

# JOURNAL

FOR

**WALDORF / RUDOLF STEINER TEACHERS**

**Volume 8, Number 1 (May 2006 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)**

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Christchurch, New Zealand. Easter, 2006

Dear Readers,

We begin this edition with a short account of the nine **Kolisko Conferences** being held this year throughout the world. Initiated in 1989 by Dr Zimmermann and Dr Glöckler in Stuttgart, and held four yearly- these conferences are organized by the Medical and Pedagogical Sections jointly. From the brochure: “Dr Eugene Kolisko (1891-1957), was the school doctor in the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart. He enriched the medical diagnosis with the phenomenological approach of Goethean natural science. Being both a teacher and a school doctor, he did the groundwork for observing education in itself as a form of preventative medicine.” So far this year there have been conferences in India, Taiwan, South Africa and Philippines. Further conferences will be held in the Ukraine, Australia (Sydney, July 2006), Mexico, Sweden and France. Thank you to Christof Wiechert and Dr. Glöckler for the use of the Kolisko 2006 poster for the covers of this edition of our Journal. Also, thank you Van James for the new lettering you have drawn for our front cover.

Our main articles in this issue include contributions from Eric Fairman, on the importance of experiential life in education and in Waldorf Schools in particular; John Allison, on the seven life processes- part one; Rosie Simpson’s acceptance speech for the biennial New Zealand National Excellence in Teaching award and James Pewtherer, of the Hague Circle, reporting on a visit to Waldorf Schools in South Africa.

This year the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School is hosting a Southern Hemisphere Steiner Teachers Conference in September (this incorporates the biennial New Zealand Fellowship of Waldorf Teachers’ Conference). We are hoping that many friends from South Africa and Australia will also be able to join us. Our theme will be the Millennium Child (21st Century child) with guest speaker Peter Glasby from Mt Barker, South Australia. Contact: [admin@ch.steiner.school.nz](mailto:admin@ch.steiner.school.nz) .

One of the discussion groups at the Conference in Christchurch will be a working together and sharing by representatives of the various bodies which strive to serve the impulse of Waldorf education, for example, the Pedagogical Section, the Association of Waldorf Schools in Australia, the Federation of Waldorf Schools in New Zealand and its mandated group, the New Zealand Steiner Teacher education group, which has been responsible for establishing the Auckland University of Technology Bachelor of Education(Steiner Primary teaching) Degree. Contact: [www.aut.ac.nz/education](http://www.aut.ac.nz/education)

Thank you readers for your support shown by reading and hopefully discussing, disagreeing with or generally taking an interest in any of the topics in our Journals! We welcome your correspondence about any of the content we offer. We hope there will be more short letters and replies from you in our next issue, 8.2 which will be published in the southern spring time, 2006. Contributions, photos/art work to: [neilcarter@xtra.co.nz](mailto:neilcarter@xtra.co.nz) cc [pglasby@picknowl.com.au](mailto:pglasby@picknowl.com.au) in Word attachment, use Times New Roman font, size 12 and Harvard system of referencing. Contributions by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

With kind regards,

Neil Carter,

Thank you to the editorial team in: **Australia:** Peter Glasby and Dr. Alduino Mazzone;

**Hawai’i:** Van James and **New Zealand:** Dr. Robin Bacchus, Hannelore Henning, Diederick Ruarus and Ineke van Florenstein Mulder.

Published by the Initiative Circles of the Pedagogical Section in Australia. Hawai’i and New Zealand. Back copies available from: [www.anthroposophy.org.nz/Sections](http://www.anthroposophy.org.nz/Sections)

**National Library of New Zealand catalogue number: ISSN 1176-4503**

The opinions expressed in this Journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors or of the Initiative Circles of the Pedagogical Section in Australia, Hawai’i or New Zealand.

## **THE KOLISKO IMPULSE- January, 2006 Kolisko Conference in Hyderabad, India.**

### **Christof Wiechert (leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland-**

*From the Journal of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Number 26, Easter, 2006:*

“A highlight of the current year is that nine so called Kolisko Conferences are scheduled to take place. Not just one big central one as was the case four years ago, but nine of these in different communities in a great number of geographical areas of the world (India, Taiwan, the Philippines, Mexico, Australia, Ukraine, France and Sweden).

The first of these conferences this year took place at the beginning of January in the Indian city of Hyderabad. Dr Michaela Glöckler and her colleagues, in co-operation with the local organizers, gathered together about 150 people in the 15 million metropolis of Hyderabad-Secunderabad. Teachers, therapists and doctors found a kind of oasis of peace and quiet and were able to link the desire to heal and the love of the teacher with the consideration of the developing human being.

In the mornings pedagogical presentations took place and in the afternoons these presentation were approached from the medical and physiological angle. The experience which evolved showed that the process of bringing up children today must increasingly turn towards the “curative” aspects. On the other hand, it was possible to experience that the Spirit of Waldorf Education, when appropriately applied, carries a healing impulse with it. The differences may only be slight, depending upon where you are at the time, whether it may be India or in other parts of the world. What was the same however, in the best sense of the word, were the Waldorf schools which we were able to visit. Hardly have you entered the school buildings before you can sense within them the renewing strength of the art of (Waldorf) education.

The conference started in the following way: there, on the floor of the entrance hall, made out of white rice and yellow and red lentils was the picture of a lotus blossom. After the hosts had sung a prayer to the gods to assist with the success of the Conference, each participant added a flower to the picture of the lotus flower. Then the oil lamp illuminating the whole picture was lit and the Conference started.

Each day we walked past this picture of the opening lotus flower, illuminated by (eternal) light. May this be a metaphorical picture for the continuing success of these conferences which may unfold across the world out of the ‘initiative-strength’ of human beings everywhere.”

### **Dates and contact addresses for the Kolisko Conferences, from April 2006:**

<b>South Africa</b> , Cape Town, April 2 <sup>nd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="mailto:koliskoct06@iafrica.com">koliskoct06@iafrica.com</a>
<b>Philippines</b> , Manila, April 22 <sup>nd</sup> - 28 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="mailto:heydoc@info.com.ph">heydoc@info.com.ph</a>
<b>Ukraine</b> , (Crimea), June 18 <sup>th</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="mailto:kolisko-krim@hotmail.com">kolisko-krim@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Australia</b> , Sydney, July 4 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="mailto:info@koliskochild.com">info@koliskochild.com</a>
<b>Mexico</b> , July 31 <sup>st</sup> -August 5 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="mailto:info@koliskomexico.org">info@koliskomexico.org</a>
<b>Sweden</b> , Jaerna, August 6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="mailto:info@kulturehuset.nu">info@kulturehuset.nu</a>
<b>France</b> , Paris, August 21 <sup>st</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup>	fax +33 (0)1 432 214 29

# ENLIVENING THE CURRICULUM- EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN STEINER/WALDORF SCHOOLS

Eric Fairman, Tasmania, Australia.

*Tell me, and I will forget; show me, and I may remember; involve me, and I will understand.*  
(Confucius)

## Central role of arts and crafts in Steiner's curriculum:

As Steiner/Waldorf School teachers, we have long recognized the central role of arts and crafts in the curriculum, an area which is generally well grounded in the lower (*primary*) grades. However, for a majority of high schools, it remains a big challenge to offer the broad craft syllabus as suggested by Rudolf Steiner.

The **Hiram Trust** ([www.anth.org.uk/hiramtrust](http://www.anth.org.uk/hiramtrust)) in the UK has done and continues to do a great deal to promote the arts and crafts syllabus within the Steiner-Waldorf movement. Another initiative is that of the **Waldorf College Project** ([www.waldorf-college-project.org.uk](http://www.waldorf-college-project.org.uk)) which is pioneering a new Waldorf experiential learning experience “..designed for students of 16 to 19...integrating the Arts, Sciences, Crafts and the environment..” at their campus in Stroud, UK. Both of these ventures, although working with aspects of the Waldorf curriculum, operate independently of the traditional Waldorf schools which generally have to rely upon their own resources in respect to presenting the high school curriculum, the development of which is frequently hampered though lack of facilities and funding.

As Martin Rawson (1999) points out: “a lack of resources has severely limited the development of adequate craft provision in many Waldorf schools. Most Waldorf schools in the UK barely manage to provide for gardening, elementary woodwork, pottery and some textile work. For historical and social reasons education in Britain has always undervalued manual, practical work. Vocational training – as practical subjects were known – was for the non-academic pupil, those not able to pass exams: the ‘dimbos’ (in the cruel terminology of the pupils themselves). The Waldorf version of this was far less socially divisive, but nonetheless subtly discriminating. Crafts were seen as a healthy balance to intellectual work, somewhat like fresh air and walking, good for you but not essential. The British school exam system and the recently introduced National Curriculum place no real value on craft work, and exams take up over half the timetable of the entire Upper school. Also exams act as a force of inertia as far as innovation in the curriculum goes. For many Waldorf pupils, the exams are what much of the Upper School is about. This is most true in Classes 8, 9, 10 and 11.”

What Rawson here applies to the educational system in the UK and to the Waldorf system in particular, can just as well be applied to Waldorf education in other parts of the English-speaking world. The lack of a full art and craft syllabus in the Waldorf High Schools needs to be seriously addressed.

Speaking with teachers at the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart in 1921, Rudolf Steiner (1996) made the following observation: “Head knowledge can give nothing that is of value for human inner life. And herein lies the reason why we fail to come into touch with the boys and girls who have reached this all-important moment in their lives, when they should be bringing the soul and spirit into reciprocal relationship with the bodily-physical side of their nature. How are we to find the right approach to these young people, at the hour when life itself is prompting them to try to bring their soul and spirit into connection with their physical nature?”

## ‘Will’ activities..... is the main lesson book *always* necessary?:

I well remember the days when a teacher could step into a classroom where students stood quietly, prepared to receive the ‘gifts’ which the teacher had to offer. But such memories are fading fast, as teachers meet classes of students that are not prepared, nor any longer able, to remain focused and listening to what is being offered without interruption, uninvited contributions, questions or general restlessness. This is perhaps no more apparent than in the later years of the middle school, especially grades seven, eight and upwards.

Regardless of the stage of development of a child, space and time should always be allowed for a strong element of ‘will’ activity in all learning. This is most apparent in the years up until the age of seven, where the child is almost constantly engaged in activities of the ‘will’. To quote Eugene Schwartz (1999): “The typical Waldorf main lesson not only invokes desk study, but also brings the children into movement. From first through fifth grades, many subjects are approached through rhythmic games, singing, the playing of musical instruments, and handwork, as well as through discussion and book work.”

‘**Activity**’ takes on an entirely new connotation in the higher grades, where there is generally a paucity of hands-on activities, for the teacher will be looking for activities which in themselves act as an additional ‘*Path of Discovery*’ (Erik Fairman, 2005) and path of learning. Of necessity, they will be fully incorporated into the general educational methodology with the aim of encouraging and engendering a sincere interest in the world, especially with respect to environmental education.

Richard Louv (2005) writes: “We know for a fact that the arts stimulate learning. In some school districts, the arts are making a tentative comeback. The same cannot be said of hands-on (nature) education – yet. In recent years, farsighted educators and environmental organizations have made important inroads into the classroom. Experiential, environmental-based, or place-based education offers a promising alternative. Proponents of the arts revival in schools have successfully argued that the arts stimulate learning in math and science. Based on early research, a similar argument could now be made that nature education stimulates cognitive learning and **reduces attention deficit**.”

From seven to fourteen, the child’s active participation in learning appears to decrease, so that by grade six, the learning process has transformed itself into one of a more sedentary nature. It is at this stage that teachers need to seriously assess their approach, for although the syllabus for the later years introduces subjects of a more intellectual nature, it does not necessarily follow that ‘will’ imbued learning has to be relegated to a thing of the past!

