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Report from the Co-Directors

*David Mitchell and
Douglas Gerwin*

To be sure, this has been a demanding year for the Research Institute. On the one hand we have enjoyed unprecedented growth in our connections to research around the world—from Australia and New Zealand in the west to Europe and Russia in the east—with new overtures and offers of research; on the other hand, we find ourselves restrained in launching new projects because of a decline in philanthropic funding.

The Research Institute has been able to sustain its ongoing activities—such as the Online Waldorf Library (OWL) and the publication of this *Research Bulletin*—thanks to the steady backing of the Waldorf Curriculum Fund as well as schools that have remained loyal “Supporting Members” of the Institute. At the same time, we will have to limit our activities in the forthcoming year to completing projects already underway while we seek funding for new projects. In short, we feel much of the uncertainty of the current economic climate. We welcome both advice and support!

Current Projects

Our current projects include:

Parent Research: We are evaluating and analyzing a parent survey by Martin Novom of 318 North American Waldorf school parents. Our intention is to publish the results of this survey later in the academic year 2009–2010.

Electronic Books Project #2: A collection of out-of-print essays, now available either on disc or as a download from the Online Waldorf Library (OWL), includes the following titles:

Reading and Writing by Karl König

Mathematics by Karl König

Embryology and World Evolution by Karl König

Creating Social Sacraments by Dieter Brüll

Sexuality Curriculum for grades 5–12: With the help of a modest grant from the *Pädagogische Forschungsstelle* (Educational Research Institute) in Germany, we have begun collecting articles for

translation, identifying new chapters to be written, and developing a curriculum for Waldorf schools. We plan to have a book available within the next year and a half, provided that the requisite funds can be secured.

Teaching Sensible Science: For the past five years, the Research Institute has offered this course to experienced Waldorf school class teachers who were ready to deepen their understanding and practice of a phenomenological approach to teaching science in grades 6–8. In response to requests from participants, plans are underway to offer a further program for veterans of the course who wish to broaden this approach to other aspects of the curriculum. Meanwhile, the most recent cycle of this program—which typically meets for three separate weeks during the school year and vacation times—had to be postponed because financial constraints prevented Waldorf schools from sending teachers they had pledged to sponsor. We are grateful to the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and the Waldorf Educational Foundation for their continued support of this important project.

International Collaboration with Researchers: One of the guiding missions of the Research Institute is to build bridges with scientists and researchers working outside Waldorf education on topics of mutual interest. In this context, Douglas Gerwin was invited to take part during a week around Easter 2009 in two conferences of medical and pedagogical researchers—one in San Diego, CA, connected with the annual gathering of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the other at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, where the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society hosted a conference for physicians, therapists, and educators. Despite the evident cultural differences—to say nothing of the nine time zones—that separated these two gatherings, some remarkably similar themes were sounded in both events. A separate article on these shared themes appears in this issue of the *Research Bulletin*.

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International Conference on the Tenth Grade Curriculum in Kassel, Germany: This spring, Michael Holdrege, a Waldorf high school biology teacher at the Chicago Waldorf School, represented the Research Institute at the International Refresher Course in Kassel, Germany, focusing on tenth grade curriculum. The conference, held in both English and German, attracted a worldwide participation. In Holdrege's seminar alone the thirty-four participants represented sixteen nationalities. In his keynote address on "Challenges and Opportunities of Waldorf Education in North America," Holdrege spoke about the issue of high tuition and the resultant high expectations of parents. He also spoke about religious diversity and the SAT and high-stakes testing. He questioned whether the U.S. government had abandoned its role as social arbiter by deregulating economic commerce and over-regulating school life. Schools, he noted, are desperately seeking rigid organizational models and failsafe forms of assessment, and yet, like any living social organism, they actually require flexible and malleable forms capable of responding differently in each situation. He lamented the energy used in this Sisyphean pursuit. He also spoke about the emergence of a subculture of some sixty million people called the "Cultural Creatives," a number of whom are drawn to Waldorf education.

Connections with Russia: David Mitchell was invited to Moscow to speak about high-stakes testing and the *Bulletin* article on this subject that was reprinted last June in the academic journal *Pedagogical Journal of Bashkortostan University, Ufa, Russia* (see *Research Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, no. 2, pp. 21–30). A separate article on the experiences gathered on this journey appears in this issue of the *Research Bulletin*.

Research in Norway: David Mitchell was also invited to Norway where he met with researchers on childhood and Waldorf education to establish future collaboration and share papers. The Anthropos Verlag and Bookhandlung in Oslo now carry most titles from AWSNA Publications, as well as several issues of the *Research Bulletin*. These publications were featured at a Scandinavian Waldorf school teachers conference in August.

"Assessment without High-Stakes Testing: Protecting Children and the Purpose of School": This article (see *Research Bulletin*, Volume XIII, #2), written by five Waldorf educators under the aegis of

the Research Institute, has been growing steadily in popularity and attracting interest around the world. In the U.S. the article was presented to the Obama administration, which posted the document on its website in a section entitled "Educational Change." The article was also sent to members of the Education Subcommittee of Congress and to the Department of Education. It has been reprinted in the following journals and posted to the following locations:

- *Independent Teacher On-line Journal*, www.independentteacher.org
- *The Institute for Social Renewal*, www.socialrenewal.com
- *The Pedagogical Journal of Bashkortostan University, Ufa, Russia*, Number 5 (18) 2008
- *Journal for Waldorf Education in New Zealand/Australia*, Volume 11.1, May 2009
- *Lilipoh*, Autumn 2009
- *Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners*, www.freunde-waldorf.de
- *European Council for Steiner/Waldorf Education*, www.steinerwaldorfeurope.org
- *Renewal Magazine*, Fall-Winter 2009
- *Houston Examiner*, August 9, 2009

New Board Member at the Research Institute

Finally, we are pleased to welcome Natalie Reed Adams to the Board of Trustees of the Research Institute. During her undergraduate years at Harvard she learned about the work of Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf education. After graduation she traveled first to England to complete foundation studies at Emerson College, then to the Waldorf Pedagogical Seminar in Stuttgart, Germany, for a two-year teacher training. On her return to New York City she became the first grade teacher at the Rudolf Steiner School.

Her husband, a descendent of Presidents John and John Quincy Adams, was employed in the U.S. Foreign Service, so the family moved abroad to live in Thailand, Romania, and Azerbaijan.

After the family returned to Washington, DC, Natalie became a tutor and part-time teacher in the high school math and science programs at the Washington Waldorf School. Eventually she picked up a class in the sixth grade and, after finishing the eighth grade, agreed to serve as Faculty Chair, the position she currently holds.



From the Editor

Stephen Keith Sagarin

Reflection will show that consciousness is not a thing, not a configuration of neurons or electrochemical activity—although it may require these for its manifestation in us. Consciousness can most clearly be conceived, I believe, according to the polarities favored by the Greeks, and, more recently, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Rudolf Steiner, and Owen Barfield, among many others.

The Greek view of courage provides a good example. For the Greeks, courage wasn't a thing, wasn't a hormone level, for example. It was that which mediated the polarity of fear and foolhardiness. A coward, through fear, will not act when he might. A fool, through foolhardiness, will act rashly when reflection might save his life. A courageous person balances the tug of fear and the force of foolhardiness to find a middle way.

Of what is consciousness the mediator? Well, it is clear that we may perceive the world and that we may think about the world. (Even those who deny the existence of consciousness do not deny the thinking that goes into their books and the perceptions of those who read them.) Perception and conception form the polarity that consciousness mediates. This is clear enough as a thought, and it was Owen Barfield, I believe, who first put it this way. For Rudolf Steiner, we may call consciousness the spirit. From at least one point of view, consciousness and spirit are one and the same.

Consciousness, after all this, is one thread common to almost every article in this issue, consciousness and the call to responsibility that consciousness entails. These are shown here with regard to school administration and governance and our work together in them, particularly in contemplative inquiry and professional development; in recognizing the social, political, and cultural contexts in which we form our schools, here and abroad; in the way we regard our own development as teachers and the development of our students; in taking responsibility for social-emotional education and health of our students; in taking responsibility for the conduct of our

research; and in thinking about the very way we live on our planet.

Without planning a theme, we nonetheless received several articles all at once that examine ideas around school governance, administration, and the function of faculty meetings and the so-called college of teachers. Christopher Schaefer discusses seven dimensions or aspects of social work in the conscious creation of a Waldorf school community. Grounded in Steiner's work and representing years of thinking and working with these ideas, Schaefer's thought-provoking article nudges us in the direction of accepting our responsibilities as members of Waldorf school communities not to shirk the hard work of fulfilling Steiner's vision.

Tackling a similar theme, Jon McAlice discusses the organizational structure, governance, and unifying forces of Waldorf school leadership. He finds these in three principles—creativity, sustainability, and accountability. Like Schaefer, he calls us to take up consciously the challenges of school governance and administration.

Continuing this theme, but from the point of view specifically of the work of teachers collectively, Kevin Avison uses the model of organic coherence to discuss the meditative life of teachers in a Waldorf school and how this provides the center from which healthful education grows. He provides a brief and mundane but illustrative case study of a college of teachers at work, and ends by elucidating a "flow chart" to demonstrate the recursive process by which meditative work may occur in a healthy school.

Similarly, Laura Birdsall and Thomas Patteson report on a professional development model, based on clear protocols, that serves to reinforce both the social mission described in Schaefer's and McAlice's articles and the meditative work described in Avison's. A similarity among all these pieces is recognition of the necessity for ongoing evaluation and assessment of all aspects of work in a school. Meditation—contemplative inquiry, we might say—is a necessary component of such

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work (more on that from Martyn Rawson in the next issue of the *Bulletin*), but, without discourse among colleagues and without assessment of its effectiveness, it may serve to further isolate one teacher from another, to reinforce convention, rather than open new avenues for teaching and learning.

This issue also contains Part II of Renate Long-Breipohl's article on the simultaneous development of teachers and young children. Taking the zodiac as her guide, she examines profound symbols and metaphors for self-development and work in the classroom. Speaking personally, as someone somewhat baffled by—and not all that interested in—the zodiac, I find her elucidation of these symbols heartwarming, clear, and true.

This issue also brings two articles from Russia. The first is David Mitchell's report on his visit to Russia following reprinting of the *Research Bulletin's* "High Stakes Testing" in a Russian educational journal. Mitchell shows, against the backdrop of Russian history and culture, how standardized testing poses a unique challenge to students and, especially, to Waldorf schools.

The second is Cassandra Hartblay's report on a women's collective in Siberia that, using Waldorf education methods, has started a small school for disabled children. Despite poverty, bureaucracy, and Russian attitudes toward the disabled that, by Western standards, are far from enlightened, these women are growing their small school. A brief talk by Peter Guttenhöfer at a South African Waldorf education conference reinforces the idea that small schools can succeed—he proposes the conscious creation of small schools for young children based on Waldorf education methods to serve communities that cannot support a large Waldorf school. His idea also incorporates the informality and flexibility that characterize what we have come to call home-schooling.

For high school and upper grade school teachers, this issue includes David Mitchell's article on a social-emotional curriculum for adolescents. Social-emotional education has been a hot topic for several years, and it's not a topic Waldorf schools can ignore. Mitchell's argument—that emotions can be educated, and that they shouldn't be educated "by the way," but deliberately—is clear and succinct. The article ends with

a table demonstrating a sample social-emotional education curriculum for high schools.

Rounding out the issue are Douglas Gerwin's report on two conferences he attended this spring, Michael D'Aleo's description of insights gained while teaching a youth group in Sweden, and Richard House's article on television and children. Gerwin describes the all-too-common way in which even like-minded, thoughtful, and well-meaning persons talk past each other at conferences, and draws the conclusion that we cannot simply rely on statistics and presentations in our research; we must deliberately take into account both the evidence and the logic we use in reaching our conclusions. D'Aleo, based on a simple calculation, unfolds the ramifications we may recognize in the face of growing population and a finite globe with which to sustain it. He concludes with lessons we may draw from tribal peoples who live simple, meaningful, beautiful, and sustainable lives. We come across many articles addressing the dangers of television for children but we don't find many that add much to what we already know. We believe Richard House's article, a summary of findings on "technological toxicity" and children, is noteworthy for its scope and brevity.

After a truly rainy beginning to the summer, the past days have been blistering and humid. Consciousness tends to want no more than a porch swing, some light reading, and a glass of lemonade; both thinking and perceiving dim, on hiatus. Instead, our new publication schedule calls for reading and editing the contents you now hold.

Corrections

In our last issue, the correct title of the article entitled "Crises in the Kindergarten" should have been "Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in School." We also neglected to include Ed Miller's name as co-author, with Joan Almon, of this article. We regret these errors and are pleased to correct them here.

The Social Mission of Waldorf School Communities

Christopher Schaefer

In many years of working with Waldorf schools, I am often asked why it is so difficult, why so many meetings, why work with consensus or, more pointedly, why doesn't the Board just appoint a principal or director and have this person run the school efficiently, without all this participation and complexity. Somewhat tongue in cheek, I say, perhaps it isn't a question of efficiency, but of liveliness, of engagement, of juiciness. Yet the questions are valid. Why is it that we struggle with new social and community forms in developing Waldorf schools in North America and around the world?

After thinking about and researching this question, I have come to believe that there are at least seven aspects of or dimensions to the social mission of Waldorf education. The first and most obvious answer is that the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany, was founded as an independent school, in large part as an answer to the conditions of social, economic, and political chaos resulting from World War I. The school, inaugurated in 1919, grew out of Rudolf Steiner's efforts to provide Central Europe with a new approach to thinking about and ordering society, referred to as the Movement for Threefolding Society.¹ In the midst of Steiner's political and social activity, Emil Molt, the director of the Waldorf Astoria Cigarette Factory, asked him whether he could help in the founding of an independent school for the workers' children and others interested in a new form of education. Steiner responded with warmth and eagerness, for, as he said, "the great problem of the future will be that of education. How will we educate children so that they, as adults, can grow into the social, democratic, and spiritually free areas of life in the best way possible?"²

Steiner's response contained two essential perspectives. The first was that the school must be legally and financially independent of local and state government because the state can never foster an education for freedom; it needs to satisfy a myriad of bureaucratic, political, and economic

demands. Indeed, according to Steiner, not only the Waldorf school, but all cultural institutions—such as research institutes, school, colleges, universities, dance troupes, and theaters—need to be free of state control and to be permeated by the principle of freedom if society is to develop in a healthy manner. The state—the administration of laws and legislation for the common good—must be limited in scope and based on the principle of equality, of democratic participation, while economic life needs to move toward associations, embodying principles of brotherhood and sisterhood between producers, consumers, and traders.³ Although it is not my purpose to describe the details of the threefold social organism in this introduction, it is important to note that Steiner's social and political ideas embodied the principles of the French Revolution in a new way: liberty for cultural life, equality for democratic life, and fraternity for economic life. His ideas were far from utopian in the context of a Central Europe destroyed by war and torn among the competing ideologies of capitalism, socialism, and communism.

A second point, connected to the first, is that the form and curriculum of Waldorf education should lead to the proper education of children so that they can become conscious and creative adults, capable of developing a healthy society. Certainly, when we meet Waldorf school graduates, we may sense their optimism, creativity, and engagement with life. But the connection between Waldorf education and social reform is deeper and more specific. In the lectures cited previously, published as *Education as a Social Problem*, Steiner suggested that:

1. Providing a worthy environment and education through proper imitation in early childhood develops a sense for freedom in later life;
2. Developing a proper sense for natural authority in the lower school provides the

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basis for a healthy rights life in relationships and society; and

3. Developing a sense for human love, for the beauty and grandeur of nature, and for the magnitude and diversity of the human enterprise offers a basis for a healthy economic life or, as Steiner stated, “brotherliness, fraternity, in economic life⁴ as it has to be striven for in the future, can only arise in human souls if education after the fifteenth year works consciously toward universal human love.”⁵

These are far-reaching statements. The connections they imply are not always obvious. How can imitation be the basis of freedom or respect for authority the foundation for a sense for equality? A starting point can be the recognition that in early childhood the forces of the will are first developed and in the time between ages 7 and 14 the basis for a healthy feeling life established. Imitation of a healthy and loving social and physical environment builds confidence and security in later life while nurturing the substance of individual will, the basis for self awareness and the need for freedom. Respect for the authority of a caring teacher or a loving parent establishes boundaries, provides structure for the emerging feeling life, and encourages awareness of rights and responsibilities in the class and in the broader human community.

In describing further aspects of the social mission of Waldorf education, it is essential to gain insight into the nature of modern Western consciousness. The growth of individual consciousness, of self awareness, from the 18th century to the present, encouraged by the industrial and post-industrial ages, has led to an increased awareness of human rights, including such milestones as the abolition of slavery, the growth of women’s rights, and the U.N. Charter of Universal Human Rights. It has also led to a new psychological understanding of the human being in the many schools of modern psychology. Yet, for Steiner, this growth of individual self awareness

In Waldorf schools, the absence of formal hierarchy, the group decision-making processes, the need to get to know each other as teachers, parents, and staff pull us out of our isolation.

has come at a price, and this price includes the loss of social instincts embedded in tradition and extended family structures and the growth of egotism, of anti-social attitudes and behavior. The struggle for mutual understanding, the breakdown of family relationships, and the growth of interpersonal violence are all symptoms of this anti-social terror of the age.

Steiner saw this development of consciousness as justified, indeed inevitable, but felt that new social forms, new communities, were needed to balance the anti-social tendencies of modern humanity:

Anti-social impulses must arise inwardly so that human beings may reach the height of their development; outwardly, in social life, social structures must work in such a way that people do not completely drift apart in life. Hence the social demands of the present; they can in a certain sense be seen as the justified demand for an outer balance to the inner, essentially anti-social evolutionary tendency of humanity.⁶

For Steiner, both the principles of the threefold social organism and the new self-administered community forms of the Waldorf school were ways of balancing the one-sided, more egotistical nature of modern consciousness; they were ways of helping people meet each other at deeper levels, thereby fostering a process of mutual development.

The self-administered partnership forms of the more than one thousand Waldorf schools and initiatives around the globe find their source in these insights into the nature of modern consciousness. To develop the appropriate forms of governance among teachers, parents, and staff, among a teachers’ college, a board of trustees, an administration, and a parent association is an ongoing task for each Waldorf school and is part of the social mission of Waldorf education. Since 1919, for ninety years, independent Waldorf schools have attempted to evolve community forms in which the interests of teachers, parents, staff, and friends can find true expression.

In most Waldorf schools in the United States and Canada this has meant a teachers' circle, or faculty council, having primary responsibility for all pedagogical life—determining the curriculum and hiring, mentoring, evaluating, and, if need be, dismissing teachers. The other main decision-making group is a board of trustees consisting of teachers, parents, and friends who carry legal and financial responsibility for the school, who support the education by making sure that there are adequate financial resources and a suitable physical space for supporting the education. An administration, grounded in an understanding of the curriculum, provides the support and the expertise needed to help increasingly mature and complex schools function well. The parent association may foster community dialogues, sponsor adult education, support festivals, and serve the cause of responsible communication between teachers and parents.

In Waldorf schools, the absence of formal hierarchy, the group decision-making processes, the need to get to know each other as teachers, parents, and staff pull us out of our isolation. The form and nature of self-administration in our schools mean we need to learn to appreciate the differences between people while at the same time accepting that we are brothers and sisters on the road of mutual development.

While it is an exaggeration, I sometimes suggest that Waldorf schools are designed to enhance conflict. Certainly they are formed to help us meet at deeper levels and to help us “rub each other into shape.” This means that all adults in Waldorf schools need to be on a path of reflective self-development, to be willing to work their issues, for, without this foundation, interpersonal conflicts can undermine the proper functioning of the school. Even in the first Waldorf school, with Steiner present as founder and director, questions of trust, leadership, interpersonal conflict, and the proper delegation of authority were significant issues, as the essay by Francis Gladstone, *Republican Academies*, makes vividly clear.⁷

Steiner described the reality of karma, of mutual destiny, as coming to expression in the social world, in the sphere of human relationships. For him, the fundamental reason for new social

and community forms was to give people an opportunity to awaken to the nature of their mutual destiny, to the reality of karma. The specialization of work and the large, complex, bureaucratic nature of modern institutional life, coupled with the anti-social nature of our present consciousness, create the danger that individuals will not meet at a deep enough level to awaken to their common destiny, depriving each of them of the opportunity of becoming who they are meant to be. If we reflect on our own life accurately, we will see the important role that a teacher, a grandparent, a chance conversation with a visiting friend, or a difficult experience with a colleague has played in helping us to become the person we are today.

The self-administered community forms of Waldorf schools exist to help us bring the mutuality of karma to consciousness. This mutuality is wonderfully expressed by a saying of Martin Luther King, Jr.:

All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.⁸

The sixth dimension of the social mission of Waldorf education, that of supporting a new family culture, is apparent to most people involved in Waldorf education. The rich image of child development, the celebration of festivals, the importance of prayer and of rhythm in the life of a child, and the understanding that parents are trustees of the child with the task of helping each child discover who he or she is meant to become are just a few of the ways in which Waldorf schools help to develop a new family culture. A strong parent association can make this a central part of its work, hosting educational events and supporting parents in the often bewildering task of establishing a family.

The last of the seven aspects or dimensions of the social mission of Waldorf education is that of co-creating with the spirit. While not frequently

[I]n exercising the social mandate of Waldorf education we are sowing the seeds for a new society.

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discussed, Waldorf education is permeated with the notion that we are co-creating with spiritual beings. Indeed, for Steiner, the “task of education, understood in a spiritual sense, is to bring the soul-spirit into harmony with the temporal body.”⁹ The challenge to the teacher is to carry on the work of the angels; to harmonize the spirit of the incarnating child with an inherited physical body. Through meditating on an individual child, through working with verses and prayers, through celebrating festivals, and through practicing working with the good being of the school in sacramental conversation, Waldorf school communities are encouraged to practice a dialogue with the spirit. This practice is significant, for I have the experience that spiritual beings are anxiously waiting for the opportunity to enter into conversation with us. Vaclav Havel points to the reality of this co-creating process by calling for an awareness of the “secret order of the cosmos” and the importance of recognizing that we are “beheld from above.”¹⁰

Waldorf schools, in addition to their pedagogical mission of providing a holistic, age-appropriate education, have the social mission of developing new community forms for the future. This mission or task has at least the seven aspects described:

1. Education free of state control; this promotes a free cultural life.
2. Educating children to become healthy, creative adults who are capable of doing the good, of fostering a healthy society.
3. Partnership community forms in which the true interests of teachers, parents, children, and administrative staff are recognized.
4. Communities of mutual interest in which we are invited to become brothers and sisters on the road of mutual development, to grow by working on our issues together.
5. Destiny communities in which we are encouraged to become aware of our mutual karma.
6. Communities supporting the development of a new family culture.
7. Communities in which we are practicing co-creating with the spirit.

