

Grace Lutheran School
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“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.”

I Peter 4:10 NRSV

‘Flipped’ classroom Algebra students at Grace learn through videos

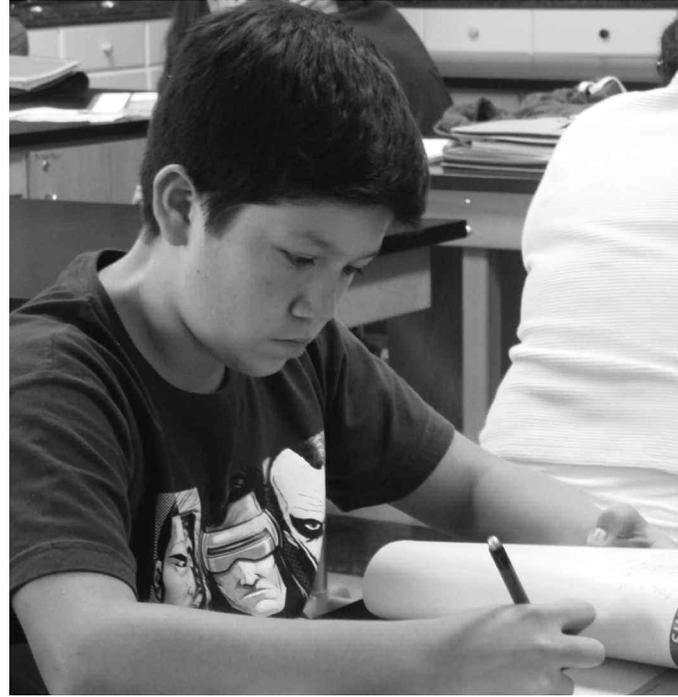
By Matt Dominis

Over the winter break at Grace, when most students were getting ready for Christmas or traveling with their families, eighth-grader Sophie Kerr was at home, watching algebra videos on her family’s Mac computer. She was studying an algebra chapter about simplifying radical expressions and another about quadratic functions and equations.

Sophie’s algebra teacher, Brian Schultz, has begun using the “flipped classroom” teaching concept, which changes the usual learning process. In this system, students watch lectures through online videos, freeing up time in the physical classroom for teaching to smaller groups or individual students. It assumes that teachers do not need to be present in person when the students listen to a lecture.

The steps for learning in the flipped classroom include:

1. Outside the classroom and on their own, the students watch one or more videos about a lesson. This video introduces vocabulary, explains the main concepts and offers a few practice problems. The student can pause, rewind and take notes – but the teacher is not there to answer questions.
2. In the classroom, the students take on more practice problems, and Mr. Schultz talks to them individually and in small groups to answer their questions.
3. Mr. Schultz gives a lesson check, generally three questions, that makes sure the students understand each core idea.



“It allows them to achieve more if they’re able, and they don’t have to be stuck with my pacing.”

4. After three lessons, the students take a quiz – a “mastery check” to show they’ve retained the lesson and they can draw on it later. After three quizzes in a chapter, they get a test. Students who don’t score 80 percent on the test get more practice questions and a chance to take it again.

Students setting their own pace

Mr. Schultz, who teaches math and science to seventh- and eighth-graders at Grace, introduced the flipped learning idea for a few students at the end of the 2013-2014 school year. This year he tried it for all 13 students in his Algebra 1 course and he’s pleased with the results. “It allows students to work up to their

‘Flipped’ continues on page 3

Student-led literature circles connect students to real life and one another

By Ruth Massman
Fifth grade language arts teacher

Walk into the common room between fifth and sixth grade any Wednesday morning and you will hear the enthusiastic voices of kids talking about books. Pushing together a group of desks, five boys discuss a New York Times bestseller, “A Long Walk to Water,” based on a true story about one of Sudan’s “lost boys.” Across the room, a group of girls has gathered on the floor by the lockers to exchange clues about a ghost story called “Doll Bones,” a 2014 Newberry Medal winner. Sitting at a long table, a focused cluster of boys leads a discussion of questions and answers about a historical novel, “Code Talkers,” about Navajo Marines in World War II. These books, as well as six other titles, are part

A M A Z I N G GRACE

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of the latest rotation of books read by Grace fifth and sixth graders in an experience called literature circles.

