

## Aspects of Teacher Education

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In the last Journal of the Pedagogical Section, we spoke about the teacher education project and its aim to create a set of guidelines for Waldorf teacher education. These guidelines are based on feedback received from colleagues around the world – more feedback is asked for at the end of this article. The names of the members of the teacher education working group set up by the Pedagogical Section were given in the last Journal. We were joined in our second meeting in November 2018 by Vanessa Pohl (CH).

In this second meeting, we worked on the eight fields which had been identified as key through international feedback, in order to create initial outlines of each field, which we include in this article. These are areas in which teachers in any situation need to develop themselves. We believe they are common across settings from early childhood to universities, from full-time programmes to online or weekend courses.

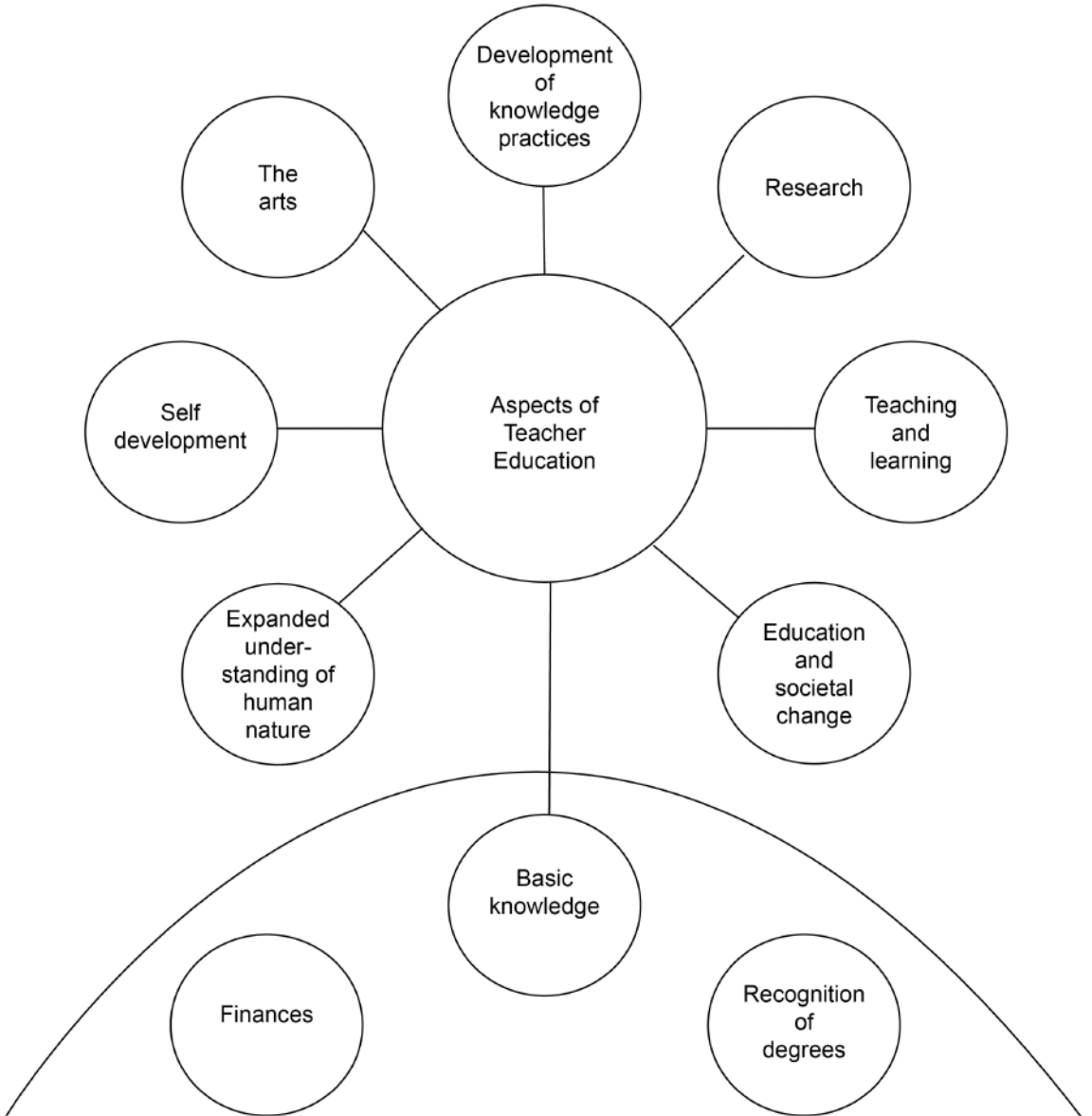
We have tried to condense the eight points into language which contains their essence. In doing so, we hope to create a vocabulary which all teacher education establishments can use, so we can communicate with each other better. How any of these areas are to be dealt with is intentionally not stated; what is to be covered is similarly left free. We

wanted to write something which any institution working with teacher education can adapt to its own context and situation.