These aspects or dimensions of the social mission of Waldorf education describe a far-reaching

and complex task, for in exercising the social mandate of Waldorf education we are sowing the seeds for a new society.

Endnotes

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Christopher Schaefer, PhD, is a lecturer, writer, and advisor to organizations and communities. He was a faculty member at Sunbridge College for many years and the founder and director of the Waldorf School Administration and Community Development Program. He has worked on governance and community development questions in numerous Waldorf schools in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America for more than thirty years. He is the co-author of *Vision in Action: Working with Soul and Spirit in Small Organizations* and author of the forthcoming *Partnerships of Hope: Building Waldorf School Communities*.

Identity and Governance

Jon McAlice

It is a rare Waldorf school that does not struggle with questions of governance at some point in its life. Today many schools find themselves in the midst of such struggles. To some extent these struggles revolve around questions of authority, questions that at their worst spiral downward into struggles for power, or they reflect a loyalty to forms that have been handed down as appropriate for Waldorf schools. In some cases we recognize in these forms the inability to create and sustain viable structures out of a sense for the whole. At the center of all of them lies the question of the identity of Waldorf education.

This question of identity has grown more pressing over the course of the last fifteen years as the number of Waldorf schools has grown and as a new generation of teachers has moved into positions of responsibility within the schools. It has been accompanied by a concerted effort toward institutional stability and assimilation into the greater educational landscape. This push has embraced forms of school development and quality assurance that are ubiquitous in the mainstream, while making efforts to adapt them to the special situation of Waldorf education with its focus on individual learning.

Although it has resulted in stronger institutional forms and a somewhat more professional face for Waldorf education, it has also exacerbated the increasingly existential question: What makes a Waldorf school Waldorf?

The questions of school identity and of school governance are inextricably connected. This is what Rudolf Steiner indicated to the teachers of the first Waldorf school when they gathered in Stuttgart for the brief, intense training in which Waldorf education was first articulated. The passage in which he speaks about the way the school is to be governed is brief and cryptic:

Therefore we will structure the school not governmentally, but administratively, and manage it in a republican manner. In a true teachers' republic, we will not be able to lean back and rest on the directives of a headmaster; we will have to bring to bear what gives each of us the possibility to take full responsibility for what we have to do. Each must be fully responsible. The role of the headmaster will be replaced by this preparatory seminar in which we will work to acquire the spirit that will unite the school. If we work hard, this seminar will engender in us our spirit of unity.¹

A careful reading shows that Steiner speaks here about three aspects that are necessary to the school's success. First he speaks about the *organizational structure*: it is to be administrative, not governmental. Second, he points out that the *governance model* should be republican, not dictatorial. Then he speaks about what it will take to replace the *unifying force* of the headmaster or principal.

Translated into contemporary language, Steiner is speaking about the three basic functions in an organization: leadership (the unifying force), management (governance model), and administration (the way an organization is structured in order to get things done). The latter should not be confused with the various administrative functions in schools. These are present in all three areas. In his

book *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* Steven Covey explores these three functions and their interdependencies. He points out that all three are necessary and proper but need to know their own strengths and weaknesses. This also applies to what Steiner sketched out that evening in Stuttgart.

The art of pedagogical study is as important to the health of a Waldorf school as is the art of teaching.

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The most fragile and exciting part of this sketch is contained in what Steiner says about the collaborative path to finding a unified center. The shared experience of the “preparatory seminar,” if everyone works hard, will serve to “engender in us our spirit of unity.” If we stop to consider that neither management nor administration can function without leadership, Steiner’s vision of teacher-guided education stands or falls on the question of this collaborative learning experience. Without it, the school lacks a common center, and decision-making becomes a matter either of personal interest, with the accompanying tendency toward power struggles, or of institutional expediency based on compromise.

The form of self-governance that we are challenged to develop and sustain hinges on this activity. It manifests itself in pedagogical study, the sharing of teaching questions and insights, and, most especially, in ongoing striving to deepen our ability to recognize the spiritual gifts and questions that we encounter in children. It is a dialogical undertaking, a space in which the teachers enter into a quality of listening and learning with one another similar to that which they hope to achieve in the classroom with the children. It is a space of highly focused activity, of a questioning learning, the space in which Waldorf education is developed out of the encounter with the spiritual reality of specific children, where Waldorf education comes alive and meets the intuitive forces of the future. It is the only space in which the future of education can be conceived.

The art of pedagogical study is as important to the health of a Waldorf school as is the art of teaching. This applies not only to what is often narrowly termed “the pedagogical realm.” The financial health of our schools is wedded directly to the quality of learning that takes place in classrooms, encounters that are enhanced and enlivened through this activity of pedagogical dialogue. The classroom is at once a concert hall and a laboratory, the teacher a participant-observer. Each day, each year should bring insights that allow us to better meet the developmental needs of the children who find their way to us, not mere-

ly cater to the supposed wishes of the parents or position ourselves more successfully in the greater educational landscape. Financial health is linked to the evolving vitality of the educational encounter, the verve of learning. This vitality, this verve is the spiritual expression of pedagogical collaboration.

When we consider the struggles many schools have today with questions of governance, it seems to make sense not to try to find ways to fix the problem—for instance, by importing successful programs or training methods, or hiring consultants to present solutions—but to step back and ask ourselves: Are there time and space in the school’s rhythm that allow this quality of dialogue to unfold? Do we give it the space it deserves? Are the skills necessary for a productive dialogue practiced and cultivated? No self-

governance structure can succeed in a school in which this dialogue is lacking. Conversely, where it lives, governance takes on a fully new quality. It becomes a question of finding forms that allow us to realize the educational impulses that arise out of this intentional, reflected commitment to our children.

The questions of school identity and of school governance are inextricably connected.

Balance and Interdependence

Finding structures that work for any given school is no easy matter. There are no general solutions. Each school presents a unique opportunity to develop self-governing structures that serve pedagogical creativity. Yet, although there are no general solutions, there are basic principles at work in every social organism. An understanding of these is helpful.

Due to the nature of their work, schools are social institutions that work explicitly with the future. Although it is clear that as a teacher we often have to deal with the past, learning takes place when a bit of the future lights up in the present. Unlike factories or stores which deal with the refinement and distribution of materials formed in the past, a school is constantly working with what is in the process of becoming, the manifestation of the evolving individual. It is helpful to keep this in mind: A school is a working community dedicated to the act of becoming.

When one reads the brochures and websites of many Waldorf schools, one finds language that speaks of education as though it were a product, something that one can deliver, with “Waldorf” being one specific form of educational product. Education, especially Waldorf education, is by its nature not a product; it is a hope, a possibility.

It is due to this that we can speak of schools in terms of Steiner’s thoughts on the threefold nature of the body social as belonging to the spiritual-cultural sphere. If schools were marketing an educational product they would have to function within the service sector, which is a form of what Steiner speaks of as the economic sphere. A number of educators have recognized this in recent years and have formed for-profit educational services with an explicitly outcome-based approach and clear learning objectives. These services are run as businesses and, in some cases, have been quite successful. This is clearly not our focus as Waldorf educators. Yet in every school we can find a tension between those aspects of the school’s life that are intertwined with the realities of the economic sphere and those that are most closely engaged in the challenge of finding pedagogical insight.

This should be no surprise. Economic thinking, as it has developed in our time, requires outcome-based approaches in order to assess effectiveness. Such approaches must be replicable. When this form of thinking dominates in a school, we find the tendency toward standardization of both the learning goals and the teaching methods. There is a tendency toward strict forms, repeatable achievements. The outer image presented by the school takes up ever more time and energy. Emphasis is placed on institutional stability, making sure that the school has everything that a school should have; programs mushroom, and the parts start to become more important than the whole.

The tension between institutional stability and pedagogical creativity is an intrinsic reality of every Waldorf school. The challenge of finding

Conflict is inevitable, especially as those who take responsibility for various aspects of a school’s life do so with great energy and dedication.

appropriate forms of governance can be met only if we recognize that both are essential to the long-term existence of a school and if we understand the nature of their relationship in light of the *raison d’être*, the essential goal of the school as an institution. The striving for institutional stability must serve the cultural-spiritual impulse; the latter cannot be channeled into forms that seem to serve the former. This is what lies behind Steiner’s injunction that the vision guiding the

development of a school must arise out of the collaborative dialogue of those most intimately connected to the children themselves, the teachers. Insight into what is needed in education can come only through reflected encounter with learning children.

If these two necessary fields of activity in a school are not balanced by a third, we can readily picture the recurring clashes and compromises that must occur in the life of a school. Conflict is inevitable, especially as those who take responsibility for various aspects of a school’s life do so with great energy and dedication. The third field of activity is one in which these two polarities find a dynamic balance. Those who are familiar with Steiner’s work on questions of social development will recognize that this balancing activity lies between the realms of necessity (economics) and creativity (individual development) and rests on the agreements, on the articulated rights and responsibilities, and on the clearly delineated processes that guide interactions within the community. It is the middle sphere, the “rights” sphere, the sphere in which governance, in its narrow sense, comes to institutional expression.

Over the course of the last few years, I have come to call these three realms of activity *sustainability*, *accountability*, and *creativity*. Any governance structure adopted by a school must devote time, space, and resources to the practice of all three activities and articulate clearly the nature of the relationships among them.

Although a number of schools have worked intensely on developing organizational structures

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that reflect Steiner's work on the threefold nature of social interaction, there is little or no recognition of the fact that each of these three realms of activity needs a different structure in order to be effective.

The archetypal form of a productive pedagogical dialogue is given in what is often termed the teachers' meditation, the words Rudolf Steiner spoke to the teachers of the first Waldorf school at the beginning of their training seminar. In this imaginative picture, he speaks of the relationship between the task of teaching at this point in the evolution of humanity and the work of the spiritual beings that form the third hierarchy: angels, archangels, and archai. In relation to the concepts of strength, courage, and light, he shows how these beings inform our work with the qualities of imagination, inspiration, and intuition. As we work through the images we discover that what is described is a path from the inner soul work of the individual to the illumination of a community of teachers. Each brings his or her experiences into the circle of teachers. Through a consciously cultivated connection with an angel, these experiences are raised out of the realm of the personal into a realm in which the imaginative reality of what lies behind them can begin to speak. In a circle of colleagues, these experiences flow together with what each brings from his or her encounters with children. The archangels bear from one to the other what each has to give, what each has to receive. In this flow of intentional dialogue, the archai bring the light of intuitive understanding.

Whoever has experienced this striving toward insight through dialogue knows that its outcomes cannot be programmed. Insight can speak through the words of each and every member of the circle. When true insight speaks, through whoever is then able to voice it, it unites the circle, and we leave such a meeting feeling enlivened and strengthened for the work ahead.

The structure of creativity is an open one, with space for a variety of exchanges, questions, explorations, and challenges. Intent is focused through specific questions, such as those regard-

ing physiological development in 7th graders, learning to read, or movement and learning. Perhaps the group studies together. How does Steiner approach the question? What are our observations? Then, step by step, always focused on the goal: to better understand the question in order to let this understanding flow into teaching.

This is a quality of work that has nothing directly to do with decision-making processes, yet plays a decisive role in the development of the school. When done effectively, it creates the spiritual and pedagogical background against which decisions can become apparent.

Whereas collaborative creativity requires such an open, dynamic structure, the activities of sustainability and accountability require more closed, regimented structures. Even these differ, however, from each other.

An institution becomes sustainable when all the available resources are stewarded in an ongoing, renewable manner.

Over the course of the last several years, there has been a growing awareness that the long-term institutional health of a school rests on a delicate web of relationships. Some of these exist within the institution (personnel questions and human resources in the corporate sense, for example), others in the encounter with the surrounding community (parent relationships and community visibility, for example), and yet others with the society at large (other Waldorf schools, accrediting bodies, and the economy, for example). Taken together these represent the ecological reality of the school as an evolving social organism. Sustainable resource management or stewardship is only possible out of an understanding of the complexities of these relationships. It takes expertise in a number of different fields, such as finance, law, communication, planning, design, and marketing. Any given question must be examined or explored from each point of view. Instead of an open, dynamic dialogue in which spiritual or pedagogical insight can arise, we need here a structure that ensures that the various aspects of any planned initiative can be examined through the eyes of various areas of expertise.

Education, especially Waldorf education, is by its nature not a product; it is a hope, a possibility.

The third structural gesture is that of accountability. Questions of accountability appear to take up the most time in faculty meetings and decision-making processes. A lack of clear processes and transparent responsibilities in this realm serves to drain a school of its vitality. Immeasurable amounts of time and effort go into finding solutions for problems that arise in this realm. In the process, many of the most sacred aspects of collaborative work are sacrificed—honesty, frankness, consequence, and clarity. What actually is accountability? In the best of worlds, it is what each individual strives for in his or her work. Doing what we say we will do, fulfilling the responsibilities that are attached to our position, acting in a manner that reflects the stated goals of the community, the active striving to right whatever wrongs may have occurred in the course of our work—all are facets of this striving. In creating an accountability structure within a school, we acknowledge consciously the need to help one another live up to these strivings. An accountability structure also ensures that what we have decided to do as a community gets done, that there is the needed follow-through on projects, that planning takes place, and that emergent questions are addressed in the proper manner. This is functionally the most selfless of the three realms of activity, yet, at the same time, it is the most demanding.

The accountability structure stands and mediates between the two poles of sustainability and creativity. It has a balancing function, bringing the activity of each of these realms into a productive relationship with that of the other. Because of this mediating charge, it is a structure that must be mandated from both sides, from those responsible for the long-term institutional existence of the school and from those who are involved in daily encounters with children or young people. (I have been asked a number of times if these two bodies are the Board and the College. Yes, and no. In the organizational structure most common in American Waldorf schools, the Board is legally responsible for the existence of the school as a corporate body. The idea of the College suffers from a lack of clarity about its role, its function, and its spiritual basis. In an ideal situation, one could imagine Board and College taking on these two polar functions. In contemporary practice,

there is much confusion concerning which body is responsible for what. In the confusion, Colleges at times function as spiritually correct over-Boards, and Boards find themselves stepping in to ensure the continuance of Waldorf education.)

The Administrative Fallacy

The last 15 years have seen a mushrooming of administrative positions in schools. Although this is to be expected as institutions pass through their pioneering years and reach a certain level of maturity, it poses a problem. Administration, if not carefully managed, tends either to become bureaucratic or to develop an undue sense of its own importance. Administrative functions are service functions. Good administrative co-workers do not want to be anything else but of service. They are professional service personnel. They justifiably expect guidance, clear work expectations, and oversight, and they take pride in doing their work well. Anyone in an administrative position who does not find fulfillment within these boundaries is in the wrong position. Any school that hires administrative personnel without giving them proper guidance does a grave injustice not only to these persons but to the viability of the school.

The lack of management in the administrative realm is the result of an unfortunate approach to “threefolding” that has been propagated throughout the school movement. Placing administrative responsibility for a school in the hands of administrators is somewhat similar to placing financial responsibility for a banking institution in the hands of its bookkeepers. Administration in a Waldorf school serves the realization of pedagogical vision in a sustainable manner. It can be effective in the fulfillment of this task only if it is managed within the framework of the accountability structure that a school adopts. The approach to administrative structures most prevalent in American Waldorf schools raises administrative functions into the realm of management without ensuring that the personnel are adequately trained in the two realms such a management function entails: sustainable organizational development and pedagogical dialogue. In an attempt to rectify this lack, administrators are given responsibility but not authority, the latter being split between a pedagogical body and a legal-

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financial body, a practice that leads inevitably to conflict due to the polarity that exists between these two areas of activity. This embedded conflict potential has been exacerbated to some extent by consultants who work either pedagogically or organizationally, creating what can only be seen as an artificial fragmentation of an organic whole.

The Double Gesture of a Dynamic Structure

Examined closely, it becomes apparent that two tri-archies are at play in the approach to governance sketched out above. One, which has a more vertical gesture, is functional and is composed of the three qualities: leadership, management, and administration. The other, which ensures that the three intrinsic realms of activity—sustainability, accountability, and creativity—can develop under conditions that are appropriate to each, has a more horizontal gesture. The interweaving of the two creates a dynamic whole. Leadership must be present in all three realms of activity, yet leadership within the realm of pedagogical creativity requires different qualities than does leadership within the realm of sustainability or accountability. The same holds true to a lesser extent for management and administration, with the administrative functions in all three realms varying least.

The recognition of this double gesture raises a number of questions concerning governance in Waldorf schools:

1. Does the school have a practiced commitment to ongoing pedagogical dialogue designed to enhance teachers' understanding of child development and learning?
2. In any given governance model, are the three core realms of activity structured in such a way that the different qualities of necessary social interaction are supported?
3. Is there a clear mandate system to ensure that necessary functions are addressed?
4. Does transparency exist around decision-making processes and the various forms and stages of input and feedback?

5. Is there an explicitly shared will to work on the skills and capacities needed to develop and sustain forms of collegial governance?

The intentional striving to develop collegial forms of governance is perhaps the noblest undertaking of our time. The realization that the skills to meet this challenge arise only through the conscious attempt to craft, practice, and revise such forms opens the door to much needed creativity and the research required to sustain it.

Endnote

1. Steiner, Rudolf. *Allgemeine Menschenkunde*. Rudolf Steiner Verlag, Dornach, 1998, p. 14 (author's translation).

Jon McAlice has worked in Waldorf schools and institutes in Europe and the U.S. for many years focusing primarily on human development and the psychology of learning. For many years a Fellow at the Goetheanum in Switzerland, he headed research projects on curricular development and collegial leadership. At present he lives in Ghent, NY, where he teaches a group of homeschool students while continuing to work with Waldorf schools on questions of teacher development and school governance.

Changing Old Habits: Exploring New Models for Professional Development

*Thomas Patteson and
Laura Birdsall*

Late in 2007, River Valley Waldorf School (RVWS) in Upper Black Eddy, Pennsylvania (about 40 miles north of Philadelphia), commissioned the Triskeles Foundation, a non-profit organization based in nearby Exton, to oversee a new model for in-house professional development for teachers, or “peer coaching,” a process that would develop an alternative to the traditional mentoring process. Shortly after work began in January 2008, it became clear that the plan would necessitate a rededication of meeting time away from business issues and toward pedagogical concerns. This shift would require developing a more efficient governance model. Triskeles’s original charge to help the faculty make in-house teacher development a priority led to the reorganization of River Valley Waldorf School governance.

Understanding Professional Development

Traditionally, professional development in public education involves teachers attending presentations by professionals who are brought in from outside the school. Because the experts who give the lectures often do not spend much time in the classroom themselves or because they are not aware of local issues, their perspectives are not always relevant to teachers’ problems. In this model of professional development, teachers become passive recipients of knowledge instead of active contributors to pedagogical improvement.

A more common model of professional development in Waldorf schools is a visiting “expert” mentor who observes and helps a teacher but then leaves to return to her or his own school. Another typical Waldorf school practice involves individual teachers attending summer courses or workshops.

While both of these have obvious potential to deepen an individual’s pedagogical practices, course and workshop content often does not make its way into the full faculty, so opportunity for school-wide improvement is missed.

Over the past couple of decades, teachers and education professionals have been working to develop alternatives to traditional top-down models of professional development. One of the most promising methods is based on the simple idea that teachers themselves are the best resource for improving classroom teaching. Called “peer coaching” or “in-house professional development,” this approach draws on the wisdom and experience of colleagues to make the educational process more humane and effective.

After being commissioned by RVWS, Mark Birdsall of the Triskeles Foundation recruited Steven Strull, President of the National School Reform Faculty, to introduce the professional development project. Strull, a longtime advocate of peer coaching in education, compares the idea to doctors’ rounds, in which medical professionals work through group discussion to identify and address patients’ problems. According to Strull, traditional education is one of the only fields in

Traditional education is one of the only fields in which professionals are directed by managers and not the other way around.

which professionals are directed by managers and not the other way around. This has a direct and negative impact on the quality of teaching because management decisions are not necessarily informed by first-hand knowledge of what is happening in the classroom.

In Waldorf schools, teachers often highlight a different issue as the primary detriment to on-going professional development: The large amount of time in weekly meetings devoted to managing administrative details leaves little time for discussion of pedagog-

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ical practice. The development of a vibrant professional development community would necessitate the reform of a cumbersome governance model that required hours of meeting time focused on business issues.

Strull led three day-long sessions with the River Valley Waldorf School faculty in the winter and spring of 2008. In these meetings, Strull shared the fundamental ideas behind the National School Reform approach and led the faculty through a number of basic exercises. Laura Birdsell, an experienced teacher who had done consulting work for River Valley in the past, also attended these sessions and continued the project after Strull's workshops ended.

The Protocol

At the heart of the peer coaching model used at those River Valley Waldorf School workshops was the protocol, a written set of step-by-step guidelines that provides a framework for faculty discussion and ensures that it remains focused and effective; or, as Strull defined it at his first meeting with the faculty, "A protocol is a tool to teach yourself the habits you wish you had." The various protocols used by the National School Reform Faculty were designed to anticipate and address issues that all teachers encounter.

Leading the group through the protocol is the responsibility of the facilitator. Ideally someone is selected from among the members, but it can be someone from outside the group. Strull initially served as facilitator, but the teachers quickly grasped how the protocols worked and were soon able to facilitate them on their own.

The structure of the protocol depends on the particular problem or issue that the group has chosen to address. For example, in the "Consultancy" protocol, the presenter shares a dilemma that she has encountered in her work. This would be a complex problem touching on the foundations of teaching practices.

1. The protocol begins with the presenter sharing relevant background information and then posing the dilemma in the form of a question.
2. The group asks clarifying questions of the presenter and then moves to more probing inquiries; these are meant to help the presenter reach a deeper understanding of the dilemma.
3. Now, with the presenter listening and taking notes, the members of the group talk with each other about the dilemma in light of the additional information that emerged through the questioning process.
4. Following the group discussion, the presenter responds briefly to the group's conversation, sharing how the process has altered her perception of the dilemma.
5. Finally, the facilitator leads a short discussion about what just took place and brings the process to a close.

