

From the Editor

Stephen Keith Sagarin 3

Report from the Co-Directors

David Mitchell and Douglas Gerwin 5

What Can Rudolf Steiner's Words to the First Waldorf Teachers Tell Us Today?

Christof Wiechert 7

Social Emotional Intelligence:

The Basis for a New Vision of Education in the United States

Linda Lantieri 17

Rudolf Steiner's Research Methods for Teachers

Martyn Rawson 33

Combined Grades in Waldorf Schools:

Creating Classrooms Teachers Can Feel Good About

Lori L. Freer 41

Educating Gifted Students in Waldorf Schools

Ellen Fjeld Køttker and Balazs Tarnai 49

How Do Teachers Learn with Teachers?

Understanding Child Study as a Case for Professional Learning Communities

Marisha Plotnik 55

Does Our Educational System Contribute to Attentional and Learning Difficulties in Our Children?

Susan R. Johnson, MD, FAAP 63

Survey on Waldorf School Trustee Education

Martin Novom and Jean Yeager 65

About the Research Institute for Waldorf Education
News from the Online Waldorf Library
—Marianne Alsop 69

Subscription Form 72

Stephen Keith Sagarin

On one hand, there's the superficial use we make of things like the word "Waldorf." I recently counted sixty-one uses of the word Waldorf as a qualifier, as if, once we get past Waldorf school, Waldorf education, and Waldorf teacher, we still know what we mean when we talk about "Waldorf values" or a "Waldorf home." And that doesn't include the unattached, free-floating "Waldorf" to which someone recently drew my attention: "In Waldorf we..." In Waldorf we trust?

George Orwell, in *Politics and the English Language*, famously drew our attention to the ways in which we were in danger of draining meaning from language—and from there it's a very short step to draining meaning from life itself. As he wrote, "The slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.... Orthodoxy, of whatever color, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style," and, "If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought."

When we use "Waldorf" in a way that creates insiders—those who we believe know what we mean, and who agree with us—and outsiders—those who aren't in the know—we undermine our meaning, our connection to others, and our relationship to the world in which we live and teach before we have said anything further. We create, inhabit, and perpetuate a jargon that simply works against whatever good we hope to do in the world.

On the other hand, associated with the word "Waldorf" as it pertains to education, deep wells of meaning await anyone with a bucket and a rope long enough to reach them. By comparing the words that Rudolf Steiner spoke to the teachers of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart during the last six years of his life with the life of the school during this time, Christof Wiechert, in this issue of the *Bulletin*, creates a historical context of meaning in which we can understand Steiner's words with greater clarity. As Steiner and the first Waldorf school teachers wrestled with bringing the school to being, they confronted realities of school life that are still true for us today.

Martyn Rawson connects teacher self-education and the work of groups of teachers (faculty, college, or council) in Waldorf schools with Steiner's contemplative or meditative research method and with the work of Arthur Zajonc and others who currently see the value—if not the necessity—of reflection in educational research.

Marisha Plotnik offers her understanding, based on years of experience and study, of "child study" in Waldorf schools, one area in which a contemplative method is consistently used. Plotnik, too, connects her study with the work of educational researchers outside of Waldorf education and with work she has done with Jon McAlice and other teachers.

We may believe that "Waldorf" doesn't combine grades or ages, but Lori Freer demonstrates not only that schools are doing just this—often out of economic necessity—but that this need not be the compromise we may assume it to be. There are advantages and strengths to mixed-age classrooms, and we may investigate, work toward, and emphasize these when life hands us a school or a class of mixed-age students.

Similarly, we may believe that "Waldorf" doesn't acknowledge or single out gifted students for special programs, but Ellen Fjeld Kottker and Balazs Tarnai connect Steiner's work with gifted students in the first Waldorf School with research and programming for gifted students over the past decades.

One area in which Waldorf schools have perhaps had an advantage over the past decades is in what is now called Social Emotional Learning (SEL), illustrated here in Linda Lantieri's article about SEL in a public school district and a public school. Lantieri is an international expert in SEL. Waldorf school teachers may learn from Lantieri's approach and may also refer to David Mitchell's article in the last issue of the *Bulletin* ("Social Emotional Learning and Waldorf Education," Vol. XIV, no. 2, Autumn 2009), which examines SEL from a Waldorf teacher's perspective and offers

an SEL curriculum outline for middle and high school years.

In Susan Johnson's brief but informative article, readers will find connections among medical science and education in support of teaching children to read and write only when they are physiologically and neurologically ready to do so. This is not an issue of "Waldorf" or "not-Waldorf," but of children's health in a world that too easily—and irrationally—succumbs to political pressure and performance anxiety in considering the education of its children.

Regular readers will note that the *Bulletin* usually contains more in the way of research, book, and conference reviews and reports. Travel schedules, challenges with translation, time crunches, and re-writes conspired to make this issue article-heavy and report-light. Our next issue should see a return to a better balance among contents.

Other than our usual report from Marianne Alsop, the cheerful yea-woman of the Online Waldorf Library, we present Martin Novom and Jean Jeager's results of a brief survey of Waldorf school trustees. Their research demonstrates the great commitment of trustee volunteers across the

country and also the great lack of thorough, consistent trustee education. Waldorf schools may recognize this research as a platform on which to build stronger trustee orientation and education, honing trustees' tremendous idealism and willingness to improve their schools.

If we take our work seriously and think it through, we can speak about it without jargon and without abusing the over-worked word, "Waldorf." Our concepts will become ever clearer, our practices less opaque. We will find a world of friendly fellow-travelers, ready to work with us on the daunting task of educating children well in a complex world too often divided by a lack of understanding.

Correction

In our last issue, Thomas Patteson and Laura Birdsall's article, "Changing Old Habits: Exploring New Models for Professional Development" (Vol. XIV, no. 2, Autumn 2009), referred to charts that had, in fact, been removed in editing. We apologize to those readers who sought the charts in vain, and we regret neglecting to remove reference to them.



Report from the Co-Directors

*David Mitchell and
Douglas Gerwin*

A new round of publications and surveys tops the agenda of activity at the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, including the production of a new format for rare books and articles.

Electronic Books

An exciting new venture launched by the Research Institute for Waldorf Education is the publication of Electronic Books. These “E-books” are posted on the website of our Online Waldorf Library (OWL)—www.waldorflibrary.org—and can be downloaded gratis anywhere in the world. They are also available on disks.

The goal of this project, sponsored by the Waldorf Curriculum Fund, is to locate out-of-print resources, gain permission from the original publishers, and create Adobe pdf files. In this way, educational insights inspired by Rudolf Steiner are made available to anyone around the globe.

So far, two CD-ROMs have been produced:

E-Books disk #1, 2008, contains:

Science in Education (essays from *Child and Man*)
The Gospel of Hellas by Friedrich Hiebel
Handwork by Hedwig Hauck

E-Books disk #2, 2009, contains:

Reading and Writing by Karl König
Arithmetic (with references to Zoology) by Karl König
Embryology and World Evolution by Karl König
Creating Social Sacraments by Dieter Brüll

Plans are underway for at least ten more disks, each with three or more books. We invite our readers to write to us at the Research Institute with suggested titles of books and articles no longer in print.

Parents Survey

We are also working on a survey of Waldorf parents initiated by Martin Novom. Results of this

work, currently undergoing statistical review and peer analysis, should be available later this year. We intend to print excerpts in the next issue of the *Research Bulletin*.

Sex Education

Under the guidance of Douglas Gerwin, the Research Institute is developing a source book on a Waldorf educational approach to sexual education in grades 4–12. Working with colleagues in Switzerland and Germany, we are currently translating portions of Bart Maris and Michael Zech’s book, *Sexualkunde in der Waldorfpädagogik* (*The Study of Sexuality in Waldorf Education*). In addition, we are commissioning prominent Waldorf educators in North America to prepare additional chapters and have begun conducting research among schools to gather curriculum suggestions. It is our hope that this research will yield new and morally grounded material and that such a curriculum can extend beyond Waldorf education into the mainstream.

Teaching Sensible Science

A new cycle of the ever-popular course on “Teaching Sensible Science,” a series of three one-week intensives in a phenomenological approach to science for Waldorf school class teachers, had to be postponed because participants were unable to secure sufficient financial support. We expect that this course, which has received high praise from those teachers who have taken it over the years, will start up again in the next season. Schools interested in hosting this course during the next school year are invited to contact the Research Institute.

European Collaboration

We continue to find new ways of collaborating with colleagues in Europe, but, unfortunately, funding for these initiatives has dried up. For this year, at least, we are limited to meeting only once

with these colleagues to continue dialogue and to enhance research with a European perspective. We hope that this important collaboration will be fully restored in the future.

Funding Needs

General decline worldwide of funding for research has caught up with the Research Institute. As a result, we find ourselves having to devote increased attention to securing fiscal support to meet the operating costs of the Institute rather than exploring new areas of educational research. While we are fortunate to have several generously funded projects in process and the prospect of some new ones, we need to concentrate energy

into creating an endowment so that we are not always walking on the edge. To this end, we have developed a legacy funding package to support the future of the Institute and have prepared several brochures explaining the benefits of these forms of giving. We thank those who have contributed to the Institute's first annual giving campaign, based on the brochure included with the last edition of the *Research Bulletin*, and we encourage all of you opening this edition to make a donation. An envelope is provided for this purpose, and we urge you to pass the legacy brochure to anyone who might consider supporting our efforts.

Note: You will notice that this issue does not include the complete Index of past Research Bulletins. In order to economize we will include the Index only in the Autumn/Winter edition of the *Bulletin*.



What Can Rudolf Steiner's Words to the First Waldorf Teachers Tell Us Today?

Christof Wiechert

Introduction

The first years of the Stuttgart Waldorf School can be seen as prototypical of the development of Waldorf schools and Waldorf teachers in general. We can benefit today from the events that took place in the six years between 1919 and 1925, while the first school was led by Rudolf Steiner. Examining Steiner's work in the school can give direction to the development of teachers and schools in the 21st century.

Sources

The lectures that Steiner gave to the teachers of the first Waldorf school are especially relevant here. The majority of lectures on education were given to a general audience, with only a few addressing the same group of specialists, that is, the college of teachers of the first Waldorf school. In Steiner's day, this group initially consisted of 12 colleagues; at the beginning of the sixth year of the school, the number had risen to 49. The following lectures were given to this relatively small group:

1. *Study of Man* (later published as *The Foundations of Human Experience*), *Practical Advice to Teachers*, *Discussions with Teachers* (Stuttgart, 21 August–6 September 1919; CW 293, 294, 295)
2. *Balance in Teaching* (Stuttgart, 15–22 September 1920; CW 302a)
3. *Waldorf Education for Adolescents (The Supplementary Course)* (Stuttgart, 12–19 June 1921; CW 302)
4. *Adolescence—Ripe for What?* (Stuttgart, 21–22 June 1922; CW 302a)
5. *Art in the Light of Mystery Wisdom* (Two lectures, Stuttgart, 7 and 8 March 1923; CW 283)
6. *Deeper Insights into Education: The Waldorf Approach* (Stuttgart, 15 and 16 October 1923; CW 302a)

Two other important volumes complete the category:

7. The 70 teachers' conferences with Rudolf Steiner: *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300 a-c)
8. *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School: Lectures and Addresses to Children, Parents and Teachers*. This includes addresses at monthly school festivals, seasonal festivals, and parents' evenings.

Study of Man: The First Year

After the opening address on the eve of the Teachers' Seminar, at which Steiner outlined the school's administrative set-up in a few sentences ("not bureaucratically, but collegially ... in a republican way.... Each one of us must be completely responsible. We can create a replacement for the supervision of the School Board as we form this preparatory course and, through the work, receive what unifies the school"), the first lecture was presented the following morning.

In this lecture, with simple words, the significance and depth of which can be grasped only gradually, a link is established between a new form of education and human evolution. A connection is created to the spiritual world and to entities whose deepest concern is the development of human beings. Reference is made to the 15th century as the starting point of the development of which we experience the consequences today.

The concentration of intelligence on purely worldly aspects, which was necessary for human freedom to unfold, gave rise not only to science and technology, but also to materialism and egoism. "All of modern culture, right into the spiritual areas, is based upon human self-interest." Steiner points out that religions tend to focus on the after-life while forgetting about the time before birth. It is a teacher's task to explore the life before birth. "Our form of educating can have the correct attitude only when we are aware that our

work with young people is a continuation of what higher beings have done before birth.”

How can this be achieved in practice? Think of a child study. The first step is the forming of a picture of the pupil as he or she appears in space and time. In order to understand this picture we have to go a step further. How did the pupil come to develop in this way? It is easy to find out as long as we avoid the temptation of superficial psychology. We come to an understanding of the inner essence of a pupil if we ask how etheric body and physical body, for instance, relate to one another, or how the soul (astral) works on the “learning body” (etheric body). How did spirit-soul (or soul-spirit) and life-body find each other? What expresses itself in which way? We experience immediately, if we practice this way of asking questions, how we move in a realm of “pure air” where we can sense the becoming and the essence of the human being. Those of us who attempt this, when meditating on a pupil, for example, know from experience that it works only if we manage not to put ourselves in the foreground. We have to be open, without preconceptions; this “not I, but the pupil in me” approach will allow us to develop a sense for pre-earthly intentions by observing the pupils.

If we manage to take hold of these intentions as ideas, we will be able to fuse them into an ideal. Pedagogical inspiration becomes possible, acting in harmony with what wants to come to life. It arises out of interest in pre-earthly aspects that reveal themselves in the different parts of the human organization. Steiner gives evidence of this capacity in the course of more than a hundred child studies.

We easily forget that understanding the pupils' temperaments is also a way of overcoming “cultural egotism,” because temperament says something about how life before birth weaves into life after birth. When studying the pupils' temperaments, we have to withhold our own temperaments, and this allows us to build a bridge to the student. Then the student will approach us.

The last lecture of *The Foundations of Human Experience (Study of Man)* and of *Discussions with Teachers* deals with the surprising significance of

I am faithful to a
method that I shape
in the truest possible
way while constantly
renewing it to keep
my teaching alive.

images, of speaking in images, of keeping the intellectual flexible. The importance of imagination is emphasized, especially on the threshold of adolescence.

The process culminates on 6 September with the presentation of the seven virtues of the teacher. The first three are found at the end of the last lecture of *The Foundations of Human Experience (Study of Man)*: “Imbue yourself with the power of imagination, have courage for the truth, sharpen your feeling for responsibility of soul.” The remaining four are at the end of *Discussions with Teachers*: “The teacher must be a man of initiative, a man of interest in the being of the whole world and of humanity, a man who never makes a compromise in his heart and mind with what is untrue (especially in the way we present our subjects), and he must never get stale or grow sour.”

The latter four virtues represent faculties of the temperaments; they are virtues that can be exercised in our daily work. Initiative: Shall I make the phone call tonight or wait until tomorrow? Interest: These parents are foreign to me; can I still summon up an interest in them? This colleague gets on my nerves, but that is interesting! This student walks in such a strange way, as if the ground beneath him was hurting him. What does that indicate? Am I really interested in the lesson that I have to present just now? Whether or not I have a strong interest in my subject matter affects the liveliness of my teaching and may lead to an unfortunate compromise: “He must never compromise with untruth, for if he did so we should see how through many channels untruth would find its way into our teaching, especially in the way we present our subjects.”

This is a direct reference to teaching method, and many channels are open today through which untruth can creep into our teaching. Is it not much more practical to have an established method for teaching a foreign language? Should I not simply use exercises from these excellent publications on basic math, spelling, elementary physics? There are so many useful things. We could also call this the virtue of faithfulness. I am faithful to a method that I shape in the truest possible way while constantly renewing it to keep my teaching alive.

Every adult has some melancholy which, depending on her overall temperament, struggles with staleness and sourness to a greater or lesser degree. From a certain age it is always lurking around the corner. Am I sufficiently aware of it? Observing one another's lessons is good prophylaxis. Why do you work with the children in this way? Asking is appropriate, judging is not.

The first three virtues are of a different nature. They cannot be practiced in our day-to-day work. We all know from experience: imagination, speaking in images, being inspired—this I cannot develop while standing in front of a class. If I am imaginative, it is as a result of different processes.

Acquiring knowledge of the human being in the three stages described elsewhere by Steiner is one path to imagination, life, and the “profound power of ingenuity that you need when facing the child you are to educate.”

Again and again, we are faced with the immensity of the opening words of *The Foundations of Human Experience (Study of Man)*. They resound as from other worlds:

My dear friends, we can accomplish our work only if we do not see it as simply a matter of intellect or feeling, but, in the highest sense, as a moral spiritual task. Therefore, you will understand why, as we begin this work today, we first reflect on the connection we wish to create from the very beginning between our activity and the spiritual worlds.

We may ask ourselves whether or not the “moral spiritual” is the realm referred to as truth and responsibility in the first three virtues. For all that is spiritual surely entails responsibility, all that is moral surely is rooted in truth. We see a gleam of the future of humankind; goodness, beauty, truth as in Goethe's “Fairy Tale” or as in Christ's words, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” “Imbue yourself with the power of imagination” can be seen as “the way” in education, because Steiner once described education as a “form of normal life.”

Steiner urgently pleaded for a “new education appropriate to the time,” an art of education drawn from life itself.

After presenting the latter four virtues in the closing words of the 15th discussion with teachers, Steiner adds, on a more personal note, “For me this Waldorf School will be a veritable child of concern.” He exhorts the teachers to work together and to live in awareness of “the spiritual powers that guide the cosmos ... they will inspire our lives.” Shortly before the first Waldorf School opened he asked the teachers to promise him to keep this awareness alive.

The classrooms were not yet ready when the school opened with a festive celebration on 7 September. Lessons therefore began on 16 September, by which time Steiner had left for Berlin. During the first school year Steiner had 14 meetings with the teachers, and three more took place at the end of July 1920 in preparation for the second school year. The first school year started with 12 teachers, 8 classes, and 256 students, which means that the average class had 32 pupils, and there was one teacher for every 21 students. (Today the ratio is closer to 1:10.) The second year started with 19 teachers, 11 classes, and 420 pupils, which means the average class had 38 pupils and the teacher-pupil ratio was 1:22. These numbers alone may justify Steiner's expression, “a child of concern.”

The Second Year

Five days before the beginning of the second school year Steiner gave four lectures to the teachers, lectures which were intended as a supplement to the introductory lectures on education given the previous year. Preparations for the second school year were so consuming, however, that he doubted that he could manage more than “scanty introductory words.” He wanted to speak “about the teacher, the educator” and about “the nature of the esoteric.” The first lecture deals with the “condition of misery” in the education of the young which had arisen due to the fact that humankind “in essential things really made itself dependent ... on the kind of thinking and feeling peculiar to the West.” Fichte, Herder, Goethe were no longer understood. What Herder and Fichte wanted, an art of education, had been turned into the opposite. Steiner offered examples of this view

and concluded the lecture with the words, “But with regard to what has to be given for the art of education, we have something to give the world from Central Europe which no one else can give.” It hardly needs pointing out that he is not referring to geography or nationalism, but to spiritual streams.

Was it necessary to refer these Waldorf School teachers to the way Western people thought and felt? Did they no longer understand German Idealism? Did they, of all people, need to be told in depth that their success as educators depended on how much they themselves learned from their teaching? Did they need to be reminded that “inward humility” grows out of the insight “that the art of education must proceed from life and that it cannot proceed from abstract scientific thought”? Herder, Fichte, Jean Paul, and Schiller represented “a life-infused education,” “a way of educating drawn directly from life.” Steiner called this the “Central European education impulse.” References to it will “annoy” scientific thinkers.

This was the situation after one year of Waldorf education. Reading this in 2010 or later, we know that it is still and again the main motif in the art of education. Probably due to the experiences of the first school year, Steiner urgently pleaded for a “new education appropriate to the time,” an art of education drawn from life itself. Today the phrase “art of education” still ruffles feathers.

What were the consequences? In these lectures Steiner did not return to the seven virtues of the teacher, but spoke of three fundamental forces in teaching. If we bear in mind that the quality of an organism is determined by the sum total of forces that its members are able to summon, we may realize what Steiner achieved with lectures 2 and 3 of *Balance in Teaching*. He spoke to the teachers about reverence, enthusiasm, and the protective gesture: reverence for what the child brings with him from his life before birth, for what determines his existence, enthusiasm for what the pupil can become in future with our help, and protectiveness to ensure that the pedagogic reality in the here and now remains appropriate to the child's age.

What else did Steiner give the teachers with these few lectures? Next to the pedagogical contents he conveyed to them two ways of transforming their teaching by filling it with life inspired by the Central European spirit. He showed them how to realize their “power of ingenuity,” that is, their pedagogical imagination and intuition. The first can be practiced with the help of inner pictures; Steiner called them meditative images. Intuition is practiced by following the “digestive” process that takes place after one has absorbed spiritual scientific contents.

