

—GREAT PLAINS— LUTHERAN EDUCATORS SESSIONS —CONFERENCE—

Anderson, Vicki – Associate Professor of Education, Director of TESOL/ESL Programs at Concordia University, NE

“What do I do when they don’t understand?”: Using Sheltered Instruction Techniques to Improve Student Comprehension for English Learners and Other Struggling Students

Teachers who work with English language learners and other struggling students face the daily challenge of working around language barriers and low levels of students’ grasp of academic vocabulary. Building sheltered instruction techniques into your instructional time is an effective way to bridge the gap between these students’ comprehension levels and where you want them to be. In this session, we’ll explore several key sheltered instruction techniques and provide a context for you to discuss how they can apply in your own classroom setting.

Anschutz, Dr. Annette – Professor and Graduate Early Childhood Program Director at Concordia University, NE

Play: Its Place in K-2 Best Practices

As early childhood professionals, kindergarten through second grade teachers are uniquely positioned to be leaders in demonstrating how play-filled learning experiences for their students are essential to understanding.

Anschutz, Dr. Annette – Professor and Graduate Early Childhood Program Director at Concordia University, NE

Tinkering with STEAM

Participants will “tinker” with a variety of loose parts materials as they discover how to engage children in solving a problem related to a children’s book using science, technology, engineering, art, and math skills.

Bassett, Nathan / Bockelman, Katie – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Engaging Students in Social Studies: Strategies and Tools for Passionate Learning

Are you looking for ways to engage your students in social studies and help them develop a passion for history, geography, and other social science topics? This session will provide you with a variety of strategies and tools to help your students become passionate learners in the social studies classroom. We will explore how to create interactive and engaging lessons that help students connect with historical events and geographic concepts. You will learn how to use primary source documents, multimedia resources, and hands-on activities to bring history to life and promote critical thinking.

Bergdolt, Jacob / Sommerer, Lloyd – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

So, You’re the Technology Person... Now What?

So you're the technology person, but you probably don't have enough time, training, or funds to do the job. You are not alone. Come learn how those of us who have been doing this for a few years have survived, and share any tricks of your own in this "Birds of a feather" style session.

Biteler, Louisa – Suzuki Violin & Orchestra Instructor at Sioux Falls Lutheran School

Temple, Kortney – Strings Instructor at Sioux Falls Lutheran School

Suzuki in the Schools and Teaching Foundational Life Skills Through the Violin (PK-12)

The presenters will discuss the ins and outs of a Suzuki in the Schools violin program and the skills that are taught through music lessons. In addition to the benefits of learning the violin, the presenters will discuss how they have enhanced their school community through themed lessons across grade levels and subject areas, started a mentoring program among students, and included staff members playing the violin in order to better understand what each child is experiencing. Finally, they will offer a group violin lesson to participants to give an idea of the whole-body connection that is necessary to play an instrument.

Buelman, Rev. Kevin – Executive Director at Shepherd’s Canyon Retreat

Practical Ideas for Burned Out People

Learn from the mistakes of this recovering burned-out pastor and camp director. Hear practical specific ideas for your mind, body & soul from various helpful ministry resources.

Deeter, Chris / Rickords, Jeff / Ziems, Lyle – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

3 Quick and Easy Hands-On Lessons for Elementary Science Classes

Are you looking for ways to engage your elementary students in science and promote hands-on learning? This session will provide you with six quick and easy hands-on lessons that you can add to any elementary science class. We will explore a variety of science topics, from life science to earth science, and provide you with practical activities that can be completed in a single class period. You will learn how to use everyday materials to create engaging and interactive lessons that help your students develop scientific thinking skills.

Duitsman, Jen / Sommerer, Lloyd – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

A Teacher’s Guide to Surviving the Coming AI Apocalypse.

Does the thought of students using Artificial Intelligence to write papers and answer questions keep you up at night? In this session we’ll look at what programs like ChatGPT can and can’t do. Then we’ll talk about ways to structure your classes so that students learn how to use these technologies appropriately. AI isn’t going away, so let’s learn to use it productively.

Geidel, Dr. Amanda – Director of Special Education and Education Department Chair at Concordia University, NE

What Can Teachers Learn from Bowling?

In many classrooms today, teachers plan one lesson and aim for the middle, hoping to reach as many students as possible. What can we learn from the sport of bowling that will help teachers change their aim, and reach more learners? Together we’ll explore Universal Design for Learning and strategies that will improve inclusive education for all students in our schools.

