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at the Goetheanum

# Journal



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## Foreword

*Dear Colleagues,*

We are very busy preparing for the World Teachers' Conference (WLT) 2016. This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> international conference of this kind and we are eagerly looking forward to the time between 28<sup>th</sup> March and 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 here in Dornach. We will be focusing on the following theme:

### **Overcoming Resistance: Courage for an Independent Spiritual Life**

There is plenty of information available already on the website of the Pedagogical Section [www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch](http://www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch) – the conference programme, workshops on many different topics, and much more. This time the artistic work will be integrated into the workshops. We are very much looking forward to welcoming many colleagues from all over the world here at the Goetheanum.

If you and your colleagues would like to prepare for the conference or simply work generally with some of the topics, this edition includes two articles especially for this purpose.

Nana Goebel's article looks at the historical tapestry of the foundation period and uses this as a background to presenting the significance of Waldorf Education. She also poses the question of courage for the situation today.

The article by Claus-Peter Röh highlights aspects of resistance which we need as a prerequisite for educational renewal. If we strive to meet the many challenges in all areas pertaining to pedagogy and organisation in our schools with imagination and pedagogical

initiative, we will master all of them and generate new power for the school movement worldwide. Courage and energy are also needed and these can be found in the community which is made up of all the faculties or 'colleges'. Mutual support should not be underestimated!

Again and again we need to remember our fundamental features and traits. What are the basic features of Waldorf Pedagogy? How can these be applied in a school in Europe, Asia or elsewhere? How does a school need to adapt to the modern age ensuring the pedagogy remains true to its roots and yet is not out of date? The International Conference of the Movement of Waldorf Pedagogy has once again revised and agreed the basic features and traits at their recent gathering in Vienna. They are included in this edition and can also be found on the website of the Pedagogical Section under <http://www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch/Characteristics-of-Waldorf-Education.3601.0.html?&L=1>

It is our sincere hope that they will, in time, be translated into the different languages and individualised by each country. There will no doubt be many regional differences.

Finally, we have included a report on the entry level in Bochum. We have been under the impression that we might be in a position to offer ideas and help for dealing with the questions around this age group. Again, courage is required, as covered by our topic for the next World Teachers' Conference, courage for new ideas based on Waldorf pedagogy!

We would like to extend a very warm thank you to all the colleagues who have been helping us finance this publication with their recent donations. This has been a real gift, thank you!

With the conference theme in mind, we wish you the very best for all your productive work with pupils, parents and colleagues!

*The Pedagogical Section*  
*Translated by Steffi Cook*

## World Teachers' Conference 2016

*Nana Göbel*

*Translated by Christian von Arnim*

Waldorf education was established at a time of great change. That time not only demanded a new kind of education but also the courage for a new social order in which the individual can live and work as a self-determined being having consideration for all other self-determined beings. Both of these, education and the social order, can almost ever only be renewed in times of great change. This is what happened in 1919 when the imperial order in Germany and Austria-Hungary was abolished and increasing numbers of people demanded the observance of basic rights for each individual person; this is what happened in Germany between 1945 and 1949 when the spectre of nationalism was driven away for several decades and the new constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany was adopted; and this was the case especially in 1989 when the socialist spectre was driven out which had suppressed the regions of central and eastern Europe for decades and kept them imprisoned. Comparable situations of great change occurred in China in 1979, in Tanzania in 1992 or South Africa in 1994; also every time that a military dictatorship was overcome in South America, such as in Chile in 1989 or Argentina in 1983. Is there thus any possibility of positively changing both education and the social order in times of peace out of our own ideals? To begin with, recent decades have shown that this hardly ever happens, and when it does, then only in tiny steps. The obstacles in times of peace are above all inner obstacles. The changes which occur "as if by themselves" lead to more regulation, more norms, more control, more conditions, more prerequisites and less freedom. It can thus be

seen that developments in times of peace develop a momentum of their own, leading to ever more rigid structures. At the same time – and also having its own momentum – complacency develops. The Waldorf school and kindergarten movement has today assumed conservative and magisterial, crusty features, particularly in the countries in which it has already been established for a long time. An attitude has taken hold in which it no longer has to fight for survival; we have established ourselves in a comfortable life. And along with that come the demands associated with pensions, regulated working hours, salaries and so on. This is of course even more the case in countries in which there are state subsidies and no, or very few conflicts over legal and political relationships. Stabilisation and complacency go hand in hand. In the relevant countries the Waldorf educational movement seems adverse to innovation and somewhat inflexible.

At the same time the global challenges today are greater than ever. There is intervention at all levels – in education for example through regulations governing an earlier school starting age and the curriculum; or through standards such as are particularly popular in Russia. But there is also intervention in legal self-determination, for example regarding the employment of teachers in that the terms of employment are laid down, but also with regard to many other conditions governing the approval of schools and kindergartens.

Alongside the external challenges there are inner challenges in the Waldorf movement. The largest at the moment is probably the so-

cial one. While teaching still continues to give pleasure to most teachers, self-management – or what is understood by that – often leads to disputes, unpleasant conflicts, secret hierarchies or avoidance strategies which are sought because of the fear of conflict. People prefer to maintain a feel-good mood rather than risk a fierce conflict.

These various strategies are an obstacle to having the courage to be an individual, the courage to carry responsibility individually and take the associated decisions, the courage to take a risk which alone can create the space for something new to arise.