The “vigorous power of ingenuity you need when facing the children you are educating” is kindled if we develop mental images of how visual and auditory perception relate to one another in a crossing-over process; how the audible is perceived in the will (or memory) region of the visible; how the visible is remembered in the perception region of the audible; how these two principles of time and space in fact form the human body.

Such pictures—meditative images—can also be derived from the second lecture by considering two streams: the sculptural and intellectual forces that come from the head (or use it as a locus of transition) and the musical forces that stream in from the outside world. The first of these forces works from the outside as attack and from the inside as defense. The latter, where the attack comes as from inside, are attenuated by music and speech instruction. Experience shows that such images, if they are placed again and again before the inner eye, strongly inspire the day-to-day work of a teacher.

The second important indication that Steiner gave to the teachers after one year of teaching referred to the threefold approach to attaining knowledge of the human being: studying contents, coming to understand what has been studied through meditation (calling up images again and again), “and finally we have a remembering of the knowledge of the human being out of the spirit. This means teaching creatively out of the spirit; the art of education comes about and takes form.”

Practical examples illustrate how our teaching works on the relationship between the “I” and the

The lectures are not just intellectually pleasing; Steiner, with his subtle sense of humor, again proves himself an expert on the adolescent soul.

body. What seemed like an abstract request the year before (“the task of education conceived in the spiritual sense is to bring the soul-spirit into harmony with the life body”) is now explained in detail, how this harmonization of the upper and lower human being proceeds: how the “I” settles in the body without being “caught” in it. It all depends on how elements of a sculptural, musical, and intellectual nature, and elements of memory and speech, alternate within a lesson. The impact of the various subjects is also explained, whether they help the “I” to “settle” or not. It is the ultimate description of an artistic approach to teaching.

In summary we can say that Steiner obviously deemed it necessary in September 1920, after one year of Waldorf education, to confer with the teachers on an educational impulse that is drawn from life and not from science. The seven virtues of 1919 were extended by the three forces that relate to the pupils’ past, present, and future. On the basis of this he used higher considerations regarding the human being to point out two possible paths, one of which is more inspirational (“the vigorous power of ingenuity”) and the other more intuitive (“teaching creatively out of the spirit”). Finally, Steiner demonstrated the artistic approach to education and how it “regulates” the relationship between the “I” and the body, which we may consider the essential task of education. I suggest that this was exactly what the teachers of the first Waldorf School needed after one year; it is what Steiner identified based on the experience of this first year.

Are these qualities an inherent and identifying component of Waldorf school teaching today? Are they cultivated in the right way in teacher education and in faculty meetings? Have we understood that education has to be drawn from life, from the living experience of teaching, rather than from imposed parameters of whatever description?

These four lectures alone support what is said throughout the school movement, that, if Steiner had to do it all over again, he would drastically change course and steer toward the artistic. We need not worry about the authenticity of this statement; it is the essence of these lectures.

The Third Year

Another year later, eight days before the beginning of the third school year, Steiner gave eight lectures to the teachers, later published as *Waldorf Education for Adolescents*. Unlike those published in *Balance in Teaching*, these lectures do not explicitly tie in with *The Foundations of Human Experience (Study of Man)*. At the beginning of this school year, the school had almost doubled in size: 540 pupils in 15 classes of approximately 36 students per class. The teacher-student ratio was 1:18. Steiner never complained about the rapid growth despite the fact that financial problems were enormous.

Can we assume that the lectures on the “Meditatively Acquired Knowledge of the Human Being” (that is, *Balance in Teaching*) had made an impact on the individual teachers? Steiner began by looking back over the first two years and concluding, “In order to prevent a possible misunderstanding of what I am going to say today, I can assure you that I have noticed and appreciated the progress made during these two years. The

way you are teaching—the presentation of subjects—is already such that it can be said, you have, in an extraordinarily healthy way, fused with the goals of these tasks.” This report for the teachers sounds much like one we might write about our students at the end of a school year.

The eight lectures embrace rich content, always in keeping with *Practical Advice to Teachers* and with frequent excursions to the study of

the human being. The sense of urgency that prevailed in *Balance in Teaching* abates. The connection of memory and feeling, the work with children who have rich or poor imaginations, with cosmic and earthly children—the teaching methods are extended. This culminates in lecture 3, in which three essential steps of teaching are explained, steps that are taken over a period of two—not three—days so that “the three parts of the threefold human being can interact, they are allowed to harmonize in the right way.”

The lectures that deal with adolescence, with the diverging male and female constitution, return to *The Foundations of Human Experience (Study of*

Steiner called this outward agreement in conjunction with inner opposition the “Stuttgart system.”

Man). The lectures are not just intellectually pleasing; Steiner, with his subtle sense of humor, again proves himself an expert on the adolescent soul. The presentation moves on to explain at a deeper level the “understanding of the world” that is needed for teaching adolescents. The teacher needs to become a representative of the world. Those teachers who have nothing narrow-minded about them represent the “wide world.” Students begin to choose their own authorities and to develop their first ideals inspired by the authenticity of their teachers. Here lies, too, the secret of a fruitful living together of different generations.

The lectures end with the suggestion that one should feel as if the spirit dispersed itself among the college of teachers like a living cloud, as if living spirits were called on to help to instill spirituality in the souls, a “prayer-like” rising up to the spirit. “Life” or vibrancy is a recurring motif. The conclusion is a parenthesis to the first lecture of the *The Foundations of Human Experience (Study of Man)*, which deals with the spiritual task of education. It returns in the form of a meditation:

We have the will to work, letting flow into our work, that which from out of the spiritual world, in soul and spirit, in life and body, strives to become human in us.

In *The Foundations of Human Experience (Study of Man)*, this idea was expressed: “The task of education conceived in the spiritual sense is to bring the soul-spirit into harmony with the life body.” What is the difference between the two? The meditative version focuses on the teacher himself, “strives to become human in us.” Education is self-education.

In summary, *Education for Adolescents (The Supplementary Course)* is in character closer to *Practical Advice to Teachers* because a 10th grade was about to be added to the high school. Detailed curriculum indications were developed in the teachers’ meetings. The lectures mentioned introduce three essentially new practical methods with suggestions for their application: the cosmic and earthly orientation of the interest (the astral viewpoint); children with rich and poor imagination (which has more to do with the ability to remember, the etheric viewpoint); and the three-fold approach to teaching—over two days—that

applies to all lesson contents from the age when main lessons convey subject-matter as such. This is followed by an extended psychology of adolescence.

We can imagine that the teachers were delighted by these eight lectures. Not only was the review of the first two years encouraging, the lectures also opened up an unclouded, wider horizon.

The Fourth Year

When I turn now to Steiner’s conferences with teachers, it is with the inner conviction that it is high time that this treasure of 70 teachers’ meetings is published in a scientific edition in order to throw light on the development of the art of education in practice.

The teachers were evidently not able to apply in practice the indications that Steiner gave in the *Supplementary Course*. At the end of the third school year, the students of the 10th grade asked for a meeting with Steiner. They complained about their teachers, about the “lecturing,” about the teachers’ lack of interest, about “not having learned anything.” Steiner looked into the situation and, based on his findings, he arranged for a change of teachers for most of the main subjects, right at the beginning of the fourth school year, for these students who were now in 11th grade. “We did not consider enough what I said at the beginning of the school year with regard to these children.”

The teachers, in their turn, accused the students of showing a lack of will in their independent work. Steiner answered, “That is a problem that lies with the children, and that one we do not need to discuss. What is important now is how we cope with the children.”

The situation continued, vehemently, into the following year. The students became morally neglected, got into trouble, and some of them had to be asked to leave. Steiner could see no other way but to blame the state of affairs on the teachers, their lack of interest in the pupils, the absence of contact, the lecturing instead of teaching that had become the rule, the general sloppiness. Neither teachers nor students were fully engaged in the lessons.

Social tensions made the situation worse when it was suggested that a small administrative circle should be established. Strong mutual distrust became apparent. The teachers’ meetings as such were put into question. Steiner said, “I feel like I

have contracted lockjaw from the bad attitude toward the meetings.”

Questions of discipline recurred because the teachers felt powerless. Steiner called on the foreign language teachers to work together to find a way of teaching instead of complaining to each other about students’ lack of understanding. The meeting of 6 February 1923 is recommended to all who wish to experience how dramatic a situation it was. (This is the meeting at which Steiner spoke about large-headed and small-headed children. It is also the meeting at which a failed grammar lesson is described, including its effect on threefoldness.)

In the third school year, which had started so pleasantly, only seven meetings with teachers took place. During the difficult fourth and fifth years, Steiner attended 15 meetings per year. In the autumn of 1923 a crisis loomed as teachers struggled under the pressure of immense and, partly, new demands. Following a phone call, Steiner managed to fit in a visit to the school. He spent 15 and 16 October in Stuttgart, giving three lectures and meeting with the teachers. The exhausted teaching staff heard lectures that belong to the most difficult of Steiner’s presentations on education. As with the opening lecture in *Balance in Teaching*, the beginning is unexpected. Gymnast, rhetorician, and professor—that is, those who live not in balance but act, talk, or think in isolation—have to undergo a metamorphosis. The weakness of a professor is described: “Today we usually think because we do not know what else to do, and that is why we have so few real thoughts.”

The second and third lectures are given on 16 October with a teachers’ meeting taking place in between. What is the main theme of these presentations? As Steiner spoke about curative education for the first time on 6 February, he explained, surprisingly, the difference between healing processes in medicine and in education. They work at different levels. New aspects arise regarding knowledge of the human being:

There are the movements of walking, grasping, the movement of the limbs, outer changes of

location, the activity in the process of nourishment, the rhythmic activity—which is through and through a healing activity—and the perceiving activity if we regard it from outside. Regarded from within, educational activity is entirely a perceiving activity.

In short, all activities, apart from rhythmic ones, are adverse to health. Everything that is adverse to health has to be counteracted by higher healing processes, through education that is metamorphosed healing.

The forces inherent in education are metamorphoses of therapeutic forces: They are therapeutic forces transformed. The goal of all our educational thinking must be to transform this thinking so as to rise fruitfully from the level of physical thinking to spiritual thinking.

Steiner went on to describe a new way of judging that was not based on “right” and “wrong” or “true” and “false,” but on “healthy” and “ill.” This was followed by fundamental considerations regarding the effect of life-infused teaching on the child and on the physiology of the will.

The third lecture concludes with a grim picture. Michael fights with the dragon while a black veil covers the picture. “Then one would realize that behind it there is something that must not be shown....” And the battle with the dragon that must not be shown is the battle with the dragon of the dead, of that which comes from the deadened knowledge of our times. “There the dragon becomes especially horrible. One might almost say that the correct symbol for institutions of higher education today would be a thick black pall....” Further,

To live in the truth means to unite oneself with Michael. We must unite ourselves with Michael whenever we enter the classroom; only through this can we bring with us the necessary strength. Verily, Michael is strong.

On the next morning Steiner gave the teachers “a summary” of what had been said, known as the second teachers’ meditation.

In Europe, in wide parts of the world, thousands have been inspired by this impulse to develop education out of the art of life.

Let us summarize again. The fourth and fifth school years were riddled with crises. In the upper school contact with the students was lost, the teachers could not rise above lecturing and could not find a warm and interested approach to the students. Added to that was the deep lack of trust within the teaching faculty when a small administrative circle was about to be formed. Steiner helped as much as he could. On average he was with the teachers once a month.

He tried to help with the—interposed—lectures later published as *Deeper Insights into Education* (included in some editions of *Balance in Teaching*). The second sentence of the first lecture is this:

After all, the fruitfulness of our activity in an institution like the Waldorf School depends ... on the ability of the teachers to develop the attitude that will enable them to carry through their work with assurance and be active in the right way. On this occasion, therefore, I would like to speak in a particular about the teachers themselves.

Did he ask too much of the teachers? The lectures are not about pedagogical questions but about questions of lifestyle, the overcoming of our inner gymnast, rhetorician, and professor. All three have to fuse into one whose actions are imbued with life. Further, the clear division between therapeutic and pedagogical healing touches us. Why? Had it become a habit to refer what could not be mastered pedagogically to medicine and psychology? Steiner's presentations on the physiology of the will relate to teachers as well as to the effect on children when a process between action and thinking is developed in a lesson.

Whenever we guide a child into some form of action while he is thinking, we call forth a state of balance between the formation of carbonic and cyanic acids. In human life everything actually depends upon symmetry being produced between these two things.

These great gestures all express the same thing: Dear teachers, take hold of these insights, use them to heal yourselves. Become alive and truthful in your doing. Gaining a personal relationship to teaching content is part of a teacher's

self education. If the subject matter undergoes a certain process in the soul, one inspires creativity of teaching in oneself. Steiner calls this the "immediate source of inspiration" which allows the "right method to present itself." This description immediately preceded that of the veiled battle of Michael with the dragon, and it refers to Steiner's words about the sourness of the teacher in the classroom.

It seems that these words were especially called for in October 1923. Steiner's deeply felt pain was noticeable when he spoke of the criminal proceedings against Gandhi. Although the British judge greatly admired him personally, he sentenced him to years of imprisonment. Why did Steiner raise this here? Because it is a picture of a situation in which the truth cannot create the right conditions for itself. In truth there is a new art of education. Can it create the necessary conditions for itself?

The Fifth Year

After October 1923 Steiner ceased to give lectures to teachers alone. Between the lectures of 15 and 16 October he also attended a teachers' meeting that was devoted to the written notice, given prematurely, by a member of the administrative council (a kind of executive board) that had been so difficult to install. Inner opposition had been noticeable when teachers were appointed on 30 March 1923 and was apparent again now. On the outside, people acted according to their agreements, while inwardly they rejected them, as they rejected the school's Director, Steiner himself:

The general opinion has been that I should select the teachers. We should continue with that, but now the problem is that although that opinion has not changed in fact, it has changed in feeling, in how we look at the situation. I may have to pose the question now of whether the faculty members want to select the teachers themselves.

Steiner called this outward agreement in conjunction with inner opposition the "Stuttgart system." Many of Steiner's suggestions met this kind of opposition, such as his ideas concerning more efficient foreign language teaching or the initially

failing preparations for the final examination (Abitur). Important indications for the now complete curriculum followed in the fifth and sixth school years. The form and content of language lessons were revised, but problems with students reappeared. Teachers were unable to engage students in a fertile pedagogical relationship.

The sixth school year brought more failings that Steiner had to blame on the teachers. In the second to last conference he severely criticizes the teachers' tiredness in class. "Inner opposition" became apparent in the fact that lecturing, an academic teaching style, had increased rather than decreased. Contact with the students was lost. "I have often mentioned it, but you have not really done much to relieve the situation...."

Helplessness speaks from these words. Again and again Steiner mentioned the lack of interest in the students and of enthusiasm for the task in hand. One teacher asked whether the "Doctor" could not help to establish contact with the pupils. Steiner had to repeat that it was a question of interest, of affinity with the students, of enthusiasm, and not of lectures. We can feel how he came to the conclusion, "I need to give things a new direction" (15 July 1924). The last recorded sentence of the last meeting with the teachers on 3 September 1924 is: "I want to give some lectures later in September or early October about the moral aspects of education and teaching." It was his last visit to the school.

The Sixth Year

"I want to give some lectures ... about the moral aspects of education and teaching." One often hears this sentence quoted out of context as if it were something that was still objectively missing from Steiner's guidelines for an art of education. This is not the case. The sentence was spoken in a particular crisis at the school and referred to the pedagogical abilities of, primarily, the upper school teachers. "Moral" implies a personal relationship of the teachers to the students that benefits the latter.

This concern comes to expression in a moving way in the farewell letter Steiner wrote to the teachers two weeks before his death. The "child of concern" to which Steiner referred at the end of the teacher training course in the last discussion with the teachers ("For me this Waldorf School

will be a veritable child of concern") was mentioned again in this farewell letter, with his urgently expressed hope that the teachers should not let go of what they had built together. If the college of teachers was united by the "active power of thought" (which was not possible during Steiner's lifetime), it could be done. What had been achieved so far would "strongly work among the teachers of this school."

The Waldorf School is truly a child needing special care, but above all, it is also a visible sign of the fruitfulness of Anthroposophy within the spiritual life of mankind.

If all teachers faithfully carry within their hearts the awareness of this fruitfulness, the Good Spirits, watching over this School, will be able to work actively; then divine spirit-power will prevail in all the deeds of the teachers.

The Stuttgart Miracle

Steiner had to say farewell to the school because he had no "wings free to fly." But the school was in a dire situation: It was in danger of losing its identity. The words, "I need to give things a new direction," only make sense in this context.

Despite all these difficulties, enough persons in and around the school carried within them the living impulse of the art of education. After Steiner's death in March 1925 they were able to work on in his spirit so that the art of education could grow triumphantly all over the world. Not even the atrocities of the Nazis could stifle this impulse. In Europe, in wide parts of the world, thousands have been inspired by this impulse to develop education out of the art of life. Wherever we are in the world, we may have an immediate experience of the healing effect of education if it unites itself with life and allows itself to be nourished by it. If life is understood as the expression of spiritual processes, the art of education can bring about the healing and renewal of our cultural life. We can therefore say that what Steiner critically referred to as the "Stuttgart system," namely the reluctance to comply with his suggestions, was turned into its opposite after his death and became the "Stuttgart miracle." His educational impulse had risen and come to life again, spreading around the globe.

We should be clear that the topics of this paper do not constitute simply a historical exer-

cise, but that the problems experienced during the first six years of the Waldorf School are essentially the same as those we face today, albeit in different contexts and circumstances. We should also be clear how Steiner, with his power of judgment, his advice, and his unconditional loyalty to the impulse initiated by Emil Molt, tried to help. These can also give us direction today.

Resources

1. From Rudolf Steiner's opening address of 20 August 1919, the evening before the teacher training seminar began (first published as *Study of Man*, later as *The Foundations of Human Experience*, CW 293). Also in *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300a) and *Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education*, Pedagogical Section.
2. Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* (CW 293), Lecture 1, 21 August 1919.
3. Rudolf Steiner, *Discussions with Teachers* (CW 295), Discussion 1, 21 August 1919.
4. Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* (CW 293), Lecture 14, 5 September 1919.
5. Rudolf Steiner, *Discussions with Teachers* (CW 295), Third lecture on the curriculum and 'Closing Words'.
6. Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a), Lecture 3, 21 September 1920.
7. Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a), Lecture 1, 15 September 1920.
8. Rudolf Steiner, *Discussions with Teachers* (CW 295), closing words to discussion 15. 6 September 1919.
9. See note 7.
10. See note 6.
11. See note 2.
12. Editor's note: The author refers here to a statement among Waldorf teachers that seems to trace only to Karl Ege's recollection of a conversation with Steiner in his brief book, *An Evident Need of Our Times*. Any reference to such an intimate communication, especially if it is used to criticize work based on Steiner's more than 300 lectures on education, should be considered with great care.
13. Editor's note: It is a disservice that these lectures have been published as *Education for Adolescents*, limiting their study, perhaps, to upper elementary and high school teachers. As Wiechert demonstrates, their content was meant for all teachers.
14. Rudolf Steiner, *Education for Adolescents* (CW 301), Lecture 1, 12 June 1921.
15. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300b), 20 June 1922.
16. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300b), 6 February 1923.
17. Rudolf Steiner, "Deeper Insights into Education" in: *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a) and the corresponding meeting of 16 October 1923 in *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300c).
18. Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a), Lecture 3.
19. See note 16.
20. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300c), 30 March 1923.
21. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300c), 15 July 1924.
22. In *Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education*, Pedagogical Section.

Christof Wiechert is an international lecturer and head of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. He was a teacher at the Waldorf school in The Hague, Netherlands, for thirty years, a co-founder of the Dutch State Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar, and a Council member in the Anthroposophical Society of the Netherlands.



Social Emotional Intelligence:

The Basis for a New Vision of
Education in the United States

Linda Lantieri

Classes were in session and the halls almost empty. A teacher first noticed the little boy—small but chunky, maybe a second grader—then two other boys, a bit older, walking near him. One of the two called out: “Hey, Fatty! You stink up the soccer field! You suck at soccer!” The object of the taunt took a deep breath and squared his shoulders, then turned to face his attackers. “You’re right,” he said. “I’m not good at soccer. And you are really good—one of the best in the school. But you know what? I’m really good at art. I can draw almost anything.”

The air seemed to go out of the boy who had hurled the insult, and he said: “You’re not so bad. Want me to show you some moves after school?” Then the pair walked off in another direction, the little guy still standing near the teacher. “Gimme five!” she said to him, acknowledging how he had handled the situation. This teacher also found the second grader’s teacher and let her know what he had done.

Today there are more and more examples in the U.S. of schools that are paying attention to children’s social and emotional learning (SEL) as a basic part of their school’s culture, structure, pedagogy, and curriculum frameworks. Imagine a school where:

- The uniqueness, diversity, and inherent value of every individual are honored, and education of the whole child is a basis for a lifelong process.
- Students recognize and manage their emotions, solve their own conflicts on the playground, and feel safe enough to discuss concerns with their teachers and classmates by taking an active role in school improvement and governance.
- The school staff pays more attention to equipping students with the skills they need to

approach the “tests of life” rather than having their students’ school experience be composed of “a life of tests.”