It's more than just a book club. First started in the 1980s, classroom literature circles have evolved through the decades, but one aspect remains the same. The key element is that this endeavor is student-led. Students work in small groups to select a novel, set the expectations for how many pages they will read from week to week, and assign tasks to team members. Jobs include summarizing the reading assignment, preparing open-ended questions for the discussion, locating interesting or unknown words, keeping track of the setting and location (the “Travel Tracer”), and selecting and reading meaningful passages.

Perhaps the most important job is the work of the “Clever Connector.” This task requires the student to make a correlation between this book and something else, such as another book, a movie, or even real life. These “clever connections” strengthen the literature



circle experience by asking students to relate their reading to personal experience.

On a recent Wednesday morning, fifth and sixth graders had the opportunity to share their literature circles with their grandparents as part of the Grandparent Day festivities. Although each student-led group was engaged in conversation, one particular group experienced an unexpected clever connection. The boys reading the WWII novel “Code Talkers” heard from grandparents with firsthand knowledge of that time in history. One spoke of a relative who had fought in the war and another talked about the economic and emotional toll. This is the ultimate goal of literature circles—reading and talking about books as a way of connecting to one another.



'Flipped' continued from page 1

potential," he said. "It allows them to achieve more if they're able, and they don't have to be stuck with my pacing.

"On the opposite side, it also allows the students to get a lot more individual, one-on-one attention from me in the classroom setting," he said.

This opportunity to work at your own pace was a big plus for Sophie and some of her classmates. Eighth-grader Henry Niermann said he enjoyed learning with the videos. "It's more free. You don't have to sit in a lecture every day and take notes."

Henry, 14, and Sophie, 13, are examples of how motivated and independent students can thrive in the flipped learning system. With discipline and hard work, they quickly got ahead of their classmates. (They both said that algebra is their favorite subject). Sophie completed the course March 19, and Henry completed it April 29. They studied geometry for the rest of the school year.

Henry and Sophie each found their own method to get their classwork done. Sophie realized that she was heavily booked with activities like choir and piano on weekdays, so she would watch most of her Algebra 1 videos over the weekends. Henry said he procrastinated a bit on the weekends, but would really focus on algebra during the week, watching a video on his family's PC every day. They leapfrogged past each other for the first few months of the school year, until Sophie pulled ahead over Christmas break, when she completed 14 lessons in 14 days.

Both will be attending Oak Park River Forest High School next year and both passed the entry test to take Advanced Algebra, the school's honors class for incoming freshmen. Sophie says she'd like to study engineering in college, and Henry would like to study a science such as physics in college.

Video lessons already online

This flipped classroom approach wouldn't have been possible even a few years ago, Mr. Schultz observed. There

"It's more free. You don't have to sit in a lecture every day and take notes."

are hundreds of short, easy-to-understand educational videos available online for free on YouTube and Khan

Academy, and dozens of them teach algebra. "That's the benefit of the age we live in," Mr. Schultz said.

Also, today's students already watch a large volume of videos on their computers, tablets and phones. "They're so used to [watching videos online] that it's second nature for them." Mr. Schultz's job as a teacher has been to assign the right videos for each topic and then to encourage the students to take notes while they're watching.

Students go to Mr. Schultz's teaching website (jhschultz.weebly.com/algebra-1-videos.com) to watch the videos, find vocabulary sheets and take practice tests. "There are so many videos out there," Mr. Schultz said. "I am not reinventing the wheel when it comes to lectures."

Sophie, Henry and Mr. Schultz gave high marks to the Khan Academy videos, for explaining the ideas and helping students stay interested.

A new style of teaching

Mr. Schultz says the flipped classroom method has changed his teaching style and sped up the pace. He now finds himself lecturing less and interacting with students more like a tutor. "A lot of times the class period will fly by. I'm working with a student who has a question, then I work with a group of students who are working on something else."