After almost one hundred years of Waldorf education we need a different relationship

with it – one in a time of peace. If Waldorf education itself wants to avoid sidelining itself and actively wishes to be involved in shaping social discourse and continuing to work innovatively for another hundred years, then it needs the courage for individuality – both in teaching and its social form and in dealing with the authorities. Such double courage will only be mustered by the Waldorf and kindergarten teachers if in a large-scale common action the uniting spirit of the Waldorf school is found once again, and if daily work – without false compromises – is undertaken out of this spirit.

In the spirit of this task the World Teachers' conference in 2016 will be able to take a further step for the worldwide movement.



## Resistance as the condition for educational renewal – Part I

Claus-Peter Röh

Translated by Christian von Arnim

Ninety-six years after its establishment, the development of Waldorf education has not lost any of its drama: anyone whose aim it is to implement the goal in class of recognising and educating the whole physical, soul and spiritual person will keep facing new resistance as part of the job. In a school process which accords with life, obstacles and antagonistic forces represent necessary challenges which, in overcoming them, enable transformation and new developments.

### Against the flow of contemporary events

An initial perspective on such resistance strikingly comes to expression as early as Rudolf Steiner's address on the eve of the *Study of Man* course. In the awareness that every developmental epoch of humanity has its own educational ideals, the Waldorf school has the task of introducing the educational culture for a new age: it sees its first and crucial measure for education as being based in the development of humanity as a whole which comes to expression in each child in an individual way. Only in perceiving the development of the child can we find each of the appropriate stages of teaching. This goal stands in opposition to the state guidelines which formulate the end objectives in a general way. As early as 1919 Steiner described the outer influence which future state and political goals would exercise on schools as something which would "treat human beings as stereotypes."<sup>1</sup>

The ever greater standardisation taking hold in education today confirms the hypothesis of

that time in a shocking way: in the way it shapes society it presents great resistance to the goal of the Waldorf school to understand the young person in a holistic way and support their individuality. But precisely the experience of such resistance can heighten the awareness and a combative attitude in support of the actual spiritual task of the Waldorf school: in view of the circumstance of our time it requires the greatest personal commitment as a Waldorf teacher to realise a step towards the new developmental direction of humanity. At the same time this endeavour touches on our innermost identity which gathers its strength from the connection with the ideals of the future.

In this sense the encounter and struggle with the resistance of our time call up new human forces and educational ideals. Rudolf Steiner described the necessity of experiencing such resistance at the foundation of the Waldorf school in 1919: "I have thus to begin with mainly characterised for you today the resistance with which we will have to fight if we want to develop a school such as the Waldorf school is to become. It runs counter to the thoughts of people, even the thoughts of the best people. It has to run counter because if it did not, it would not work towards the development of the future."<sup>2</sup>

### Using resistance to transform thinking

Experiencing and overcoming resistance plays a crucial role with regard to grasping new educational contexts in our thinking. Consider, for example, thoughts in the second and third

1 R. Steiner, *Study of Man*, GA 293, Address, p. 18

2 R. Steiner, *Idee und Praxis der Waldorfschule*, GA 297, p. 40

lectures of *Study of Man* which were revolutionary in 1919 and shake up old educational standards to the present day: the second lecture begins by describing the development of two educational qualities, which are linked in

a polar way, on the one hand, with what comes from before birth in the past – tied to the nerves – and, on the other hand, with what belongs to the future after death – tied to the blood:<sup>3</sup>

Quality of the	<b>Cognition</b>		↑ Blood
past from before	↓ <i>Antipathy</i>	<b>Volition</b>	↑ Quality of the
birth	↓ <i>Memory</i>	<i>Sympathy</i>	↑ future after
-	↓ <i>Concept</i>	<i>Imagination</i>	↑ Death
Nerves	↓	<i>Picture forms</i>	

The methodological consequences arising from this polarity lead to wholly new educational measures despite the strong resistance from goals aimed for in the education system in general today: a one-sided emphasis on developing concepts and ideas represents a referral back to what belongs to the past from before birth which bears within itself the tendency to solidify and harden and damages the development of the whole human being: *"If you use too many abstractions in teaching the child, you involve them too intensely ... in the process of the hardening of the body and decay."*<sup>4</sup> Such resistance present in the hardening tendency must be countered through education by stimulating the forces of imagination and picture forms in the child: pictorial descriptions reach the whole of the young person because they stimulate the full soul activity of the child through the power of wonder and devotion and at the same time bring the respective subject to experience in its essence and meaning. For *"if you address the child in images, then you lay the seed for*

*the preservation of oxygen, for continuous growth, because you point them to the future, to what comes after death."*<sup>5</sup>

The challenging dynamics of this polarity between the declining forces of death and creative forces of life escalates even further in the third lecture from the perspective of the observation of nature: if we look at nature with increasing distance from the aspect of reflecting, mirroring conceptualisation we can grasp the individual "dead" laws in our thinking but in so doing lose the living spirit in nature in the context of the whole. Such a loss of the spiritual context is put into words by Goethe in the first part of Faust when he has Mephistopheles tell the student in the study scene:

*"The person keen to know what living things are all about  
First seeks to drive the spirit out,  
Then, with the pieces that arise,  
Sadly possesses everything except their  
spiritual ties."*

3 R. Steiner, *Study of Man*, GA 293, lecture in Stuttgart of 22 August 1919.

4 Ibid., p. 51.

5 Ibid.

We connect quite differently with life in nature if as sensory human beings we place ourselves in a conscious experience of natural phenomena from the aspect of the will. Goethe's holistic way of looking at nature points towards such a living approach. In Waldorf education pupils experience with all parts of their being the archetypal phenomena in their context in the fullest possible way in order then to precipitate knowledge out of their own experiences. The concepts won from attentiveness, interest and work thus carry the vitality of I activity within them which will stay with the pupils in their further biography. In this sense Rudolf Steiner calls on Waldorf teachers to overcome the resistance arising from the way that knowledge is normally transmitted and instead to stimulate processes of experience and learning which out of their own dynamic lead to new, previously unknown methodological steps.