- The school leadership shifts from a centralized concept of power to approaches that help individuals and groups in the school to self-organize and solve problems cooperatively.
- School spirit comes as much from collaboration, connection, and engaging classroom practices as it does from, for example, winning a football game.
- A coordinated, well-planned and evidence-based social and emotional learning program is seen as not an either/or choice in terms of a student’s potential for academic success but rather as one enhancing the other.

The dream school described here is not out of our reach. This kind of school is becoming more and more the norm, not the exception, in American education. Thousands of schools in the U.S.—according to the latest data, 59% of schools in the U.S. have some form of social and emotional learning curricula at various stages of implementation¹—are adopting research-based social and emotional learning programs in the context of safe and supportive school, family, and

community learning environments in which children feel valued, respected, connected, and engaged in their learning. Why are more and more U.S. school systems embracing this expanded vision of education? What are the challenges we face and what do we need to do to move this vision of education forward?

This report outlines the journey that has taken place in the U.S. over the past few decades to implement high-quality social and emotional learning (SEL) programming as a regular part of kindergarten to grade 12 education. It describes the following:

Growing evidence suggests that a key component in meeting educational goals for children, academic as well as social, is social and emotional learning.

- The challenges and barriers to learning for children growing up in the U.S. today, compared to those of the past, and why social and emotional learning is taking hold.

- The trends in American education that have shaped policy over the past decades and laid the groundwork for the social and emotional learning movement and the founding of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

- What it looks like to further the vision of SEL when a school district and an individual school commit to this agenda. [Editor's note: The full report also contains a study of how Illinois is adopting SEL programming at the state level.]

I will take a closer look at the Anchorage School District in Alaska, which has been actualizing a vision of SEL as a basic part of the district's mission for close to two decades. I will also examine the implementation of SEL at PS 24, The Dual-Language School for International Studies in New York City. I will conclude with some thoughts about steps we still need to take in the U.S. to make SEL a household term and the accepted way we educate American children.

Education in the United States

The U.S. system of education is complex, multi-dimensional, and among the largest systems of education in the world. Because the population of the U.S. is increasing, so is enrollment in all levels of education, both public and private. The country is divided into more than 15,000 independently operated public school districts headed by superintendents and more than 80,000 individual schools headed by principals.²

The governing structure of the U.S. educational system consists of each school district's having a local school board. Each of the 50 states has a chief state school officer, a governor, and a state legislature. There are six regional accrediting agencies and one U.S. Department of Education, which is in charge of national initiatives that include funding and other issues of legal compliance.³ There are vast differences in race or ethnic-

ity, wealth, religion, age, and population density among the various states. Although the Federal government contributes only 10% of each state's total education funding, it issues about 90% of the commands.⁴

Children attend compulsory education from 1st grade (about six years old) to 12th grade (about 17-18 years old).⁵ There are 54,000 elementary schools, which usually cover grades from pre-kindergarten through grade 5, and 18,000 secondary schools, which are sometimes composed of middle schools (grades 6-8) and high schools (grades 9-12). There are variations in the way the 12 years of schooling are divided depending on the number of chil-

dren in any given neighborhood. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are not yet universal.

About 49 million students attend public schools and another 6.1 million attend private and independent schools, to which families need to pay tuition fees. Currently, about 1 million children are home-schooled.⁶ The number of children ages 5-17 who speak a language other than English in the home more than doubled between 1979 and 2005, with 1 out of 5 school-age children speaking a language other than English at home today.⁷ 38% of public school students are minority or children of color. Only 10% secondary school teachers, 14% elementary teachers, 16% principals and 4% superintendents, however, are minorities. The pedagogical staff is composed of 2.8 million public school teachers and about 70,000 principals who are the heads of the schools.⁸

In 1900 in the U.S., only about 7% of Americans had a high school diploma. About 75% lived on farms. Today, only 3% live on farms and about 75% have high school diplomas.⁹ The average public school in 1900 enrolled 40 students, and the size of the average school district was 120 students. Today, an average elementary school enrolls more than 400 pupils, and a typical high school enrolls more than 2,000 pupils. In 1900, schools were more economically, racially, and ethnically homogeneous.¹⁰

School systems throughout the United States are starting to realize that SEL more than pays for itself in benefits to individual children and to society.

Today's schools face unprecedented challenges to educate an increasingly multicultural and multilingual student body and to address the widening social and economic disparities in U.S. society. Of the more than 300 million people living in the U.S.,¹¹ more than 40 million move in a year, and of these, 7 million are school-age children. Further, we have no system to track a student who moves from one state to another.¹²

Kindergarten teachers say that about 20% of children entering kindergarten do not yet have the necessary social and emotional skills to be "ready" for kindergarten. Of very low income children, as many as 30% may not have the necessary skills.¹³ About a third of today's students do not graduate from high school after four years. In 2003, 88% of Asians, 85% of whites, 80% of blacks, and 57% of Hispanics had a high school diploma. The U.S. now ranks 10th in the world in the percentage of youth who graduate from high school. We were first about 30 years ago.¹⁴

After high school, of those graduates who do not directly enter the workforce, some students enter technical and vocational institutions. Others attend community college, which is usually for two years, or attend a four-year college or university. The average four-year college student—public or private—will graduate with a debt of \$18,000, and this number is increasing.¹⁵

Challenges that Face American Youth and SEL as a Solution

Our experience of the world as children was vastly different from the world our children face. Today's world includes all kinds of stressors that didn't even exist when we were growing up. As an elementary teacher during the 1970s and later as an administrator in New York City schools, I started to notice that young people's social and emotional development seemed to be in a serious decline. I was seeing children coming to school more aggressive, more disobedient, more impulsive, sadder, and lonelier. Thomas Achenbach confirmed my observations; his groundbreaking stud-

ies of thousands of American children, first in the mid-1970s and then again in the late 1980s, proved this to be true. America's children—from the poorest to the most affluent—displayed a decline across the board in scores on more than forty measures designed to reflect a variety of emotional and social capacities.¹⁶

Children in America today face a host of unprecedented challenges to their safe and healthy development. National statistics hint at the scope of these challenges: 15% to 22% of the nation's youth experience social, emotional, and mental health problems requiring treatment; 25% to 30% of American children experience school adjustment problems; and 14% of students 12-18 years of age report having been bullied at school in the past 6 months.¹⁷

The 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)—the most current year available—revealed a large percentage of American high school students are involved with substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, violence, and mental health difficulties. For example, 16.9% of high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide; more than 40% used alcohol; close to 30% had ridden in a car with someone who had been drinking within 30 days of the survey; and almost 20% had carried a weapon some time during the past month.¹⁸

Threats to learning can be found on the home front as well. Young people today have virtually uncensored media access through the Internet, cable television, and music outlets; they are bombarded as never before by commercial messages that tout unceasing consumption and glamour as the routes to happiness. Young people today are far less likely than previous generations to have adults around them in their non-school hours, as mothers' labor-force participation has grown from 10% in the 1950s to more than 78% in 1999.¹⁹ As of 2004, more than half of all children will grow up in a home without a biological father present.²⁰

According to the 2006 Indicators of School Crime and Safety report from the National Center

When social and emotional skills are taught and mastered, they help children succeed not just in school, but also in all avenues of life.

for Education Statistics, 27% of schools report daily or weekly bullying incidents. In 2005, more than a quarter of students ages 12-18 reported being bullied within the past six months, with 58% of these students bullied once or twice during that period, 25% bullied once or twice a month, 11% bullied once or twice a week, and 8% of students bullied almost every day.²¹

In the past, the dominant paradigm in response to this decline in American children's social and emotional capacities focused on trying to identify the risk factors that caused this antisocial behavior. There were almost two decades of school-based "prevention wars," like the "war on drugs." In the last two decades we have witnessed a healthy paradigm shift. Researchers and practitioners are studying the concept of resilience—the innate ability we all have to self-correct and thrive in the face of life's challenges. Bonnie Bernard, a pioneer in the field of strength-based approaches, has helped us take a look at how young people's strengths and capabilities can be developed in order to protect them from the potential harm that these circumstances represent.²²

Despite, and perhaps because of, the challenges young people face, growing evidence suggests that a key component in meeting educational goals for children, academic as well as social, is social and emotional learning.²³ Robust research studies have shown that students in schools that use an evidence-based SEL curriculum significantly improve in their attitudes toward school, their behaviors, and their academic performance. Almost 30 studies have shown that SEL programs result in student improvements in achievement test scores—an average of 14% over students who do not learn SEL skills. Furthermore, the impact of SEL programs seem to be long-lasting.²⁴

One major multi-year study found that by the time they were adults, students who received SEL in grades 1-6 (6 to 11 years of age) had an 11% higher grade point average, significantly greater levels of school commitment and attachment to school at age 18, and greater school success. Among students required to repeat a grade, the

retention rate for students who received SEL was better at 14%, versus 23% for control students. Further, SEL students demonstrated a 30% lower incidence of school behavior problems at age 18, a 20% lower rate of violent delinquency at age 18, and a 40% lower rate of heavy alcohol use at age 18.²⁵

Why Social and Emotional Learning Is Essential

A growing body of research suggests that helping children develop good social and emotional skills early in life makes a big difference in their long-term health and wellbeing. Studies have shown that children's social and emotional functioning and behavior begin to stabilize around the age of eight, and can predict the state of their behavior and mental health later in life.²⁶ In other words, if children learn to express emotions constructively and engage in caring and respectful relationships before and while they are in lower elementary grades, they are more likely to avoid depression, violence, and other serious mental health problems as they grow older. Conclusions like these may seem obvious but, in the face of nature-nurture debates, provide evidence for the importance of deliberate and focused education in these areas.

School systems throughout the United States are starting to realize that SEL more than pays for itself in benefits to individual children and to society. Providing children with comprehensive social and emotional learning programs characterized by safe, caring, and well-managed learning environments and instruction in social and emotional skills addresses many of these learning barriers. School attachment—a sense of connectedness and belonging—is enhanced, risky behaviors reduced, and academic achievement positively influenced.

Many schools in the U.S. have begun to see the value in creating and supporting the school conditions and student capacities that SEL provides. Many educators today are working to change and manage school environments or climates—in classrooms, in hallways, on playing

Attending to social and emotional needs is critical. Students need to feel good about themselves to learn.

fields, and in clubs. They are also working to develop students' skills and knowledge, skills and knowledge that maximize their potential for optimal performance, human connection, and effective relationships. These are skills like recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively. These skills, for example, allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

Students who are given clear behavioral standards and social skills, allowing them to feel safe, valued, confident, and challenged, will exhibit better school behavior and learn more. This statement is of monumental importance as we attempt to improve the outcomes of education in the U.S. In fact, SEL skills and the supportive environments in which they are taught seem to contribute to the resiliency of all children—those without identified risks and those at-risk of or already exhibiting emotional or behavioral problems and in need of additional support.

Daniel Goleman has contributed much to our thinking about the need to nurture the social and emotional lives of children. In his groundbreaking book *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman summarized research from the fields of neuroscience and cognitive psychology that identify EQ—emotional intelligence—as being as important as IQ in terms of children's healthy development and future life success. He wrote:

One of psychology's open secrets is the relative inability of grades, IQ, or SAT scores, despite their popular mystiques, to predict unerringly who will succeed in life. ... There are widespread exceptions to the rule that IQ predicts success—many (or more) exceptions than cases that fit the rule. At best, IQ contributes about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, which leaves 80 percent to other forces.²⁷

When children actively engage in meaningful, relevant learning experiences, ... they learn concepts and skills in a deep and genuine way.

Goleman's work has helped educators, including me, understand the importance of emotional intelligence as a basic requirement for the effective use of one's IQ—that is, one's cognitive skills and knowledge. He made the connection between our feelings and our thinking more explicit by pointing out how the brain's emotional and executive areas are interconnected physiologically, especially as these areas relate to teaching and learning. The prefrontal lobes of the brain, which are associated with emotional impulses, are also strongly associated with working memory and learning.

Educators and parents alike are now 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. Schools across the U.S. today are beginning to systematically help children strengthen their EQs by equipping them with concrete skills

for identifying and managing their emotions, communicating effectively, and resolving conflicts nonviolently. These skills help children to make good decisions, to be more empathetic, and to be optimistic in the face of setbacks.

The hopeful news is that schools and parents, working together, can play pivotal roles in supporting children's healthy development in dealing with their emotions and their relationships. In the U.S., this is referred to as social and emotional learning because these are skills that can be learned and mastered, every bit as much as language or mathematics or reading can be. Furthermore, teaching academic skills and social and emotional skills is not an either/or proposition. There is a great deal of research evidence to indicate that students perform better when academics are combined with SEL.²⁸ When social and emotional skills are taught and mastered, they help children succeed, not just in school, but in all avenues of life.

The SEL movement in the U.S. is related to other national youth development and prevention

initiatives, such as character education and school-based health promotion programs. SEL is significantly different from these, however, because it systematically addresses the numerous social and emotional variables that place youth at risk for school failure, such as a lack of attachment to a significant adult or the inability to manage emotions.

Many of the early social and emotional learning efforts in schools were developed to combat risky behaviors such as teens' use of drugs and alcohol, dropping out of school, unwanted teen pregnancies, and other pitfalls of adolescence. These effects are related to children's social and emotional development by focusing on a single problem or issue such as preventing substance abuse. SEL, however, provides educators with a common language and framework to organize their activities. SEL is an inclusive approach that covers the entire spectrum of social and emotional competencies that help children to be resilient and successful learners. When the W. T. Grant Foundation commissioned a study of all such programs to see what actually made some of them work (while others did not), the teaching of social and emotional skills emerged among the crucial active ingredients.

We owe it to our children to help them be fully prepared for the challenges and opportunities that they will face.

The Founding of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)²⁹ has been at the forefront of moving the agenda of social and emotional learning forward in the United States.

Founded in the U.S., CASEL has been providing national and international leadership for educators, researchers, and policy makers to advance the science and practice of social and emotional learning since 1994. CASEL's organizational vision and mission guide all that it does:

VISION: We envision a world where families, schools, and communities work together to promote children's success in school and life and to support the healthy development of all children.

In this vision, children and adults are engaged, life-long learners who are self-aware, caring and connected to others, and responsible in their decision-making. Children and adults achieve to their fullest potential and participate constructively in a democratic society.

MISSION: To establish social and emotional learning as an essential part of education.

CASEL investigates the best ways to advance children's social and emotional learning and provides training to educational leaders and school staff in how to make SEL the foundation for academic success, disseminating research findings on the most effective practices and programs to educators, researchers, and policy makers. Working in collaboration with other organizations, CASEL promotes the principle that safe, supportive learning communities are an essential component of effective school reform.

CASEL was inspired by the vision of its cofounders, educator-philanthropist Eileen Rockefeller Growald and former New York Times science writer and author Daniel Goleman. In 1994, Growald, Goleman, and collaborators convened leading educators and researchers to discuss effective whole-school change practices that incorporate rigorous scientific research. Out of this meeting came both the term "social and emotional learning" and the organization—CASEL—to gather and disseminate reliable information about evidence-based SEL strategies and to translate scientific knowledge into high-quality educational approaches for all students.

During its first decade, CASEL defined the field of SEL in the text, *Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*, published in 1996 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). This document was sent as a member benefit to more than 100,000 educational leaders. CASEL established the research base for the field of SEL, publishing the essential characteristics and documented benefits of high-quality, evidence-based SEL programs for children. The U.S. Department of Education

funded CASEL to review and create an objective guide to SEL programs. The resulting document, *Safe and Sound*, sold out 15,000 copies and has been downloaded from CASEL's website more than 150,000 times.

CASEL research syntheses established the link between these programs and greater attachment to school, less risky behavior, and greater student assets, leading to better academic performance and success in school and life. The CASEL text summarizing much of this work is *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say?* published in 2004 by Teachers College Press. Most recently, in partnership with urban, suburban, and rural schools in different parts of the country, CASEL has developed strategies for using SEL as an organizing framework for coordinating all of a school's academic, prevention, health promotion, and youth development activities. Knowledge and products developed from this work are combined with applications of the latest research in systems change, leadership development, and program implementation in the 400-page CASEL document, *Sustainable Schoolwide SEL: Implementation Guide and Toolkit*, which sold out its first printing of 2,000 copies and serves as the core element of CASEL's national training program.

CASEL also advises districts, states, and countries, providing technical assistance and training on policy approaches to support SEL and systems for expanding practice on a broad scale.

In the past two years CASEL has conducted 23 sold-out two-day school and district trainings with 300 school teams (representing several hundred thousand students) from across the U.S. as well as Australia, Spain, and Canada. In 2007, noting the research base for SEL and CASEL's role in the field, UNICEF contracted with CASEL to lead an evaluation of its Child Friendly Schools model, to assure better attention to student social and emotional development.

CASEL is having widespread influence on school practices, policies, and professional development throughout the world. Its website—www.casel.org—where papers and reports from CASEL's and others' projects are posted, attracts visitors from throughout the world. In addition, periodic reports are shared with the more than 10,000 subscribers to CASEL's electronic newsletter, *CASEL Connections*.

CASEL is unique in education today. It is an organization devoted to improving education by bridging theory, research, and practice—and to pursuing the goals of school improvement and student success through continuing dialogue and collaboration with educators.

Social and Emotional Learning in the Anchorage School District, Alaska³⁰

Russian Jack Elementary School, Anchorage, Alaska, May 1993 (Linda Lantieri's journal entry):³¹

It is spring in Anchorage, Alaska. This is my first trip to Russian Jack Elementary School but my eighth trip to the Anchorage School District (ASD) since 1988, when I first started to assist this school district in paying attention to children's hearts as well as to their minds. Russian Jack has been part of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) for four years now. . . . Upon entering Russian Jack, I notice a sign on the entrance. It reads, "Our mission at Russian Jack, a school of cultural diversity, is to ensure that each student is actively involved in their learning, while developing a sense of self and becoming a productive citizen who will contribute to society in a meaningful way."

Already I have a sense of this school. I continue down the hallway, taking in my new surroundings. To the right there's a large glass display case. Inside are a myriad of art projects, bright colorful masks, and drums. A sign above reads, "These masks and drums are representative of the culture of the Inuit people of Alaska. They were made by our Young Ambassadors, students dedicated to promoting a deeper understanding of the rich cultural diversity of the children at the Russian Jack Elementary School."

Donna, the school's principal of six years, welcomes me. I had met Donna once before, at an RCCP advanced training for administrators a few years before. Donna offers to take time out of her busy schedule to take me around the school. She talks about her school and how they've implemented RCCP. Heading up the stairs toward the second floor, I see a huge banner with P-E-A-C-E in large, multicolored letters sewn over a pastel backdrop. It is magnificent. Young people must read this several times a day as they go back and forth to the library and their classrooms; adults read it too.

Teachers and children alike greet us as we visit classrooms and observe them at work. They are working in groups, talking and sharing ideas. Classroom walls display several indicators that Resolving Conflict Creatively Program is in place at this school. “Put-up” charts (giving examples of the opposite to “put downs”) line walls. Words such as “I-Messages” and “Active Listening” are listed as tools to be used for communication in the classroom. There is calm in the air, not the frenzy one can sometimes feel in schools.

Recess begins. Donna is called to the office. I head out to the playground. It is a warm, clear day. The sun is up and shining almost all day at this time of the year. The children are playful and carefree. Mediators stand by in the lunchroom and outdoors. Several times a conflict begins to erupt, but mediators intervene immediately. I am told that the library mediation room is available in case it gets too cold to mediate outside.

Throughout the day, children and teachers share their experiences with me. They talk about Russian Jack proudly and openly. They talk about the benefits they see since RCCP has been at their school. They support their mediators, who they feel are helping to create a culture of nonviolence at this school. Young people talk highly about their teachers, principal, and mediation program. They feel safe at this school. “It’s a good school,” says Nikita. “Not like my other school where kids used to fight all the time.”

These images from Anchorage offer hints of what can happen when the kind of educational vision we have been talking about is put into practice. Little did I know then what I know now—that the Anchorage School District (ASD) would lead the way for school districts across the U.S. to commit to implementing social and emotional learning standards and benchmarks. How did the ASD arrive at this place? What can we learn from them that can inform other school systems throughout the U.S. and the world to make SEL a core part of the mission and vision of an entire school district?