By working through their problems as a group, teachers are not only less isolated, they are able to bring their collective experience and wisdom to bear on the issues they all face.

Another protocol, entitled "Chalk Talk," uses nonverbal communication to get at issues from a different angle. It begins with the facilitator writing a question on the chalkboard. Everyone present is then able to write a response on the board. It could be a sentence or a single word, or even a symbol that indicates a certain relationship between other ideas on the board. All of this takes place in complete silence, and participants are encouraged to take time to con-

tem-plate their reactions to the original prompt. Such a "silent conversation" can be refreshing and enlightening, breaking long-established group patterns of communication.

These professional tools, when effectively used, allow teachers to share the immediate pedagogical issues with which they are wrestling. The protocols also have a democratizing effect within the group in that their structures ensure broad participation; the strong voices of the few do not

tend to dominate within the protocol structure. Because the content of the protocols is supplied by the teachers themselves, this model of professional development can be a meaningful improvement over the traditional mentor/mentee or the “sit and get” visiting lecturer formats. Discussion emerges organically from teachers’ classroom activities. “This work helps you improve on what you’re already doing,” Strull explains. “It creates more meaning in what you’re already involved in.”

Strull’s experience in public schools is that teachers frequently respond to the pressures of their profession by withdrawing into their classrooms and facing their challenges alone. Because of this, one of the foremost goals of peer coaching is to “de-privatize” teaching practice. This experience of isolation can also be true for Waldorf school teachers and may have an even more profound impact on Waldorf students’ experience, given that class teachers stay with their classes for up to eight years.

By working through their problems as a group, teachers are not only less isolated, they are able to bring their collective experience and wisdom to bear on the issues they all face. But, in the end, the use of protocols to guide faculty pedagogical discussions must be evaluated on whether or not they help teachers to continually improve the quality of their work. Ideally, in-house professional development will both increase teacher effectiveness and foster a culture of continual improvement within a school faculty.

The three workshops at RVWS between January and April of 2008 were a learning experience not only for the RV faculty, but also for Strull, who was largely unfamiliar with the philosophy behind Waldorf schools. Fortunately, he found that the Waldorf school emphasis on communication and discourse made the use of these protocols a natural fit, and the River Valley Waldorf School faculty was receptive to them. At the same time, Strull noted that many of the school faculty members were accustomed to a more unstructured, open-ended form of dialogue,

and consequently had to adjust to the more tightly controlled format of the protocol.

Implementation of a Professional Development Plan and Results

Laura Birdsall began working full-time at RVWS in July 2008 and has continued to lead the work introduced by Strull. Under Birdsall’s guidance, the school has dedicated roughly half of the year’s faculty meetings to addressing pedagogical issues using the protocol format. The full faculty chose “assessment” as the broad theme for the year. From September to December 2008, the faculty held seven pedagogical meetings. During this time virtually every teacher brought issues relating to assessment from her or his classroom as material for group work, and most also took turns facilitating the protocols.

An example of one “Tuning Protocol” session may be illustrative. In October 2008 the second grade teacher shared a description of the assignment of her students’ first independently-written stories of the fable “The Lion and The Mouse.” In response to some children stating that they didn’t want to copy a story from the board but wanted to write their own story, the teacher spontaneously divided the class into mixed-ability groups of three, and the retelling of the fable was written in these groups. The teacher’s focusing questions were: “Have I modeled the story retelling and writing process enough for my students to be successful?” and “What do my colleagues think of this assignment and the students’

results?” The protocol began with a fifteen-minute presentation by the class teacher of the step-by-step process the students were led through as they wrote their stories. This was followed by approximately five minutes of clarifying questions, such as: “What were your goals? Why did you put them in groups? While they were in groups, were they able to ask how to spell words? Did any group have the sequence of events wrong?” Next, for a full fifteen minutes and with the presenter silently observing from the sidelines, colleagues examined the student work in light of

Many teaching methods or situations encountered are universal to teaching in a classroom. I gained insight from the experiences of other teachers.

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the initial focusing questions; while examining the student work, colleagues discussed what they saw and then silently reflected and wrote notes in preparation for the warm and cool feedback period. Warm feedback included the following:

- “What beautiful little books they created!”
- “They must be very proud of their work.”
- “It was courageous to try something new and let go of the normal structure.”
- “This process and the finished book were a great opportunity to assess language arts development.”
- “You now know what they are capable of, and this will affect future assignments.”

Cool feedback included:

- “Did the ones who struggled lose confidence?”
- “Without preplanning, did you miss some important assessment opportunities, such as observing pencil grip and letter formation?”
- “I am wondering/concerned that the more advanced students took over, leaving the less mature ones feeling left out.”
- “Are you clear about each child’s contribution?”

In the end, the class teacher reflected on the feedback that seemed particularly important and the group debriefed on the process.

Questionnaire Responses

In January 2008, fourteen RVWS teachers who were involved from the outset were asked to respond to a questionnaire designed to gauge the effectiveness of the project up to that point. As shown in the charts below, the results were overwhelmingly positive. The teachers were given four questions that required a graded response from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The majority of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with the claims stated in each of the questions. In total, there were only three neutral and no negative responses.

Teachers’ written responses to the questions also demonstrate a widespread affirmation of the project’s effectiveness and a desire to see it continue. Asked to list the most positive aspect of the work, one teacher wrote, “Our faculty feels like a

stronger unit since we began this work. We allow ourselves to become vulnerable and support our colleagues when they open up about challenges they are experiencing.” Many teachers emphasized how the sessions made clear the commonality of their problems: According to one, working through the protocols “helped me not feel so isolated and bear my questions and doubts alone.” Another confirmed the potential for learning from one’s peers, stating, “Many teaching methods or situations encountered are universal to teaching in a classroom. I gained insight from the experiences of other teachers.”

One of the survey questions addressed the matter of devoting faculty meeting time to these in-house professional development protocols. The faculty felt that their meetings had become too exclusively focused on administrative and business matters, and that the school was departing from Rudolf Steiner’s vision of a “college of teachers.” Using protocol work to reorient faculty meetings around pedagogical issues was thus seen as a crucial step toward real reform of school operations.

As the chart shows, the prompt related to use of faculty time together elicited the most enthusiastically positive response from the faculty. One wrote, “We are able to accomplish so much more and get along much better when we are not hashing it out over administrative issues! Our time together is much more productive.” Another said, “It feels so healthy to talk about why we are truly here and share thoughts around teaching practices. The business meetings had taken us away from teaching and created tensions between us. [The new approach] has opened everyone up and made the faculty more united.” At the same time, a number of teachers expressed concern that the faculty not neglect administrative issues altogether. The ideal balance between administrative and pedagogical affairs in faculty meetings will have to be sought through continuous experimentation.

Changes in Governance

The freeing-up of faculty meeting time for pedagogical work was accomplished at River Valley Waldorf School by a major change to the governance of the school. The faculty and board of the school, working with the Triskeles Foundation, implemented a Leadership Team of four members: two teachers, the administrator, and a board member. This group was given the

authority to make all decisions for the faculty, through collaboration and consultation with their peers as appropriate. The exact composition and structure of the Leadership Team is being evaluated through the 2008–09 school year, and will be finalized for the 2009–10 year.

It is interesting that a similar reorientation of faculty meeting time is underway at the Lake Champlain Waldorf School in Vermont. As at River Valley, the teachers felt that administrative work had come to overshadow pedagogical concerns in the faculty's weekly meetings. In order to address this imbalance, the school instituted a clearer division of labor between pedagogical and administrative work. Michele Starr, a class teacher and chair of the College of Teachers at LCWS, explains: "We made a conscious decision to separate the administrative and pedagogical realms in order to bring the College of Teachers into line with Rudolf Steiner's vision of the research academy." Jon McAlice, a Waldorf educational consultant, facilitated this change (see McAlice, Identity and Governance, in this issue). Day-to-day decision-making is now the responsibility of the Governance Council, while the College of Teachers focuses on questions of pedagogy and curriculum. The purpose of the College is to distill the collective experience of the school's teachers into recommendations concerning pedagogical policy, which are then submitted to the Governance Council for review and implementation. Now in its second year, this format has allowed the school to pinpoint and address areas of concern for the faculty. For example, the College recently decided to devote special attention to seventh to tenth grade students in order to better understand these students' situation from the standpoint of human development.

Conclusion

At River Valley, the faculty is determined to see that this new focus on pedagogy takes root in the day-to-day life of the school. "What happens between meetings? Do teachers continue sharing? Or are the pedagogical meetings 'islands' in a busy month? With far less time spent on business, are we teachers still able to address those non-pedagogical issues that affect our classrooms?" These questions touch the very heart of the project. As important as the group sessions are, the ultimate test of the endeavor is whether or not a

culture of communication and mutual support continues to strengthen at River Valley, enabling the faculty to continually grow and improve the quality of their teaching. But, for the time being, RVWS teachers have found that the open communication fostered by the Waldorf school model has become more focused and productive as a result of using protocols. In short, the implementation of "in-house professional development" or "peer coaching" has helped them realize one of the core values of Waldorf education: on-going, structured collegial dialogue as a means of creating a more fruitful and humane environment for students and teachers alike.

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For more information:

National School Reform Faculty:

www.nsrffharmony.org

River Valley Waldorf School:

www.rivervalleyschool.org

Triskeles Foundation:

www.triskeles.org

Now if you study [the developing human being] as we have done, you experience it consciously to start with, but if you meditate upon it afterward, an inner process of digestion goes on in your soul and spirit, and that is what makes you an educator and teacher. A healthy metabolic process makes an active human being out of you, and in the same way this meditative digestion of a true knowledge of the human being makes you an educator. You simply face the children as their teacher in an entirely different way if you have experienced what results from a genuine, spiritual-scientific knowledge of the human being. What makes us into educators actually grows out of the meditative work of acquiring such knowledge. Such observations... if we keep returning to them if only for five minutes a day, will bring our inner soul life into movement. We shall produce so many thoughts and feelings that they will just pour out of us. Meditate in the evening upon such knowledge of the human being and in the morning you will know in a flash... what to do in every case.

— Rudolf Steiner
Balance in Teaching

Developing Coherence: Meditative Practice in Waldorf School Colleges of Teachers

Kevin Avison

Rudolf Steiner refers to his practical suggestions in a wide variety of fields as “indications” (*Zeichen*: literally, “signs”). Understanding what is meant by an indication may help to explain some of the tangling to which Waldorf school collegiality is prone. What does it mean that Steiner describes his propositions for the conduct of the first school as indications? What are the implications of indications?

In broad terms, Steiner’s lectures and books are primarily concerned with providing readers with the big picture, the universal dimensions of a question. A lecture cycle such as *Education as a Social Problem*,¹ for example, has relatively little to say about the specifics of national or international politics of the time. Steiner presents an overview of global or cosmic trends. In particular, he presents a threefold description of (in)human potential: the animalization of the body, the “vegetabilization” of the soul, and the mechanization of the spirit, which he associates, in turn, with the “East,” “Central Europe,” and the “West.” Such characterizations are powerful, but they are “meta-statements,” and are not directly applicable in, say, schools. To put it crudely, I do not look at my American colleagues and say, “Ah, here are mechanizing spirits,” nor do I conclude that my German friends have vegetable souls, or my Asian ones animalized bodies. As a pragmatic Anglo-Saxon-Celt, there would be little purpose in my starting a campaign to halt the mechanization of the spirit; I may, however, meditate on what this means and attempt to bring active spirit into my relationship with material things.

In addition to statements of this sort, we find, scattered through Steiner’s lectures and in sources such as the records of the teachers’ conferences of the first Waldorf school, his indications, practical propositions, hints, and suggestions. These indications range from relatively detailed solutions and problems to apparently instantaneous inspirations in the moment. Waldorf educators, however, rarely use the concept of indication in such a

nuanced way, nor do they always heed the warning implied by the concept of indication. Steiner says, in effect, “As I see it, the nature of the problem is such and such, and in the current circumstances you might try the following starting points.” The inference is that teachers should try these out, contemplate their results, and develop their practice accordingly. This means that Steiner frequently gives detailed exposition at higher or contextual levels of a question and sample propositions for practical application.² Indications remain fragmentary until united with relevant concepts through meditative activity.

Steiner exercised spiritual tact and moral technique in communicating his research and insights. He emphasized that the modern spiritual investigator has to be particularly wary of acting in a way that would reduce the freedom of those who follow them. In particular, the challenge for Waldorf school teachers is the collegial co-creation of forms and procedures that are reliable in the present but capable of evolution, both dynamic and sustainable.

The following brief quotations are examples of Steiner’s indications for school administration, and they inform the discussion that follows:

The real purpose of the college is to study human development so that a real understanding of human nature is continually flowing through the school.³

These meetings are really the living “High School”...a permanent training academy, as it were.⁴

The soul of all the instruction and education in the Waldorf School is the college meeting.⁵

It is really true that the spiritual forces of the college are carried by the sharing of inner scientific experience...⁶

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Coherence

Before developing these ideas further, however, I wish to examine the question of coherence. In the sense in which I am using the word here, a coherent organization is one that closely resembles the functioning of a healthy living organism. The activity of each organ or process is balanced by another. In digestion, for example, stomach acid, necessary for the breakdown of food, has to be neutralized by alkaline bile, which also furthers the digestive process. Too much acidity or alkalinity can be detrimental to the system they serve. Healthy processes tend toward disease if they are not balanced by others. The integrity of life at each level thus consists of an interior ecology that is related both directly and more subtly to the ecology in which the organism is embedded. A rhythmic interplay of interdependent processes takes place within the physiology and environment of an organism. Similarly, in an organization, coherence is an equivalent condition of balancing counteractive processes within an active constitution. Initiative calls for accountability; freedom of action is offset by duty to the whole; development of self is contingent on professional responsibility; and so on.⁷

A coherent organization must integrate diverse perspectives if it is to succeed, just as, by analogy, flour, sugar, eggs, and so on, make sponge cake. With heat, the resulting cake transcends and forms a greater whole than the individual ingredients. In a social cake, however, the ingredients, while integrated, are not entirely subsumed. They serve as viewpoints, or sensory organs, for the inner and outer status of the organization.

Coherence is important here for two reasons. First, while Steiner's presentation of the task of a Waldorf school is coherent on the meta-level, his indications for the practical tasks of educating and running a school leave it to the creativity and endeavour of each generation and each teacher to

develop practical coherence for their work. Second, meditation and contemplative inquiry contribute to and increase personal and social coherence.

In *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Steiner describes the importance of logic for teachers:

Where thinking-cognition is concerned, humanity's challenge is to infuse this with logic. . . . As teachers you need to know about logic, even if you must keep it in the background in your interaction with the children. . . . It must be brought to the children only through your whole attitude. For as teachers you will have to be masters of logic.⁸

Where coherent integration is lacking, dissonance occurs; the school is divided. As a result, the values and intentions of the curriculum are overshadowed by a "curriculum" of implicit assumptions and relationships that communicate lessons contrary to those intended.

We may call coherence a contextual logic, a thinking-feeling, or a heart-mind communion that informs the conduct of education. This is important in a classroom, and it may be even more important in the organization of a school. Where coherent integration is lacking, dissonance occurs; the school is divided. As a result, the values and intentions of the curriculum are overshadowed by a "curriculum" of implicit assumptions and relationships that communicate lessons contrary to those intended.

Steiner saw the teachers' meeting as the core of the school—I would say, the source of its coherence—and he proposed a form of collegial action research as a continuation for the initial courses he gave before the Waldorf School opened its doors:

Instead of a school director or head teacher we have teachers' meetings in which there is common study and common striving toward further progress. There is therefore a spirit, a concrete spirit, living among the teachers, which works freely, which is not tyrannical, which does not issue statements, rules or programs,

but has the will continually to progress, continually to make better and better arrangements, in meeting the teaching requirements.⁹

Members of the staff are responsible for reflecting meditatively on their work, while continual “progress” occurs if the staff collectively supports and is hospitable to the activity of each individual.

In my view, if there is a rationale for a college with a task lying beyond that of a general (or departmental) teachers’ meeting, this task lies in a commitment to promote and sustain the inner orientation of the school. We may call this task “pedagogical governance.” The work of such a college is thus primarily meditative, and a criterion for membership is the commitment of each individual to, we might say, professional meditative activity.

The outer role of such a college may consist of regular review and support of professional development, including the induction of new members of staff, peer mentoring, and collegial appraisal—that is, to give concrete expression to “the will continually to progress, continually to make better and better arrangements, in meeting the teaching requirements.” There is no requirement that such a college be separate from a general teachers’ meeting—it depends on the temper and constitution of the school.

Accordingly, membership in the college may involve a statement of intent predicated upon the “pedagogical imagination” given by Steiner at the foundation of the first Waldorf School. Such a statement may take a form similar to the following:

I wish to join with you in contemplative inquiry, in the service of the good spirit of our time. I do so with good intent and striving toward the ideals and principles of Waldorf education to the best of my ability. My intent is to set aside, in freedom, personal ambition, and to act, to speak, and to conscientiously reflect on our collective work for the betterment of the young people in this school and in the wider world.¹⁰

[T]he activity of contemplative inquiry is key in keeping in view the aspirations of a Waldorf school.

How to Know Higher Worlds and Steiner’s other work on the subject demonstrate clearly that meditative development calls for and stimulates increased personal coherence.¹¹ Certain cardinal virtues or qualities of mind, for example, are attendant on inner work:

- Enhanced qualities of attention, equanimity, and intention, and with them, internal virtues or conditions, such as mental and physical health, responsibility, gratitude, and patience;
- Virtues, such as reverence for the world; and
- Enhanced capacities for perception, including awareness of and receptivity to spiritual realities.

Regardless of college constitution or function, however, the activity of contemplative inquiry is key in keeping in view the aspirations of a Waldorf school. Members will treat questions related to the core purpose of the school as a process of contemplatively informed action research.

A College at Work

A mundane example will highlight the practicality of the meditative engagement of a college of teachers. Examples of this sort may challenge coherent action. They may attract fly-swarms of self-interest. Yet the ability of a school body to work through complex, if matter-of-fact, issues says a great deal about its ability to make better arrangements for teaching and learning.

A number of teachers in a small Waldorf school observed that the children in their classes tended to appear pale and tired at the end of some school days and less so on others. Other staff members reported an element of fractiousness, particularly when their classes had afternoon language lessons. The College discussed this and decided to study the question.

Two members of staff, seen as among the most neutral, one having a mainly administrative role in the school, were appointed to facilitate the process. At an open, organized meeting, teachers shared observations. Language teachers were consulted and student work from language lessons

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held in the morning was compared with work completed during the afternoon. One member of staff prepared a summary of this research, and another offered research on the theme of diurnal rhythms, drawing from Steiner's suggestions and current research on metabolic rates in young people at different times of day. Another member of staff compiled and conducted a survey of staff and older pupils. Much work took place in other school meetings, including the general staff meeting and meetings with parents.

As a result of this work the question was asked: "Should we change the timetable [schedule] to take more account of daily rhythms?" Members of the College resolved to contemplate the question and return to it at the next weekly meeting. Following further communication, the decision was made to find a way to move language lessons and certain other topics out of the afternoons so far as possible, replacing these with lessons involving crafts, artistic practice, games, and other more active lessons. A member of the school's personnel team was delegated to discuss the matter with part-time teachers and others who would be affected by the change. The finance team was asked to assess financial implications of this decision. The colleague responsible for this was asked to draft a timetable implementing the change.

The outcome was a decision to make a small modification during the summer term for the younger classes, where concern was greatest, with a more complete change to be implemented at the start of the new school year. Following implementation, the new arrangements were reviewed at mid-term. This review included a study of the effectiveness of academic lessons in the subsequent school year.

As result, the new timetable was confirmed and further alterations proposed, including a proposal to establish a "multi-crafts afternoon" combining the four older classes in ways that provided a greater range of activities—drawing in skilled members of the wider school community—and made more efficient use of teaching strengths.

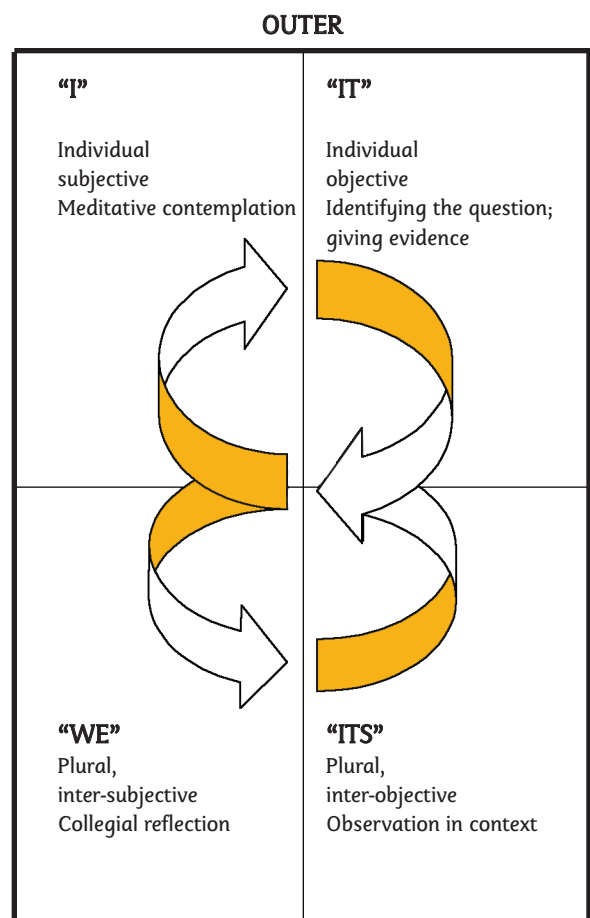
Here are the components of this example:

- A question distilled through contemplative inquiry
- Observation or evidence-gathering, including appropriate formality and record-keeping
- Collegial reflection without any attempt to connect these or arrive at concepts. This

involves the exercise of moral tact as colleagues invite one another to listen for implicit or explicit assumptions. Where these enter the conversation, an attempt is made to reverse the flow into the sphere of observation. In order to do this, specific training may be helpful. Torin Finser, for example, describes a training exercise of this sort, used in his Leadership Training Program, in *School Renewal*.¹²

- Collegial reflection, now with the aim of recognizing inter-connected images or events
- Meditation or reflection on these interconnected pictures
- Decision
- Implementation
- Review
- Adjustment

The process prior to decision begins and ends with meditation, and may therefore be recursive, a lemniscate. The results of one pass through the process may become the beginning of a new process. In schematic form, this part of the process may be represented like this:¹³



Conclusion

Steiner and Waldorf schools seek practical ways to place reflective and meditative work at the heart of pedagogical governance and to do this through spiritual-scientific action research. Its systematic and effective practice provides a model for building an associative and collegial foundation for coherent school function. Finally, this model provides a heart-centered process capable of enabling effective self-evaluation, peer-appraisal, and school development.