"I'm always engaged," Mr. Schultz said. "I might be talking about three or four entirely different concepts in each

class period. I like it because it makes me keep my mind sharp. So I always have to be ready for whatever we're talking about, which I like a lot."

If a student gets stuck

Inevitably, a student on his or her own will get held up because they have questions while watching a video. Mr. Schultz encourages the parents to watch the videos and help their students. But even the most motivated students can get stopped if they hit an obstacle. Sophie, for example, had planned to do 19 lessons over her Christmas break but finished 14 because she couldn't understand parts of the videos.

She knew she'd be able to talk it over with Mr. Schultz when she got to the next math class. "He's like a personal tutor. If you don't get it, he'll help."

And while Sophie found learning this way to be easier, not all the students liked it. "I have a friend who finds it really hard to learn from a video," Sophie said.

The system of check-ins, quizzes and tests is important because they make the students who are stuck or falling behind interact with the teacher, Mr. Schultz said. "If they're not getting the concept, one way or another we're going to have to talk about it and discuss what isn't working," Mr. Schultz said.

Flipped again

Mr. Schultz said it's too early to tell whether the flipped learning model necessarily helps a classroom learn algebra more quickly or better. But, he notes, "The kids in algebra are placing really well in their high school math classes."

While the algebra classroom will be flipped again, Mr. Schultz said, "There are going to be a few things I will tweak for next year."



Paul Grotelueschen

Globe-Trotting Member of the Grace School Family

by Bill Pullin

You can never have too much family. That is a truth that Paul Grotelueschen has proven in many ways and all over the world, and that truth speaks to the special qualities of Grace Lutheran Church and School, and to the special qualities of his family.

There are four Paul Grotelueschens in this story, and to keep them straight, we will call the man who now works as head baseball coach at Trinity International University “Coach Paul.” His story shows the legacy he received from his grandfather and father, and the qualities he has passed on to his children, including his son, Paul.

Paul’s father was the first-born child of Paul H. and Esther Grotelueschen. Grandfather Paul was a Lutheran teacher and principal. Father Paul served voluntarily in the army, despite his eligibility for a deferment, and after service in Japan post-World War II, he taught fourth grade at Grace Lutheran School. Then he was recalled for service in Germany during the Korean War. When he returned to civilian life, he

completed his graduate degree in English at Northwestern University and began his long teaching career at Concordia College (now Concordia University Chicago), where he taught and directed theatre productions for 46 years. He married Joan in 1956 and they raised many children: children born to them, adopted children, and foster children who stayed with them for varying lengths of time. He coached sports for his children and was a familiar sight at all of their baseball, football, tennis, volleyball, and other contests.

“Do they love your kids?”

Coach Paul attended Grace Lutheran School, which he describes as a warm and loving place with fantastic people. Paul Bouman led the children’s choir. Jerry Koenig, who was his eighth grade teacher and coach, later coached Paul in a very active high school basketball team, which played other Lutheran church teams. Paul discovered his passion for history in eighth grade at Grace.

Grace met his father’s standard for a

school, which was “Do they love your kids?” He remembers the many adopted and foster children that his parents would bring to Grace School, children who were of all colors and sizes and origins, and remembers the fact that they were always welcome, always embraced. The Grace family, like Paul’s home family, was characterized by mutual affection and respect, the fun of doing things together in a group, and the reassurance that everyone belongs and is accepted. The siblings of Coach Paul who graduated from Grace School are Kit San, Julie Ravencroft (deceased), Seth, Chris (deceased), Mark, and Maria (Koehne).

At Walther Lutheran High School, Paul started to make a name for himself in sports. His religion teacher and the junior varsity football coach “forced” him to play football at Walther, with a philosophy that “everybody is in,” everyone participates, everyone has room to grow, everyone has something to offer. What a blessing that turned out to be! Like his father who was very much involved in theatre at Concordia,

Coach Paul also got involved in a traveling youth theatre company at Walther that put on plays for grade schools all over the area.

Paul played baseball and football at Valparaiso University and then at Wartburg College, and at each school lettered in each sport. His focus on serious, competitive sports became obvious.