Anchorage’s SEL journey began in December 1987, when Tom Roderick, Executive Director of a nongovernmental organization—Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility—was asked to write an article on the topic of children and violence for the contemporary issues section

of *Educational Leadership*, a well-known and respected educational journal in the U.S. Tom wrote a wonderful article tracing the history of conflict resolution in schools and highlighting our work in New York City with the researched based SEL program he and I co-founded—the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). He titled his article “Johnny Can Learn to Negotiate.” Since *Educational Leadership* is a journal to which almost every principal in America subscribes, we became national news and began to receive many inquiries. One of them was from the Anchorage School District in Alaska, saying that they were ready to sponsor a course in “peace education” in three weeks. My first thought was, “Are you kidding? How could something that was developed in urban New York City be of any use to a school system in Anchorage, Alaska? I also had a sense, however, that what we were doing in NYC was going to catch on around the country and that we needed to humbly share what we had been learning. By the end of the day I called them back to say yes.

Flying into Anchorage airport, the earth blanketed in white, the imposing mountains at a distance, I wondered whether this was a crazy idea—a big mistake—or whether our grassroots origins in New York City, teaching young people how to manage their emotions and resolve conflict nonviolently, had a certain universality regardless of the distance and differences that separated these two places.

In retrospect I understand how important it was to go to a place like Anchorage. Had I not expanded to the Anchorage School District next with our SEL program, I suspect it would have taken me a long time to realize that this kind of work could take hold in any school environment that was concerned about these issues. Today, the ASD is the nation’s 88th largest school district, with about 50,000 students—nearly 40% of Alaska’s school children. Over 30% of ASD students live in poverty. Increasingly diverse, ASD now has a 50% minority population; 84 languages are spoken in its schools. The ASD has the largest population of Alaska natives in the state. While the district is proud of its ethnic diversity, it is also experiencing the pains of large achievement gap among constituencies and a huge dropout rate.

In the summer of 2007 I made my 28th trip to the ASD. It has been a joy to work with such an

amazing group of people, people who are changing the vision of education for the whole country. Here is their story.

The Anchorage School District's SEL Journey of Success

In an era in which the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act has forced schools to concentrate on increasing students' test scores rather than engaging them in a world in which they will succeed, the Anchorage School District was able to place social and emotional learning at the center of its mission. How did the district get its families, community, and school board not to dismiss this kind of curriculum as "soft and touchy-feely" and help them recognize that social and emotional learning can be part of a rigorous and achievement-oriented education? We have much to learn from their example.

In August 2006, the Anchorage School Board became the first school district in the U.S. to unanimously approve the implementation of SEL standards and benchmarks for incorporation into the district's academic program. How was this diverse urban school district, with a teaching staff of 3,500, able to make this significant commitment to such a holistic vision of education for the 50,000 students it serves? The story involves the courageous leadership of dynamic superintendent Carol Comeau, forward-minded thinking on the part of the wider leadership of the district, and a long term democratic decision-making process committed to building staff and community understanding and support for these efforts.

For two decades the ASD has had an expansive view of what skills a graduate needs to be ready for the 21st century. During 1988-1998, it became committed to implementing a few different research-based SEL programs, including RCCP, in many of its schools, well before most school systems were even thinking in terms of prevention. During this same period, the district was also introduced to the work of the Search Institute in Minnesota, which had identified forty "developmental assets" that young people need to be successful. The more of these assets young people had in their life, the Search Institute research found, the more likely they were to grow up healthy, productive, and caring.

School board members and superintendents statewide started to be trained in the Developmental

Assets Framework. Michael Kerosky, Supervisor of Anchorage's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program remembered how important this was: "It was a radical shift for us. Instead of focusing on stopping negative risk behavior, we were focusing on building young people's strengths. Exposure to this training also convinced [those at] the top that this kind of approach made sense. We also each knew intuitively from working with young people that this approach would work."

The ASD engaged teachers, staff, principals, and the wider community in many meetings to begin to identify which of the external developmental assets the family, school, and community were already providing their young people and which of the internal assets they were strengthening through implementing researched-based SEL programs. The Developmental Assets Framework became common language at the ASD. Every new teacher was exposed to this training, as were bus drivers, security guards, and school secretaries. The entire community was involved in reflecting on the social, emotional, and ethical state of the children they served. As Michael Kerosky said,

Adopting SEL benchmarks was based on the resiliency work that had been done before. That created the fertile ground for this work not to be seen as 'social engineering,' as it had been looked upon by many a decade earlier.

In 2004 Anchorage passed another important milestone on its SEL journey. Superintendent Carol Comeau, in an effort to consistently infuse the Search Institute's Developmental Assets framework district-wide, convened a team of people to design an action plan. The team conceived of the Social and Emotional Learning Six Year Plan. The plan had as its main premise the goal of having SEL as an integral part of the curriculum frameworks of the entire district. To ensure that this plan would move forward, the school district committed itself to creating a new position, the Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum Coordinator. Victoria Blakeney, a veteran high school teacher who had been actively incorporating SEL in her high school English curriculum, was selected for the position. In 2007, in a show of support, the school board voted to absorb the

SEL Curriculum Coordinator's salary, previously grant-funded, into the general fund.

Under Vickie's direction, a district-wide steering committee was created to help drive the SEL initiative. The academic curriculum frameworks of the ASD was and still is primarily standards-based, which means that for each subject that is taught, there are specific grade level appropriate competencies in which students are expected to become proficient. These are known as "benchmarks"—competencies that are easily measurable and observable. The first task of the SEL Steering Committee, therefore, was to write SEL standards and benchmarks to bring before the school board. The purpose of this strategy was to ensure that the teaching of social and emotional learning skills would be considered as important as any of the other curriculum areas students in the Anchorage School District were expected to learn.

At this stage of its planning, the ASD Steering Committee reached out to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). At that point CASEL was experienced and committed to advancing the science and expanding the practice of SEL in schools, school districts, and state policy. The benchmarks and standards Anchorage created were inspired by CASEL's work in the state of Illinois. The ASD Steering Committee also spent two years looking at what other districts were doing and engaged each other in reflective conversations about what they really wanted for their students in the social and emotional learning domain. They got input from staff and community and finally drafted their own version of the benchmarks and standards. The Steering Committee creatively devised an approach to organize and communicate what they were trying to do by using the four components of SEL as outlined by CASEL, which are self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and social management. Vickie describes the process:

I remember a great moment in our group when one of the steering committee members realized that the four quadrants that make up the goals for SEL could correspond with certain headings:
Self-Awareness = "I am..."
Self-Management = "I can..."
Social Awareness = "I care..."

Social Management = "I will..."

This resounded with all of us and, from then on, the task seemed easier. We could use as our mnemonic the phrase, "I am, I can, I care, I will."

Once the committee drafted the standards, they aligned them with their corresponding Developmental Asset, to honor the framework that had already been established in the district. From there began a year's worth of listening sessions—editing, informing, and trying to make the standards accessible to all of their stakeholders. On August 14, 2006, after an hour-long question and answer session, and with much excitement, the Anchorage School Board adopted the implementation of the SEL standards.

During the following year, Vickie continued to work to align the standards with many of the other existing programs and curricula so that teachers could see which of the standards were being taught and which needed more focus. For example, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) was implemented in quite a few elementary schools, so Vickie brought together a team of RCCP teachers and they evaluated the RCCP curriculum through the lens of which SEL standards were being directly taught and in which lessons they were being taught. A similar alignment was done for the district-adopted health curriculum, the middle school Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders (AVB) Program, and 12 other programs or curricula currently implemented in the district, including the elementary reading curriculum.

The long-term goal for the school district is to figure out how many of the SEL standards teachers have the potential of teaching by using their existing curricula and which ones they need to find more ways to support. More and more of the schools in Anchorage are self-selecting to add a research-based SEL program to their school day.

The next task ASD is working on is figuring out how they will assess whether or not students have mastered SEL skills. The ASD sees their work as "putting the assets into action." The adoption of these standards, however, does also seem to be empowering the various individual schools to address SEL more intentionally and programmatically. In order to support the deepening of the work around SEL standards, the school district decided to select two elementary, two middle, and two high

schools to be SEL pilot schools. These pilot schools are helping the SEL Coordinator to determine what resources or support schools need, and then Vickie works to provide that for the pilot schools as well as all of the other schools in the district.

It also became apparent to the school district that they weren't really going to help students thrive in their SEL skills if they didn't focus on providing them with a culturally responsive environment in which to learn, given how culturally diverse their student body was. Therefore Vickie worked with the district's Culturally Responsive Education Action Committee, spearheading the design of a Culturally Responsive Teaching Continuum. This continuum provides teachers with a look at their practices, showing them how culturally responsive they currently are, and how they can move further through the continuum. Both tools—the continuum and the SEL standards—are used at various professional development offerings at conferences and trainings around the district.

At least one team from every school in the district has now been trained in the use of both. Vickie is also an active member of various initiatives in the wider Anchorage community. For example, she serves on committees around Anchorage aimed at closing the achievement gap and ending racism as it exists in their community. ASD is currently working on developing a district-wide plan to roll out diversity training to all of its school personnel. The district has found that SEL and cultural responsiveness work can be a perfect match in both building a strong sense of self-awareness and a willingness to deal with a formerly taboo subject—racism.

Finally, ASD is also developing a Standards Based Report Card for social and emotional learning. The current report card has a place to score things like citizenship and responsibility. The scoring is arbitrary, however, and nearly meaningless to teachers and parents. A new report card is being designed, therefore, with rubrics that will rate the 15 SEL standards individually, giving teachers clear indicators by grade level (K-6) to help them to determine whether or not the student is learning and applying a standard.

Anchorage's success has reached beyond Alaska. Superintendent Carol Comeau is recognized as a national leader in SEL reform and serves on CASEL's Advisory Board. ASD's Assistant Superintendent, Rhonda Gardner, volunteered on

the original SEL steering committee, serving a pivotal role in writing the ASD SEL Standards and Benchmarks. Because of the level of their investment, the ASD has drawn national attention to the field of SEL. In 2007, the George Lucas Education Foundation filmed an onsite documentary of ASD's SEL initiative for the online magazine *Edutopia*. Superintendent Comeau presented their work on SEL at the Council of Great City Schools and the CASEL Forum in 2007. Many nationally known SEL leaders and practitioners support and collaborate with the ASD on the work they are doing. This national support has helped to ensure that their implementation of SEL is excellent.

Social and Emotional Learning at PS 24, the Dual-Language School for International Studies in New York City

Public School 24, also called the Dual-Language School for International Studies (Spanish and English), is a school in which academic instruction, social and emotional learning, and mental health services are fully integrated for the benefit of students, families, and teachers.³² This elementary school for children 4 to 12 years of age is located in the heart of a largely Latino working-class neighborhood called Sunset Park in Brooklyn. Nearly half of the school's 839 students are learning English as a second language. Most emigrated from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and other countries in Spanish-speaking Central and South America. Some children are Chinese. About 90% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, which is a clear indicator that they are from low-income families. New York City has more than a million public school students and 1,400 public schools. The student population of the entire school system is diverse: 32.5% Black, 39% Latino or Hispanic, 14% Asian, and 14.5% White.

Inside the school building, signs of a child-centered approach to teaching and learning are evident. PS 24's walls are covered with children's colorful artwork. Teachers aren't screaming in hallways or classrooms; the lunchroom is noisy, but the children are engaged and mannerly. "Visitors to our school often comment about the warmth and respect students and adults show for each other here," says Principal Christina Fuentes.

PS 24 has been implementing research-based social and emotional learning programs since the school opened its doors in 1997. Explains Fuentes:

Attending to social and emotional needs is critical. Students need to feel good about themselves to learn. If we want them to be risk-takers intellectually, we need to help them feel safe in school and at home. The more we address emotional needs, the fewer discipline problems we'll have. This is not only right to do morally; it's a strategy to get kids to achieve academically.

PS 24 has partnered with a nongovernmental organization, Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, to carefully implement its SEL curriculum. Morningside Center was founded in 1982 by educators concerned about the dangers of nuclear war. Its mission is to help students and teachers learn creative, nonviolent ways of dealing with conflict and cultural differences.

Virtually all of the teachers have received professional development in SEL through the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), one of the longest running research-based K-8 SEL programs in the U.S. Some of the teachers have also been trained in a newer SEL program called the 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution) Program, which integrates conflict resolution into reading, writing, and speaking skills for grades K-5. Each unit of the 4Rs curricula begins with a teacher reading a book aloud to the students. Students practice SEL skills in the context of understanding the story and its context in their lives. Currently this program is undergoing an extensive three-year scientific evaluation, and initial results are promising. Through both of these efforts, the teachers at PS 24 are able to provide regular instruction for their students in SEL skills (for example: active listening, dealing with feelings, assertiveness, negotiation, mediation, dealing well with diversity, and making a difference).

In addition, the school has approximately 40 trained peer mediators (4th and 5th graders) to help their classmates talk out problems and arrive at solutions. Mediators receive a three-day training and learn a specific 17-step mediation process. Once trained, they work in teams of two, usually during lunch or recess. They wear peer mediator T-shirts when they are "on duty." The

mediators always have an adult coach, usually a parent, who has also been trained in the process. The coach is nearby in case a problem should arise.

Some of the mediators also become "Peace Helpers" who go into kindergarten through third grade classrooms to set up "peace corners" to help younger students address problems that arise by resolving conflict nonviolently. A peace corner is a place where a student can go for a few minutes if he or she is upset or having a conflict with someone. Peace helpers are available on request to sit with the upset students to help them feel better or work things out. At PS 24, every kindergarten through grade three classroom now has a peace corner and peace helpers. The school also operates an after-school program, PAZ ("Peace from A to Z") every school day of the year for some 360 students.

In the spring of 2007, some upper grade students got specialized training to become part of a "diversity panel" that shared their cultural stories and experiences with various classrooms in the school as part of the school's first ever "Diversity Week." Teachers were asked to discuss diversity in their classrooms every day during that week and the student diversity panel helped by making classroom presentations.

When Heather shared her story in one classroom, she explained to her fellow students:

It was hard for me in my old school. People made fun of me because I have only one hand. So I started playing sports—basketball, football. And when I got better at it, they started to leave me alone.

Jason described his experience as an African American with the following remarks:

I was in the park one day with my mom and her boyfriend. And I was bored, because only younger kids were there. And then three white kids came into the park that were my age. I asked if I could play with them. And they said, "No, we won't play with you." And I asked them why. And they said, "Because you're black." I went away and I thought about it. And I thought that they were wrong, that it shouldn't make any difference what color my skin was. So I went back over to them and told them that.

Many other aspects of PS 24's curriculum promote SEL. For example, the school's dual language program helps the many new immigrants make an easier adjustment to their new country. Students read books of their own choosing, write from their life experiences, and practice their communication skills in group discussions which foster SEL skills as well.

Of course, there are some children at PS 24 who need extra help in SEL (as there are children who need extra help in reading or math). For 2nd and 3rd graders who continually get into trouble during lunch and recess, a staff developer from Morningside Center and the school's guidance counselor provide "lunch clubs," in which three or four of these challenging younger students are paired with older peer mediators to form a group that meets once a week for six weeks or more to check in with each other and get extra practice in SEL skills. For example, in these sessions they might role-play how to be strong without being mean in specific situations. The lunch clubs have resulted in significant improvements in the behavior of many participating students. To address the needs of youngsters and their families who need even more support, the school has a relationship with Lutheran Medical Center—a local mental health agency that provides trained therapists and counselors to work with families.

A few years ago, PS 24 chose to become an "empowerment school." Empowerment schools, in the structure and governance of the New York City Department of Education (NYC-DOE), get more autonomy in exchange for greater accountability. The DOE piloted a fairer and more nuanced accountability system in empowerment schools in 2007. In this process, called "value added," cohorts of students are tracked and their progress measured from year to year, schools are compared with other schools that have similar student populations, and schools receive a letter grade (A through F).

In the 2006-2007 school year, evidence came flooding in that PS 24's teaching efforts were having a major impact, not only on the school climate, but also on students' academic performance. The NYC-DOE rated PS 24 "exemplary" in closing the achievement gap. Latino students in the lowest third in English Language Arts rose to higher levels, and all English language learners rose to higher levels in mathematics. The school received a B+, one

of the highest grades among schools rated. The school also received outstanding scores on the NYC-DOE's Learning Environment Survey. PS 24's survey responses were above average in every category (academic expectations, communication, engagement, safety, and respect).

In its most recent Quality Review Report, the NYC-DOE gave PS 24 its highest rating, calling it a "well-developed school" in all five areas evaluated. The report noted that:

The school has developed excellent partnerships with organizations dedicated to conflict resolution and peace mediation. Students as young as kindergarten age are trained as peacemakers and mediators. There have been no suspensions this current school year and only one last year ... Children are happy, feel safe, and take an active role in their daily learning. Students who were questioned felt respected by all teachers and were able to name not one but several individual staff members whom they trusted.

When children actively engage in meaningful, relevant learning experiences, as they do at PS 24, they learn concepts and skills in a deep and genuine way. As David Elkind wrote, "Once growth by integration has been accomplished, it is difficult—if not impossible—to break it down."³³ Creating an effective school-based SEL program that teaches young people how to intervene mindfully and respectfully in conflict situations and to make ethical choices in their own personal and social behavior requires the kind of instruction that goes beyond just telling students what they ought to know and how they ought to behave. It requires a pedagogy of active learning that enables students to recognize and practice the skills and ideas they have learned in the classroom in real life.

The story that began this article is one powerful example of this kind of learning in action. The boys in that story had SEL instruction for at least a couple of years. The boy who was insulted practiced some important and standard techniques for managing his emotions and handling the conflict. First, he paused and took a slow, deep breath. This is a technique taught to children to help them control their emotions when they realize they are

about to be “high-jacked” by strong feelings. Then he gave a “put-up” (the opposite of a put-down) to his attacker and himself, reminding them both of something positive about each, thus leveling and elevating the encounter. The put-ups also cued the children to the SEL teachings they were familiar with as well, further invoking past learning about handling conflict. As a result, what might have been the start of days, months, or even years of conflict between the younger boy and two older oppressors was quickly diffused and turned into a positive encounter.

Generalizing, we note that effective SEL programming, such as that at PS 24, includes:

- Instruction in and opportunities to practice and apply an integrated set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills.
- Learning environments characterized by trust and respectful relationships.
- Implementation that is coordinated and reinforces classroom, school-wide, out-of-school, and at-home learning activities.
- Systematic and sequential programming from preschool through every grade level.
- Developmentally and culturally appropriate behavioral supports.
- On-going monitoring and evaluation of implementation for continuous improvement.

Currently, PS 24 is one of thousands of schools in the U.S. proving that a school does not have to choose between promoting academic achievement and fostering good citizenship in the context of a caring learning community. A new vision of education that values young people’s hearts and spirits as well as their minds is beginning to take hold. Adults and children at PS 24 are partners in creating a positive school environment. The children are developing their leadership skills, and have skills in social and emotional learning that they will use for the rest of their lives—at home, at school, on the street, at work, and as citizens.

As we prepare our children to meet the challenges of living and working in the 21st century, all children deserve the kind of education practiced and modeled at PS 24. Our future depends on it.

Conclusion

The United States has been the first home of the social and emotional learning movement in education in the world. At least some component of this approach is used in more than half of the thousands of schools in the U.S. Over the last decade, this humanizing wave in American education has inspired many other parts of the world to follow. As this report outlines, many other countries are using SEL curricula. Today SEL is incorporated in some form in schools under diverse titles such as “emotional literacy,” “social and emotional education,” “life skills,” “citizenship education,” and “character education.”

In Singapore, the Ministry of Education launched a nationwide SEL program in 2006 and UNESCO formulated ten basic SEL principles³⁴ in a statement issued in 2002 to ministries in 140 countries.³⁵ The ten basic principles are summarized here:

1. Learning requires caring.
2. Teach everyday life-skills.
3. Link social-emotional instruction to other school services.
4. Use goal-setting to focus instruction.
5. Use varied instructional procedures.
6. Promote community service to build empathy.
7. Involve parents.
8. Build social-emotional skills gradually and systematically.
9. Prepare and support staff well.
10. Evaluate what you do.

The SEL movement is one of the most promising trends in education that we have witnessed in a long time. It seems to be the “missing piece” in bolstering academic success and preparing young people for the challenges they face in the 21st century. The challenges the movement faces now are to tackle the barriers that may obstruct more widespread adoption.

What will it take for social and emotional learning to be fully incorporated into the American education system as a norm, not an exception? First, we need to get the word out. Educational leaders in our country are still largely uninformed about the research findings concerning the value of social and emotional learning and how best to integrate and

sustain it as a central component of their curriculum, policies, and practice. Although scientific evidence and know-how is available, this information is not effectively utilized in most American schools. A strategic communications plan is needed at every level of American society to inform school administrators, teachers, parents, and the public about the positive short- and long-term impacts of SEL. CASEL needs to take a lead in publishing and broadly disseminating reports summarizing SEL programming impacts and to continue to update its “consumer’s guide” of evidenced-based SEL programming.

Second, in order to broadly adopt an SEL vision of education, there needs to be a model established to train large numbers of people to train others in these approaches. Again CASEL’s role here is essential in making SEL more widespread in the U.S. It would be helpful, for example, for CASEL to experimentally evaluate their resource *Sustainable Schoolwide SEL: Implementation Guide and Tool Kit* and continue to provide technical assistance to other states toward SEL implementation. Currently, school personnel struggle with choosing, implementing, and sustaining effective SEL programs.