Gerdes, Dr. Drew – Assistant Professor of Education at Concordia University, NE

Mister Rogers Was Right!

Fred Rogers, and his well-known children’s television program, Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, has had an impact on children and adults for many decades. Join us as we learn more about the pedagogy and thoughts of Fred Rogers and ponder how we can continue his legacy and advocacy for children now and for years to come.

Gerdes, Dr. Drew – Assistant Professor of Education at Concordia University, NE

The Three Pillars of Success

Join us as we take a deep dive into the roles that self-regulation, executive-function skills, and social-emotional learning play in the lives of young children. These skills, which are learned significantly in the first eight years of life, play a role in one's success that lasts into adulthood. Participants will learn strategies that can be immediately incorporated into the early childhood and early-elementary classroom setting.

Hafer, Amanda – Agriculture Teacher/FFA Advisor at Lutheran High Northeast

Bringing Agriculture into the Classroom

If you are interested in incorporating more agriculture into your classrooms or want some fun hands-on projects that your students can try with minimal investments, please join me! These projects can be modified for students between ages 4-18. They can be used in the class, in childcare facilities, or during youth group nights. Tie your hair back and prepare to get your hands dirty!

Henschen, Rhonda – Preschool Director at Christ Lutheran School in Norfolk

5 Littles...

We know about the 5 Little Monkeys and the 5 Little Ducks, but have you heard of the 5 little pancakes? How about 5 little aphids? Join us to learn how you can use the 5 litter pattern to teach you kiddos science, math, letters, and kindness. I will also share how to make your own 5 little flannelboard pieces. Bring a few topics and we will work together to create some fun poems to teach your students next week.

Herl, Dr. Joseph – Professor of Music at Concordia University, NE

Teaching College Music Theory in High School

This workshop, intended for music teachers and school administrators, compares three common ways to teach music theory in high school: a do-it-yourself curriculum, preparation for the College Board's Advanced Placement test, and college dual credit. Topics include resources needed, selecting a teacher, components of a course (potentially including written theory, aural skills, and keyboard skills), things a teacher needs to know, expected student outcomes, methods of instruction, and professional support for teachers.

Kollbaum, Angela – DCE at Trinity Lutheran Church in Madison, NE and Therapist at Lutheran Family Service

Self-Care – More than a TikTok

Self-care and worker wellness are hot topics right now. Learn why taking care of self is essential as a church worker. Finding balance so we can care for all of God's children.

Kollbaum, Stephanie – Middle School Teacher at St. John Lutheran School in Battle Creek, NE

Write that Down!

Students of all ages need to be writing more frequently. Writing can be used to reflect, to discover, to communicate, and so much more. This session will be designed to give teachers a chance to gather tools they can use in their classroom and collaborate with one another on how they can increase writing in their classroom and help their students become stronger and more confident writers.

Kollbaum, Zach / Troyer, Cindy – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Making Math Stick!

Are you looking for effective ways to promote retention of mathematical knowledge in your middle and high school classrooms? This session will explore hands-on methods and technology tools that can help your students build a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and retain what they have learned.

Krause, Kathy – Lutheran Special Education Ministries

Dyslexia: Facts and Interventions

There are many myths surrounding dyslexia and best practices for accommodations and interventions for students. This sectional will address these myths and present hands on resources for providing accommodations and interventions for students with dyslexia, or those who are suspected of having dyslexia, to help them be successful in all academic areas.

Krause, Kathy – Lutheran Special Education Ministries

Understanding and Responding to Student Behavior

There are many approaches to addressing unexpected behavior in the classroom, but many miss looking at key factors that are causing the behavior. This sectional will look at these underlying factors and present strategies for helping to problem solve with the student(s) when other school practices are not effective.

Krenz, Lisa – Editor, Curriculum Resources at Concordia Publishing House

CPH Early Childhood Resources

Sharing the love of Jesus in your early childhood classroom takes many forms. CPH has resources to help! This session will showcase a variety of early childhood resources from Concordia Publishing House, including the new Enduring Faith religion curriculum. We will also take a sneak peek at an upcoming additional level of Enduring Faith Early Childhood religion curriculum that will be available in the Spring of 2024.