The ability not to start from the communication of ready-packaged knowledge but to develop what is required next educationally by reading the children, the development of the subject and what has happened in class is not an ability that can be technically learnt but it is an artistic one. Thus Steiner describes the approach of the Waldorf school as the secret of a future "art of education": *"And here lies buried what we might describe as a secret. If you had really been able to do everything at the start of the school year which you can do at the end, you would have taught badly. You have taught well by first having worked at it! ... In life it is not finished knowledge which is of value but the work which leads to the finished knowledge; and in the art of education in particular this work has its specific value."*<sup>6</sup>

The challenge of grasping school learning and child development in such holistic arcs of thinking between the past and the future, between declining, solidifying forces and creative building up forces, faces great resistance from various directions.

### Realising holistic methodological approaches to teaching

Many methodological approaches of Waldorf education are derived from the demand made of teaching not to open up fields of knowledge on the basis of finished ideas and definitions but of experiential and work processes:

- Being constantly guided by the developmental phases of the children makes it possible to address the pupils in an age-appropriate and individually thematic way.
- Main lessons enable ongoing learning processes in the deepening rhythm of phases of intense concentration and phases of rest.
- Health-giving harmonisation and *"bringing the soul-spirit into harmony with the physical and lived body"*<sup>7</sup> through the rhythmisation of teaching, e.g. in the age-appropriate alternation between listening and own activity.
- Addressing the 12 senses in the richest and most diverse way.<sup>8</sup>
- Awakening the *"head spirit"* through the *"limb human being and part of the chest human being"*,<sup>9</sup> i.e. through the strong development of the will and feelings.

6 R. Steiner, *Balance in Teaching*, Lecture 1, September 15, 1920, Stuttgart

7 See note 1, GA 293, lecture one of 21 August 1919, Stuttgart.

8 Ibid., lecture eight, 29 August 1919.

9 Ibid., lecture eleven, 2 September 1919.

- The development of “*living concepts*”<sup>10</sup> through characterising a subject from various perspectives.

To make specific use of all the methodological approaches set out above requires courage and initiative, for example when in mathematics we seek to develop arithmetical and geometrical abilities. In accordance with the appropriate development for the age, the spatial and numerical qualities are to be experienced in lower school with a lot of movement and experience of the basic senses: numbers and arithmetical types are introduced in a pictorial way. The laws of the numerical series are practiced through movement, for example in spatial forms, on stairways and in dynamic number games. The more the young person overcomes themselves in those activities and is engaged down into their bodily activity, the stronger their physical and soul foundations of confidence and security become, in order later on then to build inner arithmetical processes and geometrical ideas also in the face of resistance. If this metamorphosis from outer to inner abilities succeeds in the first years of school, then 13-year-old pupils in class 7 later on enjoy thinking through various proofs arising from Pythagoras' theorem despite the inner effort this requires. The outer will for physically active balancing and adjustment in lower school is transformed in middle and upper school into the inner will and the ability to understand and think about increasingly complex equations.

At the forthcoming mathematics teachers' conference from 2 to 9 October 2015, which is intended for subject and class teachers, this metamorphosis from outer to inner will to think will be worked on among other things.

### **Against the resistance of old habits of thought**

A complex level of resistance is revealed inside ourselves: anyone who in studying these polar qualities in the *Study of Man* reflects on wholly new possibilities of thinking about and perspectives on education, can at the same time also often experience an inner resistance against that arising from old habits of thought. If previous judgements had become fixed in habits, they now oppose more or less consciously the new way of looking at things. It is very important not to ignore such resistance arising from the new ideal or push it aside but to perceive it and overcome it in our thinking: what are the grounds for the hardening quality of *idea, memory and concept*? What is the foundation for the quality of future, creative reality in the *will, imagination and picture forms*? Working our way through such soul resistance in ourselves requires courage and leads to the inner strengthening of the personality in the sense of a free conviction.

What we obtain by this path of such inner struggle then encounters a second level of resistance in everyday school life which comes from outside: the general school system of the present manifestly continues to place a clear emphasis on cognitive, head-centred communication of knowledge and thus strongly resists the educational ideals of Waldorf education. The external influence of those knowledge-centred educational ideals today already starts with directives and learning programmes for kindergarten age, determines the question of the age when children should start school and reaches as far as the expectations of the examination bodies and parents with regard to the school leaving exams. To the extent that Waldorf schools today are part of public life in school enrol-

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., lecture nine, 30 August 1919.

ment interviews, at parents' evenings, in negotiations and conferences, their anthropological image of the human being directly encounters the resistance just described in the general educational landscape. Parents today ask their questions critically and frankly and challenge pre-school teachers and teachers to be just as frank and courageous in presenting the foundations of Waldorf education and the motives for their activity. When parents in middle and upper school are more persistent with their questions about so-called "performance results", there is often a great gap between educational goals which belong to the future of humanity and the present outer standards. It is precisely this tension between high ideals and apparently unbridgeable resistance against them which stimulates the constant further development of our thinking and the daily work in class. Whether such tension can be lived with and remains bridgeable depends as a rule on the quality of the concrete human encounter:

- Do the parents trust our daily work with their children?
- Do the parents experience the presentation of the educational rationale as being coherent with what happens in Waldorf lessons?
- Is there trust on the side of the parents and of the teachers that questions which arise can be discussed with one another?