Third, there is insufficient research and knowledge on how best to assess SEL outcomes. CASEL needs to play a role in further refining and field-testing rubrics for guiding and measuring SEL practices and program implementation. SEL report cards for parent-teacher- student conferences need to be designed and evaluated.

Finally, in order for SEL implementation to be widespread, the actions of educators alone are not sufficient. Policy work is required to guide states and countries to systematically and broadly implement and sustain evidence-based SEL programming.

The U.S. faces many challenges in educating its children, but we are also in a time of great hope and possibility. The SEL framework—if broadly adopted—would do much to improve the educational system in the U.S. We owe it to our children to help them be fully prepared for the challenges and opportunities that they will face. I end with the words of Pablo Casals:

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again. And what do we teach our children in

school? We teach them that two and two makes four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique... And when you grow up can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work—we all must work—to make this world worthy of its children.

References

1. Foster, S., Rollefson, M., Doksum, T., Noonan, D., Robinson, G., & Teich, J. (2005). “School mental health services in the United States, 2002-2003.” DHHS Pub. No. (SMA) 05-4068. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
2. Hodgkinson, H.B. (January 2006). *The Whole Child in a Fractured World* for the Commission on The Whole Child convened by The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/fracturedworld.pdf>.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006071_CommStat.pdf.
8. Ibid.
9. Op. cit., Hodgkinson, H.B.
10. www.casel.org.
11. www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-fact-book/print/U.S.html.
12. Op. cit., Hodgkinson, H.B.
13. Child Trends (2003). Kindergarten social interaction skills, from www.childtrendsdatabank.org.
14. Op. cit., Hodgkinson, H.B.
15. Ibid.
16. Achenbach, T. M. (1991). Integrative guide for the 1991 CBCL/4-18, YSR, and TRF profiles. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Department of Psychiatry.
17. *CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (2003). Division of Adolescent and School Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Atlanta: CDC; and Fleming, M. and Towey, K., eds.

- (May 2002), Educational Forum on Adolescent Health: Youth Bullying. Chicago: American Medical Association, <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/39/youthbullying.pdf>.
18. *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System* (YRBSS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005.
 19. U.S. Department of Labor (1999). *Futurework: Trends and challenges for work in the 21st century*. Washington, DC.
 20. Tyre, P. (2005, January 30). "The Trouble with Boys," *Newsweek*, pp. 44-53.
 21. National Center for Education Statistics (December 2006). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007003a.pdf>.
 22. Bernard, B. (2004). *Resiliency: What We Have Learned*. San Francisco: West Ed.
 23. Greenberg, M.T., Weissberg, R.P., O'Brien, M.U., Zins, J.E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M.J. (2003). "Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning." *American Psychologist*, 58(6/7), 466-474.
 24. From a forthcoming report by Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Taylor, R.D., Dymnicki, A.B., & Schellinger, K. (2008).
 25. Hawkins, J.D., Catalano, R.F., Kosterman, R., Abbott, R., & Hill, K.G. (1999). *Preventing Adolescent Strengthening Protection during Childhood*, Arch. Pediatr. Adolesc. Med, 153, 226-234.
 26. Huesmann, L. R., & Guerra, N.G., (1997). "Children's normative beliefs about aggression and aggressive behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72 (2), (1997), 408-419.
 27. Daniel Goleman (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*, New York: Bantam Books.
 28. Zins, J.E., Weissberg, R.P., Wang, M.C., and Walberg, H.J. (Eds.). *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say?* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004).
 29. The section "The Founding of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)" in this report has been adapted with permission from Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) website: www.casel.org.
 30. The section "Social and Emotional Learning in the Anchorage School District, Alaska" in this report has been adapted with permission from the information on Anchorage School District's website <http://www.asd.k12.ak.us/> and written in collaboration with Michael Kerosky, Director of The Safe and Drug Free School Program of the Anchorage School District, and Victoria Blakeney, Curriculum Coordinator of Social and Emotional Learning of the Anchorage School District.
 31. Journal entries of Linda Lantieri, Russian Jack Elementary School, Anchorage, Alaska, May 1993.
 32. The section "The Implementation of Social and Emotional Learning at PS 24 – the Dual- Language School for International Studies in New York City" in this report has been adapted with permission from *Action News*: Fall 2007, Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility and written in collaboration with Tom Roderick, Executive Director of Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility.
 33. Elkind, D. (1998). *All Grown Up and No Place to Go*, Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.
 34. Elias, Maurice J. Academic and social-emotional learning. Educational Practices Series—11. International Academy of Education/International Bureau of Education. Printed in France by SADAG, Bellegarde.
 35. SEL Across the Globe on CASEL website www.casel.org/sel/globe.php and Goleman, D. blog on Emotional Intelligence on his website www.daniel-goleman.info/blog/emotional-intelligence.

Linda Lantieri, MA, is a Fulbright Scholar, keynote speaker, author, and internationally known expert in social and emotional learning. She is a former classroom teacher, middle school administrator, and cofounder of Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), which has been implemented at 400 schools in 15 school districts in the United States, with pilot sites in Brazil and Puerto Rico. She is also a founding board member of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL's mission is to establish social and emotional learning as an essential part of education from preschool through high school worldwide. She is also a trustee of the Sunbridge Institute.

Note: This article is edited from Ms. Lantieri's report to the Fundacion Marcelino Botin, educacion.fundacionm-botin.org. Her full report may be found at http://www.lindalantieri.org/publications_articles.htm.



Rudolf Steiner's Research Methods for Teachers¹

Martyn Rawson

Several things that distinguish Waldorf education are unusual in education today. The first is the awareness that a human being is only fully understood if we take the unseen, spiritual aspect of a child's nature into account. Another is the explicit assumption that a teacher is required to research the curriculum, teaching methods, and factors that influence the learning and development of children. Further, Waldorf education is based on an epistemology and ontology that acknowledge no formal limits on knowledge of spiritual aspects of life. It is of paramount interest, therefore, that the methods by which this knowledge is generated be well-known and accessible to teachers.

A year after the founding of the Waldorf School in 1919, Rudolf Steiner, then school Director, held a course for teachers in which he added new perspectives to their reflection on their work. He described a method that, if used consistently over a period of years, leads teachers to be able to grasp quickly the essence of what needs to be done, for example, in lesson planning and in recognizing and meeting the needs of pupils. Steiner described this as “meditatively acquired knowledge of the human being.”² This involves studying the nature of the developing human being, meditating on this study, and then “creative remembering.”³ Steiner describes the outcome of working in this way as follows:

Now if you work at the study of the developing human like we have been doing, you experience it consciously to start with; yet if you subsequently meditate on it, an inner process of digestion goes into your soul and spirit, making a teacher and educator of you. Just as the

metabolism makes you a living person, this meditative digesting of a true study of man makes you an educator. You simply encounter the child in an entirely different way when you experience the results of a real anthroposophical study of man. And if we keep returning to ideas like these, if only for five minutes a day, our whole inner life of soul will be brought into movement. We shall produce so many thoughts and feelings they will just pour out of us. If you meditate on the study of man in the evening, then the next morning you will know in a flash... what to do with this or that pupil.⁴

If we take these brief indications in terms of practitioner research methodology,⁵ we can interpret them as follows. Steiner calls the first stage of this method study. If we interpret this in a wider sense it includes making observations, informing ourselves of the relevant literature, reflecting on ideas about our educational task, and engaging in discourse with colleagues, all of which Steiner saw as the regular activities of staff or faculty meetings. The teachers' meeting should be a “living university for the College of Teachers—a permanent training academy....”⁶ In a wide sense I interpret study to mean what would be called, in a research process, data collection. This could include a range of research methods, such as participant observation, case or child study, interview, questionnaire, study of documents, or a relevant literature survey or review—in other words, the methods typical of qualitative or interpretive research.⁷

Steiner calls the next stage of this method *meditation*. He uses an analogy with digestion but

In a wide sense I interpret study to mean what would be called, in a research process, data collection.

does not give precise instructions. The phrase “meditate on” suggests a form of reflection and contemplation, and it suggests regular practice. The analogy with digestion, however, requires a process of repeated forgetting—we are aware of our food’s taste and texture as we eat it, but then, thankfully, we are normally unconscious of it during digestion. Perhaps what Steiner meant was something along the lines of what Schmuck describes as professional self-reflection or “self-focused meditation that includes visualizing where you are, where you have been, and where you might go.”⁸ Steiner emphasizes the element of repeated practice.

The third stage following this meditative understanding is *creative remembering*,⁹ by which I believe Steiner means the process by which practice is illuminated not only by what we have understood but by what expresses itself as intuition. It is the art of doing the right thing at the right time. Lutzker has recently discussed the literature on intuition in teaching, especially by Schön.¹⁰ Kiersch has stressed that it is important to bear in mind that this process of creative remembering is not “the normal remembering with the help of which concrete pedagogical actions can be logically based on anthroposophical insights. What is meant here is ‘receiving something inwardly’ from the supersensible-spiritual realm of intuition.”¹¹ This process of remembering is akin to “thinking observation.”

In the process of meditatively acquired knowledge of the developing human being, which may be called the *meditative reflection* method, we recognize Steiner’s epistemology in the steps by which we acquire knowledge of the world. Steiner posited two sources of generating knowledge: what we perceive of the world through our senses and what we can grasp in the form of ideas and concepts in the act of thinking. In thinking, the human being has access to universal truths. In perceiving, we construct an empirical view of the world that is necessarily subjective. The world reveals itself, according to Steiner, in the human mind, or, as he also put it, the soul. The soul is the stage upon which cosmic events

unfold and in which we are not impassive observers but active co-creators, as Steiner put it in his doctoral thesis, *Truth and Science*. We change what we perceive and we are changed by the process.¹²

What is explicitly missing in Steiner’s method of meditative reflection, though it is amply supported implicitly, is the need to reflect on the acts of intuition and their consequences in practice. This is crucial if this method is to meet critical standards of research.¹³ Each individual teacher must engage in such reflection, for example, in reviewing lessons, and it must also occur in discourse with fellow teachers.

The whole process aims at revealing something of the being of the phenomenon and this insight provides a basis for meaningful engagement and action. The question is, what comes to expression through the data, through our perceptions, and how do we experience it? Only this question leads to a provisional idea of the being of the phenomenon.

Meditation as Contemplative Inquiry

Meditation may be an unusual form of research, but if we focus on the aspect of research that requires us to think about the phenomena that interest us, then we may agree on the importance of the quality of this thinking. Meditation may be called an enhancement of thinking processes, a concentration of focus on the phenomena, and a mental discipline. In the method described above, meditation has two essential qualities: repeated, focused contemplation and forgetting. Forgetting means “letting go” and allowing the contents of

mental images and thoughts to sink out of consciousness; the focus of our attention shifts elsewhere, for example, or we fall asleep. Steiner suggested that ideas and experiences continue to be processed in the unconscious mind, and modern brain research confirms this.¹⁴ Ideas, experiences, and even abilities are changed and enhanced after a period of unconsciousness.

In recent years there has been dialogue between brain science and meditation. A recent publication records the dialogue between promi-

Ideas, experiences, and even abilities are changed and enhanced after a period of unconsciousness.

nent neurologist Wolf Singer, director of the Max-Planck Institute for Neurology, Frankfurt, and Matthieu, a Buddhist monk and former molecular scientist:

WS: It appears that you are using your intentional control system to activate internal representations, to focus your attention on these and to work with them as if you were dealing with information from outside, quite as if the attention directing cognitive abilities of the brain were being used to explore the inner world. Perhaps the ability to distinguish and to perceive these processes is increased through the focusing of attention on the inner processes in just the same way as when our attention is focused on events in the outer world. Could it be that through meditation the perception of inner states is simply sharpened?

MR: ...or perhaps only the meta-consciousness for a state that you want to develop further, such as empathy...

WS: ...with the intention of stabilizing these mental states ...

MR: ...to maintain the state of meditation from moment to moment...

WS: ...to hold the focus of attention on certain inner states, which may be emotions of the contents of mental images. In principle this would mean using the same strategy as we use when we focus on a certain segment of the outer world or when we want to concentrate on a certain activity—except that most of us are less familiar with this strategy of focusing on inner states....

MR: That conforms with the definition of meditation, to cultivate a certain mental state or spiritual state, without being distracted.¹⁵

Following this description of the effect of meditation, we can see that, with practice, it is possible to focus on inner processes, be they thoughts or feelings, or data we have collected and struc-

tured, in the same way that an empiricist focuses on the external world. This would be a kind of inner empiricism, or, as Goethe called it, *anschauende Urteilskraft*—forming a judgment through contemplation. This is what Steiner called “exact imagination,” focusing our open-minded attention on mental phenomena and processes and observing how they unfold, how they reveal themselves, and how they affect us.¹⁶

The physicist Arthur Zajonc has recently described a method of “contemplative inquiry” that has much in common with the meditative reflection I have described.¹⁷ Drawing on a wide range of traditions and practices—Zen Buddhism, Sufism, Jesuit meditation, the idealism of Goethe and Steiner, and the Romantic era, including Coleridge and Emerson—Zajonc has made the case that, with suitable inner preparation, a researcher can attain heightened levels of consciousness that can enhance our perceptual and cognitive abilities. In creating an inner space of stillness and focus the mind can become more receptive and clear. Indeed, the creation of the contemplative mood or consciousness, while initially turning inward, can also be a preparation for greater awareness when attention is directed into the world. As Zajonc puts it,

In meditation we move between focused and open attention.... After a period of vivid concentration on the content of meditation, the content is released. That which is held is gone. Our attention opens. We are entirely present. An interior psychic space has been intently prepared and we remain in that space. We wait, not expecting, not hoping, but present to welcome whatever may or may not arise within infinite stillness.¹⁸

Zajonc calls this process the breathing of attention or cognitive breathing. First, the meditator focuses on a content; he or she then empties the mind to create an inner space in which activities and relationship—rather than the outer

Meditation may be called an enhancement of thinking processes, a concentration of focus on the phenomena, and a mental discipline.

forms—can reveal themselves. This path does not lead away from the world of the senses, the world of observation and empirical experience, but rather opens the mind to the inner complexity of life. “Meditation is a schooling for experiencing life from the inside.”¹⁹

This point has much in common with Barfield's concept of “participation.” Owen Barfield, the English philosopher and linguist, has been called a prophet of the post-modern²⁰ by virtue of his critique of positivism, first stated in the 1920s, and his recognition of the role of language in knowledge creation.

Barfield's chief concern was the loss of meaning in a materialistic age. In numerous works on language he charted the evolution of human consciousness. He characterized the consciousness of modern times as marked by the “trauma of materialism.” Materialism for Barfield meant “taking material objects of perception as what is really real rather than as products of the act of perception.”²¹

Barfield saw, in what he called the “idolatry” of perception, the habit of taking the world at face value, as something given, without further levels of meaning, and requiring no further activity on the part of the perceiver.²² For Barfield, the act of perception was not a passive taking in of what already existed out there. Rather, perception was actively generated. In the course of cultural evolution, human beings progressively lost their ability to directly experience reality as both their understanding of the world and their language became more abstract. Thus, people lost their ability to derive meaning from their perception of the world. Metaphors began to replace direct experience. “Reality, once self-evident, and therefore not conceptually experienced, but which can now be reached only by effort of the individual mind—this is what is contained in a true poetic metaphor.”²³

Only in what Barfield termed “poetic diction”²⁴ do we approach a state of what he called *participation*, in which our apprehension of reality is direct. The way to overcome idolatry and the trauma of materialism is to strive toward a new form of participation through thinking.

Intuition progressively becomes an ability, a skill we can apply to understand the world while we are working within it.

Barfield drew on the distinction between *natura naturata*—“nature natured”—and *natura naturans*—“nature naturing”—to distinguish between inert objects perceived in the world and the activities and processes that bring them into being. Through developing a new consciousness—one that we still have access to in metaphor and poetic diction—we can participate in or experience that activity directly. The trauma of modern materialism or modern positivism is in believing that the world we perceive passively as *natura naturata* is all there is. Like Goethe and Steiner, Barfield sought the

activity within life through an active process of knowledge creation. For Barfield, the path to the reality within the world lay, for the modern mind, in imagination, in “poetic diction.”

Like Steiner, Barfield often used the terms *consciousness* and *spirit* synonymously. Consciousness for both was a property in its own right, like energy or light. Full consciousness was, for Steiner, full awareness of all dimensions of reality, material and spiritual, outer appearance and being.

Meditative reflection is a process that shifts our awareness from external appearances to the process level of reality, to what Zajonc calls “the domain of activity and relationship in which everything is relationship and movement, everything is shifting from potential to actual and back again. And agency/being stands behind it all.”²⁵

To build on Zajonc's and Barfield's contributions, we can see a bridge between meditative reflection and the creation of an imaginative image or an intuition. I look into the world and perceive with my senses. I form mental images corresponding to what I experience. In meditating, I open myself to processes underlying the world I perceive. I can do this because these same processes are active within me, both as the formative forces of my body and as the formative processes of my cognition.²⁶

These processes may or may not be progressively revealed to me in my thinking—meditation is not a process that can be forced. If they do reveal themselves to my mind, I can express and summarize what I now experience in the form of an image, a picture, a motif, a metaphor, or a con-

cept. That is to say, the sum of my experience is artistically integrated into an image that has a more general character than the specific instance that prompted it. This image or complex concept may have a multilayered meaning, like a picture, and it expresses something of the essence of what I see and experience. I “know” how to read the “pictures” and can interpret them, just as an anthroposophical doctor may understand his or her patient and prescribe a specific therapy or remedy. The doctor weighs evidence and forms a judgment based on a “picture” of the individual and the illness. This is what Steiner described when he said the teacher will know in a few moments what the pupils need and what the pedagogical approach should be. Intuition arises here out of the participation of the observer in the process of what is observed. Both are altered by the experience and this, too, is part of the nature of intuition. Intuition is not merely a bright idea that occurs to us; it activates our being in a more profound sense. Further, intuition progressively becomes an ability, a skill we can apply to understand the world while we are working within it.

Knowledge is not a *thing* that one can possess and give to others, but rather a process in which one may engage.

Teacher as Researcher and Learner: Knowledge in Context

Meditative reflection is essentially an enhancement of the process of learning and involves development of specific competences that teachers need in order to observe and “read” children, and to then reflect on subsequent thoughts, feelings, and actions. Such competence is not acquired quickly or during initial teacher education, but involves skills acquired through practice. In particular, practitioner research is a process of development from novice to expert.²⁷ Ingold calls this process *enskilment*, which he characterizes as a process of observation and reflection embedded in a context of practical engagement with the world.²⁸ Following the socio-cultural approach of Schön²⁹ and Lave and Wenger,³⁰ teaching as an art is skilled practice that relies for its further development on a process of knowing in practice. It also requires the kind of active reflection that Ingold calls *imagination*.³¹

Further, as Kelly says, “the process of knowing-in-practice does not reside within individuals; rather it is distributed across teachers, students, and both conceptual artifacts such as models and theories, and physical artifacts such as books and computers.”³² This perspective is both reassuring and challenging for teachers who feel alone in the classroom but who wish to conform with Steiner’s view that discourse among teachers is essential, that a “living academy” should meet weekly to facilitate, we may say, knowing-in-practice.

This perspective also sheds light on the nature of meditative research, which by its nature is individual. One of the preconditions for raising meditative reflective practice to the level of research is the step to collegial discourse and the recognition that each school has a culture. This school culture is more than the sum of knowledge possessed by each member of the school,

and it “pertains not to precise situations but to the particular working practices and their associated ways of knowing and thinking which define particular school circumstances.”³³ Thus Kelly describes the context of teacher learning and the creation of teacher expertise. The implications of this for the meditative reflective method are that discourse among colleagues is part of the process and that understanding occurs in the context of consciousness for a specific school as a learning organization.³⁴

Building on Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory,³⁵ which sees learning as the motor of development and the creation of knowledge as essentially collaborative, Wells sees knowledge as emergent, contextual, and, above all, dialogic. He describes knowledge as

...the enhanced understanding of the problem situation gained by the participants, on the one hand, and the representation of that understanding that is produced in the process, on the other. Furthermore, neither the participants’ understanding nor the knowledge representation can be appropriated by others unless they too engage in some comparable problem solving.³⁶

Knowledge in this sense is not a *thing* that one can possess and give to others, but rather a process in which one may engage. Knowledge is created as an active deed and, as Wells sees it, this process is essentially collaborative. In dialogue—which also includes self-dialogue in thinking—active partners create knowledge. Learning, as Lave and Wenger point out, is not a separate and independent activity in life but an integral part of interaction with the world and with others within a “community of practice.”³⁷

What Wells calls “dialogic inquiry” is not only a method of classroom knowledge-building; it is also a primary research method. Further, in contrast to conventional research methods, in which a theory is posited, tested algorithmically, and then applied—which as Ingold has shown separates the activities of knowing and of doing³⁸—knowledge grows in a specific context through dialogue.