Krenz, Lisa – Editor, Curriculum Resources at Concordia Publishing House

Enduring Faith Religion Curriculum Overview

Come take a look at the new Enduring Faith religion curriculum for Lutheran schools from Concordia Publishing House. We'll talk about Scope and Sequence, Lutheran Religion Standards, Unit and Lesson design, digital tools for teachers, students, and families, and the flexibility this new curriculum offers for schools of all shapes and sizes.

Kristalyn, Matt / Schoettlin, Jeff – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran

Students Actually Like Using Our Learning Management System

Learn how we moved our students from reluctant users to active proponents of our Learning Management System (Canvas, Schoology, Moodle, whatever). We will share how we got where we are, and the hard learned lessons along the way.

Moore, Bryan – Professor & Director of Theatre at Concordia University, NE

Picking and Producing a School Play

Steps, strategies, and resources to use when producing a school play, including selecting the best play for your students and audiences, thinking about budget and resources (people and materials), preparing for rehearsals, and ideas for performance nights. This session will offer support for those wanting to produce their first show or for veteran directors who want to share their “tricks of the trade.”

Moore, Bryan – Professor & Director of Theatre at Concordia University, NE

Liberal Arts and Theatre Roundtable

An opportunity for educators to share experiences and ideas about their English, theatre, and speech communication programs, including suggested courses and activities for students and audiences, and recruitment ideas for performance and competitive theatre and speech.

Moore, Bryan – Professor & Director of Theatre at Concordia University, NE

Theatre: A College and Career Roundtable

This session will explore information to share with students (and parents) about opportunities for career paths related to theatre, including acting, technical theatre, marketing, directing, administration, education, and production. We will also look at options outside of theatre and media that utilize theatre-based skills.

Moore, Bryan – Professor & Director of Theatre at Concordia University, NE

Using Theatre in the Liberal Arts Classroom and Beyond

This interactive workshop will discuss how to use theatrical techniques in the classroom and other school and church settings. These techniques and activities can help develop vocal, physical, and presentation skills. Additionally, they can be used to teach lessons in subjects beyond theatre.

Ockander, Marli – Middle School teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School

What is My Role in SAS?

Set Apart to Serve (SAS) is an initiative of the LCMS to more intentionally inspire the next generation of church workers. This initiative is to address the severe shortage of pastors, teachers, DCEs, administrators, etc. within the synod.

Onnen, Natasha – 4th Grade Teacher at St. John Lutheran School in Battle Creek, NE

You've Got a Friend in Me...Why is My Stapler in Jello?

Part 1: Often Lutheran educators, DCE's, and pastors, can feel like they are on an island (not the tropical kind that serves drinks.) How can we as a school, church, community, and district provide mentors for church workers at all stages?

Part 2: Too often adults forget to play at work. According to the Fish model, play is essential. What are some easy ways you can play and care for each other at work, while remaining a professional? (There will be some time for small group brainstorming and discussion!

Opfer, Dr. Shanna – Director of Elementary Education & Associate Professor at Concordia University, NE

Best Practices for Classroom Management Leadership

Effective classroom management is not for the faint of heart, and learning to LEAD is essential for success. This collaborative learning session will address a Gospel-Focused, Relationship-Driven, Proactive, Engagement-Rich, and Response Ready classroom leadership approach that will get you talking with colleagues about your current joys and challenges in classroom leadership. Come to this session ready to share and learn from one another.

Opfer, Dr. Shanna – Director of Elementary Education & Associate Professor at Concordia University, NE

ChatGPT in Education – Friend or Foe and what are you going to do about it?

Come to this session to explore the artificial intelligence explosion that is occurring in the field of education. While there are MANY AI tools, this session will focus on Chat GPT. We will build a knowledge base, discuss concerns and opportunities, and be exposed to application ideas for teachers and students. This session will NOT provide singular answers or a “how-to” guide for AI use, but it will engage you in small group discussion and reflection about the topic from multiple angles. The AI movement is not going anywhere, in fact it is only getting smarter and stronger, so let’s build our knowledge and face our fears.

Opfer, Dr. Shanna – Director of Elementary Education & Associate Professor at Concordia University, NE

Differentiation: Philosophically On Board - Practically Challenged

Most teachers embrace an educational PHILOSOPHY that values differentiation; however, they struggle to put these beliefs into PRACTICE in the day-to-day life of the classroom. This session will begin with the philosophical and theoretical, but will quickly shift to provide practical approaches that will put differentiation into motion in the classroom.

