

ATLANTIC UNION CONFERENCE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH BOOKS 2026-2027

The Atlantic Union Conference Office of Education is happy to bring you the annual listing of the Professional Growth Books. Some of these books are written by non-Adventist authors and, therefore, may not fully reflect Seventh-day Adventist philosophy. However, we believe there is value in these books which have been selected to inspire, bring insight, and challenge your thinking.

To secure a Professional Growth Certificate for the 2026-2027 school year, you should read the four issues of the *Journal of Adventist Education* found online only at your favorite app store or www.journalofadventisteducation.org, at least one book from Group B, and at least four additional books from two or more other headings. One book of your choice, which could be classified under any of these headings, may be substituted for a book on this list.

GROUP A: READER'S CHOICE

101 Things Teachers Secretly Think (But Can't Say Out Loud), *Unfiltered Press*, 2026, 120 pages

This is a humorous yet insightful look at the realities of teaching. Written from the perspective of experienced educators, the book shares honest observations about students, parents, administrators, and the daily challenges of the classroom that teachers often keep to themselves.

Although written with humor and wit, the book encourages readers to appreciate the complexities of teaching and to better understand the profession from a teacher's perspective. It serves as both a source of validation for educators and an eye-opening read for parents, school leaders, and anyone interested in education.

GROUP B: DEVOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Learning Life: How Personal Devotions Can Make a Difference, Roger Walter, *Pacific Press*, 2023, 128 pages

Do you feel like your spiritual life is lacking and needs a boost? This book encourages readers to develop a consistent, meaningful devotional life as the foundation for spiritual growth and daily living. The book emphasizes that regular time spent with God through prayer, Bible study, and reflection strengthens faith, shapes character and provides guidance for life's challenges.

The book reminds readers that spiritual growth is not achieved through occasional moments of inspiration but through a lifelong pattern of faithfully seeking God each day.

Living for God: Reclaiming the Joy of Christian Living, Frank M. Hasel, *Pacific Press*, 2020, 128 pages

This book encourages believers to move beyond a faith based on duty or routine and rediscover the joy of living in a close relationship with God. The book emphasizes that Christian living is not about earning God's approval but about responding to His grace with love, trust, and obedience.

The book reminds readers that true Christian joy comes from surrendering to God's will and experiencing His presence in every aspect of life.

The God-Shaped Heart: How Correctly Understanding God's Love Transforms Us, Timothy R. Jennings, *Baker Books*, 2017, 304 pages

This book explores the idea that every person has a deep spiritual longing that can only be fully satisfied through a relationship with God. The book explains that many people try to fill this "God-shaped" space in their hearts with success, possessions, relationships, or personal achievements, but lasting fulfillment comes only from knowing and trusting God.

Throughout the book, biblical principles and practical examples demonstrate how surrendering to God brings peace, joy, and a sense of purpose that cannot be found elsewhere.

GROUP C: SDA CHURCH HISTORY

God's Remnant Church, Ellen G. White, *Pacific Press*, 2021, 72 pages

A compilation of Ellen G. White's writings presents the mission, identity, and purpose of God's end-time people. Drawing primarily from her published works, it emphasizes that God has always had a faithful remnant who remain loyal to Him and are called to proclaim His truth to the world.

The book also stresses that while the church is made up of imperfect people, Christ continues to lead and strengthen His church to fulfill its mission.

Hearts of Faith: How We Became Seventh-day Adventists, D. J. B. Trim, *Pacific Press*, 2022, 127 pages

These are the stories of individuals who embraced the Seventh-day Adventist faith from a wide variety of religious, cultural, and personal backgrounds. Through these testimonies, the book illustrates how God leads people to a deeper understanding of Scripture and a personal relationship with Jesus.

The collection highlights that while each person's path is unique, their stories are united by a common desire to follow Christ faithfully and serve Him through the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

GROUP D: BACKGROUND FOR TEACHING

Teach With Your Strengths: How Great Teachers Inspire Their Students, Rosanne Liesveld, Jo Ann Miller and Jennifer Robison, *Gallup Press*, 2005, 205 pages

This book focuses on helping educators identify and use their unique talents, strengths, and personal gifts to become more effective teachers. The book encourages teachers to move beyond focusing only on weaknesses and instead build on what they naturally do well to create meaningful learning experiences.

What Great Teachers Do Differently: Nineteen Things That Matter Most (Third Edition), Todd Whitaker, *Routledge*, 2020, 130 pages

Todd Whitaker identifies the habits and mindsets that distinguish exceptional teachers from merely effective ones. Drawing on years of experience in education, Whitaker emphasizes that great teaching is shaped more by attitudes, relationships, and daily choices than by programs or resources.

The book reminds educators that small, intentional actions can have a lasting impact on students' academic achievement and personal growth.

GROUP E: TEACHER'S PERSONAL GROWTH

Attitude Is a Choice So Pick a Good One: Practical Steps to a Positive Outlook on Life, Bob Phillips, *Harvest House*, 2023, 234 pages emphasizes that while people cannot control every circumstance they face, they can choose how they respond. The book encourages readers to develop a positive, resilient attitude that influences their relationships, work, and overall outlook on life.