Whereas the curriculum in the primary years is more related to practical life and learning, the tendency with respect to the teaching methodology in higher grades is one of increasing detachment from ‘real’ life situations, just at the time when new ideals well-up in the young person with the convergence of two significance streams in their life: the loss of childhood and its sense of wonder, and the birth of adulthood and new creative powers a mirroring of what took place around the age of nine, but on a different level of inner development.

This is a time where the young person makes a transition from the desire to merely ‘know’ about things, to a yearning to ‘understand’. The young person looks out to see a world and life which both have meaning and purpose, and the dawning realization that he/she has the potential to influence both the present and future course of events. It is a time of searching for the answer to inner questions, such as

“Who am I and why do I exist?

What is my role in life and in the community?

How can I influence and make a difference in the world?”

These are three major questions which confront the emerging adolescent, especially from grade nine onwards. To find the answers requires the support and guidance of not only immediate family and teachers, but also that of friends and the wider community.

In 1922, in lectures about the younger generation, Rudolf Steiner (1967) said, “When materialism is the all-embracing world-view, people today have more and more lost the ability to arouse a genuine interest in the world – the world in the widest sense of the word. Our academic disciplines, in which, of course, today’s teachers have also been educated, actually contain in essence nothing at all about the world. They offer physical laws, mathematical relationships, descriptions of what goes on within the cell and all manner of views about historical process that are open to debate. These things put together are quite incapable of inspiring interest in young people precisely between 15 and 20 years of age. Anyone sufficiently unprejudiced to make the proper observations in this area is bound to realize that such stuff is simply incapable of satisfying the deepest interests of those people in the age group we are discussing. Through the lack of sufficient interest in the world around them, they are thrown back upon themselves, and thereby begin to brood over all manner of things.”

If teaching is to be effective and meaningful, then teachers have a responsibility to ensure that students not only experience an awakening of their feeling life in presentations, but that they also have a ‘living’ experience of the subject and are able to perceive its relevance to ‘real’ life. This can only be fully realized when students are **actively** involved with their will in the learning process.

Although the ‘main lesson book’ is perceived as being central to the Steiner-Waldorf educational methodology, in that it fosters creativity and productivity with the student, it also tends to stand in isolation with regards to experiences outside of school and it is therefore not easy for the student to see any connectedness with the effort which they are expending on producing a magnificent main lesson book, to the life they will be leading once they walk through the school doors at the end of the day. There are occasions when the main lesson book can be dispensed with in favour of creativity and productivity in other fields of endeavour which have a greater tangible connectedness with ‘real’ life.

An example I wish to share from my experience is of a student with learning disabilities (for whom, for example, writing a research paper would have been too difficult a task) was asked by the teacher in the Main Lesson on the ‘Industrial Revolution’ to **build** a project instead of writing about it. The student built a working model of a steam engine and took it to several lower school classes to explain and demonstrate it!

### **Experiential, Placed-based and Community-based education:**

Karl Ege (1979) writes: “With regard to the accelerating influence of scientific technology and academic sterility upon education, Rudolf Steiner pointed out, shortly before his death, that for the future of the new school movement it would be of great importance to turn the rudder 180 degrees in the direction of the artistic and the practical. With this in mind, we realize how – in contrast to the emphasis which is put upon the academic – the artistic and handcraft activities are far too often carried on merely as supportive and enlivening factors. It could, however, be the other way around, that they would be the starting point, and that out of such creative, self-active and practical work the elements of knowledge and scientific understanding would be developed. This would appear to be the change of direction indicated by Rudolf Steiner as a need for the future.”

An integrated curriculum which incorporates both general learning and vocational or experiential learning is not a new concept. In the early 1900s, Europe and the US gave birth to a growing movement of progressive educationalists at a time when the tendency in educational circles was to focus more on intelligence testing, cost-management and a separation of ‘intellectual’ and ‘practical’ education. Several progressive educators, other than Steiner, emphasized the importance of an education which served not only the intellect, but one which also served the needs of the emotional, artistic and creative aspects of human development.

The foremost amongst these educators was John Dewey (1915), who wrote: “Our present education appeals for the most part simply to the intellectual aspect of our natures, our desire to learn, to accumulate information and to get control of the symbols of learning; not to our impulses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce, whether in the form of utility or art. If we were to introduce into educational processes the activities which appeal to those whose dominant interest is to do and make, we should find the hold of the school upon its members to be more vital, more prolonged, containing more of culture. If our education is to have any meaning for life, it must pass through an equally complete transformation.”

Learning, involving activity or *Experiential Learning*” (Kolb, 1984), should not be seen as an alternative learning method, but rather one which stands on a par with any general academic/intellectual approach, which was a central theme of deliberations at the second UNESCO International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education held in Seoul in 1999 ([www.unesco.org/bpi/seoul/ve-intro.htm](http://www.unesco.org/bpi/seoul/ve-intro.htm)), where it was stated that Technical Vocational Education is seen as the ‘poor relation’ of general education and therefore it earns little respect. The pursuit of a long general curriculum has led young people and their parents to believe that the only worthy path is that of general education and its coveted university diplomas. Vocational education and training, seen as the refuge of those who are not smart enough for general education, is undervalued.”

Education can be a very isolationistic experience for students, when what they experience in their ‘everyday lives’ does not find its mirror image within the domain of the classroom and school, and vice versa. It is important that subjects are not taught in isolation from the ‘real world’, in isolation from life, but rather that that which is taught has meaning and relevance to life in general.

Two questions could be: “How can subjects be presented in a manner which enables all students to see their relevance to life-outside-of-school?” and “How can such subjects be actively supported by a wider community than that of the class and school?”

We live in an era where the interaction between school, family and community no longer exists in the forms which they did from the 19<sup>th</sup> until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. J.Kretzman and J. McKnight (1993) observe: “Schools have tended to distance themselves from their local communities. The vital links between experience, work, and education have been weakened. As a result, schools in many urban and rural communities have lost their power as a valuable community resource.”

A recent addition to the progressive schooling movement is an educational approach known as ‘**placed-based**’ education which is generally applicable to primary and middle students and ‘**community based**’ education for high school students and beyond. The main characteristics about the ‘place-based’ approach is that it sets out to involve the students in connecting with family, community and the local region by extending the classroom out into the community. At the same time, students are afforded the opportunity for developing and experiencing hands-on, real-life experiences. Learning is centred on authentic activities which correspond directly with tasks and life in the community, and which have an evident relationship with workplaces of today and the future. This approach enables students to more easily see that what they are engaged in and has a relevance to their own world.

Placed-based education is inherently multidisciplinary, incorporating integration of the core curricula activities such as humanities, social studies, sciences, mathematics, arts and physical health. This naturally requires the involvement of teachers in bridging various disciplines, as well as giving every opportunity to call upon the wider community for work-place resources and input.

As the name implies, the content is generally specific to the sociology, geography and ecology of that particular place. Such an approach to education not only enables the student to connect with the world in a natural manner, but also to see the relevance of what they are learning, at the same time allowing them to develop an interest in and a concern for their environment, and to become contributing citizens.

Gregory Smith (2002) writes: “The primary value of placed-based education lies in the way that it serves to strengthen students’ connections to others and to the regions in which they live. It enhances achievement, but, more importantly, **it helps overcome the alienation and isolation of individuals that have become hallmarks of modernity.**”

I tend to believe that this approach to learning is compatible with the Waldorf approach, in that rather than having as its goal the graduation of young people ‘who are able to function and work in our modern highly technological and consumer orientated society’, the aim is instead to prepare young people ‘to so live and work within society that their efforts will go towards sustaining the cultural heritage and ecological integrity of the region in which they lead their lives’. Such an approach to education could be conceivably referred to as **sustainable education**.

### **UNESCO – Education for Sustainable Development**

At the UN World Summit for Sustainable Development held in 2002, it was announced that 2005 – 2014 would be the decade of ‘**Education for Sustainable Development**’. The UNESCO report (2002) sums up the ideals as follows: “This represents a new vision of education, a vision that helps people of all ages better understand the world in which they live, addressing problems such as poverty, wasteful consumption, environmental degradation, urban decay, (etc). This vision of education emphasizes a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to developing the knowledge and skills needed for a sustainable future, as well as changes in values, behaviour, and lifestyles. This requires us to orientate education systems, policies and practices in order to empower everyone, young or old, to make decisions and act in culturally appropriate and locally relevant ways to redress the problems that threaten our common future. In this way, people of all ages can become empowered to develop and evaluate alternative visions of a sustainable future and to fulfill these visions through working creatively with others.”

These ideals are definitely not foreign to Waldorf education, especially in the early to middle years of the primary school curriculum, but can become increasingly lost in the later years where teaching becomes rather ‘desk, text-book and question paper’ orientated, resulting in a loss of true human interaction.

Students need to be given the opportunity to explore and see the world and to become actively and intimately involved with their immediate communities and the learning process, and at the same time, being given every opportunity to reflect on their discoveries and the processes involved. The task of any teacher is to create an environment, for students of any age, which both supports and enhances their ability to learn. Whereas in the primary schools much of the instruction was ‘teacher-centered’, in the upper/high school this will necessitate a conscious shift to a more ‘student-centered’ learning style. With student-centered teaching, it is not a matter of giving the students information, facts and figures which need mastering, but rather that students are posed the **questions** which need to be answered. Alfie Kohn (1999) states: “Questions that matter, questions that students sincerely wonder about or at least those that teachers believe students wonder about once they’re posed. These are the questions which can drive exploration and learning.”

Christopher Clouder and Martyn Rawson (1998) write:” What we can impart is an attitude to knowledge and learning which enhances and generates genuine enthusiasm for our social and natural environment – a form of ‘moral ecology. Life-long learning is not only a question of accumulating knowledge but is based on the ability to learn from experience.”

Similarly, Rudolf Steiner (1977) in a lecture on the 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1919 said, “The other aspect of the social pedagogical question is to prepare people to learn from life. We do not fare well in life if we view it as a rigid and foreign object. We can place ourselves correctly in life only when every moment, every day, every week, every year becomes a source of learning for our future development. Regardless of how far we go in our schooling, we will have accomplished the most if, through this schooling, we have learned how to learn from life.”

Over the years, UNESCO has conducted numerous studies into the effectiveness of Lifelong Education, incorporating technical and vocational learning. At the eighteenth session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1974, revised recommendations with respect to Technical and Vocational Education were adopted. Paragraph 8 of those recommendations states:

“In terms of the needs and aspirations of individuals, technical and vocational education should:

- (a) permit the harmonious development of personality and character and foster the spiritual and human values, the capacity for understanding, judgment, critical thinking and self-expression;
- (b) prepare the individual to learn continuously by developing the necessary mental tools, practical skills and attitudes;
- (c) develop capacities for decision-making and the qualities necessary for active and intelligent participation, teamwork and leadership at work and in the community as a whole.”

As mentioned previously, vocational/experiential learning, is not a new idea in Waldorf Schools, for we need only to look at the Hibernia School in Germany which was the focus of one of UNESCO’s most thorough investigations in relation to Lifelong Learning and the effectiveness of integration of different disciplines of education. In the foreword to the report, George and Schneider (1979) wrote: “ The Hibernia School attracted the attention of the Institute (UNESCO) by the exemplary way in which three major components of the curriculum, i.e. artistic, practical and academic education, are articulated. From the very first grade up to grade 13 these three major areas are given almost equal emphasis, with the result that, at the end of their time at school, every pupil is potentially qualified to enter either university or skilled technical employment.”

### **Experiential Learning and ‘Projects’:**

In experiential learning, teachers and students together agree on an authentic programme or project which is best suited to the learner’s interests and abilities, leaving open possibilities for working in collaboration with other students.