Footnotes

1. Steiner, Rudolf. *Education as a Social Problem*, Anthroposophic Press, NY, 1969.
2. *The Curative Education Course* provides an interesting complement to this. As in many of the “Conference” discussions, we find Steiner fully engaged in finding solutions to practical problems in a collegial way. These help to highlight the particular nature of the indications that form such a large part of the background from which Waldorf educators work.
3. Steiner, Rudolf. *Kingdom of Childhood*, Anthroposophic Press, 1993. Editor’s note: UK English translations use “collegiate” for Collegium in the original, while US English translations use “college.” The word Collegium is Latin, not German, and, as Nancy Parsons Whittaker and Robert Lathe have pointed out, refers to the teaching faculty of a school, not to an inner circle.
4. Steiner, Rudolf. *A Modern Art of Education*, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1995, p. 207. Note that a high school or Hochschule in Germany was a post-secondary technical or professional college; that is, we could say that Steiner wanted faculty meetings to be, literally, a teachers’ college.
5. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Child’s Changing Consciousness*, Anthroposophic Press, 1996, p. 178.
6. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Conferences*, vol. 2, SWSF Publications, 1989, p. 38.
7. A corresponding argument to this is advanced from the perspective of cultural theory in Thompson, Michael. *Organising and Disorganising*, Triarchy Press, Axminster, 2008.
8. Steiner, Rudolf. *Study of Man*, lecture VIII, RSP, London, 1966, p. 126. Author’s rendering.
9. Steiner, Rudolf. *Human Values in Education*. RSP, 1971, p. 192.
10. A statement similar to this one was adopted by one of the newer UK schools for the foundation of its Collegiate (college of teachers). A staff member stepping down from the Collegiate or leaving the school was given the following in recognition of this: “I relinquish in freedom, the undertaking I made upon joining this community, absolving myself of all obligations and responsibilities pertaining to the Collegiate of School.”
11. See *The Heart Math Institute*: <http://www.heart-math.com>.
12. Finser, Torin. *School Renewal*, Anthroposophic Press, Great Barrington, MA, 2001, pp. 155–156. The exercise involves setting out questions around a topic, then stopping to examine the assumptions at work in those questions before proceeding to “solutions,” advocacy, or advice.
13. This semiotic rectangle is similar to those used, for example, by Ken Wilbur and Jürgen Habermas—from whose work Wilber partly derives his work. Wilber and Habermas, however, emphasize the distinct qualities of each quadrant. Habermas’s three validity claims, which do not distinguish the singular and plural qualities of the “outer,” right-hand half of the quadrant, is thus a triad: truth (objects), truthfulness or sincerity (subjects) and rightness or justice (intersubjectivity); Wilber’s rectangle (See Wilber, Ken. *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Shambhala, Boston and London, 2000) draws the distinction of singular and plural objective realms. While Habermas’s concern is primarily sociological or socio-philosophical, Wilber’s fourfold perspective provides a psycho-spiritual basis for his developmental “integral philosophy.” (See Wilber, Ken. *Integral Psychology*, Shambhala, Boston and London, 2000.)

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The energy for internal school renewal comes from the discrepancy that members of the school community feel between where they are and where they would like their school to be. Consensus on the school's mission, therefore, is critical to the long-term success of the process.

– Larry Lezotte
Seven Correlates of Effective Schools

Teachers' Self Development as a Mirror of Children's Incarnation¹

Renate Long-Breipohl

Part II

In part one (*Research Bulletin XIV*, 1, Spring 2009), I looked at four signs of the zodiac that are related to the process of human incarnation, and I will now look at four signs that Rudolf Steiner relates to will activity of human beings.² When we look at our life of will, our earthly endeavors, we may turn to the images contained in the signs of Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces.³

In order to approach our life of will in respect to self-education, we may remind ourselves that Steiner speaks of living with an openness to what life brings and with a gesture of gratitude and acceptance toward destiny. This openness is present in young children when they play freely, without preconception or plan. The process is important, not the outcome. Children surrender to the flow of play. In the same way, we adults may stand in the stream of life, open to what approaches us.

Because we live in a time that has a tendency to one-sidedness, to regulation and restriction, we may be tempted to educate according to a fixed plan rather than drawing upon life and its activities. We may divide education into specialized areas, or we may become fettered by guidelines, government regulations, and accreditation requirements. In a kindergarten, a teacher may prefer certain kinds of play and restrict others, regulating what should not be regulated. Children's play may appear unsettled to us but it may not be so in the children's own experience. We may be imprisoned by our own good intentions even in such areas as guiding children's play, and we may reflect on our work frequently, alone or with colleagues, to assist us in overcoming our prejudices in this area.

Steiner often describes the one-sidedness of materialistic thought and a conventionally scien-

tific approach to understanding human beings. As a result of the restrictions and limits of these points of view, children may sense something like a feeling of deprivation. The truly human may appear inaccessible, which in turn may lead to melancholy.⁴ Children then come to school as if they are carrying a heavy load, joyless, burdened, and tired.

One of the remedies for this melancholy is an experience of adults at work. If we welcome children into the stream of our activities and if we are present in what we do, then the children may experience us as complete human beings. They will find what they are looking for. Through our activity, we

also build up what we may call a field of warmth in which children may rest and in which they may experience closeness to another human soul. Work creates a warm, active closeness, without burdening the children prematurely with emotional sentiment.

Steiner speaks about what will happen if we take children into our sphere of will activity:

But this living interest, devotion, and sympathy will be there if at the right age we permeate all branches of our teaching and education with the principle of imitation.... What is lacking is the power to enter into the spirit of nature, the spirit of the cosmos, into the universe as a mighty whole. This power must be regained.⁵

Signs of Will

We return now to the image of the zodiac and the four "will signs" of Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. Interestingly, Steiner claims that these signs do not directly influence our

**Deep within all children
... is a great longing to
experience truth in the
deeds and words of
those around them.**

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deeds. According to Steiner, we may picture human beings standing on the earth with the zodiac signs from Aries to Scorpio in a semicircular arch above us. But the signs from Sagittarius to Pisces have to be envisaged as if below our feet, going through the earth to the other side of it. The earth sphere thus separates the human being from these zodiac signs. Their influence is indirect and weaker than the influence of other signs, and this weakness leaves us free for activity of will. Through the willed activity of our limbs we may create something new; in the activity of our heads, by contrast, in thinking, cosmic influences are active.⁶

Steiner describes the qualities of Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces as related to archetypal forms of human activity. Often, however, we no longer directly see or participate in these archetypal forms. We turn to older civilizations in order to discover these activities: hunting, animal breeding, tilling the soil, trading and traveling.

To the stars down there on the opposite side, which are covered by the earth, human beings owe their existence as hunters (Archer), animal breeders (Goat), tillers of the soil walking across the field carrying urns to water the fields (Water Carrier); and we are traders thanks to the part of the starry heavens that takes us across the seas—in far distant times boats were built to look similar to fish, and two ships side by side that have sailed the seas in pursuit of trade are the symbol for trade. ...In the past, people really had a feeling for the way the human being is connected with the universe and the earth.⁷

Over time, we have evolved many more occupations than these, but it is not our task to relate what we do now as adults directly with these archetypal endeavors. Steiner says that in moving into the age of the fishes (Pisces), the age in which modern industrialized civilization has developed, the “four honest occupations” have been somewhat modified. Children’s consciousness does not

yet correspond to our modern consciousness, however, so it seems appropriate to turn to these archetypal activities in kindergarten work.

Sagittarius: The Archer, the Hunter

The image of Sagittarius consists of a human head and torso melded with the body of an animal, a horse. We know this figure as the centaur, a being half man, half animal. The centaur reminds us of the lower nature of a human being, as yet untransformed.

The activity of Sagittarius, according to Steiner and to the myriad images in art and literature, is hunting. I would like to add “gathering” as well, as it may be seen as a hunting of plants.

Hunting and gathering are early occupations, but they live on to this day. A business person, for example, is a hunter and gatherer who seeks out good markets, gathers, and resells. Even those of us who are not business persons may enjoy “bargain hunting.”

As teachers and caregivers we may demonstrate hunting and gathering during the walks and outings on which we take children. We may demonstrate genuine interest in our surroundings, gratitude for what we find, and joy in the beauty and richness of the world. We may also cultivate gathering in harvesting fruits and vegetables.

Gathering what the earth gives us and finding or hunting for treasures are important activities for young children. We may take children to places where valuable things can be found in nature. But we also see children gathering toys and piling them up in a classroom. Hunting and gathering are part of children’s archetypal play. Some children hunt for treasures, some for specific toys, and some may even snatch what others have. This last is an unrefined hunting gesture.

A hunter and gatherer may be tempted by his lower instincts, acting for his own advantage. The activity of hunting, however, may also be honest and it may become ennobled. The virtue related to Sagittarius, in fact, is truthfulness—truthfulness in conducting business, for example, and truthfulness in words, thoughts, and deeds. Children may cheat and lie. Deep within all children, however, is a great longing to experience truth in the deeds and words of those around

A gardener knows the value of waiting and the danger of premature action.

them. Children look for truthfulness in our actions, for truthfulness in the materials we offer them, and for truthfulness in how we think and speak. As adults we may examine unrefined aspects of our souls and learn to better know ourselves. Truthfulness, in this respect, means that we do not delude ourselves as to the quality of our work, as to who we are, or as to our progress in spiritual learning.⁸

Capricorn: The Goat-Fish

The image of Capricorn is the goat-fish. It has the head and torso of a goat and the tail of a fish. Capricorn is an expression of the activity of animal breeding, which followed, historically, the stage of hunting and gathering.⁹ The goat-fish looks like a mis-bred creature; its appearance may make us uncomfortable. It reminds us of the difficulties of animal breeding, and, especially today, of genetic engineering and cloning. We take great risks in breeding plants and animals. We change nature on a deep level and, therefore, require a highly developed sense of responsibility and courage to enter these unknown realms. This was as true in the past as it is in the present; although life in the past was simpler, the immediate consequences of breeding could include famine and disease.

A direct and positive aspect of breeding is that we have to provide care for what we have bred. Animal breeding as an archetypal activity serves the purpose of developing human qualities of caring, looking after one another, providing comfort, and nursing those who are sick. It embraces the entire range of care-giving and social professions. This is an archetypal human gesture, and it is intrinsically connected with the breeding of animals. We could say that the caring professions are derived from the work of animal breeders. Education belongs here, clearly. Breeding can be, then, for good or ill. We may, for example, try to model children to suit our own intentions, or we may facilitate children's development without trying to determine the outcome in advance.

Some children, at a young age, engage in acts of caring and, also, act out caring for others in their play. Such role-play as mother and child, or doctor or nurse and patient, demonstrates an archetypal quality. Maria Luisa Nüesch describes such play and shows how she models caring for others by participating with her students:

Nine children play together, the teacher is sitting close by, sewing.

Three girls live in a house made from cloths. One is cooking and distributes "coffee and soup." One is shopping. This girl buys so many things that the house becomes very full and at last there is no room left "to be" in the house. This girl is ceaselessly busy. She has two hunting dogs, two boys who wanted to play as well, but did not dare to offer themselves as father or children. These dogs soon became ill, one of them seriously. One dog's paws were limp; the other dog had a broken leg. The owner remained detached in the face of this suffering, still shopping busily. "You can look after them," she said.

Then the teacher started to nurse the sick animals, put cream on their limbs and bandages. More and more animals came, all very ill. Some died and the teacher covered them with a cloth. But luckily new puppies came forth from under the cloths. The dog owner now quickly became a little kitten herself, newly born. The kitten was blind and roamed about for a long time. Then the blind kitten came very close to the teacher who had resumed the sewing. The kitten wanted to sleep very close by. The kitten slept very restlessly and needed to be caressed and calmed down again and again.¹⁰

We may ask whether or not it is appropriate for a teacher to become so involved in children's play. In this example, the children expressed their need for special loving attention and care through their play, and Nüesch sensed that behind a rough outer façade was a needy child. Individual moral intuition guides such actions and determines the way we act for the sake of a child or a group of children.

The virtue related to the sign of Capricorn is courage, not necessarily in the sense of bravery or heroism, but in the sense of accepting mistakes, accepting the truth even if it hurts, enduring blows of destiny, and never giving up. Courage is the determination not to go backward or "drop out," but to remain engaged even when a situation is difficult. This courage to go forward and learn from mistakes is important for a teacher because children may, at times, stagnate in their

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development or even appear to regress.

Kindergarten offers teachers many opportunities to practice courage. Often the nearly overwhelming amount of selflessness required to educate young children makes it hard to keep going. This is true of all caring professions. The inner strength to keep going is the practice of the virtue of courage.

Aquarius: The Water Carrier

In respect to the image and activity of Aquarius, Steiner says:

Agriculture is represented by the Water Carrier. There is a certain spiritual justification for thinking in terms of water, but what matters is the way he walks across the field. He holds an urn in each hand and pours water from these. This is the gardener and the tiller of the soil.¹¹

Cultivating the land involves activity of will. In our time we have rediscovered the importance of caring for the land. Today's environmental movement reminds us of our responsibility for the well-being of the earth. The image of the water carrier may also induce us to think about nurturing the etheric forces of human beings and of nature. In early childhood, this work often takes the form of a teacher gardening at playtime, watering plants, digging soil, weeding, and planting, often with the help of some children.

I remember a strongly built boy in my kindergarten whose grandfather ran a nursery. During a home visit, this child took me into the nursery and proudly and precisely explained the working of the watering system. He was totally at home there and his grandfather had been the model of the gardener for him. This had gone deeply into the child's body. When we watered plants in the kindergarten, he was immediately present. Watering was not a chore for him; it was "in his blood," a natural activity. In other activities and in his conduct, this boy was phlegmatic, and it was otherwise difficult to motivate him to do any-

Children need to experience adults who can open their souls widely and embrace the children, their parents, and the school community.

thing that demanded effort. Through this boy, I learned how deeply the work of an adult sinks into the unconscious, bodily responses of a child and how this "slipping into" the adult through imitation brings about an intense activity of will, one that we may not reach through mere instruction.

The virtue of Aquarius is the virtue of silence and discretion, the virtue of pausing, observing, waiting, and then judging wisely. From silence, in discernment, correct decisions may be found.¹² A gardener knows the value of waiting and the danger of premature action. By waiting, he improves his ability to make the right judgments regarding the plants in his care. He ensures fertile soil, a good yield, and seeds for the following seasons.

Kindergarten teachers and caregivers are well advised to do the same, not to step in too quickly to resolve conflict, not to react too quickly when a child has done something wrong. We may step back for a brief moment of inner silence and then act when our immediate emotional reactions will not blur recognition of what has happened and what is needed. We learn to wait so that we do not fall into superficial educational activism.

The practice of silence and discernment may develop into the practice of meditation. Looking quietly at a leaf becomes part of an understanding of all that is behind the happenings in nature. If we are silent and discerning, we will be better equipped to calm a noisy, restless group of children. To become still in the middle of chaos is a challenge for an adult. When we can do this, children can connect with us more easily because they sense our effort to understand.

Pisces: The Fishes

Steiner explains the sign of the fishes as the image of two boats sailing together across the sea. This expansive picture conveys a mood of opening our soul to the world, embracing not only what is nearby but also what is far away.

The activity of Pisces is trading: “We are traders thanks to the part of the starry heavens that takes us across the seas.”¹³ Traders are travelers, they roam the world. They are also adventurers and risk takers. Risks are always present when we widen our field of activity. In Pisces it is not so much trading that concerns us, but traveling, widening our consciousness. Young people travel a lot these days. We live, after all, in the age of Pisces.

Children may be drawn to traveling in their play: creating means of transportation and traveling in various kinds of vehicles, including boats, trains, airplanes, rockets, trucks, cranes, and front end loaders. Here is an example from an early childhood center in Bangkok:

A group of six boys had turned a table upside down, attached cords to it, and pulled the table across the floor as a carriage. The work was hard. The tabletop dragged on the floor and the carriage was heavy with children sitting in it. The boys managed to get a blanket underneath it so the carriage was easier to pull. After many rides, the carriage became a car, pushed along by one child. A child playing a parking lot guard with a whistle stopped the car and waved it professionally into a parking slot. The child imitated this perfectly.

In another part of the room an upside-down table became a moving truck and was loaded with big furniture—three freestanding shelves used to hold toys were loaded onto it, as were other, smaller things. The load was secured with lots of ropes. Next to the truck, three girls set up a food shop. The truck started moving, endangering the shop, so the shopkeepers packed up quickly and moved to a big table farther away. The shop was re-established on top of the table, but soon moved under the table, where it stayed until the end of playtime. The children did not complain of having been disturbed in their play by the moving truck.

The virtue related to Pisces is magnanimity. Steiner describes magnanimity as moving beyond oneself and out into the world. It includes going beyond our personal wishes, feelings, and attachments. Children need to experience adults who can open their souls widely and embrace the children, their parents, and the school community. Steiner suggested that we read the news and hold events inwardly, even if this is difficult and painful. The practice of magnanimity, of a wide-open heart, increases our ability to love. Steiner speaks, too,

about not passing by our fellow human beings without bothering to know them.¹⁴ Love cannot be demanded or forced. It has to grow and be given freely. But magnanimity and developing interest in other human beings can be practiced for the sake of our fellows.

Conclusion

This completes the picture of the four spiritual virtues of our will: truthfulness, courage, discretion, and magnanimity. They have in common the gesture of inner openness, and openness to the spiritual world, a practice of devotion, is part of the gesture of Aries. Openness and magnanimity are the beginning of the practice of love in the face of the needs of the earth. Aries and Pisces: these two belong together as the beginning and end of a journey through landscapes of the thinking-feeling soul and the working fields of will.

Endnotes

1. This article also appears, in a slightly different form, in the proceedings of the 2008 International Waldorf Early Childhood Conference, published by the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN), copyright 2009, in association with the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWECE). Full proceedings may be ordered from WECAN at <http://www.waldorfearychildhood.org>.
2. Leo, Virgo, Libra, and Scorpio will not appear in these lectures because they have little to do with the young child. They have to do with how we unfold our relationship to other adults. The virtues related to these signs are important for teachers in working with parents and in communities.
3. For Rudolf Steiner on the zodiac, see: *The Human Soul in Relation to World Evolution and Human and Cosmic Thought*. For references regarding the zodiac and eurythmy, see Hedwig Erasmý, *Cosmic and Human Evolution*; for references to the senses see Gilbert Childs, *5+7=12 Senses*.
4. Rudolf Steiner, *Polarities in Human Evolution*, Lecture 10.

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5. Rudolf Steiner, *The Roots of Education*, p. 94.
 6. Rudolf Steiner, *Cosmosophy*, p. 70ff.
 7. Ibid., p. 72ff.
 8. Robert Sardello's *The Power of Soul* provides a wealth of wisdom related to a deeper understanding of the human soul and the practice of virtues in the self-development of adults.
 9. Steiner, *Cosmosophy*, p. 74.
 10. Maria Luisa Nüesch, *Spiel aus der Tiefe (Play from the Depths)*, p. 73, author's translation.
 11. Steiner, *Cosmosophy*, p. 75.
 12. Robert Sardello has pointed to the special connection between silence and discernment. *The Power of Soul*, p. 181.
 13. Steiner, *Cosmosophy*, p. 72.
 14. Steiner, *Polarities in Human Evolution*, p. 183.
- . *Human and Cosmic Thought*, GA 151. UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1991.
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Social-Emotional Education and Waldorf Education

David S. Mitchell

Try to remember the days of September ... and your school experiences. For the majority of us, what we were taught and what we remember from our school years present two different pictures. We sat through countless hours of lessons about common denominators and mitosis, about heliotropism and split infinitives, about world revolutions and the Industrial Revolution.

Our skills developed quietly in the background at a rate equal to our interest. In the foreground, like a guardian to a fortress, was our feeling-life. Our emotions set the stage for our learning. Early memories contain the many sweet recollections of childhood but also feelings of intimidation suffered on the playground, the loneliness we felt as we tried to figure out who we were, awkward, blundering moments with the opposite sex, victories and defeats, and the antagonism we felt toward adults who seemed so sure in their correctness. As we matured, perhaps, we swam in a sea of insecurity lifted by waves of hope. In this area of our life-education, we were often largely on our own.

We should not leave emotional education to chance, however, in a world in which cultural decay and the dominance of modern media have created toxic soul conditions in which today's children must fight to survive.

In western societies the drift to greater individualism raises the question of the future social coherence and sustainability. The increase in family fragmentation with a dramatic rise in the divorce figures places new emotional strains on a child, faced with feelings of insecurity and risk over which they are powerless.¹

Across our country, one in ten children suffers from a serious mental health disorder, and very

few of them receive the help and services they need. A national survey by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported that eight percent of students in grades 9–12 tried to take their own lives, and seventeen percent reported “seriously considering” suicide. These troubling statistics reflect symptoms of a deep unhappiness afflicting children from all backgrounds.²

The remedy to this soul-toxic condition is a strengthening of the self so that young people are able to emerge from adolescence as self-directed, emotionally stable, social beings. The task of providing this inner training

once belonged to the community—to church, family, and neighborhood life. This is often not the case today, and schools are asked to fulfill these needs.

As humanity evolves we recognize the surge toward individualism, and we can glimpse the preparation for the emergence of the consciousness soul. It is a light streaming from the future and a pathway with no detour. In the future, we will experience the experience of others; we will be unable not to do this. In spiritual science this post-individualistic stage is referred to as development of the “spirit-self.”³ This higher soul state is predicated on emotional health and inner balance.