Pscencik, Sheila – Principal at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Seitz, Erin – Teacher at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Simple Ways to Improve School Culture

Are you looking for ways to improve your school culture and create a positive and inclusive environment for all students and staff? This session will explore simple and effective strategies that can make a big impact, including starting a "Random Acts of Kindness" club and implementing small changes that can have a big impact. We will discuss the role of teachers and principals in creating a positive school culture, and share practical tips and tricks for making schools a nicer place for everyone. You will learn how to create a welcoming and inclusive environment by encouraging staff to model and student to emulate positive behaviors, celebrating successes, and providing opportunities for student voice and choice.

Rickords, Jeff – Winner of the Rocky Mountain District Teacher of the Year award
and 7th & 8th grade science teacher at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Building a Middle School Robotics Program from Scratch.

Learn how we set up a new robotics program to provide opportunities for students to engage in STEM activities outside of the classroom. We will look at everything from needed equipment to ready made curriculum as we explore the benefits and the difficulties of running a middle school robotics club.

Ryan, Logan – Teacher at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Teaching Essential Business and Math Skills with Stock Market Challenge Games.

Learn how to use stock market challenge games to teach essential business and math skills to your students in a fun and engaging way. This session will explore how these games can be used to teach computational skills such as calculating returns on investment and analyzing stock performance. You will discover how to help students to think critically about their investment strategies. By the end of this session, you will have practical ideas and resources to integrate stock market challenge games into your curriculum and help your students develop a diverse set of skills.

Sankey, Dr. Lorinda – Dean & Head of Teacher Education at Concordia University, NE

Christian Habits, Day by Day

Teaching our students the everyday habits of the Christian life is the most important work we do in Lutheran schools. This session will be one of exploring the basics of the Christian life (Bible reading, prayer, singing, etc.) and how we teach student to live them out each day in our schools and classrooms. Teachers who are experienced and new-to-Lutheran schools are welcome.

Sankey, Dr. Lorinda – Dean & Head of Teacher Education at Concordia University, NE

A Genesis Model for Lutheran School and Classrooms

How do you plan for your Lutheran School to be a Gospel-centered environment? How do we apply frameworks and models from public education to our Lutheran school settings? This session will investigate God's model for learning environments in Genesis 1, 2, 3, and apply His model to our Lutheran schools and classrooms.

Schoettlin, Jeff / Zeckzer, Bethany – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Creating Intentional Chapels for Middle and High School Students

Schulte, Brooklyn / Wieting, Sean – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Designing a Mentoring Program from Scratch

A 6-12 Class C School started and integrated a one-to-one mentoring program as part of the normal school day. Hear how two educators and a small group of students passionate about mentoring have built community and lifelong relationships among students. Presenters Sean and Brooklyn will discuss the intricate details of starting and maintaining a mentoring program as well as the many proven statistics showing mentorship does make a difference in the lives of both mentees and mentors.

Schulte, Brooklyn / Twito, Micky / Zeckzer, Bethany – Teachers at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

What I Wish I Would Have Known Before I Started Teaching

They say, "You don't know what you don't know." Well, now we know, and we want to share it with you. Come listen as we share the things that we wish someone would have shared with us before we started our first year of teaching.

Seitz, Erin – Teacher at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Surviving the Trauma in your Classroom

This session is dedicated to equipping educators with practical strategies to create a supportive environment for students who have experienced trauma in their lives. We will explore the impact of trauma on learning and behavior, and provide evidence-based techniques to help these students thrive in the classroom. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of trauma-informed teaching practices, including creating a safe and predictable classroom environment, establishing trusting relationships, and implementing self-regulation and coping strategies. We will discuss the importance of empathy and sensitivity when working with students who have experienced trauma.

Sievert, Daniel – Principal at Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk, NE

Harvesting Wisdom: Cultivating Best Practices in Educational Administration

Administrators, come ready to share your gold on a variety of topics in a roundtable format... recruitment and marketing, conflict resolution, managing tasks, teacher evaluation and development, community relations, and more. Quick, two-minute share times on a myriad of topics, all ripe for the borrowing!

Sievert, Daniel – Principal at Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk, NE

Unleashing the Power of ChatGPT: When AI Becomes the Teacher's Pet!

For those who don't know AI from IA, this session unlocks the positive power of ChatGPT in your classroom to help design and create lessons (complete with state standards!), brainstorm ideas, and communicate more effectively, saving the most valuable resource: Time.