Any such project is designed to fully engage the student in initiative taking, decision making, assuming responsibility and accountability, expectations which are of course only expected when individual students have reached an appropriate stage of intellectual development, which would not generally be before grade nine. Such demands also require that the student is wholly engaged in the program/project with all the three faculties of thinking, feeling and willing.

Programmes and projects should be authentic in that they reflect or correspond to real-life experiences or needs in the home, work-place or wider community. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning experience, support the student in all aspects of the process and to ensure that the student achieves the greatest benefit from the experiences. The process would be enhanced with active collaboration not only with teachers and peers, but also with family and mentors in the community. The design of such programs/projects will inevitably require the teacher to work individually with numerous students, which in itself demands considerable commitment from the teacher.

When experiential education is combined with place-based learning, then real-life opportunities arise for working with the community or with-in the community, such as in community-based service programmes/projects which may incorporate developing work-place skills, involvement in community service or pursuing work experience opportunities within the student’s particular sphere of interests. Programmes/projects can also complement subject courses in the sciences, mathematics, sociology/anthropology, environmental studies, design and technology, to enumerate but a few.

In January 1922 Rudolf Steiner (1967) said, “The teacher must be clear that with the arrival of puberty, an altogether different being emerges, born out of a new relationship with the world. If, at this stage, the student cannot see sound reasons in all the content given to him; if conditions in the world appear to make

no sense to him and if he cannot find contact with people who are able to reassure him, at least to a certain extent, that there are good reasons for what is happening in the world, then (the) inner stress may become intolerable to the extent that the adolescent breaks down altogether.”

A student in a community-based school (not a Waldorf School) wrote: “In my community experience, I went from learning what something is, to applying it to real life. I learned why I need to know the things that I learned in math class. I had a chance to work with some neat people who let me try out things for myself. The mentor really seemed to care about me as a person and I had fun.”

Apart from the excellent work of the Hiram Trust (UK) mentioned earlier, positive action has been taken by the Rudolf Steiner School of South Devon (UK) ([www.steiner-south-devon.org](http://www.steiner-south-devon.org)) in establishing an ‘experiential learning’ program, as teacher Jenny Milne (2005) describes: “New projects are devised each year. These projects arise out of the needs of the school or directly from the curriculum, or both. The criteria are: ‘Is it needed?’ ‘Is it real, worthwhile work?’ ‘Will the children learn something of value?’ ‘Has it a social/cultural purpose?’ But ‘Can we do it?’ comes a long way down the list.”

From an interview with Jim Cotz (2005): “The Emerson Waldorf School High School in North Carolina (USA) is in the midst of developing an innovative study program, called ‘Nature and Technology’. The programme is based on the idea that one of the great challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is for human beings to learn to live harmoniously with nature and the earth, and to support the health of the earth. We use our studies in all the disciplines to maintain the connection to nature through both practical experience and academic study. We want the students to see the problems presented by the modern world but we also want to give them the skills to produce change and the optimism that they can make a difference.”

### **Transition from primary to secondary education:**

The transition from class teacher in the grade school to class guardian in the high school, varies from continent to continent, often as a direct result of government legislation regarding education and which grade constitutes the start of high school. Much debate continues to take place in Steiner-Waldorf faculties on the whole question of whether or not the class teacher should finish at the end of grade seven or eight (Riccio, 2002).

If a programme with greater emphasis on experiential learning were to be introduced into the higher classes, perhaps commencing with grade seven, the teachers would need to engage in some serious flexible lateral thinking in order to break free of the conventions which have become established within the Waldorf classroom over many decades, but at the same time, safe-guarding the integrity of all aspects of the curriculum, not least the underlying philosophy (anthroposophy).

I believe that an ever increasing number of compromises have been made with respect to the Waldorf curriculum, to the point where Waldorf Education is being ‘watered down’ in the scramble to accommodate various national and local governmental syllabi demands, especially in some schools which now rely on government funding. I am sure there are strings attached to this funding!

“We have just to see to it that we do not allow ourselves to be persuaded to compromise. We must only see to it that we ourselves do not give up anything of our essential conceptions. We must realize that we should take a careful look at where we have **gone wrong**, if we receive praise from the present educational system.” (Rudolf Steiner 1986).

### **Integrated Curriculum:**

To develop a truly integrated curriculum, teachers would require an intimate knowledge of and understanding for the interrelationship of the different subject areas across the syllabus. Such familiarity with the curriculum would allow for experiential components to be incorporated across a broad range of subjects.

In considering any options for practical activities it may be wise to firstly consider those which can be managed within the context of the class and school. Other options can be listed which would require the assistance of adults other than teachers, perhaps initially from within the school parent community, with the possibility of extending the opportunities for active mentorship from appropriate individuals within the wider community. There are always numerous retirees who are frequently willing and importantly, also available, to share their knowledge with the younger generation.

If contemplating the implementation of any curriculum change or innovation, foremost in our minds must be the needs of the young people in our care. Does the curriculum, or rather, does the **methodology** practiced in implementing the curriculum, recognize and complement the developmental stages of a child's development?

In high school we meet students who are beginning to question the authority of parents and teachers. Students are also showing a greater interest in the wider world and how it relates to *who* they are. There is an unfolding desire to participate in life. However, teachers and parents should take care not to awaken too early the intellectual powers needed for thinking and the formation of reasoned judgments. These powers (*which Steiner calls the 'astral' forces*) needed to develop intellectual thought, are still actively at work within the pre-pubescent child up until the fourteenth or fifteenth year.

It is only after this time that these forces will be *released* for intellectual development. There will be a gradual unfolding of the ability to form 'real' judgments, and therefore any experiential or hands-on learning in grade seven will need to recognize the still developing intellect of the young adolescent. As mentioned earlier, it is only towards grade nine that students begin to seek answers to the inner questions of identity and responsibility towards the community, and the world at large.

For this reason, individual work which requires significant decision making on the part of the student, is best saved for the grade eight graduation projects at the earliest, when students are in their fifteenth year. Cooperative team-work on 'group projects' where students are able to collaborate should be actively pursued in grade seven. Teachers and mentors will still, at this stage, have significant input into any undertakings, especially in the areas of guidance, encouragement and final decision making!

### **Conclusion:**

Rudolf Steiner (1995) , speaking in Stuttgart in 1919, made his thoughts very clear when he said:

**“During the age from fifteen to twenty everything to do with agriculture, trade, industry, and commerce will have to be learned. No one should go through these years without acquiring some idea of what takes place in farming, commerce and industry. These subjects will be given a place as branches of knowledge infinitely more necessary than much of the rubbish which constitutes the present (Ed. State German schools of the time) curriculum during these years.”**

An Experiential/Sustainable educational model can be of great benefit to all participants: students, teachers, parents and the community. Enthusiastic youngsters filled with active *'life forces'*, who are challenged by formality and sedentary activities of the classroom, will find renewed enthusiasm for learning if given the opportunity to actively involve themselves in the learning process, rather than just passively listening to, and hopefully retaining, something of what is proffered to them! Fritjof Capra (2004) writes: “Researchers have found that after two weeks we remember only 10% of what we read, but 20% of what we hear, 50% of what we discuss, and 90% of what we experience. This is one of the most persuasive arguments for experiential, project-based learning.”

Schools and teachers have the opportunity to enliven the Waldorf curriculum and to focus more on the arts, crafts and practical hands-on experiential syllabus in the high school. Art is well integrated into most lessons, but there is a need for practical orientated activities to also become a *'norm'* in the lessons. I do

not subscribe to the idea that all practical activities should be limited to those of a 'craft' nature and their revival.

We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and utilize the technology which this age offers us. It therefore follows that older students also need to have the opportunity to work with the current tools used in modern industry and commerce, which of necessity include access to computer technology and other forms of electronic equipment, all of which are an integral part of the lives of teachers, parents and students.

An **'Enlivened Curriculum'** will only enhance what is already offered by Waldorf schools and teachers. The developmental needs of the maturing student would be better catered for as results of such experiential education have proven beyond doubt in other educational sectors. The student's application and participation in the entire learning process, as well as the resultant positive effect which this active learning has upon the social interaction and general behaviour of adolescent youth, has been considerably influenced for the better by the change in teaching techniques. There is absolutely no reason for losing any of the high quality content of the vast subject areas covered in the Steiner-Waldorf curriculum. Incorporating more 'Will' activity into lessons where student's feel that they are an active participant in the learning process, will only add to what is already a rich experience for all concerned. Maybe restlessness and inattentiveness in the classroom will become a fading memory!! All very good reasons for introducing such methodology into Steiner-Waldorf schools!

**"Teachers must carry the life of the age in themselves. They must be conscious of this. Out of this consciousness can radiate what lively instruction and conduct should communicate to the students. To begin such a process, teachers must no longer be miserably confined to the realm of the school; they must feel themselves supported by the whole breadth of modern society and its interaction with the future in which teachers, in particular, have the greatest interest."** Rudolf Steiner (1977).

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## THE EIGHT YEAR JOURNEY OF A WALDORF CLASS

**Rosie Simpson, Hastings, New Zealand.**

Acceptance address that Rosie Simpson of Taikura Rudolf Steiner School, Hastings, gave upon receiving the NZ National excellence in teaching award for the Hawkes Bay region:

“Rudolf Steiner lived one hundred years ago. One might expect that the approach to education that he initiated would then be outdated now and yet worldwide there are 880 Rudolf Steiner Schools in 55 countries; eleven of these are in New Zealand. These figures do not include the hundreds of Kindergartens, Early Childhood Centres and Special Schools. New initiatives are appearing everywhere, especially in Asian and Eastern European countries. Steiner's ideas not only have currency in the modern world, but they are accessible to all races, cultures and religions. A school in Egypt has a mosque at its centre, a school in Thailand will embrace Buddhism; in India Hinduism, in the West, Christianity. Each school is autonomous, but there are common threads that make them instantly recognisable.

The most fundamental is reverence for the human spirit and the spirit that lives in nature. This manifests in a curriculum where the evolution of human consciousness through cultural epochs is mirrored in the development of the child from dreamy at-oneness with the world at the age of 7, to the isolating individualism of the twenty-first century experienced by the adolescent.

The approach to teaching is another of these threads, especially in the years from 7 to 14. All subjects, as far as possible, are brought in an artistic way - the arts are the medium through which thinking is cultivated - through drama, movement, dance, music, singing, poetry, painting, modeling, drawing. What could be dry and conceptual is brought to life in a creative way.

A third thread which characterises this education and the one I have chosen to talk about is the role of the class teacher, who ideally accompanies a class for its first seven or eight years.

This has been my journey for the past seven and a half years. A journey in which I have accompanied a class of thirty children from the age of seven, an age of wide-eyed innocence and wonder through to the age of fourteen, worldly wise teenagers pushing at boundaries and needing challenge at every level. It is an extraordinary task to take on. The responsibility is huge. Parents truly entrust their child to a Steiner School teacher, knowing that this person will be a major influence not only in their formative years but also a lifelong influence. They must trust both the integrity of the teacher and that the teacher will be able to change with their children, to go through a formative process, where each year a shift is required in both the inner orientation and the outer practice. What a nine year old needs is quite different from what a seven year old needs ... and so on, right through until puberty and beyond.

There is no room for complacency. No possibility of becoming "stale", specializing in one age group and repeating the curriculum year after year. Instead we are given a gift, a rare and wonderful gift: the privilege of really coming to know a human being ... (well, up to 30 human beings!) I do not have just one year to try to do this and then hand them on to someone else. I have time, time to establish relationships - in which the children can learn to trust and feel that they are understood. Problems have to be worked with. If we are on this journey together for the long haul, I cannot decide that a child is too difficult to deal with and thank God we will be parting ways within a year. I need to find the right way of working with them and they need to know that I care, that I am interested in them and who they are. I am an ally in their unfolding. I see their pain, their joy.

