

# The Core of Adventist Education Curriculum



*Adventist Curriculum Aligned with  
A Journey to Excellence*

The Adventist curriculum development process, defined by the Adventist worldview, includes four overlapping stages (with accompanying essential questions): purpose (What is the **Adventist worldview**?), plan (How can our **curriculum** reflect this worldview?), practice (How can our **instruction** reflect this worldview?), and product (How can our **assessment** reflect this worldview?).

Note that the four stages of the Adventist curriculum development process align with the four stages of A Journey to Excellence.

[adventisteducation.org](http://adventisteducation.org)

# THE CORE OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION CURRICULUM



adventisteducation.org

## PHILOSOPHY OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes God as the ultimate source of existence, truth, and power. In the beginning God created in His image a perfect humanity, a perfection later marred by sin. Education in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God. The distinctive characteristics of this Adventist worldview, built around creation, the fall, redemption, and re-creation, are derived from the Bible and the inspired writings of Ellen G. White.

The aim of true education is to restore human beings into the image of God as revealed by the life of Jesus Christ. Only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can this be accomplished. An education of this kind imparts far more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person—spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social-emotional—a process that spans a lifetime. Working together, homes, schools, and churches cooperate with divine agencies to prepare learners to be good citizens in this world and for eternity.

## MISSION

To enable learners to develop a life of faith in God, and to use their knowledge, skills, and understandings to serve God and humanity.

## VISION

For every learner to excel in faith, learning, and service, blending biblical truth and academic achievement to honor God and bless others.

## CORE CURRICULUM GOALS

1. Learners will choose to accept God as the Creator and the Redeemer.
2. Learners will grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's creation.
3. Learners will creatively apply their spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social-emotional knowledge.
4. Learners will demonstrate their commitment to the Creator through service to others.

## REFERENCES

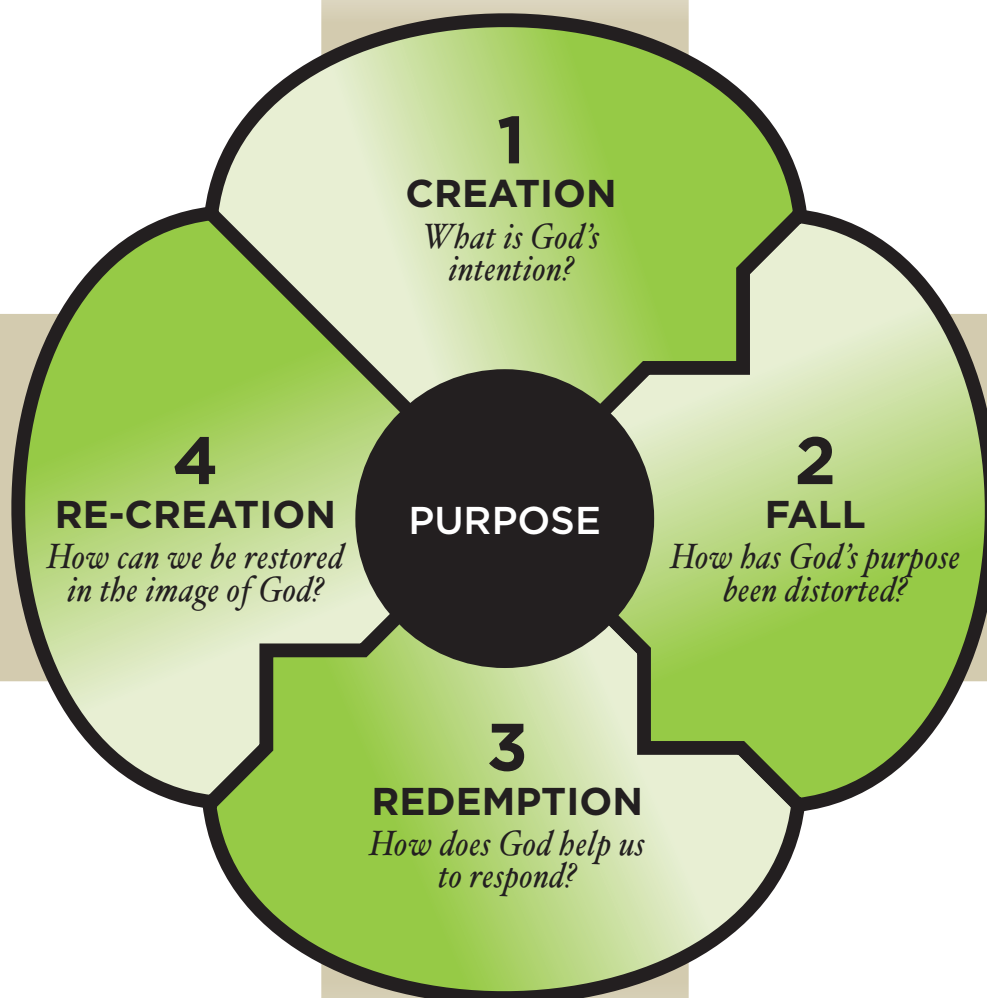
- Kainer, G. (2011). Worldviews make a world of difference. *The Journal of Adventist Education*, 73, 11-15.
- McCarthy, B. (2009). *4MAT and assessment*. About Learning, Inc.: Wauconda, IL.
- Pearcey, N. (2004). *Total truth: Liberating Christianity from its cultural captivity*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL.
- White, E. G. (1875). *Testimonies for the church volume 3*. Pacific Press Publishing Association: Mountain View, CA.