Social-Emotional Education

Cognitive researchers⁴ point out that children's social-emotional development is as important as their intellectual and physical development. Our emotional life may also be called our life of instinct. It responds before thinking commences and it can even extinguish thinking. Children's emotional health affects their academic performance, and their academic performance affects their emotional health. In other words, depression, anxiety, and unhappiness impair school performance. Similarly, school failure contributes to emotional health problems.

Children's social-emotional development is as important as their intellectual and physical development.

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António Damásio, a neuroscientist from the University of Southern California, researches the neurobiology of mind and behavior with emphasis on emotion, decision-making, memory, communication, and creativity. He has shown that, in the brain, emotions and thinking are not separate activities but constantly play into one another. “Emotion appears to be the support system without which the rational building process cannot work.”⁵ The prefrontal lobes of the brain, which are associated with emotional impulses, are also associated with working memory and learning.



António Damásio

Linda Lantieri puts it this way:

Educators and parents alike are [becoming] much more aware that when chronic anxiety, anger, or upset feelings intrude on children’s thoughts, less capacity is available in working memory to process what they are trying to learn. This implies that, at least in part, academic success depends on a student’s ability to maintain positive social interactions.⁶

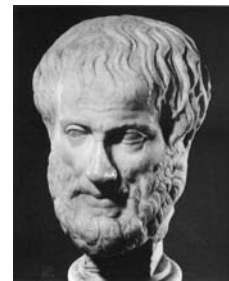
Children’s social-emotional skills drive them to learn to communicate, to connect with others, to resolve conflict, and to cope with challenges. These skills give children the confidence they need to reach goals and the ability to persist in the face of life’s difficulties. Like other important milestones that babies and toddlers achieve in their first three years—such as uprightness, walking, and talking—developing social-emotional skills takes time, practice, and patience of parents and teachers. In school, the first task of a wise teacher is to engage the “feeling-life” of the class in the subject being taught; this interest opens neural pathways to allow for cognition.

The champions of social-emotional inclusion claim an intellectual pedigree stretching back to Aristotle, who described emotional control and understanding as vital virtues. Aristotle wrote:

Children’s emotional health affects their academic performance, and their academic performance affects their emotional health.

Humankind is by no means agreed about the things that ought to be taught, whether we look to virtue or the best life. Neither is it clear whether education is more concerned with intellectual or with moral virtue. The existing practice is perplexing; no one knows on what principle we should proceed—should the useful in life, or should virtue, or should the higher knowledge be the aim of our training; all three opinions have been entertained.

Not all people have the same opinion about what youth should learn in order to develop a good character or to enable them to lead the best life. There is also no consensus about whether education should mainly focus on acquisition of knowledge and understanding or character formation, whether the right type of education should consist of disciplines useful for life, to breed a pure character, or to enlarge knowledge.⁷



Aristotle

Around ten percent of American grade school and high school students now receive some form of social and emotional learning curriculum, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a Chicago-based emotional learning research organization.⁸ Supporters point to a growing collection of studies that show the benefits of emotional learning programs on everything from test scores to lowered anxiety and lower rates of drug use. But the ultimate goal is something larger: a redefinition of what school is meant to teach and what sort of knowledge we value.

Emotional literacy campaigners argue that the problems of the American school system will not be solved by getting youth to read sooner or training them to find the Okefenokee Swamp on a map—they need to better understand, and take charge of, their essential and unique human qualities.

Daniel Goleman contributes significantly to views of education when he addresses the need to

nurture the social and emotional lives of children. In *Emotional Intelligence* he summarizes research from the fields of neuroscience and cognitive psychology that identifies EQ (emotional intelligence) as replacing IQ, high-stakes testing, and College Board examinations in importance for children's development and future life success. He identifies five components that can be translated into essential social-emotional aptitudes:



Daniel Goleman

1. Self-regulation—conducting ourselves and controlling our emotional states;
2. Self-consciousness—recognizing and understanding our feelings;
3. Motivation—managing feelings in order to achieve our objectives;
4. Empathy—identifying and decoding the feelings of others; and
5. Social Abilities—relating to and influencing others.⁹

Additionally, social-emotional education classes address five age-appropriate and essential areas of social and emotional development:

1. Self-awareness—recognizing our capacities, strengths, emotions, and values;
2. Self-management—managing emotions and behaviors, persevering in overcoming obstacles;
3. Social awareness—demonstrating understanding and empathy for others;
4. Relationship skills—forming positive relationships, teamwork, and conflict resolution; and
5. Responsible decision-making—making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior.

“The emotional mind is far quicker than the rational mind, springing into action without pausing even a moment to consider what it is doing,” according to Goleman.¹⁰ Students need to learn that they have the ability to make choices in how they respond to their individual emotions and

they must learn to understand what these emotions are in order to lead richer lives. Goleman adds that students should learn

self-awareness, in the sense of recognizing feelings and building a vocabulary for them, and seeing the links between thoughts, feelings, and reactions [thinking, feeling, and willing]. They should understand whether thoughts or feelings are ruling a decision and [be able to] see the consequence of alternative choices. They should be able to apply these insights to decisions about such issues as drugs, tobacco, and sex. Self-awareness also takes the form of recognizing your strengths and weaknesses, and seeing yourself in a positive but realistic light.

Another emphasis in managing emotions [is] realizing what is behind a feeling (for example, the hurt that triggers anger), learning ways to handle anxieties, anger, and sadness, and following through on commitments.

A key social ability is empathy, understanding others' feelings and taking their perspective, and respecting differences in how people feel about things. Relationships are a major focus, including learning to be a good listener and question asker, distinguishing between what someone says or does and your own reactions and judgments; being assertive rather than angry or passive; and learning the art of cooperation, conflict resolution, and negotiating compromise.¹¹

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry sums up much of this in *The Little Prince*: “It is with the heart that one sees rightly: What is most essential is invisible to the eye.”

Waldorf Education and Social-Emotional Learning

“Waldorf education encourages a balanced development toward physical, behavioral, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual maturation.”¹² Research on graduates of Waldorf schools has documented how the Waldorf school curricula already contain many of the attributes

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of a strong social-emotional curriculum.¹³ Still, we can do more. Schools must broaden the scope of the term “education” to give it its full meaning, and social-emotional education must be consciously taught. Resources are available, but, first, it is vital to understand child development; this is an area neglected in Goleman’s work. Second, we may study our curricula in order to determine where emphasis can be placed to strengthen social-emotional skills. And, third, we may focus on the demographics of age-appropriate social-emotional development, which may vary from community to community.

Waldorf school curricula have much embedded within them to help form the moral will of students. “In the learning process, the creative-expressive, aesthetic dimension has a [secure] place alongside the dynamics of the data-driven, knowledge-based global society, because the arts provide a bridge that promotes the inner and outer health and well-being of the individual.”¹⁴ Rich stories and biographies of men and women provide mental images containing powerful ideals toward which our students may strive. Respectful teachers afford students an opportunity for moral imitation. We may speak without moralizing about the dangers of cigarette smoking during combustion experiments in 7th grade chemistry, for instance, as well as about depression and the physiological effects of alcohol during 8th or 9th grade chemistry. True relationships and responsibility are unfolded as requisites for sexual intimacy, and procreation is looked at with wonder.

Our students are in need of a more direct development of their social-emotional skills, especially once they reach high school. Parents may have been diligent and class teachers may have laid a strong moral foundation, but the influences of modern life, as experienced, for instance, through music, the cinema, and arrogant athletes, eat away at this foundation as a strong acid attacks metal.

A teacher’s love, an aesthetic environment, and a profound respect for awakening individuality in each student are the mortar to strengthen the education of modern human beings.

Empathy

At the foundational stage, social-emotional education concerns itself with acquiring self-knowledge. The words “know thyself” were inscribed in the *pronaos* (forecourt) of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, and meta-cognition (awareness of thought process), meta-mood (awareness of one’s own emotions), and self-awareness (the sense of an ongoing attention to one’s internal states) were trained in the mystery school of Pythagoras. Situated in Crotona, a town next to the Gulf of Tarentum in southern Italy, the school was highly concerned with strengthening the morality of society. Members were required to live ethically, love one another, share political beliefs, practice pacifism, and devote themselves to the mathematics of nature. These timeless concepts return to humanity with

the regularity of a merry-go-round and set the foundation for modern spiritual work as well as social-emotional education.

At the secondary stage, social-emotional education concerns itself with the cultivation of empathy—from my perspective the most important and necessary capacity for our times. Empathy is the “potential for holding still [the] eternal oscillation between sympathy and antipathy”¹⁵ “...and in this deed of holding still, making a space, a gateway open[s] toward another person and toward [this person’s] experience.”¹⁶ Thus we give up ourselves and begin to experience the other person’s experience. The attainment of empathy is a condition for achieving total compassion. Thomas Weihs describes empathy as follows:

While love is often impatient,
empathy is patient.
While love is often aggressive,
empathy is kind.
While love is often generous,
empathy envies no one.
Love is often proud,
but empathy is never boastful nor conceited.

While love is often selfish and very easy to take offense,
 empathy is never selfish and never takes offense.
 Empathy keeps no score of wrongs, nor does not gloat over
 other men's sins, but delights in the truth.
 There is nothing empathy cannot face,
 There is no end to its own faith, hope, and its endurance.¹⁷

A teacher's love, an aesthetic environment, and a profound respect for awakening individuality in each student are the mortar to strengthen the education of modern human beings. Love is a force that will grant each young soul the strength to meet the rigors of the path to "knowing themselves." The chart on the next page gives ideas for the implementation of a Waldorf high school social-emotional curriculum.

Conclusion

Twenty-five years ago Waldorf high school teachers could enter a classroom and, so to speak, find the table set, as if in preparation for a wonderful meal. For the most part, students were relatively attentive, manners were exercised, and there appeared to be an eagerness to learn. When teachers enter a classroom today, they may well find they have first to set the table and meet the pressing emotional needs of the students before they can serve the meal—that is, teach the class. High school teachers in 2009 are often required to prepare students in a new manner before teaching can commence. This is not to say that they do not want to learn. Here, for example, Leo Tolstoy describes the torment of the underachieving pupil, Seryozha:

The father and the teacher were both displeased with Seryozha, and indeed he studied very badly. But it was quite impossible to say that he was an incapable boy. On the contrary, he was much more capable than all the other boys. And, as his father saw it, he did not want to learn what he was taught. But in fact he could not learn it. He could not because there were demands in his soul that were more exacting for him than those imposed by his father and teacher. These demands were conflicting, and he fought openly with his educators.

He was nine years old, he was a child, but he knew his own soul, it was dear to him, he protected it as the eyelid protects the eye, and did not let anyone into his soul without the key of love. His educators complained that he did not want to learn, yet his soul was overflowing with a thirst for knowledge.¹⁸

A PROPOSED WALDORF SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SKILLS CURRICULUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL

9 10 11 12

The high school Social/Emotional curriculum has two parts:
The first a weekly forum where guided discussions take place, sometimes with community experts.
The second is embedded in the curriculum as it unfolds – each teacher identifies the opportunities to bring forward.

	Forums			
	Soul Skills Needing Development	Thinking Capacities	Thinking Skills	Historical Orientation
	Discuss Physical boundaries (harassment) Develop a tolerance for differences Awaken empathy—recognize the good in everyone Ninth grade orientation Time management What is OK and what is not Transition—extrinsic to intrinsic Social exercises/Team building exercises Current events Health (alcohol & tobacco) Study skills	Relationships Masculine/feminine (sexuality) Identify anger/joy Listening skills Explain sexual harassment Non-Violent Communication Debating Fair arguing Drugs, drinking Advertisements Test taking skills & techniques for success	Emotional boundaries How to process feelings Creative playfulness Conflict resolution Vocational training The media & pollution of the “I” Current local events Stress management Adolescent loneliness issues	Life management Life recapitulation (Senior seminar) (pre-birth to death) Community building (How to provide before someone needs to ask) Global citizenship Current world events What is service to others? Finding the “Self”
	Thinking lives in the Will	Thinking lives in the Feelings	Thinking lives in the Thinking	Ego Directed Thinking
	Causal	Teleological	Analytic	Synthetic
	Modern	Ancient	Medieval/Renaissance	Destiny Questions
	Writing Tasks	Summarize	Compare/Contrast	Analyze
	Poetry to Heal the Soul	Ballads	Epic	Dramatic
	Project Week	Farming	Forestry/Conservation	Industry
	Self Esteem Building	How is farming economically possible & what rhythms are followed?	How can we care for wild lands and wildlife? Combine with surveying.	Work on an assembly line. What is social? What is work? Labor unions?
	Health Focus	Festivals, right recreation, sports, music, art, crafts, eurhythm, drama, sculpture		
	Soul Needs	Smoking/drugs/alcohol/sexuality (developed each year as appropriate to age) Put your feet on the ground! The world is yours!	A new beginning! Establish your own inner foundation!	Mental health (perversity, meditation, insanity, prayer, philosophy) Thinking creates the world! Nature needs human culture! Who is the human being? What is my life task?

Endnotes

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2. Testimony before the US Congress on National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day by Goldie Hawn, Washington, DC, May 7, 2009. http://www.casel.org/hawn_testimony_2009.
3. See Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophy*, London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1969, pp. 41–44.
4. Such as Marti Berstrom, António Damásio, Reuven Bar-On, and Linda and Nick Elksnin, to name a few. Brain research indicates that emotion and cognition are profoundly interrelated processes. Specifically, "recent cognitive neuroscience findings suggest that the neural mechanisms underlying emotion regulation may be the same as those underlying cognitive processes" (Bell and Wolfe 2004, p. 366). Emotion and cognition work together, jointly informing the child's impressions of situations and influencing behavior. Most learning in the early years occurs in the context of emotional supports (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000). "The rich interpenetrations of emotions and cognitions establish the major psychic scripts for each child's life" (Panksepp 2001). Together, emotion and cognition contribute to attentional processes, decision making, and learning (Cacioppo and Berntson 1999). Furthermore, cognitive processes, such as decision making, are affected by emotion (Barrett et al., 2007). Brain structures involved in the neural circuitry of cognition influence emotion and vice versa (Barrett et al., 2007). Emotions and social behaviors affect the young child's ability to persist in goal-oriented activity, to seek help when it is needed, and to participate in and benefit from relationships (California Department of Education, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itf09socemoddev.asp>).
5. António Damásio, *Descartes' Error*.
6. Linda Lantieri, *Social and Emotional Education: An International Analysis*, Fundación Marcelino Botin Report, 2008, p. 199.
7. Aristotle, *On Politics*, Book VIII, "Education and the Ideal State."
8. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) works to establish social and emotional learning as an essential part of education from preschool through high school.
9. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, NY: Bantam Books, 1997.

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11. Ibid., p. 268.
12. Rawson & Richter. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner/Waldorf Curriculum*, 2000.
13. See *Survey of Waldorf Graduates, Phase II*, David Mitchell and Douglas Gerwin, Wilton, NH: Research Institute, 2007, and *Absolventen von Waldorfschulen*, Dirk Randoll and Heiner Barz, ed., Wiesbaden, Germany: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007.
14. Trevor Mepham, (conference reporter, *European Council for Steiner/Waldorf Education News*, no. 15, June 2009.
15. Rudolf Steiner, *A Psychology of Body, Soul and Spirit*, NY: SteinerBooks, 1999. Steiner describes "sympathy and antipathy as the two primary forces in our soul. The force of sympathy lives in our Will; the force of antipathy is released from our nervous system—through our intellectual processes."
16. Anke Weihs, "Youth Guidance and Empathy," *Waldorf Journal Project*, no. 6, Ghent, NY: AWSNA Publications, pp. 35–36.
17. Thomas Weihs, "Empathy," *Waldorf Journal Project*, no. 6, Ghent, NY: AWSNA Publications, p. 34.
18. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, NY: Penguin Books, 2002, p. 526.

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Picture two animals: a fox and a hedgehog. Which are you? An ancient Greek parable distinguishes between foxes, which know many small things, and hedgehogs, which know one big thing. All good-to-great leaders, it turns out, are hedgehogs. They know how to simplify a complex world into a single, organizing idea—the kind of basic principle that unifies, organizes, and guides all decisions. That's not to say hedgehogs are simplistic. Like great thinkers, who take complexities and boil them down into simple, yet profound, ideas (Adam Smith and the invisible hand, Darwin and evolution), leaders of good-to-great companies develop a Hedgehog Concept that is simple but that reflects penetrating insight and deep understanding.

— Jim Collins
Good to Great

Television in, and the Worlds of, Today's Children

A Mounting Cultural Controversy¹

Richard House

As I write (March 2009), two prominent Reuters press reports on the effects of television have highlighted the controversial and mounting concerns about the place of a ubiquitous televisual culture in children's lives. First, we read a summary of a report published in *Pediatrics Surveys* that finds "TV may do no harm or good to babies" and viewing TV before age two "has no impact on learning ability." This is, of course, a particularly controversial area, with surveys showing around two-thirds of babies under two viewing some screen media on a typical day,² and the American Academy of Pediatrics' widely reported recommendation that children under two should never watch screen media.³ Around the same time, Reuters also reports "Too much TV linked to higher asthma risk," showing that sedentary behavior associated with TV viewing could cause developmental changes in the lungs, this being the first study to directly link very young sedentary behavior to a higher risk of asthma in later childhood.

These two studies are merely the latest in a growing body of evidence that is beginning to flesh out empirically the kinds of somewhat anecdotal, "from principle" arguments set out in books like Marie Winn's path-breaking *The Plug-in Drug*. Such research findings certainly raise all kinds of thorny methodological questions—and, not least, the kinds of (often self-fulfilling) assumptions that such empirical, arguably positivistic research routinely makes. A case in point is the question of the time-scale of such research, for another study (cited by Comstock and Scharrer) found that more TV viewing at age three correlated to less verbal ability at age six. In any reputable psychosocial research, it is essential to tease out the underlying metaphysical axioms that inform and, often unwittingly, direct one's conceptualization of the key research questions. One grave danger in this particular field is that televisual technologies have become so culturally ubiquitous and taken for granted that they are treated uncritically as a "given" or baseline datum, rather than as a phenomenon that should itself be open to funda-

mental challenge (see House, 2004)—and this is especially so in the field of early childhood, where parents and adults do still possess the capacity to make clear and informed choices about their young children's environments and associated well-being.

The position of the "activist-academic" that I inhabit on these issues is a far from comfortable one⁴—not least because academics are often suspicious, if not condemnatory, of those of their ilk who engage in public campaigns that commonly involve challenging head-on the governmental policy-making process. In my view, the myth of a value-free, uncommitted, even detached social science was comprehensively undermined way back in the 1970s,⁵ so it becomes important, even essential, to be open about one's own, inevitably partial position so that a reader is able to locate the arguments developed in the commentary.

I write as a professional psychotherapist working from an existential-phenomenological, post-modern, and transpersonally informed sensibility, who trained as a Waldorf school teacher in the late 1990s because of the malaise I was witnessing in children's lives, and the life-long impact that children's toxic early experience can have. I am particularly concerned about the impact of modern technology, and especially Information and Computer Technologies (ICT), on the psyches and the very being of both children and adults.

Since 2006 I have been directly involved in several public campaigns centered around the issue of so-called "toxic childhood," named after fellow childhood campaigner Sue Palmer's highly influential book of the name—and it was Palmer and I who co-orchestrated the Open Letter on toxic childhood that appeared in the *British Daily Telegraph* in September 2006, signed by 110 prominent public figures, and which quickly became a major news story across the globe. In that letter, we wrote:

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Since children's brains are still developing, they cannot adjust—as full-grown adults can—to the effects of ever more rapid technological and cultural change. They still need what developing human beings have always needed, including... real play (as opposed to sedentary, screen-based entertainment), first-hand experience of the world they live in and regular interaction with the real-life significant adults in their lives. They also need time.... They are pushed by market forces to act and dress like mini-adults and exposed via the electronic media to material which would have been considered unsuitable for children even in the very recent past.⁶

Across the globe a veritable “paradigm war” is now unfolding, centered on childhood, between, on the one hand, a technological “modernity” which, its critics claim, is characterized by one-sided materialism, scientistic and commercial values, a crass utilitarianism, an unquestioned ideology of “progress,” and an inability to recognize that children are not “mini-adults,” but human beings with a distinct mode of consciousness and way of being. On the other side of the paradigmatic divide are those, like me, who believe that children's well-being is being fundamentally compromised by these seemingly inexorable cultural trends, and that we need urgently to reclaim our own conscious capacity actively to create human culture, rather than be mere passive victims of its noxious vicissitudes.

There are many levels from which the issue of television's influence upon children's experience can be interrogated, all of them important, and I can address only several perspectives in this short piece. Most fundamentally, perhaps, there is the philosophical perspective. Primary experience, gained through the senses, is our most basic way of understanding reality and learning for ourselves. For the late philosopher Edward S. Reed, Cartesian rationalism has “captured” us scientifically and socially; yet it is direct contact with the world that most significantly influences our development, by helping us develop and refine our interpersonal and physical skills.⁷ Our hyper-modern technological culture, it is argued, tends to favor the indirect knowledge gained from sec-

ondary experience, in which information is selected, amended, packaged, and then presented to us by others, with everyday life becoming ever-more artificial—and with television-viewing being perhaps the paradigm case of such secondary experience.

Reed joins other cultural critics and researchers like Neil Postman,⁸ Barry Sanders,⁹ Jane Healy,¹⁰ Aric Sigman,¹¹ and Baroness Susan Greenfield¹² who, in their different ways, maintain that unprecedented technological progress has led to a considerable regression in meaningful communication between people. All these authors caution that second-hand experience has become so dominant in our technology-dominated lives that primary experience, and all that goes with it, is under grave threat. They offer, instead, a vision of meaningful learning that places far greater emphasis on unmediated experience and the necessary messiness of real-life experiential learning.

Calling for a better balance between first- and second-hand experience, for example, Reed argues that without opportunities for direct experiential learning, we will become less likely to think and feel for ourselves. It is fascinating and sobering that long-term empirical research is now beginning to confirm this philosopher's grave prediction, in terms of an observable and marked decline in children's and young people's thinking abilities.¹³ Reed's work is a development of the telling critique of technology developed by philosophers like Martin Heidegger¹⁴ and Wade Sikorski.¹⁵ The observed degradation of authentic play and imaginative thinking is highly relevant here, too.