### Growing on resistance in dual consciousness of the I

From the perspective of daily practice in class the experience of such resistance might feel unpleasant but from its real effect it is a strongly positive impulse to change. Particularly the days and phases which do not go

"smoothly" in harmony but lead to dissonance and resistance not only challenge us in our thinking but down into our will to change and engage in new development. If it is then possible to develop the initiative for a new step in the face of such inner and outer resistance, the page of the lesson as a rule turns to open up a new level of support. If in class a critical time of transformation is lived and struggled through then at the end, after it has been overcome, an understandable relief sets in. Looking back later at the intensity of such a critical phase, we can become aware that only by living through such a crisis was something important and crucial transformed and learnt. Entering anew into the teaching process, and with pounding heart into new steps in class which still need to be developed, is described by Rudolf Steiner in 1920 – a year after the foundation of the Waldorf school – as the foundation for good teaching: *"But we would most certainly have taught in the best possible way if every morning we had gone into class quivering and with apprehension and no longer trusting in ourselves, but then at the end of the year said: you yourself actually learnt most during this period. That is dependent on how we have actually proceeded. That is dependent on what we have actually done, is dependent on constantly having had the feeling: you are growing while you are making the children grow."*<sup>11</sup>

If we look at the resistance with which we struggle in our educational work with this in mind, then it suggests that the obstacles which at first appear to approach us as something outside ourselves turn out later, when we look more closely, to be helpful for our development. If we continue this thought, we can conclude that, looked at from a higher level of the I, we ourselves are

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 16

deeply connected with such resistance in our life. In other words, it is we who approach ourselves in such resistance. In the book *Autobiography*, Steiner describes the dual direction in which our destiny works using the example of the challenges and resistance which he encountered in the Weimar years when he was working on Goethe's works: "Destiny is composed of two factual configurations which grow together into a unity in human life. The one flows out of urges of the soul from inside; the other approaches human beings from the external world."<sup>12</sup>

If, step by step, we can find ourselves in the encounters and resistance approaching us, we face the challenge of a dual consciousness: there is on the one hand our daily I consciousness which forms in the body when we wake up in the morning as a kind of "central perspective". And on the other hand there is being a teacher based in the events of school and classes which comes to life in numerous encounters with pupils, parents and colleagues. Grasping this second level of activity of the I in the consciousness requires a kind of "encounter perspective" or "overall perspective". Learning to deal each day with this arc of tension between the "reflected I" in the body and the "effective I" living as a reality in our actions leads to new social thoughts and perspectives: to the extent that we recognise our own I in what approaches us in life as resistance and en-

counter, the desire will grow to bring our own actions increasingly into social harmony with the people and challenges that surround us. Looking at the future development of the social aspect, Rudolf describes a growing awareness of the "effective I": "But you will have to get used to seeing this I only in the external world. The strange thing will happen that everyone else who meets us and who has something to do with us will have a greater connection with our I than the thing does which is enclosed in our skin. Thus human beings are heading towards the social age in that they will say to themselves in future: my self is with all those whom I meet out there; it is least of all inside here."<sup>13</sup>

The kind of awareness a teacher develops in the face of the resistance they encounter is of crucial importance in education in particular. If they recognise the obstacles which face them as challenges which are also part of themselves, they will use all their strength out of a profound affinity to overcome such resistance: a different, additional understanding, a deeper responsibility and greater power of initiative develop if the obstacles arising are also recognised a questions asked of our own development.

In the following second part of this subject we will focus on the development of the will and personality.

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<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Autobiography*, GA 28, Chapter XII.

<sup>13</sup> R. Steiner, GA 187, *How Can Mankind Find the Christ Again*, 28 September 1918.

# Essential Characteristics of Waldorf/Steiner Education

*International Forum for Steiner/Waldorf-Education (Hague Circle)*

*Translated by Peter Holman and Michaël Merle*

At its meeting in Harduf/Israel on 14 November 2014, the International Forum of Waldorf/Steiner Schools established and passed guidelines defining the essential characteristics of Waldorf Education. The characteristics are expressed in general terms and can be amended by criteria that are specific to the various countries. Their intention is to place in the foreground and strengthen the diversity and individuality of each school and its openness to develop. They are in addition to the characteristics passed in 2009 by the International Forum of Waldorf/Steiner Schools (Hague Circle).

## **Preface**

For schools to be recognised as Waldorf schools, or Rudolf Steiner schools, a description of essential elements of Waldorf education is necessary. If this recognition occurs, this will be documented through the inclusion of the particular school in the World List of Waldorf schools, which is the responsibility of the International Forum of Waldorf/Steiner Schools (Hague Circle).

The features described here have been broadly formulated and contain characterizations of how the International Forum defines Waldorf/Steiner schools. As this understanding is in the process of development, these features too will be supplemented or replaced over time. The fundamentals of the educational philosophy, however, remain the same.