# ADVENTIST WORLDVIEW

“Our students need a conceptual framework that ties everything together, enabling them to understand themselves, their world, and their place in it”

(Kainer, 2011, p. 13).

GUIDE



A worldview serves as a conceptual tool or framework for perceiving and interpreting reality, which, in turn, informs the philosophy, mission/vision, and goals of an organization. The Adventist worldview accepts the Bible as the standard by which everything else is measured. Four key concepts (with accompanying essential questions)

emerge from a biblical worldview that can be used as a lens for the Adventist curriculum development process: **CREATION** (What is God's intention?), **FALL** (How has God's purpose been distorted?), **REDEMPTION** (How does God help us to respond?), and **RE-CREATION** (How can we be restored in the image of God?).

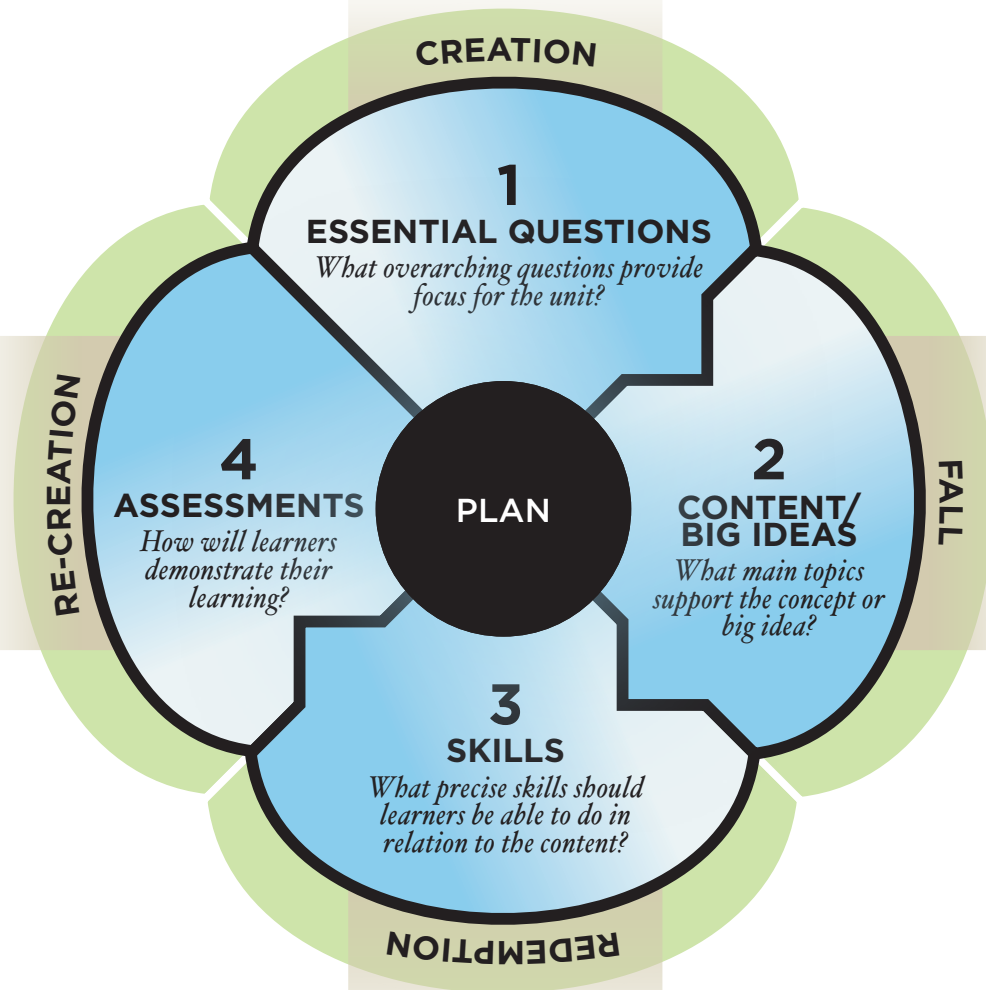
*Note that each quadrant in the worldview, curriculum, instruction, and assessment frameworks align to facilitate both horizontal and vertical planning.*

# CURRICULUM

“... every subject area should be taught from a solidly biblical perspective so that students grasp the interconnections among the disciplines, discovering for themselves that all truth is God’s truth”

(Pearcey, 2004, p. 129).

GUIDE



## OVERVIEW

Curriculum refers to the instructional components (**essential questions, content/big ideas, skills, assessments**, activities, and materials) of a particular course of study. Standards, what learners should know (content) and be able to do (skills), serve as the framework for curriculum development.

The curriculum model above incorporates these important components. Wiggins, McTighe, Erickson, and Hayes note the significance of essential questions. Essential questions provide a focus for inquiry, problem solving, application, and creativity which promote more active engagement of learners. Evidence from both national and international research also emphasizes that teaching and learning should be more concept-based;

concepts link the content and skills in a meaningful way promoting greater understanding. Organizing the standards in relation to big ideas or concepts allows teachers and learners to “teach less, learn more.”

