

Learning Theory: BCA Elementary School

The uniqueness of what we have to offer comes through the dedicated, quality staff that provides students with an authentic Christian example of how to walk in love and in obedience to Christ. Our teachers are continually growing in their teaching craft and desire to impact the hearts of students, knowing they can make a difference in a child's life for eternity.

At BCA, we believe how we teach and how children learn is based on three critical components: purposely designed instruction from a biblical worldview, child development that recognizes children learn actively and grow at different rates, and current research-based teaching practices that honor children as individuals and allow for differentiated instruction as much as possible.

Each child is fearfully and wonderfully made by our Creator; thus, we will honor each child by purposely and continually evaluating and developing our curriculum and teaching/assessment practices to help our young Royals become successful young learners.

We believe elementary students learn best by being *actively involved with new knowledge while having the opportunity to explore and construct understanding. It is imperative that we help our students build a strong foundational knowledge base, but our students also need to use and experience that knowledge in a multitude of ways involving their God-given senses.*

We are continually re-designing our curriculum to allow our students to be individually challenged in a safe and nurturing environment that fosters a love of learning over completing worksheets. Our students will complete pencil/paper tasks, but our curriculum will not be workbook based. Rather, we will continually ask, "What is the best avenue of instruction for our children to learn well?"

We believe there is a difference between truth and fact, knowing that all truth is based on God's Word and biblical principles. It is our goal to disciple the hearts of this next generation for God's glory so that our children can begin to develop critical thinking skills that facilitate their formation of a biblical worldview.

Examples of how we are currently developing our teaching practices and our students' learning opportunities in the above learning theory for the year 2021-2022 are listed below:

- 1) **Words their Way** (individualized developmental spelling for grades 3 - 5)
- 2) **Regular reading assessment** to determine a child's reading level that allows children to be placed in individualized and/or small group novels/books in grades 3-5 that match their instructional reading level rather than every student being placed in the same book every day (Guided Reading and Reading Workshop approach)
- 3) **Authentic vocabulary development** in grades K5 - 5 where students identify new vocabulary words from their own reading/learning, along with other sources, and work with this new vocabulary in writing; use of the Nifty Thrifty Fifty in grades 3-6 (root word construction for vocabulary development)
- 4) **Daily Read Aloud:** All elementary students will hear a story read out loud every day to develop background knowledge, a love for reading, build their vocabulary, and develop classroom community
- 5) **Six-traits Writing:** All elementary students are trained in the six traits of writing through using authentic literature and developing these six traits in their own daily writing (Writing workshop approach)

6) **STEM Instruction:** All elementary students will have one full semester of STEM instruction where they are able to actively build, experience, and explore using STEM knowledge and activities

7) **Mystery Science:** The Mystery Science program actively engages our students in doing and solving science mysteries while laying a strong foundation of knowledge. Video, exploration, and projects are key components of this curriculum.

8) **5th grade Servant Leadership Academy:** Students may apply for the SLA at the end of their 4th grade year. SLA gives these students the opportunity to learn biblical principles of servant leadership and readily put them into action in the elementary school. It also allows them to hear from community Christian leaders/business men and women about how God is using their businesses to serve Christ in the local community.

9) **Bible instruction** in grades 1 - 5 is based on teaching students to answer biblical worldview questions using God's Word, training them to recognize the characteristics of servant leadership, and helping them know God's story so they can identify their own place in God's story on a daily basis. Beginning in grade 3, our students are taught personal Bible study skills using the SOAP method: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer. Bible passage memorization is emphasized, along with time spent for class prayer and service to the community.

Our curriculum development is a fluid process that spans history, Spanish, mathematics, art, music, physical education and much more. Our learning theory, which guides our curriculum development, is a developing and continual process that will be based on our three core components: a biblical worldview, child development, and current research-based practices.