Rather than ignoring difficulties, the book encourages readers to face challenges with hope, perseverance, and a solution-focused perspective.

The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life, Timothy R. Jennings, *IVP*, 2017, 297 pages

This book makes the connection between faith, the brain, and human well-being. The book examines scientific research suggesting that spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, gratitude, forgiveness, and trust in God can influence the brain in positive ways and contribute to emotional, mental, and relational health.

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry, John Mark Comer, *Waterbrook*, 2019, 286 pages

This is an awesome, inspirational book about how we can slow down our busy, twenty-first century existence by purposefully and prayerfully eliminating HURRY in our lives. Comer, who is already a bestselling author, pastor, teacher and contented family man, sets the tone for the entire book by opening with the words of Jesus as found in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." In addition to practicing the words and ways of Jesus for finding rest in Him, Comer asserts through ample research findings how we are all just too busy to rest. More about Jesus' examples of restful living were included in Part III of Comer's book. He calls them practices of spiritual discipline, including "silence, solitude, sabbath, simplicity, and slowing."

At first glance, this seems like a simple, almost deceptive, everything starting with an “s”, formula, but it soon hit me as a powerful gut punch for simplifying your life. In short, this book is a great read and start toward an unhurried life!

GROUP F: TEACHING AND LEARNING

A Teacher’s Guide to Standards-Based Learning, Tammy Heflebower, Jan K. Hoegh, Philip B. Warrick, and Jeff Flygare, *Marzano Research*, 2019, 160 pages

This guide provides educators with practical strategies for designing instruction, assessment, and grading around clearly defined learning standards. The book emphasizes measuring what students know and can do, rather than focusing primarily on points, averages, or task completion.

The book encourages teachers to create transparent learning goals, so students understand expectations and take greater ownership of their learning.

Beyond Biblical Integration: Immersing You and Your Students in a Biblical World View, Roger C. S. Erdvig, *Summit Ministries*, 2020, 263 pages

This book explores how Christian educators can move beyond simply adding Bible verses or religious references to academic subjects and instead develop a worldview where faith shapes every aspect of teaching and learning. The book encourages teachers to help students see God’s presence and purpose throughout all areas of knowledge.

Note: The beginning of one chapter makes a reference to *The Lord of the Rings* series.

The New Art and Science of Teaching, Robert J. Marzano, *Solution Tree Press*, 2017, 135 pages

This book presents a research-based framework for improving classroom instruction by focusing on the teaching strategies that have the greatest impact on student learning. Rather than prescribing a single teaching method, the book provides practical guidance for helping all students achieve success.

The framework emphasizes that effective teaching combines both the **art** of building relationships and inspiring students with the **science** of using evidence-based instructional practices.

GROUP G: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS

The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness, Jonathan Haidt, *Penguin Press*, 2024, 385 pages

Just scanning the cover notes of this New York Times Bestseller makes one sit up and take notice. Jonathan Haidt author of several recent bestsellers strikes another homerun with this most recent book about the epidemic of teen mental illness that has overtaken our nation and caused similar problems around the world. Armed with an abundance of scientific, cultural, and lifestyle data, Haidt provides proof as to how national and international rates for teen depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide rose sharply during the early 2000s. Haidt demonstrates with scalpel-like accuracy showing how “play-based childhood” began to decline during the same periods and how

it was wiped out by the arrival of “phone-based childhood” which has caused so much concern. This finding alone has opened the collective senses of educators and politicians leading to the need for more research and corrective action regarding this international problem.

The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Trauma and Adversity – A Transformative Guide to Understanding Childhood Trauma and Health, Nadine Burke Harris, *Mariner Books*, 2019, 272 pages

This book deals with how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse, neglect, and chronic stress, can affect physical and emotional health throughout life. The book explains the science behind toxic stress and offers hope through understanding, prevention, and healing.

GROUP H: LEADERSHIP

101 Leadership Insights: Practical Tools, Tips, and Techniques for New and Seasoned Leaders, Bob Phillips and Del Walinga, *Harvest House*, 2021, 240 pages

Bob Phillips provides a collection of practical leadership principles designed to help leaders grow in character, effectiveness, and influence. Through concise lessons, illustrations, and real-life examples, the book offers wisdom that can be applied in business, education, ministry, and everyday leadership.

The book emphasizes that leadership is a journey of continual improvement, where small, consistent actions can have a lasting impact on individuals and organizations.

Every Leader is an Artist: How the World’s Greatest Artists Can Make You a More Creative Leader, Michael O’Malley and William F. Baker, *McGraw Hill*, 2012, 192 pages

This book looks at leadership as a creative process that requires vision, imagination, empathy, and the ability to inspire others. The book challenges leaders to move beyond management and embrace the “art” of leadership by shaping culture, developing people, and creating meaningful change.

The 4 Disciplines of Execution for Educators: Helping Schools and Districts Achieve Their Wildly Important Goals, Sean Covey, Lynn Kosinski, Betsy Wierda, and Maria B. Fleming, *Simon & Schuster*, 2026, 256 pages

This book applies the principles of effective execution and goal achievement to the educational setting. The book helps school leaders and teachers move from having good ideas and goals to consistently taking action that produces meaningful results for students.