Globe-trotting

He saw in professional European baseball his opportunity to play sports for a living and “see the world.” European baseball league rules allow a small number of “foreigners” to play on European teams, and Paul played and coached in Holland and in Italy. In those eight years of his life, his teams won two championships and four second-place finishes. Being on a team seems to be something of serious importance to Coach Paul, the family man. On sports teams unrelated people are held together by some common qualities and a common purpose, and are a resource for each other, on and off the field. The team is a family.

Paul traveled to St. Louis to attend the marriage of his cousin, the wonderful result of which was that he met his wife, Sherri, there. They married in 1987, and in the next chapter of Coach Paul’s story Sherri became a military wife. If this seems an unlikely next step, remember that Paul’s father had volunteered for the army although he was deferred from the draft as a college student preparing for professional church work. After officer training, Paul and Sherri traveled all over the world in service to the United States Air Force. Coach Paul became Lt Colonel Grotelueschen, Mission Crew Commander aboard an AWACS surveillance aircraft. Crews under his com-

mand were active in Bosnia and throughout the Middle East. As with sports, Paul found in the military that a unit is a family, supporting and protecting each other no matter what happens.

Paul and Sherri have seven children. Walking in the footsteps of Paul’s parents, they fostered and then adopted their eldest son, Michael. Their next son, named Paul (of all things!), was a student at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois, when the school was looking for a baseball coach. Son Paul was able to connect his father’s sports expertise with this opportunity, and Coach Paul was named pitching coach in 2012 and head coach in 2014.

A family game

Coach Paul, the family man, now has five family members associated with

the baseball team. Son Paul is his assistant coach. Sons Andrew, a senior, and Jon, a junior, play on the team. Freshman Kimberly is team manager. Last, but certainly not least, Coach Paul’s wife, Sherri, epitomizes the family feeling that runs in the veins of the Grotelueschens by routinely hosting a half dozen or so Trinity students at their home every Sunday, where they sit at the table and are fed and loved just like everyone else in the family, getting a delicious taste of home when they are away from home.

You can never have too much family. You can never have too many people sitting around the dining room table with smiles on their faces. You can never be too open and caring to the people around you, whether they are blood relatives or not. This we know from Paul Grotelueschen.



Take an art break in The Studio

by Gwen Gotsch

In the hall on Grace's lower level, just north of the locker room doors, there's a sign that says, "Welcome to The Studio." It's surrounded by tables full of children's art projects and points to the door of what used to be called the Industrial Arts room. That under-used windowless space has been transformed into a busy and inviting art classroom by Grace's current art teacher, Melissa Hammer.

But, she says, "This is not my studio. This is the kids' studio. I'm just a steward of how they use materials."

Mrs. Hammer works as a teaching assistant in Grace's Early Childhood classroom in the mornings and teaches art to grades one through eight in the afternoon.

She describes teaching art as her "dream job," the answer to the prayer her mother taught her about telling God "all the desires of your heart." Being an art teacher was her goal for many years as she worked in the corporate world and spent time with her children as a full-time mom.

She's done many different things in the years since then. She has worked in an art gallery, taken many art classes, mostly in three-dimensional media, and done a lot of volunteering. She brings all of these experiences to her teaching, as she exposes kids not just to paint and paper but also to tools, copper, fiber and the process of making things.

She believes it's important for children to be exposed to core principles of many art media, because different kids respond to different things. Give a child who doesn't like to draw some wire, tools and a block of wood and that student may discover that he likes art after all. A menagerie of wire animals currently fills one of the display cases in the church atrium, proof of kids' fasci-



nation with different materials. The coiled shapes include an ant eater, a dragon, a flamingo, and a squid.

"I'm proud of what they do," she says. "It's just as exciting for me as for them when they do something new." Perhaps this is because faith has always been a vital part of Mrs. Hammer's life, and she believes that Christianity calls us "not to live individually—we share in other people's lives." Her own two children attend Grace School, and she grew up at St. Paul Lutheran School in Grafton, Wisconsin. She also attended Evangel College in Springfield, Mo., and the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee.