I maintain that the wider cultural perspective on TV-viewing and its all-pervasive neurological, psychological, social, and societal-cultural effects, demand our most urgent attention—and at least some of these wider questions are not at all easily amenable to the kind of positivistic, empiricist research that dominates the field. There are, as mentioned, increasing reports in the literature of unexpected long-term declines in both children's competencies in certain key areas, and in higher-education students' thinking abilities; and in her book *The Plug-in Drug*, Winn quotes evidence strongly suggesting some kind of causal relationship between the rise of TV-viewing in the USA from the 1950s onward and notable and other-

wise difficult-to-explain declines in standardized test scores among American youth.¹⁶

Touching on these issues, cultural commentator Carl Honoré, in his new book, *Under Pressure*, writes:

Endless channel-hopping... militate[s] against the slower art of delving into a topic, staying with an argument long enough to unravel its nuances and complexities.... University professors increasingly complain that twenty-first century students balk at reading whole books.... They also seem impatient with ambiguity, demanding instant answers that are black and white.... Can democracy function properly if young voters want every issue wrapped up in text-message-style sound bites?¹⁷

Can we, finally, lay responsibility for these disturbing educational and cultural trends at the feet of the ubiquitous television—or is TV merely one instance of a wider, routinely uncritical, and non self-reflexive “technology toxicity” that now seems to be having measurably negative learning effects on our children? These are the kinds of questions that researchers, educationalists, cultural commentators, and philosophers need to address if we are to make healthy and informed steps toward consciously chosen, people-sensitive, and humanity-enabling technology (see Freenberg, 1995), rather than allow an increasingly runaway technology to dominate humankind in the “man-becoming-machine” age of Late Modernity.

To end on a controversial note, it may well take a full consideration of the spiritual and the transpersonal dimensions to achieve this essential engagement in and around technology in Late Modernity;¹⁸ and, in that eventuality, even those who are skeptical about the spiritual dimension may have to begin to take it seriously—certainly if it proves to be the only viable way out of our current technological morass and spiral of cultural decline.

Endnotes

1. This article was originally published in the *Teachers College Record*, March 23, 2009. <http://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 15594. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of the editors of the *Record*.
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4. Hofkins, 2008.
5. House, 2007.
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13. Burkhead, 2009; Griffiths, 2006.
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Preobrazhenskaya (Transfiguration), the onion-domed wooden church on the holy island of Kizhi, built in 1714 without a single nail

Russia's History, Culture, and the Thrust Toward High-Stakes Testing

Reflections on a Recent Visit

David S. Mitchell

Standardized testing poses an escalating problem for Russia because, as a consequence of its new free market economy, the state no longer supports free education and the cost of schooling students is prohibitive. The editors of The Pedagogical Journal of Bashkortostan University, Ufa, Russia, recently reprinted "Assessment without High-Stakes Testing: Protecting Childhood and the Purpose of School" from the Research Bulletin (Volume XIII, #2, pp. 21–30). Ufa, located west of Moscow in the Republic of Bashkortostan and just east of the Ural Mountains, has its own Waldorf school. Founded as a fortress on the orders of Ivan IV in 1574, the city originally bore the name of the hill upon which it stood, Tura-Tau. Locals nicknamed the city Ufa, meaning "small" in Turkic, and the name stuck. In 1802, Ufa became the principal city of Bashkiria with more than six major universities.¹ David Mitchell met with the editors and interested academics in Moscow this past summer.



To understand the problems of education resulting in high-stakes testing in Russia, we must try to penetrate the Russian psyche and its deep connection to the land. Russia is a diverse country composed of many varied folk groups, including Slavs, Tartars, Muslims, Armenians, Norsemen, and Azerbaijanis. Russia is a unique state, influenced by both European and Asian cultures. With what we may call an inherent inferiority complex as a nation, Russia has long felt a need to find respect in the world. Peter the Great copied Versailles in St. Petersburg and decreed that every Russian shave his beard in order to appear more European. Catherine the Great assembled the great art collection in the Hermitage in order to impress the world. Still, today, the longsuffering Russian soul pines for prestige and recognition.

A humble, warm people who feel a deep love for their Mother Russia and her rolling plains and

dramatic skies, the Russians have traditionally placed their political fortunes in the hands of powerful and aggressive leaders. Josef Stalin bragged in the 1950s that he was able to terrorize one out of every ten citizens.² The numbers of the intelligentsia executed in Russia in the 20th century, robbing the country and the world of brilliance in literature, drama, music, and dance, is astonishing. And the government still uses fear to control its people—in the past two years, more than thirty Russian journalists critical of the government have met an untimely, often cruel death, victims of apparent assassination.



Dramatic sky at sunset over dachas on the Volga River

In the past, the Czars and Russian Orthodox Church amassed extravagant fortunes at the expense of the common population, who we picture as struggling to exist on little more than crusts of stale black bread. The failed experiment of communism sought to remedy and balance these inequities, only to follow the same path of repression and cruelty. Members of the Communist Party and the political elite prospered while the people suffered the deprivation of failed social and agricultural experimentation.

The country was unprepared for the advent of *perestroika* and the consequent entry into a free-

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market economy. The “common wealth” was distributed to everyone in stock receipts. Not knowing what to do with these pieces of paper, private citizens sold them cheaply to enterprising individuals for hard cash, giving rise to a new generation of oligarchs while, at the same time, the new government kept no reserves to make social services available. Basic elements of society, such as real estate, education, and health care, became commodities that people could not afford. The value of the ruble collapsed, common people lost their newly acquired money, and the country's economy went into a tailspin. Strong leadership was needed to regain control of the country's vast natural resources and stabilize its fledgling economy. Vladimir Putin, former head of the KGB, assumed that role.

During my recent visit to Russia, I asked three locals how their new government and elected legislature were doing. They all replied similarly: “The politicians meet in the legislature in order to see how they can make things even more difficult for the people!”

The expansive Russian countryside is rich in nature wisdom from the North. Matrushka dolls, an ancient fertility symbol, are found everywhere, as are stories of pagan rituals and atavistic festivals in the birch forests. These vast forests stretch endlessly, as do the broad steppes, and the sky is a panorama of dramatic changes. Simple dachas—summer homes or retreats—line the Volga River with richly carved wooden window frames, doors, and eaves. Most have not seen paint for at least forty years and are near collapse. They serve as a metaphor for life in general. The structure of Russia needs repair and care. The countryside is a picture of abject poverty. I met several people who were foraging in the forest for mushrooms and berries in order to survive. Many of the elderly receive only meager social services and beg on the streets for subsistence.



Matrushka nesting dolls

I heard stories of soldiers begging a meal because the government could not afford to pay them or feed them sufficiently.



Symbolic carvings on dacha



Detail of design

On the other hand, St. Petersburg and Moscow are thriving and impressive cities, bustling with restoration and new construction. Moscow, a huge city with population of over 12.6 million residents,³ suffers from congested, pot-hole-riddled roads and too much traffic. Delays are painfully long. Food in Moscow, currently the world's most expensive city, is a third more costly than in the United States; a modest hotel charges between \$700 and \$2,400 per night for a room. Marquee stores from Paris, Geneva, London, and New York line Arbat Street (the premier shopping avenue) and fill GUM, the massive department store next to Red Square. If you have money you can purchase anything, and most Muscovites



GUM Department Store at Red Square

*Moscow as seen from University Hill*

appear to have ample resources, unlike their country cousins. There is a wide gap between the poor and the rich.

The Russian people have suffered for centuries. Possessing rich soul qualities—a love for poetry, music, and literature—they have reservoirs of devotion. How will the transformation of these qualities manifest in the future? An example of their devotional emergence from communist control can be seen in the symbolism of their new national flag. I asked a university professor about the meaning of the flag's three colored stripes. He replied: "The white stripe is for the purity of the spiritual world, the blue stripe is for the majesty of the Russian sky, and the red stripe is for the blood of Christ."

Russia's free market economy formed toward the end of the 1980s during the transition between Michael Gorbachev's *perestroika* and Boris Yeltsin's reforms during a time of great hope and change. Change was also called for in the Russian education system, which lacked innovation and creativity and was strongly ideological, bureaucratic, and technocratic. For a while the slumbering devotional life awoke and the values embedded within Waldorf education were recognized.

The first Russian Waldorf schools were founded in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ryasan, Shukovsky, Yaroslavl, and Samara. An interest in a free and humane education grew until about thirty Waldorf schools (five in Moscow) and many assorted Waldorf kindergartens were peppered across the country.⁴

During this time the schools multiplied and found success. In 2006 the central government invited schools and individual teachers to present their curriculum ideas in a nationwide contest.

*Trevskaya Prospekt in Moscow*

The largest Waldorf school in Moscow, called "School 1060," won a prize in this educational competition of one million rubles (about \$30,000) as a "School of the Future." This school has more than 300 students in eleven grades.⁵

An initial period of optimism and expansion of Waldorf education in Russia gave way to a period of serious challenges and some contraction. The challenges faced by the Waldorf schools in Russia included these: the struggle against changing government regulations based on mandated curricula; economic instability and rental costs; escalating tuition costs, from \$50 per month to \$800 per month (the high end well beyond the means of an average Russian family); and inadequate teacher salaries (\$200–\$700/month).⁶ As elsewhere in the world, the government sought to control education by mandating standardized testing because it believed that student learning could be accurately measured, albeit at the expense of individualization.

During the 1990s, as the economy collapsed and expenses skyrocketed, the Waldorf schools entered a fight for survival. School 1060 had to decide if it wanted, like most independent schools in Russia, to become a private school with high tuition rates or become a state school. The school

*Waldorf school in St. Petersburg*

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decided in 1996 to register itself as a state school and accept 40% financial assistance.

Initially, the newly empowered Orthodox Church had supported Waldorf education, but this ceased when church officials realized that the schools promoted independent thinking. For a while, the Church reversed its initial support and viciously attacked the concept of Waldorf education, but these attacks seem now to have abated.

Most likely, the Waldorf schools will have renewed opportunities in the future when they work more actively at the local level rather than at the national level. In order to be recognized, state Waldorf schools now have to pass an inspection to gain their license and be registered. To gain a license a school must have premises that accord with state regulations; it must also be regularly inspected and show that its teachers are competent. For registration it must prove for three age groups that its pupils are at the same educational level as comparable children in state schools.⁷ Strangely, overall Russian standards have yet to be set, so registration depends heavily on the local authorities of the eighty-nine Russian regions.

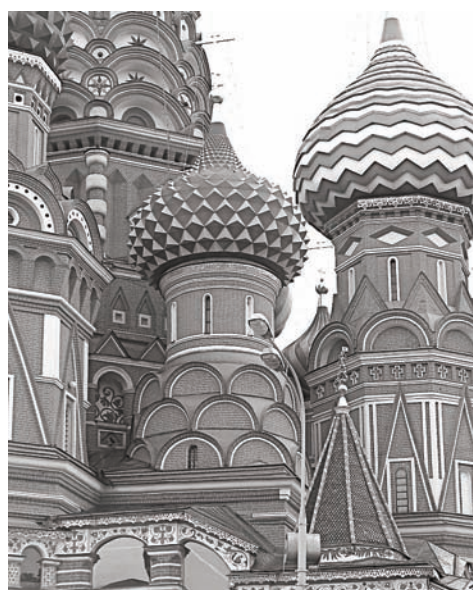
I observed, everywhere, constant change and revision. People can never be too sure that any policy will last very long. Everything in Russia appears to be in flux and in need of repair, and the common people continue to suffer and wait for future improvements. If the yoke of standard-

ized testing could be removed, then future populations could be counted upon to bring the imagination and clarity needed to solve many of Russia's problems.

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8. All photographs by Anniken and David Mitchell.

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Details, St. Basil's Cathedral in Red Square, Moscow

Da, Valdorskii!

Finding an Educational Approach for Children with Disabilities

Cassandra S. Hartblay

Waldorf education came to the Soviet Union in 1991, when the first kindergarten to employ Steiner methodologies opened in Moscow.¹ Slowly, and largely through the work of individual educators dedicated to the cause, the concept of Waldorf education has spread throughout Russia, and a small but growing number of Waldorf institutions has been established in cities and towns across the country. This proliferation has, in part, been possible thanks to the efforts of international volunteer organizations, like the Germany-based Friends of Waldorf Education.² In Russia, Waldorf schools are sometimes public but often private, and they are largely sustained on the energies of parents and educators who believe strongly in a system of free education and who go to great lengths to preserve these opportunities for their children.

When I began my research in Russia as an anthropology student in 2005, I did not intend to study Waldorf education. Instead, as an advocate for and ally of peers with disabilities at home, and as a longtime student of the Russian language, I set out to learn about the notion of disability in Russia, and about what—if any—strategies and movements were unfolding in the sphere of disability rights. By chance and circumstance, I visited the small village of Petrushka,³ a few hundred miles north of Mongolia and two hours from the nearest city in the Russian Republic of Buryatia. There, I spent several weeks as a researcher and participant observer at a tiny local school for children with disabilities, whose educators found their inspiration in the Waldorf school approach. Thus, I came to this topic not as a practitioner or scholar of Waldorf school methods, but as an anthropologist interested in the ways that individuals with disabilities and their advocates were making sense of the uniquely deconstructed social realm in the former Soviet Union, and working to overcome

both the social stigma of disability and the real world barriers to living with a disability or caring for a disabled person.

Here, I describe the problems that a group of women, mothers of children with disabilities, faced, and the answers and support that they found in Waldorf educational philosophies. With the toolbox of Rudolf Steiner's indications at hand, the women established a community-operated school, Chrysalis, to serve young people with special needs in the village of Petrushka.

The Chrysalis School is a small institution serving twenty to twenty five students between kindergarten and high school age, all of whom have special needs. The students represent a broad range of abilities and diagnoses, ranging from cerebral palsy and Down syndrome to unspecified cognitive delays. The school is supported in part by government funds and in large part by

the labor and sacrifice of five core staff members, who are themselves, with one exception, parents of children who attend the school. The Director of the School, whom I call Sophia, is herself one of these parents. The school occupies a small, one-story, five-room building nestled among apartments and shops in the 350-person village of Petrushka.

A Day at the Chrysalis School

The Chrysalis School carries out an educational curriculum that is highly intuitive and based on Waldorf methodologies. Teachers at the school are always eager to learn more and to incorporate aspects of Waldorf techniques; however, language, geography, and financial resources have limited their access to information and formal training.

Perhaps most critically, the educators at the school embrace an emphasis on multiple and var-

Waldorf schools' vision implies maximal development of individual talents of every given child.

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ied types of intelligences. They identify intellect, *myshlenie*, located in the head, feeling, *chuvstvo*, located in the torso, and will, *volya*, located in the limbs, as modes of intelligence to be developed in each child. In keeping with a Waldorf school curriculum, each part of the day at the school is specially targeted to work with one of these types of learning.

During the first half of the day, the children activate their thinking and reasoning. In the afternoon, the students—the teachers refer to their pupils as “our children”—do theater, painting, and music, all of which are considered to be related to feelings and expression of emotions. They also practice basket weaving, beading, clay- and wool- and wood-working, all of which focus on the hands, and the children’s capability to use their energy productively.

All of the toys in the school are handmade. Sophia recalls that, at first, they had many toys made from brightly colored plastics (Chinese black market goods are the most readily available merchandise in Ulan Ude, and, as a result, in Petrushka). When a Waldorf educator from Irkutsk visited, she was adamant that they be replaced with natural, handmade, creativity-inspiring toys. Later, on a tour of the school during my visit, Sophia explained to me that she had eagerly implemented this advice, and investigated the underlying philosophy.

The teachers at the Chrysalis School employ these and other aspects of Waldorf philosophy that they have amassed from distant sources to fit their needs.

The Locale

Petrushka is a tiny village along the Trans-Siberian railroad, somewhere north of Mongolia, just east of Lake Baikal (that long sliver of water a blip on the globe, halfway between the Baltic Sea and the Pacific Ocean). Six hours by train from the nearest major airport in Irkutsk, and an hour and a half by train from the regional capital of Ulan Ude, Petrushka is little more than a dwindling settlement.

Once a factory town established during the mid-20th century as the Soviet Union pushed to settle and develop its Eastern Territories, the people of Petrushka were supported by government-run steel and concrete factories that manufactured building supplies and railroad parts to be moved by train to outposts eastward. Like the factories, everything in the town—from the apartments people lived in to the grocery stores, schools, and land—was state property, and all business was administered from above.

Then, in the 1980s, the Soviet experiment began to fall apart. Food shipments to the village grew increasingly insufficient, environmental hazards (from mining, oil transport, and nuclear energy endeavors) increased, there wasn’t enough housing, and, bit by bit, paychecks from a floundering central government became fewer and more sporadic.⁴

Chaos descended on the town; with no money and no supplies, the already limited possibilities available to the residents grew even slimmer. Because goods and farm products were distributed via centralized channels, the work performed had no market value, and the products had no consumer base. Life came to a stop during these years. The factory paid its workers, if it paid them at all, in flour; whole families survived on the potatoes they could grow; the collective farms which raised pigs and cattle were without the infrastructure needed for continued production. Many residents turned to alcohol. Today, women of the village will state matter-of-factly that during that period, many men, faced with insurmountable odds, committed suicide or simply abandoned their wives, children, and aging parents.

Society deteriorated to the extent that, when I arrived in the village in 2005, numerous buildings on the outskirts had been abandoned and fallen into disrepair, running water was considered a luxury, and hot water had ceased to flow through the pipes in the apartment buildings. Petrushka was a lesson in survival—of what people do when they have nowhere else to go.

With the toolbox of Rudolf Steiner’s indications at hand, the women established a community-operated school, Chrysalis, to serve young people with special needs in the village of Petrushka.

At the time of my fieldwork the town had little that hadn't existed in the 1980s: three small stores that sold groceries, one with practical homegoods and clothing; a bread factory; a chicken farm; the railroad repair dispatch; one public school housing grades one through twelve; a pharmacy; a post office; a three-room medical clinic; and not much else.

The Chrysalis School itself is located in a building that was once a music school. When that project was abandoned, the building became property of the state. The Chrysalis School staff petitioned the local government and gained permission to restore and use the building in 2001.

For mothers of children with disabilities in this town, a number of challenges emerged that left them with few options; this changed when they learned of and began to implement Waldorf methods. While the mothers themselves had always felt that their children were beautiful, valuable individuals, authority figures and cultural mores all pointed to the contrary. In stories that the mothers working at the Chrysalis School told me, several specific barriers to inclusion arose repeatedly.

First, they were faced with the economic and social challenges of *perestroika* and the early post-Soviet period, described above.⁵ Second, the primary medical response to the birth of a child with a disability and the inadequate resources and insulting attitudes of many of the doctors, were frustrating, to say the least. Third, they faced the difficulties of educating a child with disabilities in Russia. These were, chiefly, limited or inadequate special education options, and the economically critical conflict between childcare and work that a parent faced when her child could not attend school.

All of these issues worked together to render disability a comprehensive crisis in the lives of these families. Sofia, the director of the school, told me many stories of the difficulties she encountered raising her son, Vova, who was born developmentally delayed. He was often ill as an infant and was eventually diagnosed with DTSP.⁶ Thus, Sofia recalled feeling immense relief and a sense of revelation when, in attending a seminar on the principles of Steiner education, she heard, for the first time, a stranger say that a child like her son could be educated and could become a

contributing member of a community. Vova is now a healthy and rambunctious, if still highly vulnerable, young adult.

Medicalization and Stigma in Infancy and Early Childhood

The care in post-Soviet hospitals, for any individual, is so sparse that family members are expected to care for the ill, preparing their meals and washing their bed linens; the bulk of personal care and attendance, in the West assumed by nursing staff, is, in the Russian Federation, borne by the family. Sophia's recollections of her son's early childhood frequently included the phrase, "One time, we were lying in the hospital..." and went on to detail a particularly harsh episode of sickness, or an altercation that Sophia had had with a nurse or doctor. Russians regularly use the idiomatic expression of literally lying in the hospital, but Sophia's use of the plural ("we were lying") is unusual, and indicative of the degree to which she shared in her son's experience of hospitalization.

Sophia recalled a particularly soul-crushing experience from this period. She had requested a referral from a doctor for Vova to visit a physical therapy center, but the doctor's response was, "Your son is too disabled. Why should the state spend money on a child that will never be rehabilitated?" Embedded in this statement is a notion of rehabilitation that implies the goal of total normalization of difference or impairment. The goal of medical and educational treatment as provided by the state is to restore individuals to a level of social normalcy and functionality that renders them indistinguishable from the larger population; such a model leaves no room for difference, or for social integration of individuals with special needs. It also indicates that for a mother of a child like Vova, giving up the child to state care is the only course of action supported by the professionals around her. Raising a child with special needs as part of her family and community was simply not an option offered to Sophia.

The horrid conditions in many Russian children's homes (where both special needs children and orphans are housed) are well documented. Sophia later wrote, "How could I possibly have put my child into a home for invalids, knowing what went on there? Even now they are not sweet

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to the children there. It is like sentencing a child to a long, slow death.” But, in seeking to raise Vova in the community, Sophia found herself with sparse resources and little guidance.

The Russian sociologist Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova has conducted research with mothers of disabled children in the city of Saratov, and writes, “Sources of help for families raising children with disabilities that are well established in the West—such as books and other reading materials about raising a child with a disability, parent support groups, and education for parents—are absent in Russian women’s narratives.”⁷ Her research reinforces the pervasiveness of stories like Sophia’s in Russia today.

Barriers to Education for Young Children

Sophia’s story began in the early 1980s, when she learned that her newborn son was “sick.” By the age of one, Vova had been diagnosed with DTsP. During the difficult years of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Sophia was lucky to be employed as an assistant teacher in the local preschool; likewise, her husband was lucky to be employed in the factory, which continued to function in bankruptcy, unlike the collective farms surrounding the settlement.

By the time Vova was seven, Sophia’s husband had died, leaving her a single parent struggling to provide for her two children. When she worked at the local preschool, she brought her children to work with her. She was constantly negotiating daily problems. When Vova was still unable to walk steadily at the age of six, she found him a tricycle, which became his self-propelled wheelchair. When Vova was denied entry into the first grade at the local school, which had no special education facilities, she noted a policy clause that allowed Vova to stay at the preschool until the age of nine.