This document can serve the purpose of a self-evaluation process for oneself or for the institution, as well as an accreditation procedure for the recognition of a Waldorf/Steiner school.

**Characteristics of a Waldorf/Steiner School include:**

## **Interconnectedness**

The Waldorf Movement forms an international network within which the individual

Waldorf/Steiner schools are autonomous and network on local, regional, national and international levels. This occurs in ways that demonstrate friendship and cooperation with colleagues, and is also judicious. A shared awareness of one another and mutual interchange within a region or country or on an international level strengthens a school's own working. This awareness of interconnectedness can equally well be expressed through partnerships with schools in other countries as through the support of young Waldorf initiatives or schools in need. The participation of colleagues, parents or student representatives in further training courses and conferences organised on a regional, national and international level is also part of this.

The consciousness of one another, as well as being in accord with the essential characteristics, creates an inner sense of interconnectedness. Being isolated, having a niche existence or lacking readiness to work together hinder this inner sense of interconnectedness. Also important is that Waldorf/Steiner schools strive for integration into the social context of their environment and participation in public life.

## **The identity of the school**

Each school has an unmistakable identity. Its identity is established through the simple fact

of its existence, with all its peculiarities, advantages and development potential. These arise out of the school's historical development, its location and environment, as well as its founding parents and teachers, who have made their mark on the school organism. In addition its identity is established through the realisation of the art of education initiated by Rudolf Steiner: Waldorf Pedagogy. It depends upon the situation of each respective school, the extent to which the school succeeds in putting into practice the art of education as outlined and described by Steiner and whether it is discernible in the classrooms and in the work of the colleagues. More specifically it refers to the pedagogy (i.e. how colleagues relate to the pupils), it refers to teaching, how colleagues deal with the content and transfer of the subject matter. Equally it refers to the question of how the fundamental themes of the art of education are applied; and finally it refers to whether the methodology is applied in a way appropriate to the child's stage of development in accordance with the anthroposophical understanding of the human being. So, what it comes down to is the creative and responsibly-minded way each school has of working with the above areas.

This will form a large part of the school's identity, and this will be complemented through what can be perceived as an *inner meaning* in each individual teacher and among the teaching staff. To the extent that the majority of teachers have worked to gain an inner attitude of openness and the striving for knowledge and self-education with the help of anthroposophy, this will determine the identity of the school. The joy of the profession, as well as the striving for knowledge of the human being as a basis for pedagogy, make up the individual mood of each school and are the soul-wise expression

of what is generally perceived as the spirit of the school.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is not an arbitrary part of Waldorf pedagogy, but rather a constituent element. Its age-appropriate application strengthens the development of children and young people through its inherent mirroring. The curriculum undergoes further changes and is developed depending on geographical and cultural position, time-related and political development as well as general or global lines of development.

Each school is located in a cultural, geographical and political space. These have their effect on the curriculum in a comparable way to the indications Rudolf Steiner gave about forms for classrooms and school architecture, in order to create a special mood fitting for each grade. Each region and country has its history, which characterises world history from its own vantage point and will also have its effect on the curriculum.

Each school relates in some way to the demands of the state authorities responsible for education. To what extent, for example, curriculum guidelines are adopted into the curriculum of Waldorf/Steiner schools will depend on the political circumstances of the particular country. And in taking up the indications Rudolf Steiner gave for teaching, which for example draw more on western cultural values, these will need to be supplemented or replaced with correspondingly valuable content, provided the pedagogical effect is thereby preserved. The teaching of foreign languages in multi-ethnic countries can be organised in an appropriate way. The indications regarding teaching methods, which Rudolf Steiner gave, set the standard for the teaching of foreign languages, as well



as the characteristic qualities of the various languages.

In countries where several religions co-exist, the school will reflect this both in the religion lessons and the traditions of the school and festivals. The religion lessons in other confessions can be organised in consultation with the parents.

In many countries the state makes demands that have an impact on the curriculum and stand in contradiction to the Waldorf understanding of child development. These range from early enrolment to the various forms of premature academic learning. Each school finds solutions, ways and compromises that preserve the spirit of Waldorf/Steiner education and are at the same time in accord with the legal standards. What is called for within this area of tension is a fruitful consensus between possibility and ideal in order to work in a creatively productive way and to foster the development of the child through the curriculum.

### **The Relationship between Teachers and Pupils, and their Relationship to the World**

Child development and all that is learnt at school are realised in a relationship borne of the child's trust in the teachers, in their general environment and in an awareness of the world. Waldorf teachers bear a special responsibility for the vibrant forms of this relationship.

In adolescence this relationship changes, for now the students are to stimulate their own forming of opinions, empathy and independent activity in their encounters and in their attempts to come to terms with the world from the perspective of the subjects. What will be decisive here is whether or not high school teachers are able, beside their professional qualification, to bring with them the ability to meet the young people in such a

way that they discover their self-expression and develop the courage to orientate their biographies accordingly.

The lesson is successful when it awakens further questions in the young people and when they are not bored, but rather develop and show interest in their fellow human beings and the world. The school will find solutions and ways to maintain a well-balanced relationship between the pressure to prepare for examinations and the demands of a healthy unfolding of soul and body.

### **The Artistic Approach**

One of the objectives of Waldorf/Steiner pedagogy is to link education with life and not with an accumulation of abstract knowledge. A school will only do justice to the task of education when, in the later life of the graduating student an inclination towards basic humanity lives through strong thinking, feeling and will. How these abilities engage in relation to one another will make a difference as to whether or not the human being can walk his own path.