In a way, the eight areas point towards a teacher ideal. All eight are processes taking place at many levels from initial to proficient to expert. The degree of success across all eight will not be uniform. However, they can be used to help identify areas of strength and areas which need support. We are putting these guidelines forward to refresh Steiner teacher education with the hope that teachers at all levels will engage further with the transformative process of the teaching journey. In the texts, we have not explicitly referred to Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy. We take it as understood that the foundation of Waldorf education and Waldorf teacher education is the work of Rudolf Steiner as expressed through anthroposophy.

This diagram shows the eight fields of teacher development.

We have kept the texts in the individual fields short and condensed. Each is rich in ideas which need unpacking and exploring; this will be done at a later date, whether in this Journal or elsewhere. They appear here in no particular order.



## Eight Fields of Learning

### **Development of knowledge practices**

Students are introduced to and given the opportunity to consciously follow a sequential path of self-development, allowing them to experience and investigate their own thinking.

### **The arts**

Practising the arts is, essentially, transformative; the arts form a path of constant inquiry towards refined sensibility and insight, of the self, the other and the world. Linking thinking, feeling and willing, the arts can act as a bridge between outer and inner experience, enabling students to express and understand themselves and the world in diverse ways. This can be done as creator, performer and/or engaged audience.

### **Self-development**

Self-development is central to teacher preparation and teacher being. It contains a clear notion and recognition of agency and is a continuously transforming, holistic learning process. Self-development includes artistic practice, inner work, inquiry, the development of inner capacities, challenging, developing and strengthening identity, and individualising inherited values.

### **Research**

Research is creative and systematic work to identify and relate phenomena in order to further and deepen understanding and knowledge. In Steiner teacher education, it can include teacher inquiry into practice (both inner and outer), often through action research and reflective practitioner models, based on what would further teaching and learning. In this context, research is situational, investigating and expanding the changing picture or understanding of the child, and is responsive to place and cultural

context. It can be done individually and in groups.

### **Basic knowledge**

Teachers need sound general knowledge as well as an embodied understanding of their social and cultural contexts which allow them to be successful professionally. They need effective literacy and numeracy abilities and appropriate oral skills to facilitate successful learning.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning is primarily a dialogical process of experiencing, knowing and understanding the world, oneself and others. It accommodates itself to diverse peoples, locations and circumstances. It includes an understanding of a developmentally appropriate and responsive curriculum and involves periods of practical work in schools in which student teachers are supported in their role. Teaching and learning involve an on-going conversation with a mentor and recognises that the path towards being a teacher is an individual one.

### **Expanded understanding of human nature**

A teacher needs an understanding of the human being that embraces both the tangible and the intangible, the bodied and the embodied. A phenomenological approach that seeks to apprehend the full spectrum of human experience enables the teacher to anticipate and respond to the learning needs of individual children. This affirmation of the emergent nature of what it means to be human is the foundation for a creative approach to education.

### **Education and societal change**

Students are encouraged to critically examine forms of educating currently practised and investigate what might become appropriate in the future. They have the opportu-

nity to question the stated purposes of education and explore its potential to facilitate social change.

Students examine how to ensure that Waldorf education is inclusive, anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory, and is embedded within society as a force for social good. Social capacities are developed to support teachers to work professionally and successfully with parents and colleagues.

What is contained in this list is relevant to everyone involved in teaching at any level and in any sector. We are all on the same path, from a beginning student to the most experienced teacher and teacher educator. We hope that what is contained here will generate discussion where teachers are educated, in schools and in early childhood settings. We hope that this list can be used to focus on key elements of being

a Steiner teacher and become a framework to intensify and renew collegial work.

From the beginning of this process, we wanted to engage with teacher educators and others worldwide to hear their opinions and questions so their viewpoints can be incorporated. We would like the process to be one of dialogue and welcome feedback.

The working group will meet twice in 2019 to finalise the guidelines and publish them. We are looking for centres to trial these proposals and report back on their experiences with them in 2020. We are aware that there is an additional question to be answered. If these guidelines are for teacher development, are indications needed to help structure the development of those who would instruct teachers? If so, what might they be? Who teaches the teachers?