Sommerer, Lloyd – Teacher & Technology Coordinator at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

7 Tricks to Save Money on School Technology

"We can't afford that." There's never enough money for the technology that you want to put in the hands of your students and teachers. In this session we'll look at 7 ways that you can stretch your technology budget and get the most value for the money that you spend.

Stahr, Julie – Teacher at Lincoln Lutheran Middle/High School

Engaging Middle School Students in Service: Creating a Successful Community Service Day

Are you looking for a way to engage your middle school students in service and community involvement? This session will show you how to create a successful community service day that allows your students to make a positive impact in their community while learning valuable skills and developing their character. We will also share our practices for organizing a community service day, including how to identify volunteer opportunities, coordinate transportation and logistics, and ensure student safety.

Stradtman, Dr. Amy – Middle-Level Director and Assistant Professor of Education at Concordia University, NE
Teut, Dr. Dylan – Director of Literacy Programming and Outreach at Concordia University, NE

Between the Lines: Faith Formation and Development through Children’s Literature

Many books published for children make for great reads and lend themselves to rich read aloud experiences. Once you begin scratching the surface, you find that a lot of titles have even more than the enjoyment factor. Without being overly didactic, there are many titles that provide opportunities for conversations and extensions for solid faith formation and development for students in all grade levels. Join us as we take an approach to reading between the lines to make enjoyable reading experiences a place for building up and strengthening the faith.

Stradtman, Dr. Amy – Middle-Level Director and Assistant Professor of Education at Concordia University, NE

Learning to See Images: Incorporating Visual Literacy Strategies in the Middle School Curriculum

Our students live in a visually stimulating culture with images bombarding them everywhere. These visual images allow them to communicate feelings and ideas. As a result, they must rely on visual data from social media platforms, electronic apps, and live-streaming services to make sense of their world. This session addresses strategies for teaching students to interpret layered information embedded in images and text. We will explore how to develop a metalanguage for making meaning and then apply visual literacy strategies to the meaning-making of historical fiction picture books.

Sunderman, Preston – Activities Director and Social Studies Teacher at Lutheran High Northeast

The Monkeys are Driving the Bus - And How to Turn it Around

Over the past several years, there was a slow decline in the climate of student attitude and effort. As a part of my SLED major project, several teachers at Lutheran High collaborated with me on identifying specific aspects of the school climate that had changed, worked to understand some of the causes of this decline, and brainstorm some solutions to halt and reverse this trend.

Teague, Helen – Adjunct Professor at Concordia University, NE

Peace at the Center: 10 Peace-filled Leadership Practices You’re Already Doing... And 10 More To Try...

School leaders have so many demands on their time and mental bandwidth with near constant distractions, interruptions, and schedules. This session explores ten routines, practices, and procedures of peace-filled leaders and gently recommends ten research-based, leader-tested strategies to strengthen peace-filled environments for all school stakeholders (K-12 admin, coaches, teachers, teacher leaders, and those who love them).

Teut, Dr. Dylan – Director of Literacy Programming and Outreach at Concordia University, NE

The Basic Building Blocks: Sounds, Letters, and Words among the Science of Reading News

“Science of Reading;” “Reading Wars;” “Whole Language;” “Balanced Literacy;” are just a few of the buzz words seeping into news cycles. Who is right, who is wrong, and who gets to decide what is best for young readers when it comes to beginning to decode and learning to read? Join us as we sift through some of the muck and mire of the reading research and proposed changes that have surfaced over the last few years, and re-center our focus to which time-tested, evidence-based, research-supported practices and outcomes are the very best for beginning readers and writers.

Timmons, Dr. Jill – Assistant Professor of Education at Doane University

Strategies for Classroom Teachers to Support Mental Health and Behavior in School

There is a shortage of mental health workers and many behaviors to deal with but there are some strategies we can utilize in the classroom that will help not only our students but us as teachers. We will review the strategies and teach you how to implement them so when you leave this presentation you're ready to support your students. This presentation is most useful to newer teachers but more experienced teachers will benefit from a review of some of these strategies as well.

Witt, Emily – Marketing & Communications at Concordia University, NE

Top 5 Marketing Tips for Schools & Churches

Need five quick tips to improve your school or church's marketing today? Attend this session to learn actionable insights you can take to your school or church to improve your digital presence and gain momentum towards your institution's goals.

Sparking Ideas and Sharing the Joy: Round Table Content Area Discussions

Language Arts

Math

Music

Recruitment

Science

Social Sciences