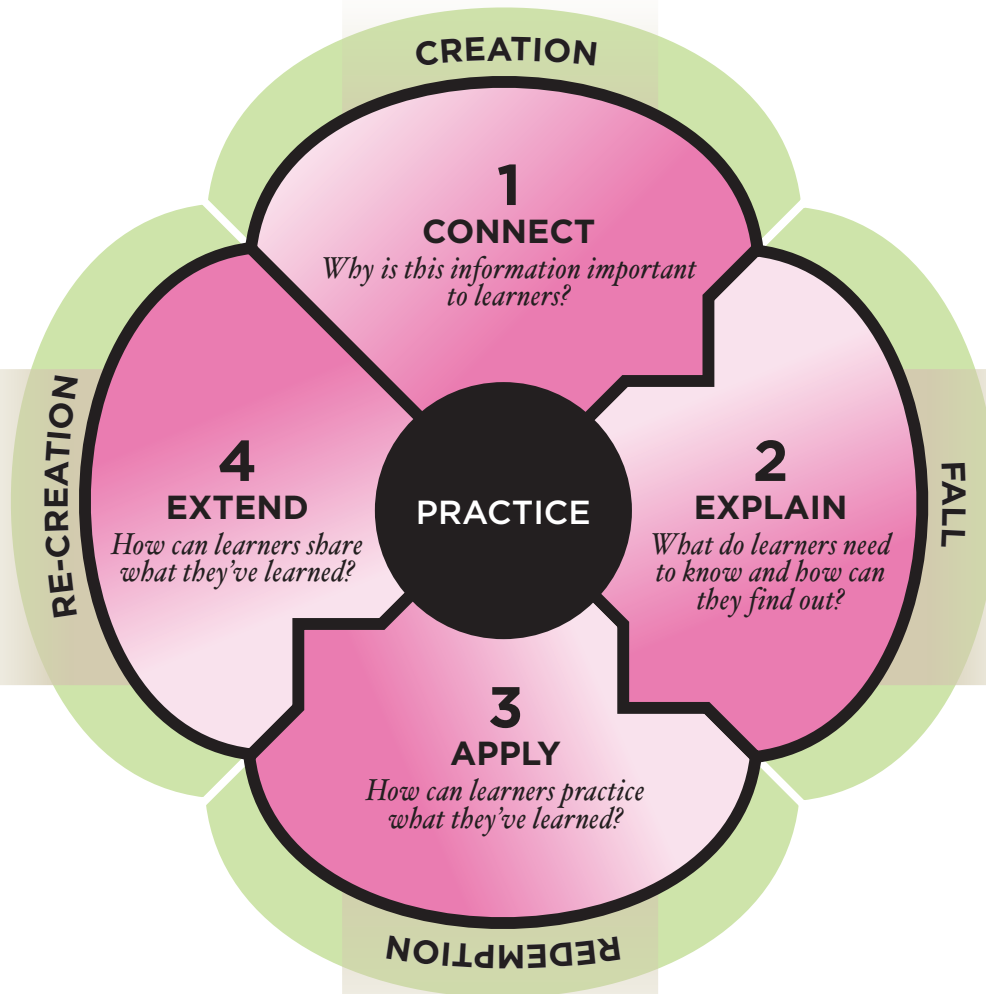
Curriculum mapping is a process for aligning instructional components across an educational system or a classroom. A system-wide or core curriculum map describes agreed-upon internal and external standards, which should be addressed with consistency and flexibility by the teacher while developing units and lessons. Internal standards in NAD core curriculum maps reflect the Adventist worldview across K-12 curricula, while external standards reflect the integration of national and provincial/state standards.

# INSTRUCTION

“The greatest care should be taken in the education of youth to so vary the manner of instruction as to call forth the high and noble powers of the mind”

(White, 1875, p. 131).

GUIDE



## OVERVIEW

Learners progress in many different ways. A natural, brain-friendly cycle of learning suggests that learners learn best when they can connect to personal experience (**connect**), develop a conceptual understanding (**explain**), practice and apply new knowledge (**apply**), and synthesize to create new ideas (**extend**).

The instructional cycle above recognizes these elements of teaching and learning. It is based on consensus among various instructional models created by noted researchers, curriculum developers, and learning theorists, such as Gardner, Tomlinson, McCarthy, Johnson & Johnson, Hunter, Marzano, Wiggins, and McTighe. Models offered by these and other individuals

include: Multiple Intelligences, Differentiated Instruction, Cooperative Learning, 4MAT, Inquiry Learning, Project-based Learning, and Understanding by Design.