Whether and how these abilities are integrated within the "I" of the human being will have an effect on his or her independence. One of the most important instruments for this is the artistic lessons. There are four aspects to be understood:

- 1) The teachers themselves nurture their own relationship to art in some form; they themselves become artistically active.
- 2) They use artistic materials in their lessons (painting, drawing, recitation, music and the like).
- 3) The lesson itself is artistic in the sense of originality, imagery, creativity and through structuring the flow of time in perceptive

observation of the pupils, and with a lively alternation of the tasks between holding the tension and letting go. This artistic element of how the lesson is structured is the essential aspect of Waldorf/Steiner education.

- 4) The teachers strive for an appropriate aesthetic environment for the school and its classrooms, as this has an unconscious effect on the moods of the students.

In the artistic structuring of the lesson the path is the goal, for the path is as living as the art itself. The teacher endeavours to develop his or her own methods and as far as possible to avoid prefabricated methods. Here it is of importance whether artistic activities are used as an end in themselves, or for pedagogical reasons.

#### The Forms:

##### Shaping the School and the Lessons

In the conception of the Waldorf/Steiner schools Rudolf Steiner gave us only a few *forms* that would provide a founding identity; forms that are founded on the one hand in the knowledge of the human being and on the other in the social mission of the schools. These are the following:

For the children:

- 1) Stable groups of students of different levels of proficiency. Classes are arranged according to age, not standardised ability.
- 2) *Alongside* this, subject-specific proficiency groups are possible.
- 3) The class teacher accompanies the class for many years (ideally until the year when the pupils turn 14).
- 4) The Main Lesson takes place in the morning. *Thereafter* the subject lessons.

- 5) There is a pre-school stage without academic objective.
- 6) The school is an all-inclusive school, from pre-school age to young adulthood.
- 7) There is an individual accompanying of students within the class community.
- 8) The school is co-educational.

For the teachers:

- 1) Each teacher is to a full extent responsible for the school as a whole living organism.
- 2) One maintains an inner and outer connection through regular joint faculty meetings, and engages thereby in further training.
- 3) The school is managed by the teachers and parents and not heteronomously.
- 4) Parents and teachers form a community that takes responsibility for the school.
- 5) The teachers search for and find forms to develop quality.
- 6) Each teacher is responsible for his lessons on the basis of the anthroposophical study of the human being, the relationship to the students, his social and specialist competencies, as well as the aims of Waldorf education.

##### Entrepreneurial Health

The founding of a Waldorf/Steiner school is followed as a rule by the gradual building up of one class after the other. Each school initiative develops and grows. The organic development of the middle school leads to the establishing of the high school. To start a high school too early can jeopardize the exist-

tence of the school. Development and growth, therefore, have to remain in balance, in order that the educational task is not jeopardized.

The size of the organisation influences the health of the school organism, as well as the way in which the educational and social tasks of a school can be taken up. A healthy school organism makes itself felt in the finances. Since in most countries Waldorf/Steiner schools are not supported by the state, the costs of the school are covered through the contributions of parents. In many countries the schools are therefore dependent on additional donations. Many schools show a good deal of involvement and creative solutions in order to maintain healthy finances and further develop the school.

### **The School Community: Living Together**

The basis for the Waldorf/Steiner schools is the school community and human interaction between parents, teachers, pupils and co-workers. All cooperation and working together are marked by humanity and human dignity. All involved can join to develop meaningful, non-hierarchical forms for this working together. Transparency and a comprehensive picture (instead of personal and institutional power) will thereby be striven for in all processes of school management and in the reaching of decisions. These form the basis for the involvement of the individual in the community and for how the school is discerned in its surroundings.

Various activities and committees make possible the encounters between teachers and parents (parent's evenings, consultations, discussions, child studies), whereby the teachers more than anyone are to exercise the greatest possible care in terms of general humanity.

If such striving can be discerned at a school it also gains a profile as an institution which is aware of its social responsibility.

### **School Leadership**

The responsibility for Waldorf/Steiner schools is carried jointly by teachers and parents. How they form the organisation and structure is in line with the common intentions. From time to time it is worthwhile for schools, which have been in existence for some decades, to radically rework the structures, decision-making processes and principles of leadership. To lead the school means to have the task and mission of the Waldorf school ever clearer in one's consciousness and to constantly work at it. This is only possible through studying together the anthroposophical fundamentals of this pedagogy. So school leadership, founded in the unifying spirit of the Waldorf school, emerges in that colleagues and parents work with the fundamentals.

Waldorf/Steiner schools are self-governed (i.e. not state-governed) organisations. Teachers and parents run and manage the school and create appropriate organs.

On this foundation the structuring of the school, its organisation, finances, administration, etc. can be carried out in the most varied of ways. Today it is predominantly all the various forms of delegation of tasks and responsibilities that are discussed with those involved and agreed upon in consensus and in accord with the mission of the school.

This form of school leadership is a decisive feature of Waldorf schools.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In summary it can be said: A Waldorf/Steiner school is one where a majority of the teachers live by an igniting spirit. This spirit makes light and easy what is heavy and hard, it

makes the impossible possible and illumines the darkness.

## Waldorf-Inspired Schools

### Preface

Under the term "Waldorf-Inspired schools" various forms of schooling can be understood.