Enhancing Educational Research

Both Steiner's meditative reflective method and Zajonc's contemplative inquiry can enhance all processes in the daily or weekly cycle of teaching, including planning, acting (e.g., teaching), reviewing, studying, and discoursing. Both approaches support the process of intuition and, practiced regularly, help to sustain the development of skills that belong to teacher learning and the acquisition of expertise. To raise this activity to the status of research, the key is the quality of critical reflection after the event.

I follow Wellington's definition of educational research,³⁹ in which he follows Stenhouse⁴⁰ in describing research as systematic, critical, and self-critical inquiry that aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. I add Stenhouse's basic maxim, that practitioner research is aimed not only at understanding learning and teaching but improving them as well.

I am currently investigating, in a range of educational and therapeutic settings, the extent to which a method of meditative reflection can be embedded into a cycle of practitioners' learning with the aim of enhancing professional learning. Initial outcomes have established that many practitioners recognize the value of intuition in their professional judgment and are interested in exploring ways

of enhancing intuitive processes through meditative work. To this end, I have developed a method that combines Steiner's meditatively acquired knowledge and Zajonc's contemplative inquiry. Participants are asked to record personal reflections on the experience as well as the outcomes of discourse with colleagues. The work is at an early stage but initial results are encouraging. I see this work and research as an important aspect not only of Waldorf education but of education in any context. To this end I am also working with colleagues outside of Waldorf education.

As da Viegas points out, the “ongoing revision and evaluation of educational practice through observation and through scientific research and taking into account the anthropological, biological, and social changes which have occurred”⁴¹ is essential to the continuing professional development of Waldorf education and its practitioners. This research should also include research into practitioner research methods, including those based on anthroposophy.

Endnotes

1. Selection from "Enhancing professional learning: embedding continuing contemplative enquiry into practitioner research" In: Dahlin, B, ed. *Research in Steiner Education*, 2009.
2. Steiner, Rudolf. 1983.
3. Steiner, 1983, p. 32.
4. Steiner, 1983, p. 25.
5. See, for example, Wellington, 2006.
6. Steiner, 1972, p. 208.
7. Wellington, 2006.
8. Schmuck, 2006, p. 19.
9. Steiner, 1983, p. 32.
10. Lutzker, 2007; Schön, 1983; see also Noddings and Shore, 1984; Copei, 1966.
11. Kiersch, 2008, p. 68.
12. See Sijmons, 2008; Schieren, 2007; Welburn, 2004.
13. See, for example, Poulson and Wallace, 2004.
14. Damasio, 2004; Edelmann, 2004.
15. Singer & Ricard, 2008, pp. 61-62. Author's translation from the German. In the last sentence MR uses the word *Geisteszustand*, which could also be translated as "spiritual state."
16. Steiner, 1963.
17. Zajonc, 2009.
18. Ibid., p. 39.
19. Ibid., p. 46.
20. Gruenler, 1998.
21. Ibid.
22. Barfield, 1957.
23. Barfield, 1928, p. 88.
24. Ibid.
25. Zajonc, 2009, p. 195.
26. Steiner, 1996.
27. Kelly, 2006; Lave and Wenger, 1991.
28. Ingold, 2000, p. 416.
29. Schön, 1983.
30. Lave and Wenger, 1991.
31. Ingold, 2000, p. 418.
32. Kelly, 2006, p. 507.
33. Kelly's summary 2006; Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 507.
34. Wells, 1994 and 2000.
35. Vygotsky, 1978.
36. Wells, 1994, p. 13.
37. Lave and Wenger, 1991, cited in Wells, 2000, p. 4.
38. Ingold, 2000, p. 416.
39. Wellington, 2006.

40. Stenhouse, 1988.
41. da Vieg, 2006, p. 41.

References

- Barfield, O. (1928) *Poetic Diction. A Study in Meaning*. London: Methuen.
- Barfield, O. (1957) *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Copie, F. (1966) *Der Fruchtbare Moment im Bildungsprozess*. Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer.
- Damasio, A. (2004) *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*. London: Vintage Random House.
- Da Veiga, M. (2006) Die Diskursfähigkeit der Waldorfpädagogik und ihre bildungsphilosophischen Grundlagen: Ein essay. In *Waldorfpädagogik: Perspektiven eines wissenschaftlichen Dialogs*, Bauer, H.P. & Schneider, P. (editors). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Edelman, G. (2004) *Wider than the Sky: The Phenomenal Gift of Consciousness*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Gruenler, C. (1998) Owen Barfield: Prophet of Postmodernism, lecture given at Mythcon 1998 at the C. S. Lewis Centenary Conference, on the Barfield Scholarship website: http://davidlavery.net/barfield/Barfield_Scholarship/Gruenler.htm.
- Ingold, T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skills*. London: Routledge.
- Kelly, P. (2006) "What Is Teacher Learning? A Socio-cultural Perspective." *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 4, September 2006, pp. 505-519.
- Kiersch, J. (2008) *Vom Land aufs Meer: Steiners Esoterik in veränderten Umfeld*. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben.
- Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lutzker, P. (2007) *The Art of Foreign Language Teaching*. Freiburg: Franke Verlag.
- Noddings, N. and Shore, P.J. (1984) *Awakening the Inner Eye. Intuition in Education*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- Poulson, L. and Wallace, M. (2004) *Learning to Read Critically in Teaching and Learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Schieren, J. (2007) "Methodische Aspekte Anthroposophische Forschung," in *Anthroposophie, Michaeli 2007*. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben.
- Schmuck, R.A. (2006) *Practical Action Research for Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Sijmons, J. (2008) *Phänomenologie und Idealismus: Struktur und Methode der Philosophie Rudolf Steiners*. Basel: Schwabe Verlag.
- Singer, W. and Ricard, M. (2008) *Hirnforschung und Meditation: Ein Dialog*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, edition unseld.
- Steiner, R. (1983) Spiritual Knowledge of Man as the Fount of Educational Art, lecture held on 21st September 1920, in *Meditatively Acquired Knowledge of Man*, Dornach, study material in preparation for the World Conference of Waldorf School Teachers at the Goetheanum April 4-9, 1983.
- Steiner, R. (1996) *The Foundations of Human Experience*. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1978) *A Theory of Knowledge*. Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1972) *A Modern Art of Education*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.
- Steiner, R. (1963) *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity and Truth and Knowledge*. Introduced by Hugo S. Bergman. West Nyack, NY: Rudolf Steiner Publications, Inc.
- Stenhouse L. (1988) "Artistry and Teaching: The Teacher as Focus of Research and Development," in *Alternative Perspectives on School Improvement*. Hopkins, D. and Wideen, M. (editors). Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wells, G. (1994) *Changing Schools from Within: Creating Communities of Inquiry*. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Wells, G. (2000) "Dialogic Inquiry in Education: Building on the Legacy of Vygotsky," in *Vygotskian Perspectives on Literacy Research*. Lee, C.D. and Smagorisky, editors. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Welburn, A. (2004) *Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy and the Crisis of Contemporary Thought*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.
- Wellington, J. (2006) *Educational Research: Contemporary Issues and Practical Approaches*. London: Continuum.
- Zajonc, A. (2009) *Meditation as Contemplative Enquiry: When Knowing Becomes Love*. Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press.

Martyn Rawson has been a Waldorf teacher for more than 25 years in the UK and Germany. He is a member of the College of the Pedagogical Section of the Anthroposophical Society in Dornach, Switzerland, and is currently leading research projects for the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle (Waldorf Research Institute) in Stuttgart. He has published 10 books and numerous articles. Individuals or institutions interested in participating in his research or finding out more about the methods studied may contact the author at rawsonmartyn@hotmail.com.



Combined Grades in Waldorf Schools: Creating Classrooms Teachers Can Feel Good About

Lori L. Freer

Introduction

In Waldorf schools, combining grades is a concession, not a design choice. Low or decreased enrollment is often the cause for combining grades. Lower birthrates, limited population, geography, economy, and attrition can lead to decreased enrollment. Regardless of the causes, however, a school may continue a given class for many reasons, including responsibility for and loyalty to students and parents.

This study, a look at combined grades classrooms in Waldorf schools, necessarily takes into account that Rudolf Steiner's indications for teaching were made regarding an educational system of age-based grade levels and that most Waldorf schools are designed on this principle. Thus, most of the educational literature available on the topic is not based in the literature of Waldorf education. I used educational literature, interviews with teachers, questionnaires, and classroom observation to gain an improved understanding of combined grade classrooms both in general and specifically with regard to using Steiner's educational ideas in circumstances that differ from those in which the first Waldorf schools took root.

I contacted schools known to have combined grades or multiage classes and individuals who had relevant teaching experience. I interviewed eleven Waldorf school teachers and four Montessori school teachers; another four Waldorf school teachers provided questionnaire responses. I also interviewed one Montessori and two Waldorf school administrators and observed six combined grades classrooms in Waldorf schools and four Montessori multiage classrooms. All of the Waldorf teachers interviewed for this study considered their classrooms to be "combined grades." The four Montessori teachers advocate the "multiage" approach based on their own work and on established standards for Montessori schools. It is interesting to note that two of the teachers from the Montessori schools had backgrounds in Waldorf education—one was formally trained as a Waldorf teacher and another was a Waldorf school graduate.

Teaching Children of Different Ages in One Classroom

Considering that Steiner made such efforts to free the language teaching from the fixed age groups—and the various passages of the published notes on the meetings (the Conferences (#4)) bear witness to this fact—and that he later dropped this question altogether and did not even mention it when the curriculum for modern languages was being discussed on 2nd June 1924 makes one strongly suggest that this problem should be taken up again anew.

(Stockmeyer, 1991)

As an alternative to the now-pervasive standard of a grade-by-grade curriculum that was introduced to North America in the mid-19th century, students of different grade levels may be found in a single class. Although the concepts vary by name and detail, for clarity here the terms combined grades and multiage classrooms will be used to discuss two generally distinct approaches to teaching children of differing ages in one classroom. The reasons for assigning these students to a single class and the measures of educational achievement are distinguishing features of these approaches.

Grades are often combined because of administrative, enrollment, or economic constraints. Combined grades classrooms serve students who are in the same classroom but who receive curriculum at grade level, with two or more curricula taught in one classroom. Although teachers have personal intentions for the overall health of their classrooms, graded curriculum objectives have become increasingly focused on academic achievement. By contrast, multiage classrooms grow from a pedagogical foundation and have a broader view of educational success. To serve students in a multiage classroom, the teacher does not teach based on grade level. Instead, some of the priorities of a multiage classroom, based on my research, are these:

- To use developmentally appropriate practices and support the learning continuum.
- To develop the whole child and help children enjoy learning.
- To use the process approach to learning and build on each child's successes.
- To use varied instructional strategies within an integrated curriculum.
- To choose a curriculum based on interest and need.
- To develop individual potentialities to the maximum.
- To evaluate each learner on past achievements and individual potential.
- To encourage noncompetitive, cooperative social interaction.
- To establish one teacher for several years.
- To promote professional parent partnerships.

Much of what is done in Waldorf schools is consistent with what is described as “best practices” in the multiage setting. This work, ideally, avoids unhealthy competition among learners in favor of cooperation and support, acknowledges differing perspectives as natural and normal, fosters imitative learning, and aims to create risk-friendly environments that encourage exploration, experimentation, and problem solving. Sandra Stone (1996) compares the primarily academic focus of contemporary single grade education with multiage pedagogy when she states that “social, emotional, and moral learning are just as important as learning how to read.”

Both multi-grade structures and Waldorf schools use methods that reflect a “constructivist” philosophy, meaning that knowledge is built through the work of teachers and students, rather than merely transmitted by teachers and absorbed by students. To this end, a progression leads children to discovery. According to Alfie Kohn (1999), “We form beliefs, build theories, make order. We act on the environment rather than responding to it—we do it naturally and continually. It’s part of who we are.” Teacher observations, involvement, and inspiration are

required to create conditions for student discovery. The goal of allowing freedom to discover recognizes the motivational value of trust in the classroom, and, rather than a grading system, close observation of the student and authentic assessment are practiced in order to offer personal and creative leadership.

What Do Studies Say?

The results of available studies generally indicate that on achievement tests students perform just as well or even better than those in single-grade classes. (Gayfer, 1991)

Studies looking at affective indicators of student success abound, and these often specify both individual and group benefits. Being in a more age-diverse social group allows for more varied and natural associations that help children within and outside of school. Nevertheless, in our increasingly literate and educated society, cognitive development tends to take priority, so whether or not such classrooms promote academic success is a crucial question. Do multiage or combined grades classrooms promote academic success?

The answer is overwhelmingly “yes.” In one study of 4,407 students, Joel Gajadharsingh (in Gayfer, 1991) found that “achievement of multi-grade students was significantly higher in vocabulary, reading, mathematics problem-solving and mathematics total.” In a

smaller study of 418 students, researchers concluded that “there is an 80% chance that the achievement of multi-grade students is equal or superior to that of students in single grades.” (Gayfer, 1991)

Do multiage or combined grades classrooms promote academic success?
The answer is overwhelmingly “yes.”

Obstacles to Combined Grades Classes: Cultural Conceptions

Despite studies that demonstrate that multiage and combined grades classrooms are good for students, unfortunately parents, teachers, and administrators tend to oppose them. The concept of combining grades has negative connotations for many people, and this attitude extends to multiage classrooms as well. Some reject these as throwback to the one-room schoolhouse, as antithetical to progress, or out of concern that they will not meet grade-by-grade curriculum standards.

A Canadian study includes research on attitudes about combined grades classrooms:

Even though students in multi-grade classes do as well as, and in some cases better than, students in single grade classes, the parents and teachers do not accept this fact. A further implication is that parents and teachers had not received any positive statements about multi-grading, and that most publicity was negative, inaccurate, or misleading. (Gayfer, 1991)

Sometimes this negative view is overcome through education about and marketing of a program. Montessori education has carved out a place for itself among those seeking alternative education despite three-year student age ranges in each of the elementary, middle, and upper school classrooms. According to the Association of Montessori Internationale website, there are 170 affiliated schools in the U.S. Private schools tend to be seen as elite and, through careful representation of their benefits, able to create a strong but limited following. Montessori and a few independent schools are notable exceptions to the general cultural opposition to combining children of differing grade levels in a single class.

Teacher education according to a graded standard creates teachers who are ill-prepared (and often poorly supported) for the task of combined grades, and this lack of training can reinforce a negative mind-set. Teachers who are neither fortified by training nor have a sound philosophical foundation from which to teach can find it difficult to embrace the task. Although a few years ago there were continuing education programs and workshops available for teachers working with multiage pedagogy, currently it is difficult to find anyone providing such support. None of my questionnaire respondents were aware of any training for teaching in a combined-grades classroom save for standard Montessori training. Additionally, several experts and authors in the field of multiage education (not Montessori) could point to no currently available resources beyond published studies.

Combining grades can allow the teacher to form a large enough group to be dynamic and to embody the social aspects of Waldorf education.

Waldorf School Conceptions

Beyond the cultural backdrop of pervasive negative attitudes about combined grades and multi-age classrooms, Waldorf school teachers may have additional psychological and social filters formed in their own teacher education, as well as those of their peer group, including those of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). (Baertges, 2009) Advocates of Waldorf education question whether developmental curriculum guidelines can be met within a structure of combined grades. In light of multiage pedagogy, a main point of departure for Waldorf teachers is that Steiner related the structure of child development to age, whereas the multiage approach sees child development as progressing through stages in an individual, and these stages are not necessarily so tightly age related. Steiner's

developmental tasks, related to age, do not stop with child development, but rather continue as seven-year cycles throughout a human lifespan (Steiner, 1907), making development part of an all-encompassing philosophy that teachers are loathe to misinterpret or disregard.

To complicate matters, an ongoing discourse comparing Waldorf and Montessori methods tends to be prejudiced

according to the author or speaker. This seemingly competitive positioning of the two approaches may influence a Waldorf teacher's unwillingness to embrace what may be perceived as a Montessori technique.

Teaching Approaches

If one has an eye on human health and human development, then this makes possible correct classroom and educational practice.... The Waldorf school is, in many aspects, completely built on compromises; this fact we do not want to deny. However, only as it is possible today do we educate and teach in the sense of a true knowledge of the human being. (In Riccio, 2002)

Waldorf school teachers approach their combined grades in different ways. Most find them-

selves either alone in the task or supported by a faculty group that is trying to make the most out of less-than-desirable conditions. A few teachers have been consistently at this task for years—observing, cultivating, and tending a school design that has grown into a complex organism that blooms in their community year after year.

Several teachers, for instance, stated that their schools have found value in keeping Grade 1 as a single grade classroom and beginning to combine classes starting in Grade 2.

Below, compiled from interviews and questionnaires, are four ways to address the needs of combined grades in Waldorf schools. These constructs are not mutually exclusive, but constitute a variety of tools that teachers use to manage their classrooms. Parenthetical comments about grades reflect specific suggestions of the respondents.

Strategies for Combined-Grades Teaching in Waldorf Schools

- 1) Separate students for main lessons:
 - a) Grade-specific main lessons provided by different teachers at the usual time.
 - b) Alternate timing of grade-based main lessons.
- 2) Group students by ability or as needed:
 - a) Group by grade for main lesson when the curriculum poses a particularly difficult combination of topics (blocks for Grades 2 and 3 were noted).
 - b) Split the class for math work (Grades 3 and 4 were noted).
 - c) Split the class for math and language arts (starting in Grade 5 was noted).
 - d) Use creative grouping and splitting.
- 3) Use an alternate school calendar:
 - a) Time the school year by teaching as if you start in the northern hemisphere and migrate to the southern hemisphere—the calendar and school years match more closely in the southern hemisphere (e.g., January-June starts a new grade; fall continues this work). In practice, this involves beginning the year

with the lower grade's blocks and proceeding to the next grade's blocks after the winter break.

- 4) Use a homeschool or individual approach:
 - a) In a small class, a homeschool approach can teach each student one by one.

Combining ages and grades in Waldorf school classrooms need not be seen as conflicting with Steiner's indications, but may be seen as a call to meet them from a fresh perspective.

Splitting a class by grade for main lesson does not have to create a feeling of distinct class levels. The two-teacher (or teacher-with-assistant) approach can be used as an ongoing solution or for assuring that all students work through certain blocks at a given age but do not have to repeat them the following year. These groupings may be strictly based on age indicators or on needs observed by teachers.

Three teachers interviewed said that they considered the “soul need,” as distinct from the chronological age, of the child as a partial indicator of student readiness for a topic of study. Teachers looked carefully at topics with regard to the specific children and ages represented in their classrooms. A teacher with a combined class of first and second graders, for example, deemed fables and animal tales appropriate for the second half of first grade, but felt that she would not teach more emotionally and spiritually advanced stories like those of sages and saints until the beginning of the next school year.

It takes careful planning to make the topics from the curriculum fresh for students who have already begun particular grade-level work the previous year. Students and parents complained when one teacher ended a school year with Hebrew stories and continued to study Hebrew stories when students returned in the fall. Following curriculum indications with students of more varied ages requires the diligence of teachers to examine continually and carefully the effects of their work. This diligence is weightier but easier to achieve in a Waldorf school, since teachers continue with students and their families for several years. One knowledgeable teacher is responsible for the progression and integrity of the children's education.

Benefits of Combined Grades in Waldorf Schools

The margin between the challenged and the intelligent pupils which, on 24th July 1920, Steiner called a makeshift arrangement, would hardly become wider by putting classes together, but the working together of older and younger pupils which Steiner thought to be beneficial could come into full play.

(Stockmeyer, 1991)

Although most Waldorf school teachers consider teaching a combined grades class in a Waldorf setting to be less desirable than teaching a single grade class, respondents noted several benefits. Combining grades can allow the teacher to form a large enough group to be dynamic and to embody the social aspects of Waldorf education. There is naturalness about being part of a varied age group with people of different stages of development working together. Many teachers enjoyed their students' accomplishments and their subsequent ability to support or guide others. Ideal class size depends on many factors, but, generally, respondents noted that a combined class should not enroll more students than a single grade equivalent.