There are student pictures and artist prints on the walls of the art room, including a painting of God's creating hand, a detail from Michelangelo's ceiling in the Sistine Chapel. Letters formed from twigs proclaim "Create." Materials organized in trays, cups, and buckets fill every corner, except for the open work tables and the empty counters against the walls. Each student has a portfolio that holds, protects, and respects his or her work.

The art room provides a relaxed environment, away from the demands of math, textbooks and homework papers. One student recently looked up from her project during an art class and told Mrs. Hammer, "It's nice to be down here and get a break."

Grace Church and School CALENDAR

Friday and Saturday, June 12–13: Youth and Family Ministry Rummage Sale

Monday, June 22 to Thursday, June 25:

Vacation Bible School and Confirmation Intensive, 5:30-8 pm

Tuesday, August 25: First day of school for 2015-16 school year

Sunday, September 27: Oktoberfest, 4-7 pm



Give to the Annual Fund for Grace School

Grace School's budget comes from the support of the Grace congregation, pledges from school families, our annual fundraisers, A Graceful Evening and Walk With Grace, and from donations to the Annual Fund for Grace School.

Gifts to the Annual Fund help to ensure that quality Christian education continues at Grace School. Students graduate from Grace with solid academic skills and a commitment to living out their faith in high school, college and beyond. Help us sustain our mission—bringing in, building up and sending out disciples for Jesus Christ—with a donation to the Annual Fund, using the enclosed envelope. Thank you!

CLASSNOTES

1953 Priscilla (Long) Grubbs passed away on February 4, 2013. Survivors include her husband, Jimmie, and her brother Bill ('58). Priscilla's love of music was nurtured by her third and sixth grade teacher, Miss Miller, and by Mr. Bouman when she was in eighth grade. Music sustained Priscilla. No matter where she lived, she was in a church choir. Music was a blessing she received at Grace and graciously shared with others throughout her life.

Also at rest in Christ

Norma Thoms (1935), **Edward Kipple** (1946), and **Edward G. Kipple** (1954).

1959 Ellen Adams Pure marked her 45th wedding anniversary with her husband, Jeff. She is starting her second term as condominium board secretary.

1963 Greg Grasse and his wife, Alice, have moved back to Florida and recently enjoyed a Carribean cruise.

2006 Sophie Amado received a Fulbright scholarship to go to Spain. When she returns, she will have a full scholarship to attend Columbia College, Chicago, to work on an MFA in non-fiction writing.

THANK YOU

Gifts received between July 1, 2014, and May 31, 2015.

Gifts have been given to the Annual Fund for Grace School by:

Mr. & Mrs. David Amado
 Mr. & Mrs. Neal Armstrong
 Mr. Ryan Balock & Mrs. Annalise Nelson Balock
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 Mrs. Betty Elmen
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Awards for artists and musicians

Grace School choirs, orchestra, handbells and soloists all received Superior or Excellent ratings at the April 17 Lutheran School Fine Arts Festival, hosted by Trinity Lutheran School in Roselle. Soloists, small ensembles, and larger groups worked for weeks to prepare their music, under the direction of choir directors Janel Dennen and Pastor Michael Costello, handbell director Lisa Wolfanger, orchestra director Kris Hedlund and band director Julie Bernier.

Eighth grader Dan Johnson (trombone) and seventh grader Natalie Chizzo (violin) were selected to play on the "Best of the Best" concert in the evening. Seven Grace students took home Superior or Excellent awards for art projects.

Ms. Dorothy Foster
 Mr. & Mrs. Art Grundke
 Ms. Phoebe Helm
 Mr. Dale Hermann
 Mr. & Mrs. Whipp Johnson
 Ms. Dorothy Kinnaird
 Mr. & Mrs. William Koehne
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Koenig
 Mr. Nathan Krout
 Ms. Elaine Kruse
 Mr. William Kuhlmann
 Dr. Wayne Lucht
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Martens
 Mr. Gregory Meyer
 Mr. Robert Meyer
 Ms. Kathy Miller
 Mrs. Susan Mlot
 Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Murphy
 Ms. Linda Muse
 Mr. Martin Nieman & Ms. Elizabeth Gottlieb
 Dr & Mrs. Donald Offermann
 Mrs. Sarah Ohanesian
 Mrs. Mary Olson
 Dr. Pettigrew & Dr. Schaefer-Pettigrew
 Ms. Georgene Phillips
 Mrs. Bonnie Pihl
 Ms. Nancy Pilafas



Cutline or not cutline? I could move this photo down and then you could skip the cutline.