- It can be about an existing regular school in which elements of Waldorf/Steiner schools are applied.
- It can be about new schools that are in a process of accreditation to receive the status *Waldorf School* from the relevant federation of the country or from the International Forum (Hague Circle).
- It can be schools which would like as much as possible to realise Waldorf/Steiner education, but are in a legal or religious or cultural context in which this is only possible to a limited extent.
- It can be schools that practise Waldorf/Steiner education within a state teaching system, insofar as this is possible within the existing system.

Further school forms, which also aspire to Waldorf/Steiner education, can be:

- Small free schools, such as are found within the context of farming communities.
- Home-schooling, in which parents educate their children on the basis of Waldorf/Steiner education. These are to be distinguished from the home schools that are preparing to be regular schools. This school-form is not allowed in some countries.

In these schools the following examples can be found of Waldorf elements:

- Narrative material is given
- Music is played
- Teaching is in Main Lesson blocks and Main Lesson books are produced.
- Lessons are given by a class teacher.
- The curriculum is applied.
- An artistic environment is nurtured.
- A hygienic timetable is put into practice.
- Eurythmy lessons take place.
- (Additional) foreign languages are taught.
- There is painting, and form drawing is systematically practised.
- The teachers come together for weekly faculty meetings.
- The teacher ethos described above is striven for.
- The teachers take part in further Waldorf teacher-training.
- The teachers immerse themselves in Anthroposophy as the basis of Waldorf/Steiner education.

### Recognition and Waldorf School Status

The status of a Waldorf-inspired school has to do with the existence and quality of the elements described above. The Waldorf Movement strives to be aware of, recognise and accompany all schools that endeavour to work on the basis of Waldorf/Steiner educa-

tion. In making an assessment it will depend on how many of these elements exist and of what quality they are.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The Waldorf Movement strives to be aware of and recognise these various school initiatives in their efforts with Waldorf/Steiner education. It is possible that we have here to do with new streams which, alongside the recognised, typical Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner schools, also have a social task to fulfil for the holistic education of children. A fruitful working together will be striven for.

**Passed by the International Forum of Waldorf/Steiner Schools (Hague Circle) on 14 November 2014 in Harduf, Israel and ratified at the International Forum of Waldorf/Steiner Schools (Hague Circle) meeting in Vienna/Austria on 14 May 2015.**

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## How to deal with early enrolment? A new concept

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*Bochum im September 2015*

*Translated by Andreas Meyer*

About internal differentiation and collective learning of children who are

- a) required to attend school and ready for schooling (primary education) and
- b) required to attend school, but not yet ready for it (elementary education)

Since 2006 North Rhine-Westphalia has brought forward the age for enrolment step by step as well. Some schools reacted and responded to this pressure for early enrolment by installing so-called bridge classes, i.e. pre-school classes with children who were already required to attend school but not yet ready for schooling.

### **The Challenge**

After ten, well experienced years with bridge classes the administration of schools decided to alter the governmental guidelines: Refinancing was only guaranteed if:

- a) children in bridge classes were able to join at least 50 % of the lessons together with children on the primary level.
- b) – due to a structural permeability – each child could possibly change from the elementary level (see also below) to the primary level (see also below) in the course of the school year. It was additionally said that such a change would only be advisable with regard to the pedagogical evaluation of the child's assumed development.

These preconditions have changed the school's framework completely. On the one hand the decisions of the regional administration of schools had to be considered. On the other hand the school was in force to protect the children who were not yet ready for school from the mischievous impact of too premature schooling. Consequently, the newly developed concept of a flexible starting level tries to balance the legal as well as the pedagogical viewpoints.

The new "starting level" was designed by a task group of the teaching staff. The pilot phase started with the beginning of the session 2014/2015 and was preceded by an intensive examination of child development as well as a search for suitable, curricular offers with corresponding methods. The occasionally quite challenging dialogue among colleagues was characterized by two different factors: the screening of a teaching practice which had become just a habit and the discovery of new possibilities and perspectives. All in all the participating colleagues experienced this process as absolutely positive.

### **Differences in Development**

Within the school the teaching staff got slowly got used to speaking of children of the elementary level and of children of the primary level. The first ones aren't yet ready for schooling, the second ones already are. Both groups form the so-called starting level. The starting level is characterized by learning periods in which both groups are strictly separated and periods in which both

groups learn together in mixed teams. This division isn't just a pragmatic solution for an administrative demand which is forced on the school from the outside. Instead it offers a pedagogically reasonable concept that focuses on the developmental situation of children who are ready for schooling or not. In accordance with the principles of Waldorf teaching the task group questioned and analysed the following aspects:

- a) the features of preschool learning (learning by playing and by imitating, learning out of the resources of a meaningful life, joyful learning with perpetual interest and based on the ongoing interaction of assimilation and accumulation)
- b) the characteristics of being ready for schooling (the completed forming of the four basal senses, growth and physical extension, the change of the heart-lung frequency, the release of memory and imagination)
- c) the attaching consequences for learning (the ability to concentrate, understanding – adopting – performing, an increasingly cognitive approach, to be gradually able to abstract, to be gradually able to transfer pictures into letters etc.)

### **Different developmental phases require different ways of addressing children**

In order to enable children to unfold their whole potential it is necessary to address them differently. The address has to correspond to their individual stage of development. That's why children are offered differentiated tasks on the elementary as well as on the primary level and are not taught collectively in just one group for the whole morning.