Most important, the necessity of earning income often came second to caring for children. Her position at the preschool was as an aide, rather than as a head teacher, and the school often could not pay her. So, for years at a time, Sophia lived off meager state benefits and the kindness of neighbors in order to stay at home with Vova. She was often hungry, and she struggled to feed her two children.

Sophia told me, “There is not yet any developed system of special education in public schools in Russia.” After a moment, she added, “Well, maybe somewhere, but not here.” Generally, an attitude persists that there is no space for children with special needs in an already under-funded public school system. Teachers are not trained or expected to include children with special needs in their classes. Some children may attend classes with their peers and receive a certificate in place of the regular diploma. Two instances of this approach in Petrushka known to me both yielded poor results. Although the children sat in classes beside their peers, they were largely ignored by already overwhelmed teachers and learned little.

The parent-educators at the Chrysalis School all had stories of failed educational attempts. Like Sophia, Tanya, whose daughter has learning disabilities and speaks little, addressed her lack of childcare by working in a kindergarten herself. After kindergarten, at age seven, the children were eligible to apply to a state-run specialized boarding school, called an *internat*. By all reports this institution was as terrible as the name sounds. One mother, Maria, told me that while her daughter Anya was living at the *internat*, during her visits home she would hide bits of bread under her mattress. When, after nine months in the *internat*, Anya had forgotten the alphabet, which she had previously known, Maria quit her job and brought her daughter home again. “No, I don’t like to be a stay-at-home mom,” she told me, “but there weren’t really any other options.” This sentiment was a common refrain among the mothers whom I interviewed.

Particular Challenges

Like any other identity, disability is very much a reflection of the cultural values of the broader society. Thus, while there are many similarities between the stigma and hurdles that people with disabilities and their caretakers face in Russia and the United States, there are also many differences. Two key issues are these: 1) The (lack of) development of a tradition of civil rights legislation, and 2) The (lack of) development of a broad-based sense of the desirability of diversity.

In the United States, a tradition of civil rights legislation in answer to popular movements has been developed through struggles such as those for racial equality, gender equality, same-sex mar-

riage equality, and, with the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1992, disability rights. There is no equivalent civil legal tradition in Russia, and the Constitution of the Russian Federation is a recent document with little history of being upheld in court; likewise, the judicial system itself is sorely undeveloped, and the very professions of lawyer and judge continue to be held in low esteem in Russian society. The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees equal education for all. With no system of special education, already under-resourced schools, and slimly paid teachers, however, few schools and parents have even been made aware of this right. Likewise, with no history of education-related legislation, it will be a slow process to bring this standard into practice. (One group that has been fighting for advances in this realm is the Mental Disability Advocacy Center, or MDAC.⁸)

There has also been little success in building a tolerant, inclusive public sector in Russia, whether in regard to racism, sexism, or ablism (“able-ism” discrimination against those disabled in some way). These “isms” remain powerful forces. In the United States much effort has been exerted over the past thirty years to include tolerance lessons in the everyday curricula of schools and to value these rights in hiring decisions and work-place communications, but in many forums of Russian public life, similar efforts have only recently attained even a precarious foothold in the Russian Federation. (This has occurred primarily as international business has taken root in Moscow, implementing Western human resource policies. For example, cosmopolitan values have led journalists and other media professionals to introduce politically correct language.)

The majority of people with whom I spoke about disability continued to use what, in translation, amounts to outdated and derogatory language, i.e., “invalids,” “mental retards,” and so forth. In the past years, there has been an observable increase in the use of mindful phrasing (e.g., “people with special needs,” in Russian, *lyudi s*

ogranichyeniymi vozmozhnoctyami) in journalism and general audience publications. While advocates adopt these phrases as they look to international disability rights movements for guidance, they are beginning now to become a part of the broader lexicon.

The Irkutsk Model

“By the dictates of the culture, in American education, everyone must do better than everyone else. Of course, this is both logically and social structurally impossible,” write educational anthropologists Ray McDermott and Hervé Varenne.⁹ In Russia, however, that is not the case. Rather, the system has been established to differentiate between talented, high achieving students and those who do not excel. Unlike American schools, which encourage students to pursue numerous fields (i.e., perform in school theater productions, play on the soccer team, study trumpet, and perform academically) at their whim, Russian students are encouraged to pursue one field in which they are deemed to be particularly talented. Most Russian school children receive the equivalent of C and D grades in some subjects, which is not seen as a failure, but simply as an indication that they are not leading their peers in this area. Unfortunately, by extension, those students who are considered to be low achievers are left unassisted, and children with special needs that require additional support are not included in mainstream education at all.

In Russia, as in the United States, a Waldorf approach to education offers a radically different student and parent experience from the public school system. A Russian education journal explained in 2000:

What is the difference between Rudolf Steiner’s and the traditional approach to children’s education? First, Waldorf schools’ vision implies maximal development of individual talents of every given child. While at a regular school a teacher plays the role of the all-knowing strict

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master ruling his absolute knowledge into his students' brains, at a Waldorf school a teacher is the wise tutor who helps children find answers to the world around them. A Waldorf school eliminates the distance between the teacher and the scholar. No marks to evaluate the quality of knowledge. Therefore, students are never classified by grade. No "good boys" and "bad boys," no "successes" and "failures"—which are, in fact, stamps that sometimes stick to children for the rest of their days. As the result, children feel more liberated; and they are free to express their emotions.¹⁰

Unemployed for two years during Vova's childhood, Sophia used this time to invest in her son's development. Although he was not enrolled in school, she insisted that he learn. She set up special tutoring sessions for Vova after-hours with an elementary school teacher. She sat with him for hours until he solved simple arithmetic problems. Gradually, other mothers began to bring their children to Sophia's apartment for "school" in the early afternoon. Sophia recalls sitting for hours with three or four kids, going through the alphabet over and over again.

Eventually, Sophia's commitment to her role as teacher led her to take correspondence courses and attend conferences in the city of Irkutsk. When Vova was about twelve, Sophia attended a conference at which she learned of a school and living community for people with disabilities outside the city of Irkutsk that seemed to answer her unanswered questions. The school, Talisman, which is internationally and privately funded, has adapted a Waldorf approach to the needs of children such as hers.

This was the first time, she told me, that she had heard people talking about disability as a fact rather than a curse, the first time that she had found a context in which her son could be valued. Sophia set out to create such a school in her own town.

The very notion of a place in the community specifically for their children was radically new. The local preschool tolerated and allowed their

presence, while the *internat* kept these children separate from the rest of the world and did not nurture the children as individuals. The idea offered a powerful change of perspective and a potentially dramatic improvement in quality of life for children and parents alike. With about five local families on board, and more expressing tentative interest, Sophia set out to find funding for the venture.

Founding Chrysalis

The settlement of Petrushka has a small local administration. By discussing her plan with the single town social worker (who was chiefly responsible for disbursing social security payments to veterans, the elderly, and the disabled in the town), Sofia began to spread the word. Eventually, her plan gained the ear of another government employee in the regional administration office, an hour's journey from the village. "I helped her out, and she helped me out," Sofia explained to me. "She needed a new program on her list of accomplishments for the year. I needed money." And so, Sofia obtained money enough, with intense frugality, to pay herself, to hire three teachers, and to serve one meal a day to the children. They claimed the small, empty building, renovated the rooms, scavenged for furniture from their own apartments and from friends, and collected toys and other supplies in a similar way.

Though Sophia's vision was of a school, her funding came from an administrative branch not involved in education called the "Department for the Protection of Women and Children." Thus, in the eyes of the state, Chrysalis is considered not a school, but a "Center for Rehabilitation of Disabled Children," with all the links to medical and social services that this title implies.

To Sophia, her peers, and the children, however, the space is patently a school. Despite the implications of its funding, the reality of the distance between the administration and Chrysalis, as well as Sophia's status as Director, allowed the daily workings of Chrysalis to be entirely based on the needs of the partici-

The teachers at the Chrysalis School employ ... aspects of Waldorf philosophy that they have amassed from distant sources to fit their needs.

pants, rather than the dictates of rehabilitation models promulgated by the state.¹¹ Points of contest do arise around the permitted age of enrolled children (officially children may be six to eighteen years of age). This results in “hiding” overage and underage students in school records and when regional administrators visit. Similar contests may arise regarding the structure of the day and the educational philosophy employed in lessons.

At Chrysalis, children may attend the school with permission of Sofia, usually as a result of their mothers requesting that their child be enrolled, although occasionally a relative or a teacher at another school may make this request. Once enrolled in Chrysalis, children may attend as long as they or their family members wish. Some children attend for a summer or a year, while others have never known any other school.

The space has increasingly served as a resource for women who have given birth to children with special needs, as the older women working there take on mentoring roles. Often women with infant or toddler children who have been identified with special needs visit the school, which, despite the limitations of its funding, is very much aligned with the broad mission that drives Sophia and the other educators.

As Chrysalis has become increasingly stable, its funding renewed year after year and its ties with educators and the Waldorf School in Irkutsk strengthened, it has begun to be recognized as an institution in the broader community. Neighbors notice that Chrysalis has brought jobs, and thus increased stability and commercial opportunity to the town, and that the social network that has grown around the school provides an important safety net. One neighbor, the English teacher at the town school, told me, “Sofia has done a lot over there. Not only has she made a place for those kids to go, but she has helped out the mothers a lot—jobs, support.” Neighbors also turn to Chrysalis with problems. For instance, they asked Sophia to take on two children, three and four years old, who, neglected by alcoholic parents,

I was awed by the determination of this group of women who looked beyond the possibilities offered to them in order to build, in the Chrysalis School, an exemplary community and learning environment.

were roaming the town hungry and mistrustful of people. After six months at the school, the children appeared healthy and functional; Sophia planned to continue working with them (off the books) indefinitely or until they moved to the town school for first grade.

The Chrysalis School has also begun to bring the language and fundamental concepts of equality and sensitivity concerning disability to the remote region. Local newspaper coverage has identified the strong contribution that the school makes

to the lives of its students, against all odds. The articles are a valuable source of publicity for the school and a significant step toward spreading compassion and acceptance of people with disabilities in the region.

Challenges Today

Despite the growth of Chrysalis since its establishment in 2000, there is still a gap between what the school provides and what the community needs. The limitations of state funding, the problem of a growing number of students older than eighteen, the lack of support for the students’ future lives as adults, and the constant negotiations with funders have led Sophia and the others to begin seeking other models.

“This time, we will not use government money,” Sofia told me. Instead, the women hope to build a self-sufficient community. They envisage a workshop, farm, craft center that will become a home and place of employment for Chrysalis graduates. In many ways what Sofia and her colleagues seek to build is a Camphill community,¹² an inclusive and self-sufficient collective with its roots in Steiner philosophy. There is already one such community in Russia, Camphill Svetlana,¹³ located outside of St. Petersburg, which is officially allied with the international Camphill movement. The Chrysalis collective’s plans, however, are based on the model of Talisman,¹⁴ a similar but unaffiliated community outside of Irkutsk. The Chrysalis women plan to grow much of the food that they will consume

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both at the school and at the new center; in addition they plan to sell handicrafts and hope eventually to own a cow and a horse.

The Chrysalis collective will face significant challenges in establishing such a community in Petrushka. For their plan to be realized, they will have to implement a successful entrepreneurial enterprise and garner income through farming and selling handicrafts and baked goods. This is a difficult goal to accomplish considering the level of poverty facing the general community in Petrushka; whether their neighbors will have money to spend and goods to barter remains to be seen.

Likewise, they are far from the only ones seeking to supplement their income by selling milk, cheese, baskets, and so forth, a common practice in many post-Soviet communities,¹⁵ and these micro-enterprises often fail to reach sustainable levels.

A further possibility for bolstering the sustainability and supporting the start-up cost of their so-called Butterfly Garden would be to secure funding through an NGO. Chrysalis, however, like many rural grassroots organizations in Russia, has few connections to such resources. With neither Internet access nor English language skills, and no knowledge of grant writing or the workings of non-governmental service organizations, this possibility remains out of reach. They are not alone in this problem. Scholars have noted, "The population at large has little if any idea of the why and how of international assistance for NGOs work. It would be in the interest of both of those giving and those receiving grant money if this situation were tackled."¹⁶ It should be added that the domestic non-profit sphere in Russia has only just begun to develop, even in major cities, and the concept of philanthropy in general is largely absent. At present, plans for the Butterfly Garden will continue without support from non-governmental sponsors.

When I was last in Petrushka, I saw that a building had been reclaimed on the outskirts of town and was being renovated as a new community center. The building was in horrid disrepair. A former kindergarten building abandoned for lack

of children during the darkest days of *perestroika*, it had long sat empty as an ad hoc barn for roaming cows and a gathering place for local drunks. But it was large, had a solid foundation, a sizeable area of adjacent farmable land, and—most important—it didn't belong to anyone else. A team of parents and teachers began scheduling group workdays to clean up the land and to repair the roof, the windows (which had long ago been knocked out and broken at the sills), and the floor (which had fallen through to the foundation). The team began petitioning the regional administration for rights to the building and land. And, as a collective, they planted their first crop of potatoes, which, I am told, they harvested the next fall.

Conclusion

As a young anthropologist encountering courage in the face of severe poverty, I was awed by the determination of this group of women who looked beyond the possibilities offered to them in order to build, in the Chrysalis

School, an exemplary community and learning environment.

The parent-educators' integration of Waldorf methodologies is remarkable on several levels. First, it demonstrates their relentlessness in reaching across geographical and cultural boundaries to find solutions to the challenges they encountered as parents of special needs children. Second, it speaks to the deep resonance of the Steiner philosophy. Finally, it highlights the need for international contribution to local concerns in rural Russia (despite legislation that has severely limited the activity of foreign NGOs within the Russian Federation). Were it not for the efforts of the Friends of Waldorf Education that brought Waldorf-based school communities to Irkutsk, the Chrysalis School might never have come into being.

After my first visit to the school—a brief two days with a delegation of three Waldorf educators from Switzerland and Britain—I found myself on a train, rushing through the Siberian dusk back toward the city of Irkutsk. After a moment of silence reflecting on our visit, my travel compan-

[T]he domestic non-profit sphere in Russia has only just begun to develop, even in major cities, and the concept of philanthropy in general is largely absent.

ions turned to one another. "What do you think?" I remember asking, "Can they do it? Will they be able to build a more permanent community?" On the one hand, it seemed impossible that a group of women with such limited resources could build, with little guidance, a self-sustaining Steiner-based community. But, had we visited ten years earlier, we would have viewed it far beyond their reach to build a functioning school on nothing more than their own sweat, hope, and volition.

During my subsequent stay in the village, for three weeks in May of 2005, the mothers who work in the school gave me their own answer to my question. Nothing in Petrushka is easy; there will always be more work than hours in the day. But there is nothing to do but keep on working. There is nothing else worth fighting for. I am, in turn, overwhelmed by the scope of work that remains to be done, and enormously inspired by their story. Where the Soviet Union failed, these women stand together, moving forward, armed with a powerful guiding philosophy and an iron will.

Endnotes

1. International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education, "Russia, Ukraine, Kirgistan, http://www.iaswece.org/country_projects/around_the_world/former_soviet_union.aspx.
2. Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners, "Friends of Waldorf Education," <http://www.freunde-waldorf.de/en/the-friends/>.
3. I have used pseudonyms for the names of the town, the school, and individuals, following the precedent of my longer ethnography on this topic, a thesis from which portions of this article emerged [Cassandra S. Hartblay. "An Absolutely Different Life: locating disability, motherhood, and local power in rural Siberia" (Undergraduate honors thesis, Macalester College, 2006), in Digital Commons @ Macalester, http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/anth_honors/1/]. I also presented a paper on this research at the 2006 conference of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Vancouver. Although much material is shared between these various texts, this article is unique in its focus on Waldorf methodologies and in a general, rather than anthropological, orientation.
4. For more on the deterioration of Siberian settlements in the 1980s, see: "The Bam Zone: Permanent Residents" The Glasnost Film Festival: Video Four, 1986.
5. For a further discussion of the economies of *perestroika* and early post-Soviet period in Buryatia, see: Caroline Humphrey, *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies after Socialism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002.
6. This diagnosis is often translated into English as "cerebral palsy," but the reality of diagnosis in the Soviet medical system is actually limited by an insufficient range of terminology, and "DTsP" refers to a broad range of diagnoses that includes cerebral palsy. Sofia told me of one doctor, considered the best in the region, yet everyone says, and everyone knows, that he almost always diagnoses DTsP. "Just look at Vova and Lyuba, and then look at Tolya and Sasha," she told me, indicating children with very different symptoms, all of whom have been diagnosed with DTsP.
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14. Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners, "Why Just Siberia?" <http://www.freunde-waldorf.de/en/info/publikation/newsletter/2007-he/rus-irkutsk-0707/>.
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Work of the Research Fellows

One Hundred Meters Squared

Michael D'Alco

"It is faster to walk than it is to take the train."

— Henry David Thoreau

"It is faster to hitchhike to Stockholm than it is to take the bus."

— Amanda and Anatoli

A number of years ago I began to take a serious look at global environmental issues. The largest and most pressing of these issues is clearly the question of global warming or climate change. I became convinced that this issue is not driven by a correct understanding of the scientific issues but is, instead, driven by an incorrect view of the role of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. One of the key elements of this analysis was the discovery that warming created in large cities alone may be sufficient to account for all of the warming observed in the historical temperature data for any particular city.¹ This analysis results in the conclusion that we may not have a global warming issue, but, instead, a local and regional issue that is independent of the type of fuel used.

While presenting a two-week course on environmental issues to a group of young adults in Järna, Sweden, recently, I thought about how each human being affects the earth as a whole. I became curious about how much land is available to each human being, assuming that each human on the earth has an equal area of land. The result surprised me. Presently, there are approximately 7 billion people on this planet. Knowing that population is still growing, I decided to use a population of 8 billion to plan a bit for the future. Taking the diameter of the earth as 7,915 miles, I quickly calculated the surface area of the earth. When we take the surface area of the earth, remove the

71% covered by water and reduce that land by 50% to account for frozen land masses and deserts, the resulting area of land available to each human being is approximately an area 109 yards by 109 yards or approximately 100 meters square.² That's it—the length of a football field by the length of a football field per human being.

Everything that you need or value in the world has to be supported by human beings' abilities to work harmoniously with a piece of the earth roughly that size. Your food, water, clothing, shelter, transportation, energy, entertainment... you get the picture. Technically, you also have a piece of desert or chunk of ice the same size, as well as a piece of the ocean about four times this size, but, in essence, your life is supported by, at most, a couple of hundred meters squared. Surely, such a fact implies the possibility of a new means of looking at environmental and social issues.

Our present industrial lifestyle is only possible through the glaring imbalances of land use that affluent (even modestly affluent) people of the western hemisphere—roughly speaking—have with respect to the average person in the world. We know that the world is simply not large enough for each person to live as an affluent Westerner, each with his or her own gasoline-powered vehicle and a current American commute.

Unless we intend to begin the process of deciding who is on and who is off—a "real reality" version of *Survivor*—or unless we accept the dire consequences of our unconscious continuation of the way things are, a new look at environmental issues is required.

For a number of years I have been interested in the artwork of traditional cultures. This interest includes the cultures of Tibet, Kham, Mongolia, the Pacific Northwest, the Inuit, the traditional

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culture of the mountains of Austria, and, recently, the Sami people of Sweden. When looking at their artwork, I am immediately struck by how little work there is and also the similarities—and differences—among cultures in style and intention. Each piece generally has a function in daily life (it is not “art for art’s sake”) and has been made beautiful because it is, in fact, one of its user’s only possessions. A short list of such items may include a knife, a needle case, a pouch for flint and steel, a bowl or spoon, clothing, boots, and a hat. Except for our clothing, the closest we come to such items in the West are a cell phone, keys, and a credit card.

Traditional people are frequently nomadic. Most of what they need is on their bodies at all times. As nomadic people, they move easily; when one area of their land becomes overused, they move on and let the earth heal and return to a natural balance. These people know every aspect of the earth and its rhythms. Their life not only depends on natural rhythms; their life is one of these rhythms.

If each human life depends on land roughly 100 meters by 100 meters, it is no longer possible for human beings simply to move from a place on the earth that they have just worn out to another place. We would simply be moving into another human being’s “worn out” place. We require a new level of consciousness and a new means of working harmoniously with the earth.

It is possible for every human being to live on the earth supported by an area of land 100 meters by 100 meters if every human being recognizes the necessity, takes the opportunity, and assumes the daily responsibility to develop a relationship with a piece of the earth. Such a relationship will be as different for each piece of the earth as each human being is different from another. Such work requires great sensitivity in reading patterns and establishing relationships with the land, as practiced intuitively for centuries by traditional people. This work also requires the great imagination, ingenuity, and creativity that have developed in supporting our modern ways of life.

To make such a relationship with the earth a reality, we must educate human beings who are keen observers of subtle patterns in their surroundings (think: phenomenological science meets a native dowser or shaman). Here, the ability to

see what the land needs in order to become more balanced is combined with the patterns and resources already present (think: biodynamic agriculture meets the eye of the hunter). Here, every human creation is functional, beautiful, and integrated into the harmony of the local environment (think: practical and fine arts meet traditional indigenous crafts). Here, everyone will have a relationship with a neighbor so that understanding another human being and her task will become as important as understanding our relationship with the earth (think: the best of Western culture meets the wisdom of generations handed down by indigenous elders).

The opportunity is here, now. What will you do with the 100 meters by 100 meters for which you are responsible?³ The world awaits your answer.

Endnotes

1. Nordell, Bo. “Global Warming Is Large-Scale Thermal Energy Storage,” in *Thermal Energy Storage for Sustainable Energy Consumption*, Halime Ö Paksoy, ed. Springer Netherlands, 2007. An abstract may be found at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/wkv36rxuu4561912/>.
2. You may have slightly more land than this estimate—about 30% of the earth’s land is ice or desert; on the other hand, only about 13% is arable.
3. An area a bit less than 2.5 acres.

Deepest thanks to Amanda and Anatoli, students whom I was teaching recently in Sweden who took me to Stockholm one Saturday afternoon to see the art of the Sami. We didn’t take the train, we hitchhiked—it was faster.