High School Choices

Grace School students go on to succeed at private and public area high schools. This year's Grace grads have been accepted at the following schools:

- Elmwood Park High School
- Fenwick High School
- Guerin College Preparatory High School
- Oak Park River Forest High School
- Parkview Baptist Academy
- Walther Christian Academy
- Whitney Young Magnet High School

Ms. Angeline Polites
 Dr. George Reinhardt
 Dr. Stephen Roskam & Dr. Chandler Barnes
 Mr. Albert Ronald Rott
 Rusch Foundation
 Ms. Kathryn Sangalis
 Mrs. Hildegard Schmidt
 Mr. & Mrs. William Scholtens
 Mr. Jordan Smoots
 Mr. Ralph Sprandel
 Mrs. Eunice Spurgat
 Mr. William Tatman
 Ms. Linda Tjaden
 Dr. Gary Tzeng
 Mr. David Waldschmidt
 Dr. William Werner
 Ms. Jan Westrick
 Ms. Helene Zarcone

Have you achieved a significant milestone? Gotten a new job?

Tell us! Please take a moment to update us! Send email to alumni@graceriverforest.org or write to 7300 Division Street, River Forest, IL 60305.



Alumni honored at A Graceful Evening

Three graduates of Grace School received the Distinguished Alumni Award at this year's A Graceful Evening benefit on Saturday evening, March 7, 2015. The gala dinner-auction celebrates Christian education as well as raising money for Grace School.

The award recipients included entrepreneur and philanthropist **Jay Christopher** ('59), a passionate supporter of Lutheran education at the elementary, high school and college levels. As the current chair of the Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation, Jay works with area schools to help them meet the challenges of providing Christian education in a changing world. Jay is also the owner and ecological steward of the 400-acre Christopher Farm and Gardens, a private residential compound in Sheboygan, Wis., that offers educational opportunities to schools and community groups in its extensive flower and vegetable gardens and native woodland and natural prairies.

Distinguished alum **Jan (Schalk) Westrick** ('69) is professor of education at Valparaiso University. Her experience in elementary and high school education includes 25 years serving at the Hong Kong International School as well as work for UNICEF on Child-Friendly School Initiatives in Oman, Thailand, Macedonia,

Uzbekistan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her research interests include professional development for teachers, principal identity, and intercultural competence.

Rob Clearfield ('99), pianist and composer, was the third award recipient. From

playing grunge rock in his friends' basements and accompanying choirs at his mother's church, Clearfield has become a fixture on the Chicago music scene as one of the area's best improvisers. He has received commissions to compose for churches, stage productions and film and has released five recordings of his original music. You can sample his music at rob-clearfield.com.

The annual dinner-auction benefit raised more than \$45,000 for the school's operating budget and an additional additional \$17,000 in the Fund-A-Need auction for new health and wellness and PE equipment.



Grace girls competed in the Lutheran Sports Association State Track Meet on May 16 and 17 at Concordia University. Eighth grader Kersten Brayton placed 6th in shot-put, while eighth grader Annie Byrne took 6th in the 100-meter. Sixth grader Jessica Hoffman made all-state in both the 400 and 800 meters. Grace's 4x800 meter team made all-state with an 8th place finish. They were the youngest team ever to become all-state, with (pictured) Anna Scholtens (3rd grade), Madelyn Virzi (4th grade), Jessica Hoffman (6th grade) and Nicole Virzi (6th grade). They'll be back next year! Grace's track and field team is coached by Rich Brooks (pictured), teachers Kat Albrecht, Brian Schultz and Joel Zielke, and parent Glen Steiner.

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