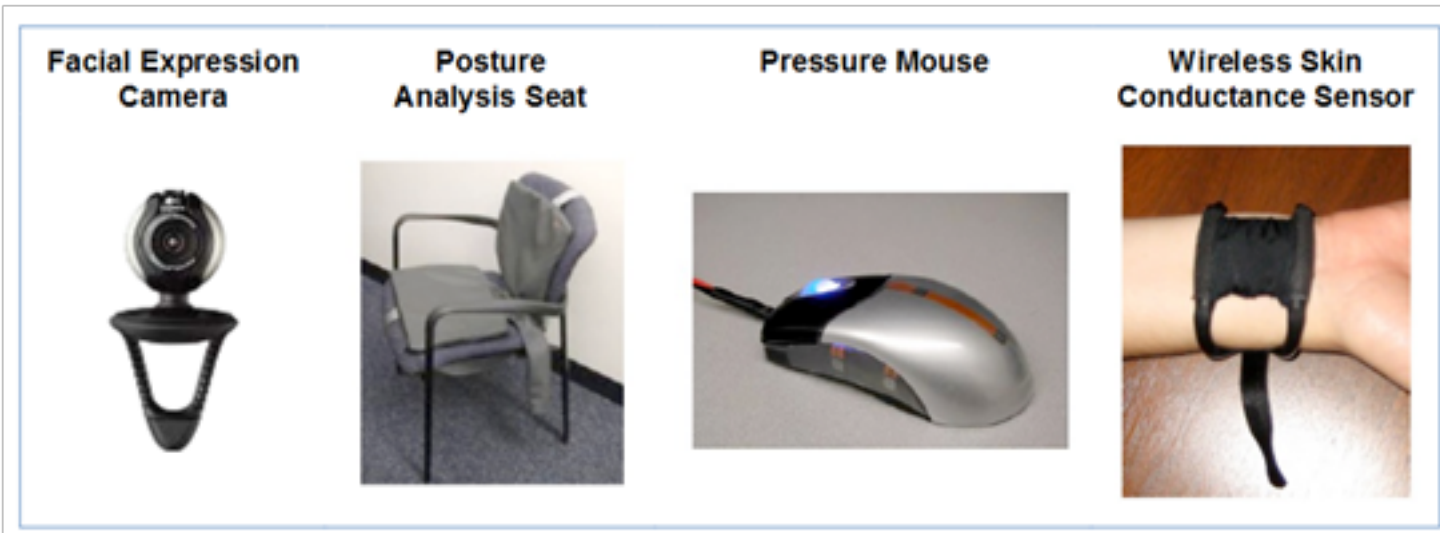
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;

6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;

7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent; or

8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

It is unclear whether students will be required to answer the aforementioned questions while being analyzed by the



The "four parallel streams of affective sensors" in the February DOE report

four kinds of "sensors" promoted by the DOE report, but all students will be subjected to questioning. Although the SLDS claims that this particular information "requires written parental consent" before a minor is forced to disclose it, loopholes still exist that could circumvent parental authority. "I think they would get around parental consent through testing," Black explained. She warned The New American that academic exams — regardless of the subject — could potentially be utilized to extract this information without parents knowing. Black asserted that, even if parents could truly opt out and save their children from having to answer such personal questions, the children might be "branded" — permanently placing them into a different category from the other students.

Armed with knowledge, citizens are beginning to see the red flags within the wordy explanations from the authorities on Common Core. If Americans want freedom for their

--Courtesy of *The New American* magazine (online)

children and grandchildren, they must take a stand before it is too late. By the 2014-2015 school year, all schools will start testing at the national level, using Common Core Standards. "We need to be working with our state legislators and fight it at the state level," Black said. "This is about something most near and dear to people — their children." They are worth the fight!

Let the children play *Cont.*

against it. I feel it messing up my hair and pulling me back when I walk.

My kids close their eyes, spread their arms and fly with it, until they fall to the ground laughing.

When I pray, I say thee and thou and grant me this and give me that.

My kids say, "Hi God! Thanks for my toys and my friends. Please keep the bad dreams away tonight. Sorry, I don't want to go to heaven yet. I would miss my Mommy and Daddy."

When I see a mud puddle, I step around it. I see muddy shoes and dirty carpets.

My kids sit in it. They see dams to build, rivers to cross, and worms to play with.

I wonder if we are given kidS to teach or to learn from? No wonder God loves the little children!

Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

I wish you Big Mud Puddles and Sunny Yellow Dandelions!!!
LET THE CHILDREN PLAY!

THE NEW

STAFF

MALLORY SAUER

...Editor

BEULA POSTLEWAIT

...Advisor