Some benefits were considered to be so important that teachers stated that they would seek out ways to incorporate them into their classrooms even in a single-grade situation. A few teachers felt strongly that the benefits of teaching combined grades outweighed the dictate of a single-grade philosophy. These included the sense that the creativity involved in teaching was even more strongly drawn upon to meet the needs of their students than it would be in a single-grade experience. Below are other aspects that teachers appreciated:

- 1) Mentorship
 - a) Teacher authority takes its place in a natural hierarchy that includes student achievement and shifting roles in the classroom.
 - b) Older students take pride in modeling achievement, attitude, and behavior, and they feel responsible for the younger ones.
 - c) Younger students look up to the older students and anticipate future participation in next-level activities.
 - d) Student activities can be based on age or ability; flexible groupings support individuals without creating stigma.
 - e) Mentorship is cultivated—children enjoy sharing their strengths and skills.
- 2) Diversity
 - a) Students can be grouped depending on needs and preferences (teacher or student-designated), and children generally choose their own groupings well.
 - b) Learning experiences and challenges shift due to diversity.
 - c) Some work can “level the playing field” and unite the class, such as cooking, games, and festivals.
 - d) Regardless of the topic of study, everyone can celebrate holidays.
 - e) The habit of integrating differences helps students “not to form a pack that singles itself out” or is singled out.
 - f) Uniformity of development does not always fit the student's age—individuals can display soul needs (assessed by faculty and other support) that are inconsistent with calendar age.
 - g) One teacher says, “Like a rainbow, combined grades classes are more colorful, more beautiful, with a greater combination and integration of ages.”
- 3) Attitudes and abilities
 - a) Students learn to work independently.
 - b) Multiage can serve high-needs students better—they can participate without feeling out of place.
 - c) Students learn patience and tolerance.

In summary, the Waldorf school teachers who saw a combined grades classroom as a creative challenge and found pedagogical support (rather than overwhelming conflict) in Steiner's indications seemed to agree with Gajadharsingh. “The teacher who rises to the challenge and who has motivated pupils finds the multi-program class has a revitalizing effect.” (Gayfer, 1991)

Advice from Teachers

The school's philosophy becomes the compass for staying the mission's course.

(Grant, 1996)

Educational literature suggests that multiage programs select students with care, as this is critical to the success and quality of teaching within this model. Referring to classroom composition the authors of *Our Best Advice, The Multiage Problem Solving Handbook* state, "This is the one very important aspect that must not be left to chance." (Grant, 1996)

Commentary from Waldorf school teachers echoes this consideration and provides counsel. Classrooms must be carefully balanced without over-representing students who require remedial work and, on the other hand, a teacher must take care not to tax an academically advanced child through inappropriate grouping by achievement level. Work should feel doable to students. More practice work, homework, and challenge work may be given to more advanced students. Additionally, the teacher may want to consider the balance of temperaments when grouping or even when admitting new students.

Several Waldorf school teachers recommended avoiding reference to student grade ranking, as it divides the class into age-based groupings that may not serve the classroom community. One teacher felt that grade differentiation gives the message that they only half belong. When choosing curriculum components, one needs to focus on what most defines the year(s) and work out the block rotation according to student readiness and other factors. One teacher says that her students get all of some of the Grade 4 curriculum and all of some of the Grade 5 curriculum—she avoids fragmenting the blocks to try to fit them all in. In the case of altering the curriculum delivery for mixed ages, it is important that the teacher has a plan that offers its own integrity.

Above all, teachers who participated in this work considered the teacher's own spiritual and personal development as important. Planning well and opening up to and trusting the creative process work for them and reduce fear and control issues that drain energy.

Since they are not a part of traditional Waldorf schools, combined classes require inner

work and strong imagination. One participant mentioned that the power of the teacher's thinking affects the child's doing and the teacher's actions affect the child's feeling life. He posited that if the teacher's etheric and astral bodies had processed the work and rested, they would be prepared to bring the material freshly to the student; if, however, the teacher was at odds with the work at hand, or felt overwhelmed by it, the children would feel it and would respond accordingly.

Another teacher who instructs six children ranging in age from seven through eleven (grades 1-5) says that she pictures angels covering the ears of the younger students when she is delivering lessons to the older ones; the younger students happily work together on their projects and do not seem to be affected by the lesson presented to their classmates. This teacher says that she considers her work to be a joy, that "all flows and fits perfectly."

As general advice, the following comments were offered by experienced combined grades Waldorf school teachers:

- 1) Classroom Management
 - a) Nurture the spirit of community.
 - b) Give students the experiences of being both the older and the younger students in groupings.
 - c) Putting older students in charge is great for the classroom energy—they can assist in circle (taking a leadership role), help with ideas for math and grammar work, and be a support person.
 - d) Ban the word "bored" and cultivate creative self-direction.
 - e) Help each student to choose an on-going "independent study" topic so he or she may effectively use extra time.
- 2) Material Considerations
 - a) Seek resources, including workbooks, teaching assistant, logistical options.
 - b) Two-sided rolling chalkboards can work as a room divider.
 - c) A small connected room can help.
 - d) It is useful to have lots of nooks or work stations.
 - e) Have plenty of work available for students.
 - f) Assignments for students may be photocopied.
 - g) Key Curriculum Press series for math is useful.

- h) Flash Kids curriculum series by Harcourt Family Learning for language arts and math skills also help.
- 3) Parent Relations
 - a) Let parents know what might be missed from the graded curriculum and recommend books and activities to supplement classroom work.
 - b) Educate parents about the benefits of multiage classrooms.
 - c) Remain in close contact with parents, particularly with regard to their children.
 - d) If a child is ill-suited for the class, take action.

Waldorf school teachers who were able to realize the benefits of having a spectrum of student ages approached their work using more of the tenets of the multiage pedagogy. These teachers generally focused more on the positive aspects of teaching than on the negative aspects of combined grades. More profoundly, they seemed to have clear pedagogical reasons for their approach. These teachers were aware of the implications of the grade-by-grade curriculum standard in Waldorf education, but they did not allow it to keep them from serving their students; instead, they relied on Steiner's indications and applied them to the best of their ability.

Conclusion

Life in its entirety is like a plant. The plant contains not only what it offers to external life; it also holds a future state within its hidden depths. One who has before him a plant only just in leaf, knows very well that after some time there will be flowers and fruit also on the leaf-bearing stem. In its hidden depths the plant already contains the flowers and fruit in embryo; yet by mere investigation of what the plant now offers to external vision, how should one ever tell what these new organs will look like? This can only be told by one who has learnt to know the very nature and being of the plant. (Steiner, 1907)

A stronger program is built from a foundation that is educational rather than administrative. Classroom composition dictated by administrative convenience or economic reality promotes a sense of compromise. Few can feel good about a compro-

mised education, and no one wants the education of their own children to be administered in a way that feels sub-standard. Administrative structure may indeed hold on to tenets that represent an idealized model, but it should not adversely affect the ability of a school or a teacher to teach children.

Combining ages and grades in Waldorf school classrooms need not be seen as conflicting with Steiner's indications, but may be seen as a call to meet them from a fresh perspective. A practice of astute observation, cultivation of inner life, and creative teaching are central to Steiner's instruction for teachers.

To see combining grades as a compromise is to support these teachers less. To insist on larger or more urban Waldorf schools is to restrict Steiner education to those places where material support allows only one view of it; this, too, is a compromise. As a movement toward localization takes hold, the time is ripe to find ways to reinforce the creative implementation of Steiner's methods. *A Study of Small Schools and Combined Grades in Finland* (Peifila, 1978) states that "preservation of schools in sparsely populated areas is considered a better solution than school systems in population agglomerates."

Steiner's comment on plants provides an analogy for the growth of Waldorf schools on different continents and in different times:

But I cannot carry a plant about all over the place; it will not remain the same. Its nature is only complete in conjunction with the soil, with the forces that spring from the earth, and with all the forces of the sun which fall upon this particular portion of the earth. Together with these the plant makes a totality. ... We must take our start, not from the plant or the plant family, but from the landscape, the geographical region: from an understanding of what the earth is in a particular place. And the nature of plants must be treated in relation to the whole earth.
(Steiner, 1922)

Just as a plant thrives only in its own habitat, so too approaches to Waldorf education must grow according to and within their own condi-

tions. We can all admire strong schools that have a sturdy and persevering tradition of Waldorf education, and we can also strive to build our own schools to their full capacity. Every step along the way requires adult compromise, but the compromise need not be in the education of children. As Steiner said, and as any conscious human being may say, "One has to weigh up the needs of the individual man with those of practical life." (Stockmeyer, 1991)

References

- Association Montessori Internationale. AMI/USA. Accessed April 28, 2009 from <http://www.ami.edu/usa/international.html>.
- Baertges, C. (February 2009). AWSNA consideration of combining grades in Waldorf schools. Parent Meeting conducted at the Ithaca Children's School, Ithaca, NY.
- Gayfer, Margaret, ed. (1991). *The Multi-grade Classroom: Myth and Reality: A Canadian Study*. Extracted from the CEA research study done by Joel Gajadharsingh. Toronto: The Canadian Education Association.
- Grant, J., Johnson, B., Richardson, I. (1996). *Our Best Advice: The Multiage Problem Solving Handbook*. Peterborough NH: Crystal Springs Books.
- Kohn, Alfie (1999). *The Schools Our Children Deserve*. NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Peifila, Asta, ed. (1978). "A Study of Small Schools and Combined Grades in Finland [Abstract]." Retrieved on February 21, 2009 from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetailsdetailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICEstSearch_SearchValue_0=ED161564&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED161564 ERIC #ED161564 *Information Bulletin* No. 3, 1978.
- Riccio, M. (2002). "Did Rudolf Steiner Want a Seven-Grade Elementary School Configuration?" *Research Bulletin*, Volume 7 #1 (January 2002). Retrieved on February 12, 2009 from http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Journal_Articles/RB7104.pdf.
- Steiner, Rudolf (1907 lecture). *Occult Signs and Symbols Lecture III The Symbolism of Numbers*. Retrieved on April 17, 2009.
- _____. (1907 lecture). *The Education of the Child in Light of Anthroposophy*. Retrieved April 21, 2009 from http://wn.rsarchive.org/Articles/EduChi_essay.html
- _____. (1922 lecture). *Spiritual Ground of Education and How Knowledge Can Be Nurtured*, Lecture: 21st August, 1922, Oxford. Retrieved from http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19220821p01.html;mark=479,0,6#WN_mark.
- Stockmeyer, E.A. Karl (1991). *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools*. Crawley Down, Sussex: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship Publications.
- Stone, Sandra J. (1996). *Creating the Multiage Classroom*. Tucson, AZ: Good Year Books.

Lori L. Freer is in her final year of Waldorf Teacher Education at Antioch University New England and has been studying Waldorf education and anthroposophy for more than 12 years. She has a B.S. in Human Development from Pennsylvania State University.



Educating Gifted Students in Waldorf Schools

*Ellen Fjeld Kottker
and Balazs Tarnai*

Gifted children pose deep riddles for their teachers, including those who work in Waldorf schools. Perhaps it is time that we think differently or improve our understanding of the needs of these children. Investigations reveal that on average two per cent of a class may consist of pupils we may call gifted.¹ There are more than 200,000 students in Waldorf schools worldwide,² so we may expect to find about 4,000 gifted students in Waldorf schools. Also, according to Michaela Glöckler, “since highly gifted pupils are rarely ‘easy’ ones, but tend to be more unique, also perhaps appearing to be socially ‘difficult,’ our first task must be to take a clear look at the phenomenon of giftedness itself.”³

Too Smart for School?

Markus is now ten years old. The pedagogical-psychological authorities in Norway became aware of him at the age of seven. One and a half years later, it was clear that he could not be diagnosed with Asperger’s or ADHD, or any other of the many diagnoses suggested along the way. Extensive examinations, inquiries, and investigations have been part of Markus’s life for years now. His symptoms? He is too smart. He says about himself, “I look like a child, but inside I am different, I think.” School does not appear to meet this child’s needs. For one thing, he is musically precocious. And, as a young child, he asked questions all the time, to the point of irritating those around him, questions for which he demanded proper, accurate answers. As a four-year-old, he wanted to hear about photosynthesis. As his parents managed to answer one question, he

was ready with a new one. He learned quickly and was often bored in school.

Markus has no friends in school, not students, not teachers—not that he has enemies. When he tries to play with other children, he is often seen as a nuisance. He does not understand them, and they do not understand him. He frequently does not understand unspoken social rules. His emotional life has not developed at the same rate as his intellectual life. This leads to misunderstandings and frustrations. He asks, “Why do people, including my father and mother, not think the way I do?” For his parents, it is painful not to understand their own child.

It helped Markus’s parents tremendously, however, when they learned to think of their son as gifted. His talents themselves are not so important to them, however; they want him to enjoy his childhood. His mother started an association, which translates from Norwegian as “Happy Gifted Children,” and she now sees her son interacting with other gifted children cheerfully and comfortably.

Steiner ... himself carried many questions as a child that were not addressed at home or at school, and ... this made him a lonely boy.

In Norway, there are no special schools, programs, or lessons for gifted children.⁴ When Markus’s parents asked for help, one authority suggested that the family move abroad. Denmark, Australia, England, Switzerland, and Germany have special classes for gifted children;⁵ and, in the U.S., every state is obliged to institute a program for such students.⁶

What Is Giftedness?

In the past, giftedness has been strongly associated with the concept of genius.⁷ This connection began around the turn of the 20th century, when psychologists developed tests designed to meas-

ure intelligence.⁸ People who scored on the low end of a scale were labeled “retarded,” and those who scored on the high end were considered “geniuses.” The use of intelligence tests as the sole evaluation of giftedness has been seriously criticized in recent years, primarily because such tests are often confounded by ethnic origin, language, schooling, and acculturation. Since then, researchers and educators have come to consider giftedness as more than intellectual talent; it also includes creativity, memory, motivation, physical or manual dexterity, social skills, and artistic sensitivity.⁹

More recently, the Marland Report offered a definition of giftedness that has been, and continues to be, the one most widely used by authorities.¹⁰ The report defines as “gifted and talented” those children, identified by professionally qualified persons, who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance in a particular area. These are children who require educational programs or services beyond those provided by regular school programs in order to realize their potential contributions to their own self-development and to society. According to the Marland Report, children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement or potential abilities in many of the following areas, solely or in combination:

- General intellectual abilities
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership abilities
- Visual and performing arts
- Psychomotor abilities

According to McClellan, an explanation of giftedness is the basis, the groundwork, upon which an educational curriculum for such children is built. Specific abilities included in a definition of giftedness determine the criteria used to select

Smart or knowledgeable children	Gifted children
Know the answers Are interested Have good ideas Work hard Answer questions Are among the best in class Listen with interest Learn easily Have good friends Are perceptive Are technically-oriented Copy accurately and precisely Enjoy logical thinking Take delight in school Understand ideas	Ask questions Extremely curious Have wild ideas Do many other things and manage well Discuss in detail and get circumstantial Are ahead of the class Demonstrate strong attitudes and views Know it already Prefer adult company Are intense Are inventors Create novel items Enjoy multifaceted and complex thoughts Take delight in learning Think abstractly

children for a program and the services provided to those children. The abilities included in a definition are, therefore, important to those who determine which children are identified as gifted and what kinds of educational services they receive.¹¹

Being Excellent at School or Being Gifted

The Danish Association for Gifted Children created the table above to distinguish between smart or knowledgeable children and truly gifted children.

Gifted or ADHD? Other Perspectives on Giftedness

Gifted children and adults are at risk of being labeled ADHD. Some may be both gifted and suffer from ADHD, but many are not, and it is not currently possible to determine whether or not these conditions are linked. Such students may also exhibit the following behaviors:

- Anger and frustration
- High energy, intensity, fidgeting, impulsiveness
- Individualistic, nonconforming, stubborn attitudes
- Emotional swings, moodiness
- Underachievement

- Disorganization, sloppiness, poor handwriting
- Forgetfulness, absentmindedness, daydreaming
- Low interest in detail

These behaviors or characteristics may blind us to a student's giftedness. As a consequence, many gifted children may be medicated for conditions from which they don't actually suffer; they may be medicated to make their parents' and teachers' lives easier. On the other hand, some claim that medications allow gifted children and adults to manage boredom or to allow the gifted to thrive in environments in which they otherwise might act out or which they might otherwise find too difficult.

There is evidence that as many as half of all children with IQ scores above 130 receive below-average grades; and, in one study, 13% of high school dropouts could be labeled gifted. In another study, 25% of children diagnosed with ADHD tested so highly in creativity that they qualified for state scholarships.

Unconventional intelligence may further complicate matters. A student may not be able to grasp simple mathematical operations, for instance, but be able to play the piano exceptionally well. Few persons are gifted in many areas.

Labeling a child as gifted is not without its pitfalls, too. Some of these children feel that they are judged solely on their intelligence, not on their effort. Failure then means that they are not as smart as everyone believes. It is important, then, that teachers and parents praise children for their actual work and efforts, not for relatively innate qualities like intelligence.

Gifted Children and Schooling

Generally, schools take one of two approaches in dealing with gifted children. Some are included in a "normal" class and receive individualized, enriched instruction at grade level; others are segregated and attend gifted classes.

Another strategy to address giftedness is to skip grade levels, but often, schools oppose this idea because of concerns about social-emotional maturation. Another possibility is to allow gifted students to attend higher grades for certain sub-

jects. Several schools in the U.S. have "enrichment programs" for gifted students. Such programs usually take the form of enhancement rather than acceleration. Lessons often involve more work, and children may feel punished for being smart.

Many parents choose alternative education for their gifted children, and home schooling is currently a popular choice. Home schooling parents try to meet the social needs of their children in such activities as sports, clubs, and camps.

Gifted Children in Waldorf Schools

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some students leave Waldorf schools because they don't feel sufficiently challenged. Waldorf education, however, is based on two principles. One of these is to educate according to the general laws of human

development, and the other, equally important, is to educate according to the individual needs of each child. As Christoph Lindenberg writes, "The Waldorf school is no place for preventing or hindering the development of intelligence." Rudolf Steiner himself assisted with or taught a few classes in

the first Waldorf School; two of the students attending his class were extremely talented in music. He told the faculty to change the students' course of study so that there would be more space for music in their schedules.

Steiner describes in general how teachers may address gifted students:

First of all, you must carefully ascertain whether the self-assertion of pupils who are more gifted, and therefore more capable, is justifiable or not. You must not allow their greater talent to develop into an ambitious kind of egoism, but you should help them using their gifts in the service of other children. "John is a good boy. Look what he can do. Such people are a great help to others, and I am pleased with you all that you have learnt so much from John." So you begin by praising one child and end up by praising them all! You will nearly always find that you can deal with them best by combining two meth-

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some students leave Waldorf schools because they don't feel sufficiently challenged.

ods. First, you must speak to them, not in front of the class, but in private, so that they realize that you look through them. The other thing is this: You should give such a child tasks which are beyond his powers, and try to make it clear to him why he has to solve these problems that are too difficult to him.

Ernst Lehrs, one of the founding teachers of the first Waldorf School, describes the following case. As a twelve-year-old, Alexis von Vivenot read Kant and Hegel, and, with his newly gained “understanding,” started to criticize the Catholic Church. He was, therefore, forbidden to read such literature. His mother and he were later present when Steiner was visiting an acquaintance of theirs. Steiner told the boy about the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, and, some months later, Alexis joined Grade 9. He was politically interested and engaged, and he asked Lehrs to help him to express in writing what was important to him. Lehrs brought this to Steiner’s attention in one of his conferences with the teachers of the Waldorf School. Steiner asked first if the adults involved had observed how the student walked, which was not in a straight line. Further observations included that his hair fell down over his forehead; when reading, he breathed irregularly; and his handwriting was unclear. Steiner noted the boy had difficulties in three-dimensional space and suggested that he should do Bothmer gymnastics, write five lines beautifully each day, and receive other assistance. This helped the boy; he became more focused and attentive. Later, Steiner described this boy’s karma. Among other things, Steiner remarked that the last part of the boy’s previous incarnation had now joined with this present one. Later, Alexis studied at Oxford and became an important diplomat in the Second World War.

In another case, the Waldorf School faculty wanted to dismiss a gifted boy because he was too difficult to cope with. Steiner suggested math problems and geometry exercises as therapy. They helped.

Finally, from Steiner’s autobiography, we learn that he himself carried many questions as a child

Gifted children may need a curative approach, in particular, so that they develop the courage necessary to take up their gifts.

that were not addressed at home or at school, and that this made him a lonely boy.

Implications

Many gifted children occupy themselves early with content that they can’t really digest emotionally, often for lack of experience. Such a discrepancy between special interests and personal potentials can lead to isolation. Expectations and reality clash. This challenge may be addressed by working with art because each work of art draws imagination and reality closer together. We should keep in mind, too, that “Waldorf school education is not a pedagogical system but an art—the art of awakening what is actually there within the human being.”

Further, according to Steiner, we have a task as teachers to be conscious of our guidance of a child’s ego so that it does not enter too deeply into the body, nor does it incarnate insufficiently. If the ego is too strongly connected to the body, we tend to become too oriented to the physical world. Vice versa, given a loose association with our bodies and surroundings, we are inclined to become impractical dreamers.

Too much or too little, this indeed is the issue at hand: to apply the right measures so that we help each child to find balance in meeting his or her destiny. It is helpful, then, to see giftedness as a process in development, as a growth of potentialities. Gifted children may need a curative approach, in particular, so that they develop the courage necessary to take up their gifts.