They have the possibility to reveal more of their individuality, to establish their dignity because they are not beset with the repeated anxiety of: "Will this new teacher see who I am, what my gifts are, what my

needs are?" It means that once the rhythms and routines are established and the social relationships tuned we can get on with learning; behaviour management is not a major issue.

Time allows the children to get to know each other, their strengths and weaknesses. They learn to accept difference and work with it. They celebrate each other's achievements in a genuine, heartfelt way. They see that I talk with their parents, that they walk this journey of their education also. This partnership with parents builds in strength over the years and enables a full understanding of the children.

Time and continuity over the years allow us to build cohesion and strive for excellence together. We are able to deepen and extend, to build upon what has gone before knowing that all have covered the same ground. Each morning we play music together. We have done this since Class One where we began with simple wooden flutes. Now seven years later the class is able to play Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", all four movements, written for a recorder ensemble. And they all play. Everyone is a musician. And they know that it is good. Something is achieved that will have an enduring resonance in their souls.

Steiner gave a wonderful and wise curriculum. It is based on the picture of child development as a process of incarnation. We may grow 'up' in our physical bodies, but we grow 'down' from the spiritual world. We are spiritual beings on an earthly journey: "The Dressed Angel" rather than "The Naked Ape". How do we make this journey and not become dis-spirited, removed from the spirit? As we take hold of our body, the physical instrument that will give home and expression to our spirit and soul life, we leave behind our spiritual home. The Waldorf curriculum is sensitive to the unfolding of faculties as the child matures, upholding the integrity and sanctity of childhood allowing children to be children, cultivating the sense of wonder and a sense for the goodness, the beauty and the truth in the world.

If I reflect on what I have learnt through my years together with this class, there are two things that stand out, without which I could not have taught or stayed the journey. The first is a sense of wonder. The ability to wonder is a diminishing faculty in today's world. It is borne of the feeling that something great, perhaps mysterious, stands behind what we perceive through our senses. We live in an age in which the intellect is king and the heart is yet to be understood as an organ of perception, in which anything trivial can be described as "awesome"; where the word "whatever" drops from children's lips with an uninvolved cynicism. Cultivating a sense of wonder, giving the opportunity for wonder, prepares the ground for healthy, properly child-like learning, for imagination to grow.

"The man without wonder is but a pair of spectacles behind which there are no eyes" - so said Thomas Carlyle.

If as teachers we do not wonder, how can we expect children to keep alive their openness and receptivity? Which is more important - what we teach or who we are as individuals? Can I ask them to be learners if I am not a learner myself? They need to see that I am also on a path of self-development, that I have learnt something fresh and exciting for myself when I have prepared these lessons, that I have enthusiasm for what I teach.

Enthusiasm is the second thing. Preaching to children about morals or the values they ought to have will not change the way that they are, but perhaps my wonder and enthusiasm will. The Greek 'entheo' means 'to be filled with a god'. If they recognise the divine spark that comes through my enthusiasm perhaps they will not become dispirited. With enthusiasm we warm and carry each other. It is infectious, it is enlivening, it is powerful.

"Wonder" and "Enthusiasm". If we give these to our children we give real gifts - these are the fibres of the kete\* in which I pass on my teaching and from which they draw their learning".

(\* kete, Maori word for a basket made of flax; meaning here a "basket of treasures")

## WORKING WITH THE LIFE PROCESSES-THEME AND VARIATIONS- part I

John Allison, Melbourne, Australia, September, 2005

(Editor's note: A different version of this essay appeared as 'Time for a Change' in - *Living in Light Loving the Dark*, Allison (2003). We shall publish the second part and completion in our next *Journal* 8.2 to be published later this year).

### *Theme One*

In 1910, Rudolf Steiner (1996) began to outline his understanding of the seven *life processes* active in the human organism: *breathing, warming, nourishing, secreting, maintaining, growing, and generating*. These processes are prerequisites for life: even in plants a kind of breathing occurs; and warming, whether inwardly possessed as in mammals and birds, or as in the case of plants and insects — and also reptiles, amphibians, fish — directly due to the sun's warmth, is obviously present. Similarly, each of the other processes is integral to life.

The life processes are also *time* processes. It would be an error, however, to think of them working only sequentially. While some linear relationships do seem apparent — for instance, between nourishing and secreting — we must try to imagine all these processes inter-permeating, inter-weaving, and overlapping in time.

These seven life processes have cosmological origins — for instance, we find in the ancient Indian text, the 'Rig Veda (Mascaro, 1961):

There was neither death nor immortality then. No signs were there of night or day. The ONE was breathing by its own power, in infinite peace. Only the ONE was; there was nothing beyond.

Darkness was hidden in darkness. The All was fluid and formless. Therein, within the void, by the fire of its fervour arose the ONE.

Here we read of the processes of *breathing* and *warming* as the preconditions for all further creation. Through breathing, a rhythmical relationship is established between what is inner and outer — a space is opened up within space. This space, really no more than a kind of pulsating differentiation, is then permeated by warmth, a warming which inhabits the space, thus forming a kind of content, and establishing a basis for presence. In the further stages, the *nourishing* process begins to draw inward all that is necessary to give shape to this formative space.

*Secreting*, in a wonderful way, is a central point. A sifting and sorting process takes place, retaining what is essential, rejecting the inessential — an alchemical process through which form is given substance. At this point, creation is manifest.

The existence of any entity must then be regulated and moderated, through a process of constant *maintaining*. This would only keep things as they are, however, were it not for the process of *growing* that underlies all development. Organisms develop, from juvenile forms to maturity; this is a process which fills us with wonder and awe when we perceive it in any living thing. Finally, there is a process through which replicative or reproductive capacities appear at some level in the organism, *generating* its own kind, creating something new.

All these processes occur below the level of ordinary consciousness, and we generally become aware of their existence only when their normal healthy activity is disturbed; then we might notice, through the inward monitor of our *life sense* that something is not in its usual equilibrium. However, their relationship to soul processes, especially to our *consciousness in time*, is of interest. We learn that these subliminal life processes underpin the processing of events in consciousness. As parents, then, we could consider how to create a supportive environment for our baby or toddler. And teachers could ask themselves: in terms of the life processes, what is the right relationship between teaching and learning? Both teachers and parents

could ask: how might I then work more effectively in managing behaviour, through processes that enable the child to find a true relationship to conscience? And every adult human being could ask: how are the life processes present in all encounters and their transformation, as relationship processes to which we can be more attentive? And how might any one of us undertake a meditative or contemplative path that enables greater awareness in the fields of life? The following is a set of variations composed on this theme of the life processes.

### *First Variation*

If, as a parent or childcare worker, we want to work with understanding into the life of a baby or toddler, what is relevant? The answer is simple: everything, for they partake in everything around them, responding as an open sense being to their environment. Therefore, everything we do will be either a support or violation of their development.

In considering babies and little children, we need to be mindful that while we can work in accord with the life processes, we must not interfere directly, or intervene in their workings. That is a medical matter. We support their healthy functioning. The body has its own wisdom, and we would be wise in deciding not to obstruct the play of its wisdom.

If we observe a baby's breathing, we notice how irregular it is, and how easily affected it is by sudden events — any unexpected change is a shock, and it registers in the breathing. This irregular breathing — laboured at times, and almost suspended at others — can be a source of anxiety in a parent, and that is exactly what is not needed. Breathing is easily polluted, and not only from physical causes. A baby breathes most easily in a calm environment, one which is free of any nervous or emotional intensity and flurries of abrupt activity.

*Breathing* is a metaphor for all steady rhythmic processes and transitions, as steady and rhythmic as the tides of the ocean and their turning. As we live into this, we will find its reality in the seasons of the year, the 'seasons' of each day, in waking and sleeping. And we will notice further that our sense impressions, our awareness of inner and outer realities, have an oscillation. Two phrases from Jungian psychology seem very relevant here — *focused consciousness* and *diffuse awareness*. So can we observe that even consciousness has its polarities, between breathing in and breathing out?

Thus we are not so much concerned directly with the baby's actual breathing, as with all that 'breathes' around it: with all that opens or closes, with our awareness for the spaciousness of the physical and soul environment in which the baby is enveloped.

So, too, we can consider *warming* in the first place as an environmental influence. It is easy for us to conceive of loving as a warming activity. Warmth is love. We know the baby does not have a conscious relationship to its own warmth, so we have to ensure that the physical surroundings are right, that the baby's head is covered against heat and cold, for instance, especially in those first years when the fontanels are still open.

And then there is the warming love we direct towards the child. There is a lot of research to show that touch is the most direct way of giving expression to this love — touched babies thrive. Therefore, holding, embracing, caressing, stroking, massaging, are acts of love, the natural actions of a loving caregiver. Love wants to be demonstrated in the world — it is never abstract and cold.

Here we might pause and consider for a moment the over-effusive 'love' that can smother a child. Can we grasp that breathing and warming are to be understood together? Breathing opens a space, and warming fills it. Because this breathing continues, the mood-atmosphere does not become too humid, too over-heated. The effect is like mild, fresh springtime air. So we see that both breathing and warming are evident forms of love, especially when they are in proportion.

Then there is all we can understand of *nourishing*. Physically, this process is more tangible, as babies have to be fed, and they demonstrate quite strong metabolic responses! So we can talk about nourishment in terms of the quality of their food, and we reflect that organic or biodynamic food is to be preferred. We can consider the nature of root, leaf, flower and fruit, and their nourishing qualities — and how we need to balance them for the constitution of our particular baby.

We will be concerned for the context, the setting, for a meal — for we are really nourished through our senses. Everything a baby takes in is nourishment or malnourishment. So again we look at the whole environment of the child, seeing it as food for the senses. Are we ‘force-feeding’ or ‘starving’ the baby? What do we mean by ‘wholesome’? And then, again we come to love — just to think about these things is already loving, but our deeds are so nourishing. We know how a baby ‘devours’ our attentiveness, flourishing in our devoted gaze.

*Secreting* is a secret process, a mysterious activity through which the human organism sifts and sorts the essential from the non-essential. Thus it involves both retaining and letting go. The undisturbed wisdom of the body will effectively process most physical substances. The miracle of secretion is this complete transformation of substances, so that nothing remains as it was, and everything has its place — or is excreted.

Secreting, as the fourth life process, is thus right at the centre of things. We can see how specific capacities are secreted out of transformational experiences — just think how walking remains, but the frustrations of the struggle seem to be discarded in the celebratory event of accomplishing it. Is there not a comparable activity at the basis of all soul life? This ability to transform our experiences — to not get stuck, to not remain obsessed with some mental or emotional blockage, to digest and retain our learnings but not the pain of the lessons — this is an active power in the life environment of a baby.

At this point we might pause again and reflect that Rudolf Steiner referred to a *Pedagogical Law*: our activity at a higher level affects the child at a more fundamental level. Therefore, for instance, our soul experiences will directly impinge upon a child’s life forces. Mothers especially may have observed that if they are emotionally distressed, the baby’s health can be affected. Each of these life processes can be affected by our mental and emotional state of being, and any behaviour originating from that. Why should we have to deal with our own ‘stuff’, through a work-out in the ‘soul-gym’? Apart from our own needs, in order to keep the life-realm of the child fresh and clean.

The process of *maintaining* is a further miracle. Why am I still me, despite the fact that not one cell of the child I was has remained? What maintains my form? I am like the axe that has had several new handles and a new axe-head but is still the ‘same old axe’. I am not thinking here of my spiritual identity, but simply of my status as entity. Life is characterised by this maintenance of form — and when I die, the form will dissolve.