Basic Schools and the Future of Waldorf Education

Peter Guttenhöfer

Closing address of the 2008 National Teachers' Conference of the Federation of Waldorf Schools in South Africa

I would like to give you a sketch of an idea that is both simple and complicated, one that is both new and obvious. The idea came to me through my encounters in Africa over the past fourteen years, but also through my experiences with Waldorf schools in Germany, Brazil, Russia, and other countries. I have seen wonderful Waldorf schools—big schools with 12 or even 13 classes, with almost 1000 pupils, beautiful buildings, and a staff of 70 to 80 teachers. I have been teaching for 36 years in one of these schools—my own beloved school in Kassel, Germany. But I have also visited tiny Waldorf schools with up to, perhaps, 6 classes—in simple huts, with a few teachers who are provided with salaries enough for a sparrow's living. And I have seen many places without any Waldorf school at all.

Observing the quality of change in our modern life, I will now express my deepest concern briefly—that is, the increasing worldwide maltreatment, not to say abuse, of the children of our time by systems of state schooling. There is no time to lose. But our forces are limited. In South Africa we cannot afford to develop large numbers of such schools as Michael Mount [a larger South African Waldorf school], given the worldwide shortage of Waldorf-trained teachers, the lack of money, and the absence of support from the authorities.

So let us build a picture of a school reduced to the smallest possible size, a mini-Waldorf school, or, as I call it, a “basic school” of four school years combined with a kindergarten of three years. So we have a picture of a school of seven years for children from ages four to ten.

What happens with the children, when they turn ten? We have learned from Rudolf Steiner that the children cross a “Rubicon,” which means

that at this stage of life they have achieved the foundations for a secure and stable immune system. They have developed their own particular organism of health. The children have gained what we call resilience—in other words, a coat of armor to protect themselves from threats and temptations to come. When, now, children have to leave a Waldorf school environment, along with the wonderful education they have received from their teachers, they will be armored against whatever happens to them in any other school they attend.

So, let us look at these three years of pre-school and kindergarten, together with four years of school, as a full and complete pedagogical support for the children, not merely as a fragment of what has to be completed over a period of seven, eight, or even twelve years.

Look at what children do during the first three years of school. The curriculum contains the most wonderful topics, with the journey of learning to write, to read, to calculate, all thoroughly worked through according to Waldorf methods. Children are allowed to work with joy, slowly, quietly, peacefully, and free from competition and stress. Each child has the opportunity to be imbued with the whole spiritual quality of Waldorf education.

But who can do this? My answer is simple: mothers who have matured through the realities of life, especially those who have not been academically trained. Such women with common sense will be able to teach to write, to read, to calculate, to knit and stitch, to draw, to sing, to dance, to exercise in rhythm, to play, to garden, to do housework, and to tell stories. All these, all the curriculum contents of the first four years, contain a basic education for each human being.

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With a certain amount of training complementing the common sense and sound educational experience of these women, who may well have raised children of her own, such a teacher will then have the abilities to work with a group of children.

How many African women have said that anthroposophy has brought them back to their own roots; that anthroposophical knowledge can link directly to the traditional wisdom of Africa? I believe that only Waldorf education, springing from anthroposophy, can really respond to the needs of African children—and to the social chaos of South African society.

When looking at our picture of a basic school we have to ask ourselves: Will parents have trust in a school where their children will reach only fourth grade? Only life can answer such a question. We have yet to appeal to those parents who would appreciate an offering of four wonderful years of school as a complete educational program in its own right. We usually promise to go up to at least eighth grade, and often further. Of course we would have to fulfill our professional responsibilities in using the fourth year as an adaptation year to prepare the children for any school of their choice—if there is such a school at all.

This picture can easily be modified. Imagine a school with five school years. Why not? This does not change the basic idea.

What we can see and agree on are the untold numbers of children waiting for Waldorf education. A huge amount of educational competence lies hidden below the surface of life, often unused. “Everything that the government schools bring is dead!” said Credo Mutwa, the famous sangoma

[an African shaman] and artist, whom I recently met.

It is not my intention to persuade you suddenly to found a number of basic schools. I know that all of you are overloaded with the commitments you have to fulfill. But if there is a group of people with initiative to start a school, I would like to encourage them with the idea of a basic school, to make it small, because “small is beautiful,” as the saying goes. In the meanwhile, the development of fully extended Waldorf schools from grades one to twelve must go on without being affected by the idea that “small is beautiful.” Better to call my proposal a basic school, working with elements of Waldorf education, rather than to call it a Waldorf school. My proposal addresses the question of concentrating our limited forces and limited financial means to the utmost and asks us to focus on the necessary task of our times.

Peter Guttenhöfer, who has a PhD in history, including the history of literature and the history of art, has been a teacher at the Freie Waldorfschule Kassel, Germany, since 1972. For the past 26 years he has also been engaged in teacher training at the Seminar für Waldorfpädagogik, Kassel. He is also a member of the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle beim Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen. Since 1980, Dr. Guttenhöfer has educated teachers and advised schools in many countries around the world.

When One Plus One Equals Three: Evidence, Logic, and Professional Discourse

Douglas Gerwin

Paul Dirac, the twentieth-century mathematician known for his acerbic brevity, is said to have sent the following cable to his colleagues following the birth of his first daughter: “ $1 + 1 = 3$.”

In the context of conventional mathematics, this equation is incorrect; from the perspective of married life, however, it may constitute a true statement, assuming that Dirac and his wife did indeed bring a new member into their family. It all hinges on what you allow by the term “plus:” Does it mean simply the *combination* of previously existing entities, or can it also represent the transformational *union* of two entities into something greater than either one of them?

This was the kind of question that hung in the air of two conferences I attended during Easter Week earlier this year. Though separated by six thousand miles and nine time zones, these two gatherings both adumbrated the same nagging question: When it comes to researching the nature of the human being, what are we willing to accept as evidence—along with all of the assumptions that make that evidence meaningful—and what are we unwilling to accept? Put differently, when, if at all, is the human being simply an additive collection of traits, and when, if at all, is it a being capable of transforming itself into something greater than itself?

The first gathering, held on the eve of the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in San Diego, California, brought together a small but broad spectrum of researchers and educators from North American universities and Waldorf institutes; the second, held a few days later at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, included invited empirical researchers and Waldorf educators from the fields of biology, pedagogy, and curative education.

There can be no progress on this question of legitimate evidence without at least a measure of agreement on what constitutes a human being.

Take, for instance, the question of stages of human development. At the San Diego gathering, participants representing Waldorf education came with the assumption that the human being undergoes predictable stages of development for which different approaches to education are appropriate, indeed necessary. This assumption was not shared by participants from other educational streams, for whom questions of developmentally appropriate modes of teaching did not figure in their research nor in their suggestions for educational reform. And while they respected the idea of developmental stages in planning curricula, they did not seem interested in exploring it for their own proposed reforms. The conversations were stimulating, personable, and genial, and yet I had the sense we were talking past, rather than with, one another. To put it concretely: If rock music is perceived to be developmentally inappropriate at a certain age, for example, we will not include it in the curriculum. If stages of development are not recognized, however, there is no reason to exclude catchy rock tunes from the classroom, especially if they help to capture the attention of restless youngsters. Bracket the existence of developmental stages, as understood by Waldorf educators, and the exclusion of rock music from the classroom may be perceived as quaintly old fashioned, even overly protective.

Skewed Justifications

A similar, though more nuanced, feeling of skewed discourse pervaded the gathering of some 150 participants at the Goetheanum, who were jointly invited by Michaela Glöckler, leader of the Medical Section of the Anthroposophical Society, and Christof Wiechert, leader of its Pedagogical Section. Their stated intention was to provide a forum in which researchers from a multitude of backgrounds could converse and seek common ground.

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As a representative of Waldorf education, it was a wake-up call to hear that modern empirical science can quite legitimately be seen to support the practices of Waldorf education, on the one hand, while at the same time to be told that this evidence should in no way be used as the basis for making pedagogical decisions about appropriate curriculum for any one age group.

This caution deserves to be heard among Waldorf school circles in which statistical results of experiments conducted in mainstream science are used to justify certain practices—or their absence—in Waldorf school classrooms. Heiner Ullrich, Professor of Education at the Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, who devoted his doctoral dissertation to Waldorf education, argued forcefully that pedagogical principles are built upon what *ought* to be among children, not only on what is their situation in the present case. He pointed out that teachers need to shape their lessons not only according to how their children are but according to how they *should* develop. If they appear too ruddy in their cheeks, for instance, we may balance their disposition with exercises in memory; if they grow too pale, we introduce exercises that stimulate imagination. These exercises are introduced because we feel the children should be helped to achieve a condition of healthy balance.

The results of empirical research into the development of children, however, are intended to indicate solely what is—or may be—the case in one or another set of circumstances. These empirical results are never intended to tell teachers what to do. “A statement of what is can never be used to derive a statement of what ought to be,” Ullrich concluded. “Logically, an *ought* statement can never give rise to an *is* statement.”

In practical terms, this serves as warning against using the results of contemporary science, such as brain research, to justify the practices of Waldorf education. While it may be useful, even reassuring, to know that the results of mainstream empirical research are consistent with the practices of Waldorf education, it is a logical fallacy—and even a disservice to this empirical research—to wrench it into the witness stand and use it as testimony in favor of Waldorf educational practices. Contemporary research may serve to

confirm, or challenge, what we do, but it cannot be appropriated in order to instruct us what to do. For pedagogical reform we need to exercise pedagogical insight, rather than rely upon empirical results.

Ullrich was one of several university professors at the Dornach conference who, based in their empirical research, offered fresh insights into the nature of childhood. But they vigorously resisted the suggestion, advanced by Christof Wiechert, that they might be illustrating certain archetypal principles that underlie the unfolding of the human being. For Ullrich, childhood is “an historical phenomenon, not a universal reality.” In his view, children are children by dint of what we make of them in a cultural and historical context, and not spiritual entities going through archetypal stages of development.

Professor Hans Georg Schlack, chief physician at the Children’s Neurological Center in Bonn, Germany, and a specialist in neuro-pediatrics, took a similar view in his summary of empirical research concerning the ability of young children first to recognize their reflection, second to refer to themselves by their own name, and, finally, to name themselves using the first person pronoun. He related that researchers studied the first step by painting a red dot on the forehead of an infant and then holding it in front of a mirror. To begin with, the toddlers would attempt to touch the red dot by reaching for the mirror surface; eventually they would touch the dot by tapping their own forehead. Schlack pointed out that most children made this switch over roughly a one-year period—between the ages of 12 and 26 months. By contrast, most children began to refer to themselves by their own name over a much longer period of 2.3 years—between the ages of 14 and 42 months. And the final achievement, of referring to oneself as “I,” took most children an ever longer span of 2.5 years—between the ages of 24 and 54 months.

His point was to stress the wide range of variability in the timing of these stages, and he categorically rejected the notion of any narrowly defined “normal” or archetypal timetable. He was unwilling to be drawn into speculation as to why the first period was so much shorter than the second and third periods.

From an anthroposophical perspective of the human being, however, it was striking to notice that the more that a change was tied to the physical body (i.e., learning to touch a red dot on one's forehead), the shorter the time frame of development, and, conversely, the more a change was independent of the physical body (i.e., referring to oneself as "I"), the longer the span of development.

Evidence and Logic

Perhaps the most striking example of the difference between mainstream and anthroposophical research was offered by Wolfgang Schad, a Waldorf school graduate and high school teacher who also taught biology of evolution and morphology at the University of Witten/Herdecke, Germany. He painted a remarkable picture of the human placenta as a physiological representation of the higher self that accompanies the human being as it takes hold of a physical body.¹ He described how the placenta initially performs all of the physiological functions on behalf of the growing embryo, and only gradually relinquishes these functions as the fetus becomes capable of taking them on itself. Basic functions, such as respiration, circulation, digestion, and excretion, are slowly handed over to the fetus as it develops. One can say that the placenta "dies away" as the embryo emerges, so that the birth of the embryo at nine months coincides with the death of the placenta. "In short," Schad concluded, "one can think of the placenta as the best kind of Waldorf teacher, one who gradually steps back while handing over the functions of existence to the child as it is able to take them on, until the child is launched in full freedom, no longer bound by any umbilical attachment to the organism that gave it help for as long as it needed it."

How are we to interpret the evidence of human development if we cannot come to a shared picture of what a human being is, including its higher nature? A view of the human being that excludes any spiritually guided stages of unfolding will make no sense of Schad's research beyond its basic empirical data.

In an essay published some years ago,² Schad offers three levels of interpretation when it comes to studying the full human being, using three distinct modes of thinking or sets of logical assumptions. At the most physical level, he says, we can

understand the human body in terms of the laws of the physical world, which we also know as laws of causality. Here events of the past give rise to—and often fully explain—events of the present. Thus, given two billiard balls, A and B, one can fully explain, even predict, the motion of billiard ball B once it is hit by billiard ball A; in this instance, the present is explained by the past. Cause explains effect.

Once we rise to the level of the living physical body—that is, a physical entity given life by an etheric organism—the rules change. However we try, we will be hard-pressed to explain present behavior fully in terms of past events. Here Schad introduces a new way of thinking, which he calls "biological thinking," in which we let go of the model of the past determining the present and speak only in terms of one present event coinciding with another present event, without making any claim as to one being the cause of the other. We thereby escape the conundrum that causal thinking poses of the living realm: Which comes first, for example, the chicken or egg? Instead, we restrict ourselves to observing the close relationship between chickens and eggs. In causal thinking, we can say, "If this, then that"; in biological thinking, we say "When this, then that."

Finally, we rise to the level of the sentient living physical body—that is, a living physical organism inhabited, at least for as long as we are awake, by a conscious soul or astral body—and Schad describes how the rules of explanation change once again. At this level we make more sense of present events by attending to the soul's desires or wishes; in other words, we make sense of present events not by appeal to some abstract cause in the past, but, rather, by attending to the nature of some as yet unrealized future. At this level, paradoxical though it may sound, the present is shaped more by the future than by the past. Schad describes this approach to understanding the human being at the soul level as "teleological thinking," in which explanation is couched not in terms of a past cause but of a future goal (Greek: *telos*). At the level of the soul, we understand the human being more fully by seeing how the future gives shape to the present.

In this way, Schad points to three distinct levels of understanding when it comes to the study of human nature. Evidence couched in terms of causality may adequately account for events at

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the level of the physical body but prove to be incapable of making sense of the human being in its living and conscious aspects. For these levels we need other forms of evidence, and other ways of thinking about this evidence.³

Herein lies a two-fold task. The first is to determine which kind of evidence we are considering and with which type of thinking it is best understood. When does $1 + 1 = 2$, and when not? The second is to articulate as clearly as possible the logic—causal, coincident, or teleological—by which we are assessing this evidence so that we can more successfully reach out to other researchers at the level at which they are conducting their work.

Endnotes

1. This research forms part of a new publication, which we hope to excerpt in translation in a forthcoming issue of the *Research Bulletin*.
2. See Wolfgang Schad, "Scientific Thinking as an Approach to the Etheric," in *Toward a Phenomenology of the Etheric World*, ed. Jochen Bockemühl, Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1985, pp. 163–197.
3. E.F. Schumacher, in a succinct little volume entitled *A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), develops this idea in a similar way, describing what he calls four levels of *adaequatio*. The highest of these four levels is reserved for an understanding of the human "I," or that aspect of the human being that is not only sentient or conscious, but self-conscious.

Reports from Current Projects of the Research Institute

Progress Report on the Waldorf Parent Survey

Martin Novom

Our interactions as members of communities of adults in Waldorf schools are a subject for lively and frequent conversations. How parents view their schools and the teachers and administrators who inhabit them is a perennial subject in meetings, hallways, and private discussions. While we all may have direct experiences and anecdotal data about the perceptions, concerns, and hopes of the adult communities in our Waldorf schools, we lack reliable data. Until we have a better basis for understanding, we can expect to bounce from one issue to another with little hope for improvement.

With the guidance and assistance of the Research Institute, I am conducting a new study on perceptions of parents and their role in Waldorf schools. This article provides a report of the process and describes the background, method, and some of the challenges this research has entailed.

In early 2006 it became apparent that there was an opportunity to use the annual multi-school workshops that I had been presenting under my own organizational banner, that of the Alexis de Tocqueville Institute, to conduct research. Over the previous five years I had experimented with ways to improve adult learning through these workshops. I had introduced a questionnaire, as a teaching tool, at the beginning of each workshop. It functioned as a means of setting the tone and providing an overview of questions helpful to engaging with the workshop topic. The workshop series I was preparing for the 2006–2007 school year was called, “The Role of the Parent: Joining Forces with Your School.”

When I realized that such a questionnaire also offered the potential to collect valuable data, I contacted the Research Institute, and we agreed to work closely on the design and distribution of a revised questionnaire. We recognized that here

was an opportunity to gather useful data and, perhaps, to publish an article of value to Waldorf schools. Since the start of this research project I have discontinued professional work under the Alexis de Tocqueville Institute banner and am now conducting my workshops and consulting as a member of Skystone Ryan, an international consulting firm.

The revised questionnaire became part of four multi-school workshops in different regions of the U.S. between October 2006 and January 2008. Parents, faculty, staff, and trustees from several different schools attended each workshop. Workshop participants were told that their anonymous responses to the questionnaire would be collected at the end of the workshop for possible inclusion in a national research project.

While these four workshops provided a good cross section of a Waldorf school community, they did not provide a large enough sample size. To remedy this, I contacted a number of schools to invite their participation. Since distribution and collection were conducted by intermediaries at these schools, great care was taken in communicating with the contact person at each school. I asked each school to seek a range of participants, not just parents. I attached a cover letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and my commitment to keeping all participants anonymous. I was successful in arranging for the distribution and collection of questionnaires from six schools. I also collected questionnaires at a regional conference.

The questionnaire was designed for paper and pen responses, with 32 multiple choice and narrative response questions. At the four workshops and one conference, questionnaires were distributed and collected manually. For the six schools, I distributed an original by email attachment and arranged for a contact at each school to print

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hard copies for distribution and collection. The completed questionnaires were mailed back from the six schools. I collected a total of 313 completed questionnaires.

The purpose of this research is to collect useful data from parents, teachers, administrators, and active volunteers—trustees and committee

members—regarding their perceptions of the role and perspectives of parents in Waldorf schools. As of this writing, the data has been compiled and is being analyzed. We anticipate the publication of conclusions from the analysis in a forthcoming issue of the *Research Bulletin*.

News from the Online Waldorf Library

Marianne Alsop

The Online Waldorf Library (OWL) continues to see an increasing number of inquiries and requests for information. Over the past eight months traffic has increased by 15% over the same period last year.

Daily requests for general information are directed to other web-based resources like AWSNA, WECAN, and the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education. Direct links to these and other groups working internationally with Waldorf education are on the links page of the OWL site. A new addition is the link to the World Language Teachers in Waldorf Schools website, a helpful web-based community of foreign language teachers and resources.

The current economy has led to a number of requests for homeschooling resources from parents who have had to withdraw their children from independent Waldorf schools. Their requests are heartfelt, and it is obvious that, having made the decision to withdraw their child from school, they want to continue the education as well as they can. The OWL site offers many specific curriculum resources as well as links to homeschooling resource sites.

Included in the many requests for information over the past months are these topics:

- Teaching resources for working with children with special needs, both in homeschool and public school settings.
- Understanding sleep, from physical and spiritual standpoints.
- Research on gender issues specific to curriculum.
- How to work with the Extra Lesson in a homeschool situation.
- The relationship of knitting to brain development.
- Teaching German in a homeschool setting.
- Teaching music in the middle grades.
- Research on the development of handwriting.
- The evolutionary sequence of consonants.

Most notable this year has been the increased use of online or e-books, specifically the titles in the “Foundations of Waldorf Education” series. Other frequently used online resources include the *Science Newsletters*; Guenther Hauk’s *Handwork and Handicrafts*; and back issues of *Gateways*.

The Online Waldorf Library invites your questions and comments, and encourages readers of the *Research Bulletin* to explore this valuable virtual library.

Visit the Online Waldorf Library at

www.waldorflibrary.org.

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About the Research Institute for Waldorf Education

The Research Institute for Waldorf Education is an initiative working on behalf of the Waldorf school movement. It receives support and guidance from the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science and financial support through the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), the Midwest Shared Gifting Group, the Waldorf Schools Fund, the Waldorf Curriculum Fund, and private donors through the Rudolf Steiner Foundation.

The Research Institute was founded in 1996 in order to deepen and enhance the quality of Waldorf education, to engage in serious and sustained dialogue with the wider educational-cultural community, and to support research that would serve educators in all types of schools in their work with children and adolescents.

The Research Institute has responded to the call for research as a top priority of the Waldorf school movement by becoming a supporting organization of AWSNA and by co-sponsoring research projects with the Association and with the Pedagogical Section.

We support research projects that deal with essential contemporary educational issues such as the role of play in early childhood, attention-related disorders, trends in adolescent development and innovations in the high school curriculum, survey of Waldorf graduates, learning expectations and assessment, computers in education, the role of art in education, and new ways to identify and address different learning styles. The Research Institute has sponsored colloquia and conferences that have brought together educators, psychologists, doctors, and social scientists. We have published a *Research Bulletin* twice a year for the last decade, and we are developing and distributing educational resources to help teachers in all aspects of their work.

We sponsor the Online Waldorf Library: www.waldorflibrary.org, whose mission is to make available contemporary writings on Waldorf education, and we host our own site: www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org, where up-to-date research is posted.

The Research Institute is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization and gratefully accepts donations.

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Art in Human Development
Attention-Related Disorders Research Project
Effects of High-Stakes Testing on Children
Evaluation of the Urban Waldorf School in Milwaukee
Learning Expectations and Assessment Project
Mathematics – Phobias and Remediation
Reading, Writing, and Reading Comprehension
Survey of Waldorf Seniors
Teaching Sensible Science Workshops
Waldorf High School Research Projects
Waldorf Graduates Survey Phase I
Survey of Waldorf Graduates, Phase II

Colloquia and Conferences

Towards Wholeness in Learning, 1996
Pathways of Healthy Child Development, 1998
Andover Proceedings: Tapping the Wellsprings of Health in Adolescence, 2001
Subject-Specific Colloquia, 2000-2004
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Mathematics
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Computer and Information Technology
Life Science and Environmental Studies
World History – Symptomatology

Resource Development

Computers in Education, handbook for teachers
Being on Earth, a book for scientists and teachers
On-Line Waldorf Library, a web site of resources for Waldorf education
Themes in Waldorf Education, compilation of Rudolf Steiner's indications on teaching language arts and mathematics
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