

From the Editor

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As another challenging year is drawing to a close, we are glad to entrust you with the Fall/Winter issue of the *Research Bulletin*.

The first two articles of the current issue are companion pieces. They both address the question of Waldorf education's European orientation and the need to adapt and rearrange some of the themes, festivals, and traditions that at times seem to define Waldorf education, when the latter is implemented in communities that have a distinctly different heritage, culture, and climate than the ones of Stuttgart and Dornach.

The New Zealander Waldorf educator, Neil Boland, who in recent years emerged as one of the more vocal internal critics of Waldorf's Eurocentrism, co-authored the first article in this issue with Jocelyn Romero Demirbag, an experienced Waldorf educator and administrator based in Hawai'i. Working with Neil's critique and Jocelyn's years of experience in nurturing a located sense of place and belonging in the Hawaiian Waldorf schools, the two describe extensive reflective processes they have conducted with the Honolulu Waldorf School teachers in adapting the curriculum to the cultural heritage of the school's community.

Similarly, Vera Hoffmann, a veteran Waldorf teacher and administrator based in Switzerland, addresses the question of Waldorf's need for adaptation by studying the cultures of two distinctly non-European schools: *Kusi Kawsay* in Peru and the Nairobi Waldorf School in Kenya. What is remarkable in both articles is their combination of conceptual thought, critique, and concrete description of school climate and practice that give rise to a thoughtful evolution within Waldorf education without undermining its deep-seated values and far-reaching worldview.

Tracing their approach to Steiner's initial address to the faculty of the very first Waldorf school as a cycle of practice and self-critique, Boland and Demirbag identify their methodology as what is called nowadays 'action research' – a cycle of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and introducing modification to pedagogical practice in a perpetual process of optimization. This notion of action research, which received its name and theory in mainstream pedagogical

studies, is also central to another article in this issue, Martyn Rawson's "Life Processes and Learning in Waldorf Pedagogy." Rawson, a consummate theoretician and practitioner of Waldorf education, presents his current study as a chapter in a longer effort to review and refine the practice of Waldorf teaching. For this purpose, Rawson offers in the article published here a set of ten propositions on Waldorf education. True to the approach of reflective and self-critiquing research, Rawson also invites responses and critiques from *Research Bulletin* readers.

Another sign of the commitment of Waldorf educators to meet the changing needs of the time is demonstrated in Jack Palmer's "Understanding and Educating Transgender Youth in the Waldorf School." Addressing the imperative to understand and accommodate the experience of transgender students within the school community, Palmer asks how anthroposophy can guide our thinking and pedagogical practice regarding gender identities, the gender spectrum, and transgender individuals. Working with Steiner's comments on gender, as well as with more recent studies by leading anthroposophist scholars, Palmer demonstrates that transgender individuals are uniquely positioned to advance the understanding of self, other, and the universal human through the fluidity of their gender identity. At the same time, he emphasizes the vulnerability of transgender individuals and the important role of the educational community in accepting and protecting them.