Health and safety consciousness is one aspect of maintenance in the life environment of a baby, a vigilance that attends to all possibilities. Seeing that each day is sufficient — that our activity of nurture suffices — is another. Maintaining implies a steadfastness that is difficult amidst the forces of contemporary life. To just keeping on going. This constancy is a vital element in a child’s life — a reassuring constancy and dependability that can be relied on. This is not a desperate bid for survival, nor resignation to circumstances, but rather a calm and solemn ‘yes-saying’ to all that comes. This implies a capacity for equanimity, which often has to be worked for amidst great adversity.

The life process of *growing* is obvious in a child. We never grow so much as in the womb, and then never again so much as in the first months, the first years... This process of quantitative growing is gradually supplanted by qualitative growing in soul qualities through the process of dying. The physical basis of growth is in cell division and development, and we see here an intimate relationship between growing and maintaining. But the difference is that maintaining just keeps things just as they are, whereas growing

advances things. Stasis and change. Form follows process — process follows form. One is the precursor for the other.

How do we allow for growth? How do we promote it? The capacity for wonder is the essential quality we look at here — openness towards what will come, a positive looking for it, without preconditioning its nature through imposed attitudes. This propensity for growth in a child tends to be faster than consciousness on our part — we comprehend it only retrospectively. And so — we must wonder. To marvel at the rate of change, the kinds of change, the unexpected aspects of it all...

Finally, we are faced with many questions when we ponder what we might see in a baby as an underlying process of *generating*. We usually think of generation in terms of sexual reproduction, and clearly these forces become active only around puberty. The generative organs are of course already formed in the womb, and we can note their development, showing that this life process is present from that time onward.

However, there is another aspect of this generating process that dominates the first three years of a child's development. It is a succession of deeds that seem to rise up through the child, first lifting it from its helplessly prone position to accomplish the extraordinary freedom of walking; then to find utterance; and ultimately to think and to remember. These three accomplishments — walking, talking, and thinking — are the foundations of creative freedom. Each one generates active presence in a world. Walking provides an orientation in a world of physical space; talking forms a basis for orientation in a world of soul; and thinking orientates the child in a spiritual world. At the age of three the child can *conceive* thoughts. Then, in the following years, in the child's remarkable capacity for imitation, we witness the replicative, reproductive aspect of generating present as a learning tool.

Witnessing this journey, and accompanying the child upon it, is an extraordinary experience. Wonder, reverence, our sense for the wisdom-filled harmony of each of these processes, and a gesture of devotional self-surrender to this sacred procession of accomplishments — these soul qualities constitute the mood in which a parent can watch their child develop. We support the life processes by providing an environment that nurtures their activity. And as the steward of that environment we realise that we have to work at our personal development.

### *Second Variation*

I now want to suggest how teachers could monitor learning through taking account of these processes that take place beneath the level of consciousness.

First, we need to be aware of the *breathing* process, in every sense of the phrase. How do we introduce the lesson? Can the child see his or her way into the lesson? Is there sufficient 'lightness of touch' to allow the child some breathing space, or do we cramp the breath through too much content, too many impressions, brought too soon? Is there an expansion / contraction principle present in our lessons? Is it a steady rhythmic quality of relaxation and concentration, in which the child breathes freely between sleeping and waking?

*Warming* to the lesson is critical. Do we overheat the situation through excessive enthusiasm for the subject, or for the idea of teaching; or do the facts, or perhaps our disinterest, leave the child cold? Does our interest extend right into the child's world, into the way the child experiences things? Having warmed to our task, do we allow the child to enter into a learning space and engender their own interest?

We must allow time for the child to digest information, to absorb new skills. Is all this data actually *nourishing* the child? Can the child digest it? Is it sufficient? What of the pictorial element? There can be both under-nourishment or over-nourishment; do we starve or bloat the child? Then, there also can be

mal-nourishment. Does the content of the lesson give the child indigestion? Does the child get to grips with the content? How long is required in general terms for digestion to take place?

The child has to sift and sort experiences in learning. What is the essential point? What can be discarded as useless? Or is it inappropriate? Does he or she get the point? What needs to be forgotten? What remains in the sieve of the child's consciousness? How do the facts become faculties? Does the result of the child's *secreting* process correspond with what we have conceived to be the desired learning outcome?

Learning must be maintained. Practice is necessary. Does the child remember what was taught? What is the most effective way of *maintaining* learning? Are there specific rhythms (daily, three-daily, monthly) for practice? Do we actually *know* the relationship of rhythm to the maintenance of knowledge or skilled capacities? What supplementary exercises reinforce learning? What is the real purpose of homework?

The process of *growing* what has been learnt is more sophisticated. Once knowledge has been instilled, a skill has been established, or a level of facility has been formed, how does the child develop new skills or understandings based on this learning? Is there a *growing down* into capability? How do we teachers create opportunities for extension? Are we aware of what can happen between one main lesson, for instance, and our subsequent return to that subject area? Sensing this, can we more conscientiously facilitate the growth of capacities?

Finally we must be interested in what the child is *generating* in response to the lessons. What do we ask them to reproduce? When? In setting out learning outcomes, do we distinguish between replication and genuine creativity? When do we expect more than mere replication? How do we enable creative responses? Through all this, can we find a right relation to time, in such a way that our personal creative consciousness with the classroom process awakens the possible future in the child? Such would be a special moment in the child's becoming.

### ***Third Variation***

In looking for ways through which behaviour management gradually becomes behavioural self-management, we can experience the importance of processes as they are developing in time. Noticing how emotions — both ours and theirs — can become somewhat too involved in situations, caught up in denial, anger, and bargaining, we may work consciously to calm the tendency of these forces in the soul to inflate reactions and occupy all the available space.

It is helpful to regard all challenging behaviour as Rudolf Steiner has suggested we should deal with a choleric child's outbursts. In the first place it is necessary to observe the incident: 'Oh, look at what's happened, the desk has some writing on it. We shall have to have a look at that later — let's say, tomorrow before school.' Then we discuss the issue on the following morning.

Or a parent can respond to a situation: "Oh, look, there are crayon marks on the walls in the hallway. Now I wonder how that happened?" No moralistic tone, just a reflective comment...

This first response initiates a kind of *breathing* process: perception of the event, and just an awareness of something to follow. Through this open gesture — what I've already called 'lightness of touch' — and through our *warming* interest in the child, a space is established in which the child's conscience may become active. Rudolf Steiner also recommends we tell morally *nourishing* stories, as food for the conscience. This helps a child digest the situation: both the actual event, and the possible consequences. The teacher or parent simply does not get involved in those reactions of denial, anger, or bargaining which so easily rise up in the immediate situation. In the first place the child will be relieved at this, while still aware that the conversation is to come.

We now let sleep have its say. All three processes are involved in carrying the event forward — breathing, warming, nourishing. Another life process, *secreting*, is activated during the precious period of sleep. Each night the child unconsciously sifts and sorts through the various elements of the previous day; for many of us the *guardian angel* is a counseling reality in this process. In the morning the voice of conscience can speak to the child of responsibility — that need for *response-ability*.

So, the following day we approach the matter. Trusting the above processes, we try not to force the issue. Again, we establish a breathing / warming gesture of openness, reassuring the child that we are looking together for the best resolution, before asking what he or she might be able to tell us to help us understand the issue. We let them bring forward whatever they may have digested and secreted, keeping the focus on the narrative of the event. Excuses and justifications are unnecessary. Usually the child can ‘own’ responsibility in such circumstances. And then the consequences, whatever they might be, can be effectively taken towards further sleep, so that the child might live fully with them.

Then it becomes a matter of what behavioural learning can take place. What has now been secreted as the basic lesson? And *maintaining* — how shall we consolidate behavioural learning? This is an activity requiring guidance and support; and then definitely monitoring the further journey to ensure the lesson is reinforced.

Effective guidance in behavioural self-management can lead to an extension of the learning into other situations. The *growing* process may bear a new facility into social consciousness in such a way that the child can support others in a similar situation (e.g. in dealing with bullying). For instance, I have experienced a thirteen-year-old girl help to guide a class-mate through a process of behavioural change, having learned previously that increased awareness, self-esteem, and a free conscience had been outcomes for her.

This comes towards a *generating* process. We could hope that the child will become able to find creative solutions to situations in life. Can he or she develop a genuine social initiative? That has to be entrusted to time, and ultimately to all those future intersections of the eternal spirit — the child’s *daimon* — with events in time.

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### **{ *parent-theses* } - a free email newsletter about parenting**

I am producing a free email (bi-monthly) newsletter for anyone interested in the challenges of parenting. My intention is to share some views — *theses* — about *parenting* as a vocation. The first issue of six A4 page is now available, and can be received by emailing me at

[jmallison2006@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jmallison2006@yahoo.com.au)

There are no obligations other than respect for copyright. Your address will not be used for any other purpose, and your name can be removed from the list simply by emailing me with the word ‘unsubscribe’ in the subject line.

## A VISIT TO WALDORF SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

James Pewtherer, Amherst, MA , USA. May, 2005

(James Pewtherer is the North American representative on the Hague Circle).

*“There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbrooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa.”*

-Alan Paton in *Cry, the Beloved Country*

That this country of South Africa would be beautiful, I had no doubt. That it would be so stunning was beyond anything I imagined. It is a society of many colors, of eleven official languages and of almost 45 million people, 35 million of whom are black. Every conversation we had inevitably made reference to the 1994 election as the turning point for what South Africa is to become. Numerous times, we heard, “Everyone who lives here is a South African.” Everywhere, we met hopefulness. From the white people who now find themselves as the disadvantaged ones in seeing that their grown children cannot find work; to the mixed race people (the so-called “coloureds”) who wonder if they are now invisible to the black government leaders; to the blacks who strive to become part of the middle class; there was always an optimism that South Africa will be different than any other country in the world.

There are signs everywhere that this may be the case. It is a country in which a “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” invited people to come forward to admit and apologize for their politically motivated crimes so that clemency could be granted. It is a country in which then newly-elected President Nelson Mandela insisted that the national anthem would include the music and words of the Afrikaner anthem of the former oppressive regime. It is a country in which 600,000 simple new houses have been built and sold at affordable prices to the residents of the shanty towns known as the “townships” so that comfort could also be theirs. It is a country in which the national rugby team, called the “Springboks,” (a symbol to many people of apartheid), won the world rugby cup in 1995 and was awarded that cup as the team of all South Africans by Nelson Mandela dressed in a Springboks’ jersey over his suit.

There are problems, to be sure. Crimes of property are of epidemic proportions in some areas. Many homes of the 4+ million whites are surrounded by walls or spiked fences topped with razor wire. Unemployment is as high as 40%, 9 million adults have had little or no schooling, some 7 million people (as of 1996) are in “informal housing” (read: “shantytowns.”) Laws which aim to wrest economic control out of the hands of rich whites have led to the flight of many in the professions who no longer can find work. HIV/AIDS is ravaging the poor black communities. As an example, 25% of the black teachers and 30% of black mothers in maternity wards are HIV positive. There is a long history of European aid projects which crumble after the sponsors leave because the local people have little ability to sustain the results due to poverty, lack of initiative and years of being culturally crushed by the white minority.

Yet it is also a country of potential for the Waldorf community locally and worldwide. There are seventeen Waldorf schools and many childcare centers around the country based on Anthroposophical ideas of child development. Five of the schools are more established, some having existed and survived the apartheid years in spite of admitting some children of colour to their classes. The others are newer, many having ventured into or near the townships where poverty and crime is still rampant.

This report can only be a snapshot of Waldorf education in a country which is more than twice the size of Texas, but I hope that it will be one which will provide some of the colors and hues of this lovely land.