The children on the elementary level have less contact to a cognitive communication of

the so-called cultural techniques. In contrast, the children of the primary level (class 1) are allowed to learn in the already established style. Therefore, this teaching happens in different groups.

In contrast, collective learning or being active together is definitely possible when it comes to subjects like music, needlework, playful physical training, nature studies and narrating. Here, the main educational objectives are focused on encouraging the sensorial development, on creative internalisation and on training and attaining artistic and practical competences. In subjects with artistic and practical priority the teaching staff pays broad attention to all kinds of human emotions by using and working actively with the hands and all the senses. Here, collective learning in mixed groups forms one of the basic backbones of the new starting level because teachers and students can experience directly that the inner feeling of being willing and being able to do something passes every phase of child development. The children even help themselves and teach each other which certainly is an invaluable advantage of collective learning.

With regard to content and methods the children are differentiated in reference to their individual stage of development. The formula here is: Differentiate in an equivalent way but not the same way. The unfolding of the fine and gross motor skills, the increase in feeling and willing: they can be shaped differently with each key subject. If necessary, the children on the primary level can get more demanding tasks concerning their motoric, musical or creative skills. In contrast, the children of the elementary level can work on more basal operations in these sections. Besides and according to the respective subject and standard there are activities which can be managed by all the chil-

dren collectively. The beginning of the week, the closing of the day or seasonal festivities can be celebrated together as well.

Foreign languages (English/Russian) are taught only on the primary level and in alternating periods with four lessons per week. Each lesson lasts 30 minutes and is placed directly before the morning break. The foreign language lessons are arranged like a little rhythmical part of its own with linguistic, musical and playful elements. Here, the children acquire the foreign language not cognitively but – corresponding to the acquisition of their native language – by hearing, listening and imitating. This method not only shows an amazing success in a minimum of time. It also reveals how intensively and densely the language is experienced by the children even – or precisely because – it is taught in a time-wise economic way. It is thinkable that children of the elementary level could be introduced to a new and foreign language likewise.

### **The order of the day**

In the so-called main lessons (Block 1) the children of the elementary and the primary level are taught separately. Subject teaching in the first (Block 2) and the second (Block 3) subject lesson takes place collectively. The fixed and once solid structure of lessons was eliminated. Consequently, fluent passages between the blocks are possible now. Therefore the new structure contains three blocks (see also scheme):

- a) The main lessons (Block 1) contain not only the rhythmical and the main part but also the breakfast and the foreign language teaching.
- b) The artistic and practical subjects are taught collectively as well as in mixed groups in Block 2. The mixed groups are flexible and open. The fact that it is possible to change the group on a horizontal

level widens the children's perspective: It is now possible for them to learn with and from each other. Children experience each other differently in such a peer-to-peer situation. If children with different developmental backgrounds learn together, then a fascinating atmosphere of social learning emerges. Besides, each child can find and work on an exercise that fits perfectly to his or her individual stage of development. This block allows work that is based on the student's resources.

- c) Block 3 focuses on subjects with playful, artistic and motoric emphasis (physical training and eurythmy). A collectively experienced part with listening to fairy tales or to seasonal stories completes the day.

The schoolday ends at 12.05 p.m. for all the children.

### **Developmental monitoring**

Whether a child is admitted to the elementary or to the primary level is decided by a special admission team after an intensive screening of the child's individual stage of development. The screening continues during the school year. At the beginning of the session an individual survey registers the development of each child on the elementary level. This survey is built upon the monitoring criteria of the very first screening and contains observations made by the teaching staff as well as special exercises. The results are documented, evaluated and finally labelled with a recommendation on a stay in the same or on a change to the other group.

### **The report**

The report for the children on the elementary level is designed formally in the same way. If individual cases require it, the teaching staff can apply the criteria for the description of the stage of development which they have



used for screening during the year and summarise them in a commentary.

### **Teamwork**

The collective lessons in Blocks 2 and 3 require an intensive and constant cooperation of the two class teachers and the teachers of the different subjects. The communication was intensified so that the staff now can exchange and agree on information in weekly meetings. The effort is remarkably high and offers a new training ground. But all participants found out that it was worth it: The collegial learning process turned out to be an internal advanced training which enriched each individual not only in a technical but also a humane way and commanded a view on other and future teamwork.

### **Conclusion**

Central considerations for this concept are:

- a) It should offer the admitted children maximum security with regard to their social relationships among each other.
- b) It should secure stability and continuity with regard to the children's reference person.

- c) It should guarantee a "local homeland" as a kind of mental and atmospheric landmark.
- d) It should stick to a regular structure every single day and every single week.

This strategy realizes a pedagogical approach which places special emphasis on the social learning of children and on building confidence.

These are the prospects:

- a) The concept offers a new social learning that happens in lessons which are partly structured in crossed over and mixed groups.
- b) Originally fixed age-group levels open up for individual learner's biographies.
- c) New training grounds are established supporting a learning which breaks up the traditional borders between the different subjects.
- d) The teacher is no longer seen as the representative of traditional and fixed positions but as a modern, collegial team player.

## Agenda

### 2015

September 11 – 13

Study of Man, Lecture 13 with Wolfgang Schad (only in German)

October 5 – 9

International Conference for Teachers of Mathematics

November 1 – 3

Conference for Educational Support Teachers (also in English and Spanish)

### 2016

February 19 – 21

Practical Meditative Work (only in German)

March 28 – April 2

10<sup>th</sup> World Teachers' Conference (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese and Russian or Hungarian Language)



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