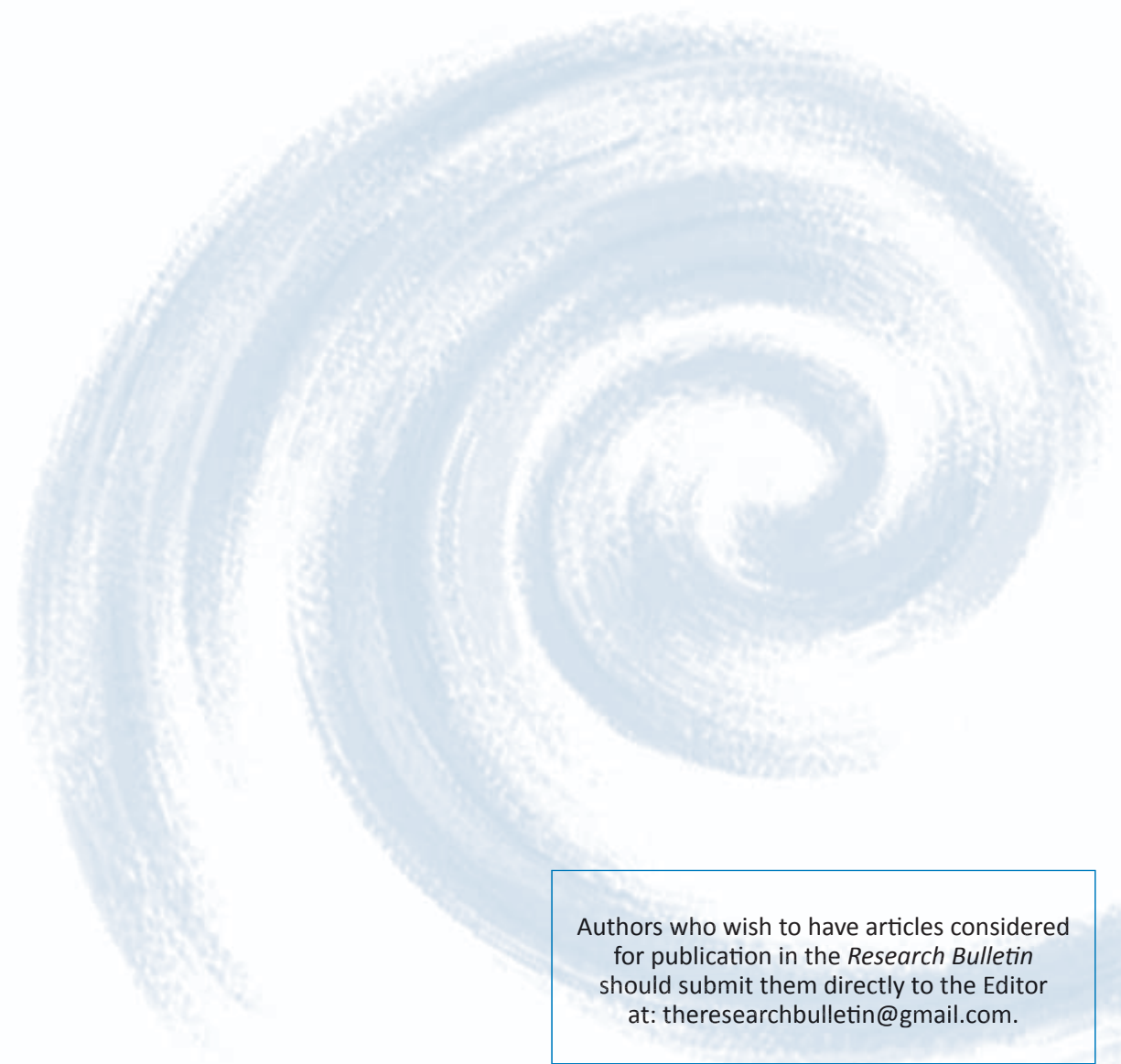
This article is followed by an important internal investigation by Peter Lawton, who is studying the transition of Waldorf elementary school graduates into non-Waldorf high schools. Given that there are far fewer Waldorf high schools than elementary schools in North America, and that Waldorf-raised eighth graders often end up in a non-Waldorf high school, the question studied by Lawton is urgent and important.

Finally, as a coda to the three recent issues of the *Bulletin* dedicated to questions of technology in the Waldorf classroom and beyond, teacher and author John Trevillion, currently of the Chicago Waldorf School, shares here the story of his school's adoption of the Cyber Civics program in the upper elementary

classes and of computer science courses in the high school. The change-of-story suggested in John's title, "Changing the Narrative," is the one in which Waldorf students are offered a guided pathway to a healthy relationship with digital technology, wherein they understand and appreciate the roles of technology in contemporary life while learning to use it thoughtfully. John's brief report turns quickly into an energizing call to the Waldorf community at large, to take on the task of changing the old Waldorf narrative that held technology in certain contempt and prevented, so far, the rise of a fruitful and fully conscious relationship with technology.

As always, the issue concludes with reports from the worlds of Waldorf publications and the ongoing activities of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, which seems to be working overtime these days in preparation for Waldorf's centennial and the much anticipated study of Waldorf School Graduates, to be published in 2019.

We wish you pleasant, thoughtful, and helpful readings.



Authors who wish to have articles considered for publication in the *Research Bulletin* should submit them directly to the Editor at: theresearchbulletin@gmail.com.