The Hague Circle gathered 20 of its 25 members for its first meetings outside of Europe since it was founded in 1970. As we do twice each year, we met to discuss Waldorf education, the needs of children and the life in some of the 894 schools worldwide. We also met with the Council of the Federation of Waldorf Schools Fellowship (South Africa). We met with the Assistant Director of the Ministry of Education for the government and two of his staff to hear about the history and present condition of schooling in the country. We led conferences for the SA school communities and for SA Waldorf

teachers. We discussed the HIV/AIDS epidemic with the daughter-in-law of the late African National Congress leader Walter Sisulu. She is a Waldorf parent and an AIDS specialist in Southern Africa for the UN. We split up our group to visit and work in the 17 schools and also to observe in numerous Waldorf childcare centers in the townships. All this took place over a ten-day period in the first part of May, 2005.

### Waldorf Education in a Land of Change

South Africa confronts the Western visitor with a mixture of first-world amenities and third-world challenges. The media play up the violence, but the fruits of colonialism show themselves most often in crimes of property, not crimes of person. This is not a European culture, so the solutions for such crime come more through unique laws which seek to correct the imbalance of 42 years of the racist policy called apartheid (“separateness” in Afrikaans) than anything found in the West. Educational policy is also a mix of approaches. On the one hand, first world approaches (high-stakes testing and a national curriculum) have been laid on a third world infrastructure (classes of 130 children, shockingly low salaries, 11 official languages, some teachers who cannot pass a 4<sup>th</sup> grade literacy and numeracy test) which is stressing the educational system. On the other hand, the new government showed its resolve in 1994 when it sent out 40 teams into the world to research the best education for the country. Waldorf education was the choice of the commission receiving the team reports, but the government decided that it did not have the budget to finance Waldorf schools for the entire country. Instead, it chose, as second best, what it sees as a “child-centered, outcomes based” method for its 27,000 schools.

The Waldorf conference we held in Cape Town of teachers, childcare providers, parents and board members opened with an “African welcome.” This consisted of a performance by some 25 mostly black teachers in the richly-colored clothing of the tribes of this land. Singing, dancing and rhythmically showing all gathered the inspiring music and harmony which lives in this culture, these Waldorf teachers showed some of what they bring to their work with children. Later, some of them spoke about their commitment to this education and what it is doing for the children in their care. They can see that it works.

Yet this is in many ways a non-western culture, right down into the way people think. For instance, the grammar of the Xhosa language does not separate the pronoun “I” from the verb. The very form of “I” changes when the deed is done. Perhaps one can appreciate the implications when the will is intimately and openly part of the “do-er” and when the effects of the deed clearly affect the one doing it. Once I’ve done something, I am not the same “I” that I was before. This, it seems, is much more evident to the Xhosa people than it usually is to us.

So, too, teacher-trainers must learn to work with a consciousness which is not easily engaged by the too-often dead intellectual concepts of the 1<sup>st</sup> world. Even to delve into the intricate constructs of *The Study of Man* (Steiner, 1966) is not easily achieved. This asks us in the Waldorf movement to bring Rudolf Steiner’s ideas in a living-enough way that they will speak to the African soul. The reality of Waldorf education already speaks to these black teachers; these women we met know that the education is “right” for their pupils and right for the young children for whom they care in the townships. Yet it does not necessarily conform to the national curriculum promulgated by the government, in spite of the appreciation of Waldorf education by some levels of government. Waldorf schools are as important in South Africa as anywhere, but how can they justify their differences from mainstream educational approaches in a society which is trying to eliminate the vestiges of separate but equal?

In this light, the three challenges identified by the leaders of the Waldorf school movement in South Africa can perhaps be appreciated by our first world readers of this report. These challenges are:

- How to operate as free schools without the appearance of being elitist, “segregation academies?”
- How to mitigate first-world testing demands on students when there is only third-world financial support for education?

- How to find the most effective Waldorf teacher-training approach for teachers of different cultural backgrounds and learning styles.

### South African Waldorf Schools and Programs

(Here follow a few glimpses of what we met in the schools.)

The Kindergarten to grade 7 Waldorf school in **Lesedi** is in a remote region about 3 hours (much of it on dirt roads) northeast of Johannesburg on the high plateau in the north of the country. There, the residents of this traditional village are all black. The people are enthralled with their Waldorf school (all South African elementary schools end at class 7 in SA).

The visitors from the Hague Circle were greeted with a traditional Xhosa dance in costume and song of welcome and by the village dignitaries. The children in the school are warm and affectionate with each other and with their teachers. Picture if you can, a class of kindergarten children led into a class by fourth grade children with a gentle protectiveness that touches the heart. The little ones sit around the walls of the eurythmy room in absolute silence with rapt attention as the fourth graders do eurythmy. At the end of the class, the fourth graders spontaneously take one of the younger children under their care and lead them back to their teacher in the yard.

The **Inkanyesi Waldorf School** is in the Alexandra Township, an all-black area of a very different nature adjacent to Johannesburg. Here, the school began in a rough barrack-like building which has gradually been supplemented by brick buildings in the fenced compound. A guard is posted at the rolling iron-picketed gate. The classes run in size from about 15 to 25 and the children are met with confidence by their teachers. The teachers hold a non-denominational chapel service (the Free Religious Service for children given by Rudolf Steiner) every Thursday morning which is gratefully attended by the children from all classes KG to Class 7. A Man and Animal block here can include an uncanny yet vibrant presentation of an animal, each done by a child in a unique way.

The teachers are very poorly paid as the government subsidies are small and few parents can pay much to supplement this. Government money also brings inspections and sometimes the turf battles with low-level civil servants over the Waldorf approach in light of the national curriculum. Contributions from Europe make up some of the shortfall. Absenteeism is a problem mostly due to the parents' own life struggles, but the children are sorry to miss a day.

**Roseway Waldorf School**, K-13, is near Durban in the east on the Indian Ocean in the province of Kwazulu-Natal. It is in the Valley of a Thousand Hills where morning mists often fill the valley floor, leaving only the hilltops to be seen. Here, Zulu is the main language spoken by the native black people. It is predominantly a school with white and some families of color, all of whom seem devoted to their school. Roseway has benefited from the gift of a lovely hilltop farm overlooking one of the "thousand hills" of this region and some charming buildings have been erected on the land. The climate is mild with warm days and cool nights in the late fall and winter, often with morning mists. Lively teaching is found in the classrooms, some of which sit in circle surrounding a grassy courtyard.

The children and high school students have a warm and friendly attitude, the high school parents are concerned about their children's fitness for the job market (very similar to what one might find in a North American high school), yet the school is growing. Though employment prospects are rather dim, the degree of optimism and patience for what is possible shines through.

### Hague Circle Discussions

(As we do in each meeting, reports and discussions about the world Waldorf movement brought very interesting exchanges and exploration; a sampling follows.)

**"Waldorf schools squeezed from two sides"** served as a topic to help us to take stock of the present conditions of the education. Rudolf Steiner wanted the first school to serve as a model for new schools,

not as simply a curiosity. That the world list now includes 894 schools is a testament to the broad appeal of this education beyond central Europe. Yet we recognize that there are weakening effects coming at the schools from two sides today.

The first effect is due to the growing gap between the wealthy and the poor and the resulting squeeze on the middle class which provides so many of our pupils. The cost of schooling in a Waldorf school risks becoming so high that increasing numbers of our families will not be able to afford it. The second effect, related to the first, shows itself in the choice of course offerings and their manner of presentation which aim to have students perform well in mainstream academia. Too often, this is at the expense of those courses which aim for building human capacities over the long term. The choice of courses and especially the methods used to teach them comes about, often unconsciously, when we try to make our schools more attractive (read: more like high-fee prep schools which will bring in higher tuition fees). That Waldorf schools should be subject to these pressures is understandable. Our concern is that there is too little debate in faculty meetings when such decisions are made.

We ask ourselves in the Hague Circle how we can aid in the development of a “rights life” for spiritually free education through out the world. Should the Circle add such a task to its founding principle of furthering the spiritual tasks of Waldorf education? Clearly, these challenges to our schools are intimately bound up with the failure to further the threefold idea which is such a part of our work today. More work on these needs to be done both in individual schools and in the Waldorf movement worldwide.

**Euro-centric education** is one criticism which is sometimes leveled at our schools. Especially the history and literature in the Waldorf school can come in for this kind of complaint. Yet we begin to better understand our work if we see that our task is one of working with and countering what might better be termed a “Western-centric” or “Modern-centric” world view, rather than Euro-centric. This topic of Euro-centrism has been raised in many conversations in many schools outside Europe over the last years. It also was raised in South Africa where there are so many cultural traditions. As we addressed this question in the Waldorf conference mentioned above, I will share some of the thoughts which were voiced and some of my own reflections.

The engine that is driving many of the citizens and most of the governments around the globe today is what might be termed the dominance of economic considerations. Whether we think of artistic, spiritual, scientific or simply human endeavors, the sphere of economic activity is in danger of eclipsing all of them. Behind this economic kind of reckoning is the materialist thinking which is the hallmark of the modern world and of our times. It is this thinking which is truly pushing itself to be the central factor in addressing the human condition today. Always in need of balance by spheres of the rights life and the cultural life, materialistic/economic thinking left to its own will become self-centered, even selfish. It would be more accurate it seems, to see that our culture and our world is dominated by this most-Western of world views, that is, a “Western-centric” world view rather than a European one. This modern view and the consciousness which gave it birth is the fruit of the historical development of the way of thinking fostered since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe. It has now further developed in the West and spread to many countries around the world.

The Waldorf school aims to address this one-sided thinking through examining its roots (really it is our roots as modern people), putting it in the context of other cultures and ways of thinking through geography, literature and history, among other subjects. At bottom, it is this thread of the development of modern consciousness which we follow in the Waldorf school. We do this in order to recognize both its historical necessity for the attainment of human freedom even as we teach other ways of thinking and engage in other activities (artistic, service projects, outdoor education) in order to balance it.

If we recognize the need for human beings to go through the “eye of the needle” by coming to the self-recognition that one-sided thinking is inherently unhealthy, then we can understand the curriculum indications of Rudolf Steiner. The curriculum which he developed (and which we must continue to elaborate), must trace the path of human development and consciousness which has led us to where we

are today. Yet it must also cultivate the other qualities important to the social life and the cultural life so that our students will be healthy, balanced adults. The curriculum with which we work is not Euro-centric, but rather designed to give the students the understanding to work in and change society. We must begin with where the students are so that they can become more than a mere product of contemporary society.

### Some final thoughts

I hope that the mix of joy, satisfaction and humbleness that we all felt as visitors to this wonderful land has come across. This trip provided myriad examples of the universality of Waldorf education and the anthroposophy which informs it. I hope that you, too, can perceive that each one of us who has chosen to work with children in this way, wherever we are in the world, is truly making a difference.

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Editor's note: not all the schools could be mentioned in the above report. The World List of Waldorf schools is available from <http://www.waldorfschule.info/> Go to the right hand side of the welcome page and download the PDF file.

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**DELAYING THE TRANSITION FROM KINDERGARTEN TO SCHOOL-  
from a letter to the editor- a response to the article in your *Journal 7.1 (2005)* by Birgit Dressel,  
pg22-25**

**Terri Reinhart, Kindergarten Teacher, Denver Waldorf School, Colorado, USA**

Dear Neil,

“... regarding first grade readiness. I actually do have strong opinions about that one!.. My own son was also older when he started first grade, turning 7 before he started. He was a very, very quick learner. He was bored from time to time and complained bitterly about school during the early grade school years. I tried to just be calm about it - he had other things to learn! He had to learn to be patient with students who didn't learn as quickly as he did.