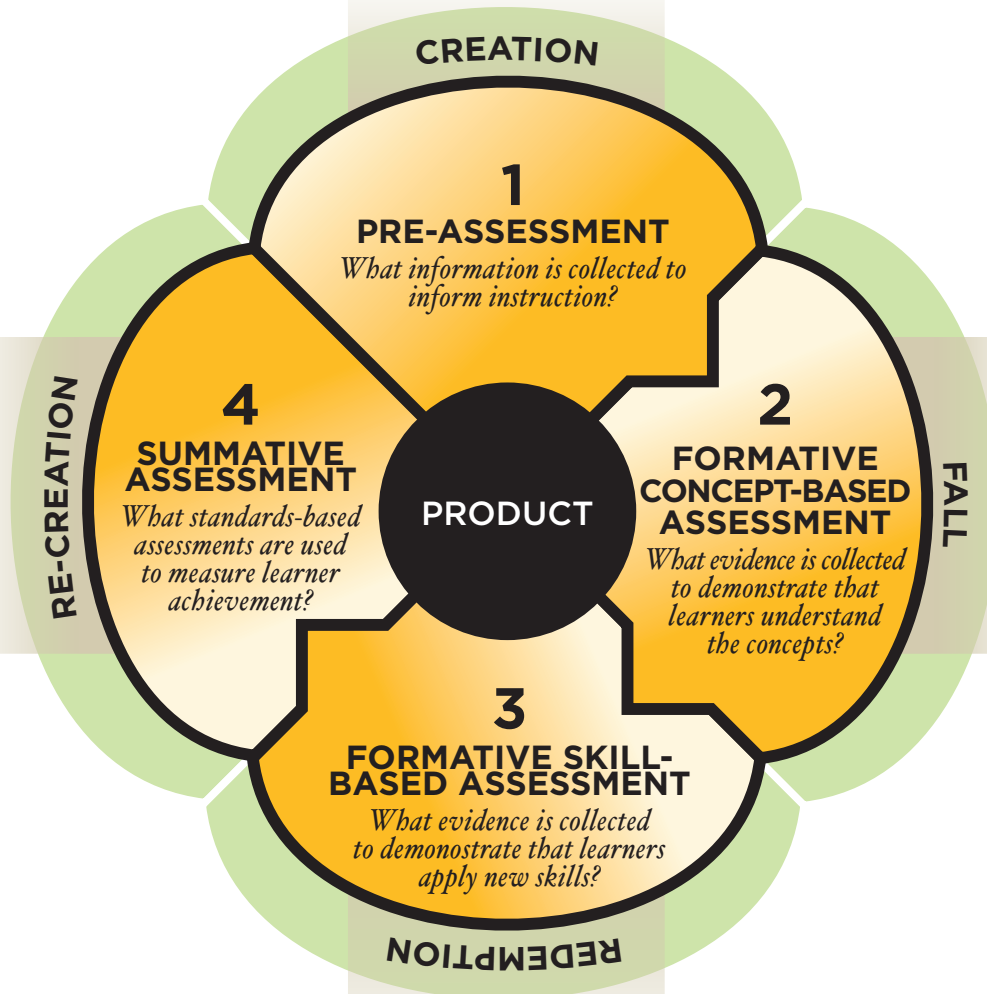
This model promotes teaching methods that meet the needs of individual learners and that ensure whole-person learning, all within the context of the Adventist worldview. Instruction focused on these four stages will appeal to all learners: those who enjoy talking about what's happening in their lives, those who want more information about the topics being studied, those who want to know how the new concepts fit with real life, and those who want to creatively apply what they've learned to their own context in collaboration with others.

# ASSESSMENT

“If you don't change assessment,  
nothing changes”

(McCarthy, 2009, p. 66).

GUIDE



## OVERVIEW

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process which should be clearly aligned with the stated curriculum standards and the learning experiences. It should provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely. Reflective teachers use a variety of appropriate assessment practices to measure learner achievement and to inform instruction.

The assessment cycle above offers a balanced emphasis on these assessment practices. **Pre-assessment** and **summative assessment** offer learners opportunity to creatively demonstrate their prior and newly acquired knowledge, respectively. **Formative concept-based**

**assessment** and **formative skill-based assessment** include the use of a variety of ways for learners to demonstrate conceptual understanding and skill development. This model aligns with the work of Marzano, McCarthy, Wiggins, Stiggins, O'Connor, McTighe, and others.

These four stages of assessment not only inform instruction but assist learners to develop self-assessment skills that enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning. The four core curriculum goals of Adventist education, informed by the Adventist worldview, can be consistently assessed as part of this cycle.