Instead of pushing him ahead, his teacher paired him with a student who had learning problems. These two ended up being good friends! When he was in 8th grade, he thanked us for holding him back. In high school, he really took off with the academics and savored every bit of the study. And now? He is 24 and will start Waldorf teacher training this summer at Antioch Graduate School. He still feels strongly that it was right to start first grade when he did.

As a kindergarten teacher, I have sent some "borderline" children on to first grade and held some back. It is often a real challenge to know what is right for a particular child. I will say, though, that after watching many of these children go through the grades, I have never regretted holding a child back but have had occasion to be concerned when one of these young borderline children that I sent on to first grade is found to have learning difficulties by second grade. I always have wondered whether they had a real learning disability or whether the child was just not ready to start!”

Take care,  
Terri

## **WALDORF – EDUCATION AT THE SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF IN THAILAND**

**Hermann Wessels, Bangkok, Thailand, 2006**

In autumn 2004, after about five years of preparation and research, Ratchasuda College under its director Dr. Jitprapa Sri-on, started a project which aims to introduce “Bilingual Waldorf - education” at five schools for the Deaf and in one experimental kindergarten.

(Ratchasuda College is part of Mahidol University/Bangkok and offers higher education and supporting services for people with disabilities.)

In this context “bilingual” means: the introduction and enforcement of Thai Sign – language (TSL) as the first language for children and Thai language (especially written Thai), as the second language. TSL is the medium of instruction. The Waldorf curriculum and - environment has not only been chosen because of its flexibility and adaptability for the needs of all kinds of children and cultural contexts, but also because of its holistic approach to the human being and its spiritual background.

Besides introducing Waldorf – methods in the participating classes, the project aims to develop a strengthening of the personality and professional attitude of the teachers.

The project is scheduled for 5 years and is funded by the Thai Ministry of Education. In case the projects are successful, an extension is very possible.

The organizers asked Ms. A. Charanjavanaphet (Baanrak Waldorf – kindergarten, Bangkok), Mr. H. Wessels (Eurythmist and curative eurythmist, Bangkok) and Ms. S. Chivapruk (Graduate from the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar Ltd) as consultants to be closely involved with development of the curriculum and the training of the teachers and the monitoring of the work at the schools. Two courses about Waldorf education in kindergarten and lower primary have been held in March and October 2005; a next one is to follow in March 2006.

Currently (Jan 2006), under the responsibility of some 25 teachers, the above project takes care of about 110 deaf children in 11 kindergarten classes.

The organizers and consultants of the project would like to get in contact with individuals and groups who are working from out of an Anthroposophical point of view with deaf adults or children, to share experiences and ideas which may assist our work.

Contact: Hermann Wessels, Email: [helawe@gmx.de](mailto:helawe@gmx.de)

## **THE INITIATIVE CIRCLE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL SECTION IN NEW ZEALAND**

**Ineke Mulder and Neil Carter. Christchurch, New Zealand.**

The Initiative Circle of the Pedagogical Section in New Zealand has been active since 1998. A group of eight people carry the Initiative Circle out of their feeling of responsibility for the Waldorf pedagogical impulse. At the moment these eight people are: Neil Carter and Ineke Mulder (Christchurch), Pauline Mann and Deirdre Reid (Wellington), Sue Simpson and Edith van der Meer (Hawke’s Bay) and Megan Baguley and Hannelore Henning (Auckland).

The Initiative Circle of the Pedagogical Section in New Zealand aims to support the deepening of Waldorf education amongst the Fellowship of Waldorf teachers in New Zealand in as many practical ways as possible. For example:

1) To publish and distribute the *Journal for Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner teachers*.

- 2) Publish relevant books and encourage local authors.
- 3) Engage in pedagogical research in our local groups of the Pedagogical Section.
- 4) Prepare the annual Pedagogical Section conferences (or part of conferences).
- 5) Liaise with the Pedagogical Section in Dornach and the leader of the Pedagogical Section, and co-ordinate our support for the Dornach bilingual *Journal-Rundbrief*.
- 7) Make the book *Towards the Deepening of Waldorf education* better known to the teachers in New Zealand.
- 8) Support the NZ Federation (teacher training/AUT courses), the Alliance for Childhood and other organizations.

Since its formation, the Initiative Circle of the Pedagogical section in NZ has:

- 1) Published three books:

In 2001 John Allison: *Where children are* (455 copies- now out of print).

In 2003 John Allison: *Living in Light, Loving the Dark* (500 copies- some still available at the Rudolf Steiner bookshop in Sydney-see advertisement).

In 2005 *Towards the Future-Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner High School Education-Perspectives* a collection of essays on Upper school teaching (see review and advertisement in this Journal).

- 2) Published the *Journal for Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner teachers* bi-annually since 1998, now in collaboration also with the Initiative Circles in Australia and Hawai'i.

- 3) Helped to organize Pedagogical Conferences or workshops during Anthroposophical Society Conferences and National Fellowship of Waldorf Teachers in New Zealand Biennial Conferences:

1996 Dr.Heinz Zimmerman (it was after this Conference that Dr Zimmerman suggested we could work towards an Initiative Circle)

1998 Dr Michaela Glöckler (Asian Pacific Conference, with special reference to the Child Study in Waldorf schools)-held in Hastings

2002 Dr Heinz Zimmerman- held in Hastings

2004 Florian Osswald (Adolescence) - held in Auckland

2005 Van James (Art) –held in Christchurch.

- 4) Supported the work of the Alliance of Childhood.

- 5) Kept in regular contact with the Pedagogical Section in Dornach. Some members of the Initiative Circle attended the World Teachers Conference in Dornach in 2004.

## **THE WORK OF THE FEDERATION OF RUDOLF STEINER/ WALDORF SCHOOLS IN NEW ZEALAND**

**-Sue Russell, Federation of New Zealand Waldorf Schools' Secretary. Raglan, New Zealand.**

**“The Federation is the national body that represents the collective of Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner) Initiatives, Kindergartens, Schools and Tertiary Centres in New Zealand. It operates in the political/legal/rights realm in our picture of the three-fold social order.”**

The Federation was founded at a National Conference of the New Zealand Waldorf Schools in August, 1986. The first secretary was Alistair Munro and much of the early work of the Federation involved negotiations with Government agencies concerning Integration with the state schools as “Area schools with a special character”. The Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School integrated in September, 1989, followed by Michael Park, Taikura and Raphael House.

The Federation currently has 22 registered member institutions. It meets annually as a Council with teacher and parent delegates from full and associate member centres attending. An executive group meets more frequently. Koru Grove School, located in Silverdale, north of Auckland, has recently been accepted as an Initiative member of the Federation.

In the last four years a number of structural changes to the Federation have occurred, driven by a sense that the business of Federation life, whilst of concern to all members, needs to be managed at a more practical level on a day-to-day basis, so that strategic goals can be achieved. This change began with the appointment in March, 2002 of a Federation Secretary Barry Hancox, and an Executive group. Sue Russell was appointed as the next secretary, March 2005. The Secretary is employed by the Federation to support and strengthen not only Federation activity itself, but also to provide a central communication/facilitation space within the organisation that individual members could turn to for support on local matters. This model has proven to be a positive development, along with the development of three year strategic plans and annual tasks set.

With a new working group structure well-established within the Federation, much work of strategic importance to the movement is being achieved. Through the activity of the New Zealand Steiner Teacher Education working group (NZSTE), which is a mandated group of the Federation, a Bachelor of Education (Steiner Primary Teaching) option is now available through the Auckland University of Technology, in the primary stream. Discussions are beginning with AUT to provide an accessible Early Childhood Degree as upgrade from Diploma to Degree increasingly becomes an issue for our membership. The NZSTE has also established a successful in service two year Certificate Course for practising Waldorf teachers. This is now in its second year, and benefits from the expertise and well-established experience in adult education of Taruna College, Havelock North.

Following a review of national advisory needs, Marjorie Theyer has been confirmed into a more specific advisory role, supporting the pedagogical and professional tasks of our kindergarteners and initiative playgroups. Attention is now turned towards establishing Federation resourced advisory structures to our Lower and High School teachers.

Work is also being undertaken to develop a bonafide High School Certificate, recognised by NZQA, universities and employer organisations alike. This work is currently in place, guided by the project manager, Jane Patterson, in a two-year contract.

For further information and a complete list of Federation members, please contact the secretary:

Sue Russell, PO Box 186, Raglan, Ph: 07 825 6885 [rudolfsteiner.federation@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rudolfsteiner.federation@xtra.co.nz)

(Editor- The **Federation** in New Zealand is the equivalent of the **Fellowship**- the legal entity for Waldorf Schools in England, and the **Association** in Australia. However, in New Zealand, *Fellowship* is the word we use simply to describe the fraternity or collegueship (not anything to do with the legal realm) when Waldorf teachers from different schools communicate with each other. For example, a prime aim of this Journal is to encourage such fellowship and communication. Our biennial Fellowship Conferences are organized by the various Waldorf schools on behalf of this *Fellowship*- and is not organized by the legal body, our Federation.)

## **RESEARCH TOPICS IN WALDORF EDUCATION- correspondence**

**from Professor Philip Woods, United Kingdom, March, 2006:**

Dear Neil,

I was delighted to hear about your and colleagues' interest in the research. You are very welcome to download the report *Steiner Schools in England* (2005) by Philip Woods, Martin Ashley, and Glenys Woods, University of West of England, Bristol; Research report RR645 ISBN 1 84478 495 9 and copy it, as well as to e-mail it to colleagues. It is intended to be available to all who are interested and there are no restrictions on its circulation. Any feedback from you and colleagues would be greatly appreciated. (Editor's note: I could loan this 206 page volume on request)

The following papers were presented at the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association currently taking place:

- **Democracy, spirituality and educational leadership: Steiner schools as 'republican academies'**,  
Glenys Woods and Philip Woods

- **Creating Collegiality across Boundaries of Belief: Prospects and challenges for mutual learning between mainstream and Steiner schools**, Philip Woods, Glenys Woods and Martin Ashley

- **Can One Teacher Know Enough to Teach Year Six Everything? Lessons from Steiner-Waldorf Pedagogy**, Martin Ashley

- **Authority, Anarchy and Anachronism on the Slopes of Sustainability: Steiner Waldorf Pedagogy and the Development of Mature Judgement**, Martin Ashley

If you would like any of these papers, please let me or Glenys or Martin know and we'll be happy to e-mail copies to you.

We are currently conducting a further study, focusing on leadership of Steiner schools. Further details of this are available at <http://edu.uwe.ac.uk/cred/research/projects/steiner.asp>.

We are interested to know about any research that you and colleagues are undertaking in New Zealand. With best wishes,  
Philip Woods

PS Just published! *Democratic Leadership in Education* by Philip A. Woods  
Sage, September 2005 ISBN 1-4129-0291-6 (pbk); ISBN 1-4129-0290-8

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**from David Mitchell, Chairman of the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America, Publications, CO director , Research Institute for Waldorf Education and editor of the Waldorf Science Newsletter ;1158 Quince Ave, Boulder, CO 80304 April 2006:**

Dear Neil and Peter,

*Renewal* is published twice a year, and is aimed primarily towards parents. It is not available in electronic version but is available from the address above.

The *Research Bulletin* also comes out twice a year and is geared towards Waldorf Teachers. Our Spring *Research Bulletin*, 2006 volume X1 no 2 is now available. The contents include:

Report from the Co-Directors, From the Editor, Feature articles:  
Van James on Art (reprinted from the Journal for Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner teachers, volume 7 no 2 2005);  
Arthur Auer on Reading; Magda Lissau on The Seven Cosmic Artists An Artistic View of Child Development;  
Aksel Hugo on Spiritual Research; Work of the Research Fellows;  
Hymowitz book reviews by Jon McAlice;  
Spiritual Research by Arthur Zajonc;  
Nature Deficit Disorder by David Mitchell;  
Asthma and Waldorf Ed by Dr. Philip Incao; [TBD] by Eugene Schwartz;  
Standards in Waldorf Schools by Martyn Rawson;  
Reports from Current Projects of the Research Institute;  
Graduate research Phase II by Arthur Pittis;  
Reading, Writing, and reading Comprehension by Paul Gierlach;  
Teaching Sensible Science by Michael D'Aleo or Douglas Gerwin; Library Sleuthing by David Mitchell;  
Creativity or ? by Steve Sagarin;  
Report on the Waldorf Library by Marianne Alsop [www.online.waldorf.library](http://www.online.waldorf.library)  
Contents from past Research Bulletins; About the Research Institute.

(Editor's note- one of the aims of the Pedagogical Section is to promote educational research, so David also kindly listed some of the current topics his organization was currently researching.

- twelve research questions that are being explored here for the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America as at 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2006:

\*Research the effects of movement on speech (regarding fluidity, syntax, and grammar).

\* Analyze and compare Phase II results with those of Dr. Dirk Randall for Waldorf students from Switzerland and Germany.

\*Analyze Phase II findings regarding the health of Waldorf graduates. Find data for public school children. Are Waldorf trained students healthier mentally and physically?

\* Research the health and resilience of Waldorf students (Virginia, Susan, together with an Anthroposophical doctor).

\* Support and disseminate Anne Greer's new work regarding the teaching of grammar.

\* Research whether or not developmental stages in childhood have accelerated in the past two decades.

\*Research whether or not Waldorf education holds back sexual development.

\*Research the effects of standardized testing on students.

\*Research the multiple forms of testing on students such as multiple choice, matching, fill-in, and essay, and compare it to imaginative recall. Try to establish which method helps the student retain information over the longest period.

\*Research the effect of academic pressure on pre-school children and gauge the effect of play as an antidote.

\*Research teacher resilience and longevity. How many teachers carry a class through eight years in North America? What do these teachers express as reasons for their ability to do this? What strategies did they use? What was most difficult? What brought them greatest joy? How active were they in Anthroposophical inner work? What evaluations do schools use to determine if a teacher should carry their class through the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. How many schools have decided to stop the class teacher at grade five and allow "specialists" to carry the upper elementary grades?

\*Research the nature of a creative moment. What precedes it? How is it experienced? What "bodies" of the children are activated? How does this creative moment transfer to other aspects of the children's life? Which areas of the brain are stimulated? How do children define a creative moment?

Best regards to you both!

David.

***TOWARDS THE FUTURE...Rudolf Steiner/Waldorf High School Education-Perspectives***

**192 pages, illustrated**

**Reviewed by Vee Noble, editor of *Sphere*, quarterly journal of the Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand**

Following the establishment of the first Waldorf School in September 1919 Rudolf Steiner gave sixteen lectures to teachers at Dornach from 23 December 1921 to 7 January 1922, and spoke of the new pedagogy that does not merely dispense knowledge but strives to call forth capacities and strengthen the will. "We ought to approach this curriculum in such a way that we could recreate it ourselves at any moment; we must learn to read in the children how they should be taught," he said.

It is out of that striving to continually work to meet the changing needs of the new generation of incarnating children that has seen the number of Waldorf Schools increase worldwide and here in New Zealand. "Towards The Future" is a collection of high school teachers' educational perspectives that will be of interest to teachers, students and anyone interested in gaining a deeper insight into Rudolf Steiner education.

Published by the Initiative Circle of the Pedagogical Section in New Zealand, the book is edited by Neil Carter and Ineke van Florenstein Mulder. It contains essays and articles by teachers both in New Zealand and throughout the world including Van James, art teacher from Hawaii. Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand's General Secretary, Hans van Florenstein Mulder and chairperson, Sue Simpson are two other contributors. Hans writes about life science teaching in the upper school and in a second article asks; is there more to the food we eat? Sue has been teaching eurythmy for twenty four years and shares her reflections and experiences of teaching this art of movement. They are joined in their "perspectives" by other teachers including Florian Osswald, Diederik Ruarus, John Allison, and Julian Thomson. Together, the contributing educators have a teaching experience of many years.

In addition to the teachers, David Ritchie and counsellor David Garb make their contributions and insights about adolescence. Then Valentin Vollmer talks of the first year after school, which has information for teacher, student and parent. Heinz Zimmermann, the former leader of the Pedagogical Section in Dornach and John Allison bring another dimension to this book, which centres on the education of teenagers today, with two articles about adult learning.

"Towards The Future" is no theoretical text book; it is a collection of essays and articles that have been written out of the direct pedagogical experience of the authors. There are many books about teaching the younger age groups in a Rudolf Steiner School but as the editors write in the preface there was a need for a "collection of articles representing perspectives on the high school part of Waldorf education." This book certainly fills that role. It is recommended reading for every teacher, every parent of a teenager (or soon to be), students themselves and anyone interested in how teachers are working to bring an 'education towards freedom.'

**Place of Wisdom:**

For the study of World Philosophy, Religion and Spirituality. By understanding our relationship to Self, World and Divine we start to live! A part time certificate course held in Adelaide by Rev. Martin Samson. July 9th - 12 , 2006: The Priesthood of Melchizedek. September 17th - 20th :Epistemology - How do I know that I know something?

Other courses to be offered in 2007 and 2008. For more details contact Martin on [msamson@iprimus.com.au](mailto:msamson@iprimus.com.au)

**TOWARDS THE FUTURE...  
RUDOLF STEINER/WALDORF  
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION  
PERSPECTIVES**

**Published by the Initiative Circle of the Pedagogical Section in New Zealand  
July, 2005. 192 pages, illustrated.**

**Inspiring articles on teaching science, arts, technology, literature plus guidance for teachers about the development of adolescents by Peter Glasby, Heinz Zimmermann, John Allison, Hans van Florenstein Mulder, Florian Osswald, Sue Simpson, Van James David Garb and other authors who have had many years experience teaching and guiding teenagers.**



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***Living in Light, Loving the Dark*  
Essays by John Allison**

**Published by the Initiative Circle of the Pedagogical Section in New Zealand,  
2003. 90 pages.**

Responding to interest in his first book *"Where Children Are: beginning to understand Waldorf Education"* (now out of print), in this collection of essays John Allison continues to develop his primary themes: a loving engagement with all the challenges of adolescence, deepening insight into pastoral care, and its basis in meditative and contemplative consciousness.

This publication, aims to make available to practising teachers the insights of many years of research by John Allison together with his colleagues in schools in New Zealand and Australia.

Contents include: *Living in Light, Loving the Dark*; *Back to the Basics* (this dying and becoming); *Time for a Change*; *Building the Hut*; *Moving In*; *Sensation and Attitude*.

Copies of this book may be ordered from the Rudolf Steiner Bookshop, 307 Sussex Street, Sydney (02) 9264 5169, or via other Steiner bookshops. Rrp: AD\$19.90

**AWAKENING TO ONE'S DESTINY  
ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN NEW ZEALAND  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE- HASTINGS, 7<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2006**

This year's Anthroposophical Conference, from Friday evening 7<sup>th</sup> of July to Monday 10 July midday, is entitled "Awakening to one's Destiny". Paul Mackay, member of the Executive Council in Dornach, and leader of the Social Science Section, will be the guest speaker.

Paul will speak on three consecutive days. The titles of his talks are:

- 1. Which kind of intelligence enables me to recognize my destiny?**
- 2. How can I relate to my individual destiny, my communal destiny and to the destiny of my time?**
- 3. Discovering the meaning of Christ becoming the Lord of Karma.**

The Karma lectures given in 1924 by Rudolf Steiner will provide preparatory reading for this conference.

During the conference, time will be allocated for sections work. Section leaders will provide a more detailed programme for these sessions in due course. As always, time will be allocated for artistic and/or contemplative workshops. The AGM will be held on the Sunday and it is our intention to organise an evening for artistic performance. During the conference art work, coordinated by Andrea Beech, will be on display. Please contact the committee if you want to set up a display.

The Conference will close on Monday around lunchtime. This year it will be followed by a Class Members Conference, which will start on Monday evening and continue until Tuesday afternoon, 10<sup>th</sup> July. A separate programme will be published for this conference.

To get hold of a brochure with programme and registration form please does not hesitate to contact anyone of the organising committee: Sue Simpson (ph: 06-8787363 work, 06-8776656 home), Andrea Beech (ph: 06-8774743), Ton van der Meer or Edith van der Meer (ph: 06-8350078).

We look forward to a challenging and nourishing conference!

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Professional Development in Steiner Education**

**SHORT COURSE: THE UPPER SCHOOL CURRICULUM-** an overview of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum, class by class, with reference to aims, strategies, methodology and approach for the child and young adult.

**Tutor:** Julian Thomson **Cost:** \$280

**Dates:** 8 days. Wed 20<sup>th</sup> July to Fri 4<sup>th</sup> August.

**SHORT COURSE: THE PATH OF THE TEACHER-**

Image interpretation: Fairy stories to meditation. What can we learn by comparing religions? From fairy story to the Philosophy main lesson in Class 12. The self-training and development of the Steiner teacher: Do we have mental mobility or do we have rigidity and dogmatism? Metamorphosis exercises in anthroposophy as a tool for development. Love, compassion, and pity: What are the differences?

**Tutor:** Peter Patterson **Cost:** \$175 **Dates:** 4 days. 28 Nov to 1 Dec.

**NEW ZEALAND STEINER TEACHERS' (IN SERVICE) CERTIFICATE-**

This two-year programme, currently for primary and high school teachers, for the January 2007 intake has been designed specifically for teachers and assistants working in Steiner-based Early Childhood kindergartens and centres, who are looking for a training that they can successfully complete while staying in-work.

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**Electronic Versions:** three weeks after the hard copy has been distributed, request through Peter Glasby. **Back Copies:** free downloads from the web site, [www.anthroposophy.org.nz](http://www.anthroposophy.org.nz) six weeks after publication.



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# SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE STEINER TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

The Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School warmly invites you to this  
Teachers' Conference **September 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**"The Art of educating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Student"**

Our students navigate an information rich, yet often emotionally conflicting world.  
As teachers we are challenged to meet this new spirit in our teaching and learning.

**Peter Glasby** (Mt. Barker Waldorf School, S. Australia) will be our major speaker, followed by **specific groups** working on the theme of the lectures: Kindergartens, special education, lower school, upper school and others. There will be another, shorter lecture by various speakers before lunch.

In the afternoons will be **Artistic and practical workshops**, to stretch our vision of activities for the 21st century students; then further **workshops of specialist groups** on topics such as: boys at risk, qualifications (such as the New Zealand Rudolf Steiner Schools Certificate for classes 10, 11 and 12), the extra lesson, leadership, associate teachers for the new Bachelors Degree in Teaching at the Auckland University of Technology, high school issues, Pedagogical Section and others.

**Food** will be prepared by our resident chef and his students.

We welcome you to join us to create or further connections with valuable colleagues during our welcoming evening of folk dancing and music.

**Share a cultural feast with colleagues from Australia, South Africa and Aotearoa, New Zealand, to widen our understanding of the global issues of a new millennium consciousness.**

**Conference fee:** South Island: \$150. North Island and overseas: \$100.  
Accommodation (billeting or motel) and food are extra

We look forward to seeing you here at:  
Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School, 19 Ombersley Tce., Opawa, Christchurch, N.Z.

Friday, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> 5pm – to Tuesday, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> 12 noon  
**Enquiries** [admin@ch.steiner.school.nz](mailto:admin@ch.steiner.school.nz) attn: Pacific Conference.  
Cheques: payable to the Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School

( This Conference incorporates the biennial Conference of the National Fellowship of Rudolf Steiner Teachers' in New Zealand which has been held every two years since 1982).