Schools contemplating the education of gifted children may consider the following conditions or accommodations:

- Earlier readiness for school
- Flexible grade enrollment
- Skipping grades
- Partial participation in higher grades for certain subject matters—sharing main lesson periods
- Individual or group support lessons
- Special homework

- Open-ended problems, tasks, and projects that can have several solutions
- Instruction in how gifted students may help other pupils in a class

In addressing these topics, of course, we cannot lose sight of a student's social-emotional health. We know that when intelligence is emphasized and nurtured too early, there is a danger that life forces are not allowed to complete the physical growth of the child healthfully.

Intelligence, creativity, and other forms of giftedness are gifts of destiny that should be respected, enhanced, and helped to grow. Intellectuality, in this respect, is not a goal in itself. Many of our brightest and most creative minds may be unrecognized and even falsely pathologized because of a lack of understanding. Recognition of giftedness as a permanent characteristic of the self and as a question of growth and development may help us to understand and support the whole gifted child. We will not ignore or misunderstand such a student, nor will we focus solely on that child's gifts or immature accomplishments.

This child
Of the spiritual world
Has descended to you
So that you may solve its riddle,
From day to day,
From hour to hour.

— Rudolf Steiner

Endnotes

1. Glöckler, 2006.
2. e.V., 2008.
3. Glöckler, 2006.
4. Thune, *Gutten som så gjerne ville lære*, 2008.
5. Ibid.
6. Zettal, 1982.
7. McClellan, 1985.
8. Terman, 1982.
9. Pritchard, 1951.
10. Marland, 1972; McClellan, 1985.
11. McClellan, 1985.
12. Barn, 2007; author's translation from Danish.
13. Webb, 2004.
14. Gallagher, 1997.
15. Ibid.
16. Webb, 2004.
17. Gallagher, 1997.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Steiner, 1996.
21. Lindenberg, 1981.
22. Steiner, 1919–1924.
23. Steiner, 1967, pp. 72–73.
24. Lehrs, 1979, pp. 333–344.
25. Niederhäuser, 1962.
26. Steiner, 1999, pp. 83–94.
27. Steiner, 1976, p. 23.
28. Steiner, 1982.

References

- Barn, L. (2007, June). Kjennetegn. Retrieved 2008, from <http://lykkeligebarn>.
- e.V, B.d. (2008). *Weltliste*. Stuttgart: Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen e.V.
- Gallagher, T. (1997). *Born to Explore*. Retrieved June 14, 2008, from <http://borntoexplore.org/gifted.html>.
- Glöckler, M. (2006). *Children with Special Gifts. Education—Health for Life Kolisko Conferences* (pp. 153–159). Dornach: Medical and Pedagogical Sections at the Goetheanum.
- Lehrs, E. (1979). *Gelebte Erwartung*. Stuttgart: J.Ch. Mellinger Verlag GmbH.
- Lindenberg, C. (1981). *Geschichte Lehren*. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben.
- Marland, S. (1972). *Education of the Gifted and Talented*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- McClellan, E. (1985). "Defining Giftedness." *Digest*.

- Niederhäuser, E.G. (1962). *Konferenzen Rudolf Steiners*. Stuttgart: Rudolf Steiner-Nachlassverwaltung.
- Pritchard, M. (1951). *The Contribution of Leta Stetter Hollingworth to the Study of Gifted Children*. New York: D.C. Heath.
- Steiner, Rudolf (1982). *Balance in Teaching*. New York: Mercury Press.
- _____. (1967). *Discussions with Teachers*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.
- _____. (1996). *The Foundations of Human Experience*. Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press.
- _____. (1919–1924). *Konferenzen mit den Lehren der Freien Waldorfschule*. Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag.
- _____. (1999). *Min Livsvei*. Oslo: Antropos.
- _____. (1976). *The Younger Generation*. Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press.
- Terman, L. (1925). *Genetic Studies of Genius*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Thune, G. (2008). "Gutten som så gjerne ville lære." *A Magasinet*, 8 and 12.
- Webb, E.N. (2004). *Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnosis of Gifted Children and Adults*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

- Zettal, J. (1982). "The Education of Gifted and Talented Children—from a Federal Perspective" in *Special Education in America: Its Legal and Governmental Foundation*.

Ellen Fjeld Køttker, MEd, is a lecturer at the Rudolf Steiner University College in Oslo, Norway. She spent 23 year as a Waldorf school therapeutic teacher and class teacher. She is involved in international work connected to the Waldorf school movement, to Hague Circle, and to the European Council and Pedagogical Section of the Anthroposophical Society.

Balazs Tarnai, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at Seton Hill Catholic University in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. He often lectures on remedial education in the United States and abroad. He has been involved in certification trainings in Chirophonetics, Extra Lesson, and Remedial Education. He regularly teaches in continuing education programs sponsored by AHE (Association for a Healing Education) and has served as Advisory Board member. He has received awards for his contributions to autism research and special education.



How Do Teachers Learn with Teachers?

Understanding Child Study¹ as a Case for Professional Learning Communities

Marisha Plotnik

In the wide world of educational research, the hopeful concept of teacher as learner has gained currency among a number of authors and provoked useful questions about the nature of professional development for teachers.² Called by different names, *collaborative professional development* and *professional learning community* (PLC) both refer to a way in which teachers learn with teachers to become better teachers. These kinds of initiative recognize that collaboration is a demanding, uncomfortable, participatory process in which teachers may ultimately be required to take responsibility for each other's learning.³ This image of what we expect from our teachers may look exactly like what we expect from our students. The rewards are potentially profound, although they are not easy to measure.

A fundamental characteristic of a community that learns together is well described by the phrase *essential tension*.⁴ Drawing on the work of Engeström⁵ and of Wenger,⁶ Barab et al. describe how grappling with apparent dichotomies moves a community of practitioners forward. What is important is not the resolution of a particular conflict, and certainly not a resolution that lands on one side or the other. Rather, as Grossman et al. describe, in an essential tension two foci are "brought into relation" with each other and through this relationship generate growth. They are at pains to specify that ideas such as "combine" and "integrate" are unable to describe the dynamic, creative interplay of poles within a community. *Teacher as learner* is a prime example of this kind of essential tension: In a school whose very purpose must be for student learning, how do we bring attention to the learning of the adults

Our Child Study Group has these three purposes: to understand and better meet the needs of individual students in the school; to deepen the participants' understanding of anthroposophy; and to improve the teachers' professional practices.

in the community? Our premise must be that one does not occur at the expense of the other, or that one must preclude the other, but that, in maintaining both, in relationship, at the foci of our attention, a better school is created.

For me, this way of thinking can transform many of the tensions we experience. Consider these apparently contradictory juxtapositions:

material as process, depth as breadth, or content as structure. This view of conflict, which sees conflict as generative, seems to me to be the appropriate one for a group engaged in the difficult work of creating a community. A competitive, win-lose approach to conflict might work well in an authoritarian hierarchy, but it would prove barren in a professional learning community.

Grossman et al. are emphatic that conversations among teachers in a group must be viewed as ends in themselves. "As we have tried to make clear, we do not regard discourse as a proxy of something else but as a powerful achievement in itself."⁷ This point of view may indeed lie at one end of a spectrum, but anyone dedicated to the work of a professional learning community needs to view discourse as necessary, if not sufficient.

The Child Study

The sections that follow contain an account of the Child Study Group at the Rudolf Steiner School in Manhattan (I currently serve as Chair of the group). In recent years, I have grown increasingly interested in deepening the discourse among the members of this long-standing professional learning community. My methods of working draw heavily from the example of Jon McAlice, a co-founder of two other professional learning com-

munities in which I have participated: the Young Waldorf Colleagues Circle and the Advanced Studies Initiative (ASI). In a letter to new ASI participants, McAlice describes the way in which this group works:

The way of working striven for in meetings of ASI members can be described as a focused dialogical approach with a dynamically evolving content and structure. Teachers need to be able to engage one another in dialogues which challenge each to reach from the known through reflected experience into the unknown. This is a method of discourse which lies at the core of Steiner's work on the creative social encounter. It rests upon the three archetypal gestures of the engaged self: focus, listening, and speaking, and challenges participants to speak of rather than talk about the topic at hand. In general, the dialogues serve to lead all the participants to a deeper pedagogical understanding of the question or topic being addressed, although not necessarily to answers to the questions or explanations about the topics. The latter tend to move one to a cognitively safe distance from the unknown, whereas the goal of this approach is to engage more closely with the focus of attention. This shared striving to move towards rather than away from a question or pedagogical riddle can lead to those rare moments of grace in which one has a deep consciously moral experience of the inner nature of what one has striven to understand.⁸

The account that follows will describe what this process actually looks like in the Child Study Group, the kinds of structure that facilitate it, and my reflections on the fruits of this endeavor.

The Purpose of Child Study

Our Child Study Group has these three purposes: to understand and better meet the needs of individual students in the school; to deepen the par-

As we study a child, seeking to understand how to meet her needs, we are simultaneously and consciously working to develop new skills and capacities as classroom teachers and as colleagues.

ticipants' understanding of anthroposophy; and to improve the teachers' professional practices. These purposes demonstrate a recognition that professional learning communities need to balance *process* with *content*.⁹ As Lieberman and Miller describe in their third chapter, professional learning commu-

nities need to study *something*—the content. In our case, the content is twofold: the individual child, and the philosophy of anthroposophy.

The first purpose of our group, articulating how to meet the needs of individual students, is common to nearly every school. Whether we look to the committees that write Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in a public school, an educational support team in a private school, or a care group in many Waldorf schools, these groups devote themselves to finding and describing how to better meet the needs of students who are perceived to be struggling

in, or disturbing to, their classrooms. These groups may be described as providing diagnosis and prescription. A common assumption concerning their work, however, is one of expertise: Those who diagnose and prescribe are qualified, and usually certified, to do so. While it may be expected that their skills will be honed by practice, there may be little conscious effort to explicitly develop new skills within the committee's process of diagnosis and prescription.

Child study is unusual in turning this assumption on its head. As we study a child, seeking to understand how to meet her needs, we are simultaneously and consciously working to develop new skills and capacities as classroom teachers and as colleagues. First-year teachers and experienced colleagues work side-by-side, and insights can come from either. Expertise is judged during the process of work. Experienced teachers may more frequently contribute valuable questions or offer fruitful insights. It may also be, however, that an experienced teacher is more fixed in her opinions and modes of seeing. Every teacher who joins the work of child study, therefore, must be simultaneously committed to the children and to her own growth. This growth is necessarily both professional and personal. In the work of teaching out of anthroposophy, the first cannot be divorced from the second.

Since my first encounter with child study in 1995, when I arrived as a teacher new to the Rudolf Steiner School, I have seen the balance between providing for the needs of exceptional students and providing professional growth change in emphasis. My current emphasis for the group is toward masterful teaching. In particular, my interest lies in the interactive relationship between the teacher and the students in his class, what I might call the art of teaching. As David Schon describes it,

I have used the term professional artistry to refer to the kinds of competence practitioners sometimes display in unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice. Note, however, that their artistry is a high-powered, esoteric variant of the more familiar sorts of competence all of us exhibit every day in countless acts of recognition, judgment, and skillful performance.¹⁰

In the classroom, I argue that “unique” and “uncertain” situations arise daily. A teacher’s professional artistry lies in the ability to do the right thing at the right time. When do you throw the lesson plan out the window and do exactly what the class needs at that moment? What do you choose to do? Certainly, teachers may improve through trial and error, but that can be slow, frustrating, and damaging to both teacher and students. Indeed, many teachers leave the profession long before they become masterful, or rest content at a certain level of competence. Child study works from the basic assumption that teachers can consciously and deliberately develop skills that will enable professional artistry in their classes. Master teachers have a wide variety of effective styles, and artful teaching is highly individual. Our study thus avoids training in particular methods or techniques. Rather, we educate ourselves in careful observation, disciplined reflection, and responsible experimentation.

The Process of Child Study

Child Study has met every Thursday afternoon for more than twenty-five years. Meetings last between about 60 and 90 minutes. Typically, they include an opening exercise, study of a text,

work on the riddle of an individual child, and a closing. Membership is entirely voluntary and is open to any teacher or administrator in our Nursery–12 school, although the majority of members have historically tended to be early childhood teachers. Every second week an anthropological physician joins our work.

Observation

Our first step in studying a child is to observe that child as fully as we can. What is the physical form of the child? Is he short for his age, or tall? Are his limbs rounded or linear? Have the secondary teeth descended or are the milk teeth still intact? What are the child’s habits? Does she suck her thumb? Tap his foot? How does the child move? Can he jump rope? Catch a ball? Walk a balance beam? What is the child’s speech like? Are the sounds clear? Where are they placed in the mouth? What does the child eat? Does she prefer foods that are white? Foods that are crunchy? How is the child’s health? Are there allergies? Does the child tend to get headaches or stomachaches? What is the character of the child’s handwriting? Is it angular or rounded? Are the pages messy or deliberate? Are the pencil strokes light or do they make grooves in the paper? These are only a scant handful of the many, many observations that a teacher might make about a child of interest.

Good observation is typically characterized as *objective*, and it is essential that the observer remain completely faithful to the truth. I have found, however, that objective observation, rather than distancing me from the phenomenon at hand, brings me increasingly closer to it. As a young teacher, struggling to work with a student I disliked, I was advised simply to observe that student. Then, as now, I found that the more closely I observed, the more interested I became in the phenomenon. Each observation called for more observations: *when* did the child start staring out the window? How *often* did she drum her fingers on the desk? And, surprisingly, the more I observed, the more I found myself liking a formerly irritating child. Observation leads to interest which leads to sympathy. Experience can occur anywhere on a spectrum from fleeting and superficial to intense and profound. An impoverished experience must necessarily allow only shallow reflection and

greater likelihood for an erroneous hypothesis. Because our work is in teaching children, our hypotheses take on a deeply moral character.

Because of this emphasis on observation, we spend some time during each child study meeting training ourselves to be better observers. This is helped by our fifteen to twenty minutes each session working through an artistic exercise. Over the years, these have included sketching, speech work, eurythmy, and clay sculpture, rotating through this opening time in blocks of about twelve to sixteen weeks. Our intention is not to become artists, but rather to use each medium to sharpen our capacity for observation. This time also serves to center us, allowing us to slowly shed the busyness of the day and to slow down, breathe, and fully arrive in the room.

Our first step in studying a child is to have the presenting teacher simply describe that child to the group as completely as she can while withholding further interpretation as much as possible. This initial presentation takes only ten to fifteen minutes, a long time for pure description. The other teachers listen as attentively as they can, working hard to form a picture of the child in their mind's eye. Then a few minutes are given for the listeners to ask questions that fill out that picture, details that the presenter overlooked. I typically schedule this presentation at the end of our agenda, so that we are not tempted to chat about the child, but we can close the meeting with a picture of the child living in our imagination.

Diagnosis

One week later, Child Study returns again to that same child. During the week, every member has made an effort to observe the child for himself or herself, visiting classes or simply watching the child play in the park. During this week, the school's anthroposophical doctor is also in attendance, and by now he has observed the child on two separate days.

Slow, ongoing, recursive work with Steiner's ideas enables us to move beyond catch-phrases and jargon so that unfamiliar words and difficult concepts slowly become part of a deep, enduring understanding and a meaningful, shared vocabulary.

We return to the child by recollecting her in our collective imagination. Taking turns around the circle, each teacher mentions what "struck" her about the child, either from her own observation or from her memory of the last week's presentation. At this point, other information may be introduced: paintings, written compositions, educational assessments, a house-tree-person picture. The presenting teacher has also usually been in contact with the child's parents, and anything the parent wishes to share about the child's early years and home routines is now brought to the group. From this comprehensive description of the child, a question, or "problem" may begin to emerge. The question, we hope, suggests a more fundamental riddle in the child's constitution. Beyond superficial problems of inappropriate behavior or academic underachievement, we try to discern the imbalance or disjunction in the picture of the child. The wisdom of the practiced teachers

is especially important at this stage, for while a novice can discipline herself to careful observation, those observations do not always "speak" to her.

This is the stage at which conceptual schemas enter, and we must proceed gently indeed. A learning community needs a shared language. But the concepts expressed by that language must be deeply penetrated and alive for each member in the circle. Superficial frames and unexamined jargon have no place here. As McAlice describes it, our intention is to approach closer to the riddle at hand rather than to distance ourselves by explaining it away. In the work of the Child Study, an explanation serves to situate the question in such a way that we can begin to make sense with it.

Toward this end, a substantial portion of each meeting is spent in studying Rudolf Steiner's work. For four years we have worked with *Foundations of Human Experience (Study of Man)*.¹¹ We typically spend several weeks on each lecture, working through about seven lectures each year.

Our work with these lectures is by no means finished, and I expect that we will return to them many times in future years. This slow, ongoing, recursive work with Steiner's ideas enables us to move beyond catch-phrases and jargon so that unfamiliar words and difficult concepts slowly become part of a deep, enduring understanding and a meaningful, shared vocabulary.

Our intention is to come to a place where we can speak "out of" rather than "about" the lecture at hand and toward that end we work slowly and deliberately. Steiner's work is difficult, and it would be easy to come to the table with a collection of highlighted passages, ideas we don't understand, or statements with which to agree or disagree. What we have in mind, however, is learning that transforms us. Instead of merely bringing our current skills and capacities to analyze the text at hand, we intend, through working with the text, to develop new skills and capacities. Rather like learning a new language, say French or mathematics, exercise in reading that language develops the language itself, as well as the thoughts contained within the language, thus bringing process and content as dual foci of our work.

One of the exercises that I learned through my work with McAlice is to begin with a collective remembering of the text, thought by thought, without notes or book to glance at. Either progressing in a sequential manner around the circle, or freely opening the floor to whoever wishes to volunteer, we try to simply summarize the thoughts of the lecture in the order in which they were given. This is a remarkable challenge not only as a memory and concentration exercise, but as a social exercise in listening and speaking. As the participants in the group speak, they build together a picture that everyone recognizes and yet one that looks different from what anyone alone would have created. Something shared is brought into existence, and from that shared co-creation a different level of dialogue may emerge.

With Steiner's concepts at the heart of our shared vocabulary, we offer explanations that remain tentative and malleable. Thoughts often emerge in the form of images or metaphors about the child, and they can have an almost dream-like quality. Occasionally, one of these speaks of the child with profound power and truthfulness. It is these insights for which we strive, which McAlice

calls "those rare moments of grace in which one has a deep, consciously moral experience of the inner nature of what one has striven to understand."¹²

Treatment

This stage, a natural evolution of the previous one, sees that the dream-like image we had of the child holds up to the light of day. McAlice's "experience of the inner nature" needs to be articulated. Insights are formed into words. We search to see where this image fits with our observations of the child, and where it does not. Finally, this new understanding of the child is translated into a recommended course of action. This may consist of apparently small changes in how the teacher meets the child in the classroom, or it may involve substantial changes to the child's educational program, perhaps requiring the agreement of many teachers within the school. The presenting teacher implements the proposed course of action and reports to the Child Study six weeks later and again at the end of the year. Occasionally there is a dramatic change in the child, usually there are subtle changes, and sometimes there is little change at all.

Conclusion

Reflecting upon my work with the child study, I am brought back to the helpful idea of *essential tensions*.¹³ To reiterate my earlier description, this concept recognizes apparent dichotomies within a collaborative enterprise that, when brought into relationship which each other, generate growth. When the relationship lacks a healthy dynamic, however, these are exactly the fault lines along which collaboration can be split asunder and which therefore cause an enterprise to fail.

The first tension I have found is that between keeping the group voluntary and maintaining the consistency—and depth—of the work. A remarkable circumstance of this particular learning community is its voluntary nature. There are few extrinsic motivators for teachers to attend. Teachers are there because they wish to be there and they consider that this commitment of time and effort yields some real benefit to them. This creates the ideal atmosphere of working with people who want to work. It also means that attendance may be dropped whenever the intensity of

the rest of the week becomes too great. This means that, in any given week, the size of the group can vary between five and seventeen participants. Inconsistent attendance means that the work cannot build and deepen, and those who attend regularly may grow irritated. I have found that it takes devotion and patience to maintain an open and welcoming gesture of freedom while at the same time expecting higher levels of work from the group. Ultimately, however, I believe that this uncomfortable tension generates a deeper level of engagement from those who are able to bring it.

The second tension is between helping the child and furthering our own self-development as teachers. As a younger teacher, I was impatient with the time we “wasted” reading Steiner’s texts, and I was eager to spend more time talking about children. The texts were so difficult and their meaning so esoteric that I was able to find little that was “practical” or “useful” in understanding how to work with a living, breathing problem in my second period class. Over the years, I have increasingly come to appreciate the study. Now, I recognize that I cannot create meaningful change in the way a child behaves in my class without profoundly changing myself in relationship to that child. My experience of wrestling with Steiner’s ideas changes me. I recognize, however, that different members of the group ascribe different weights to “study” and “child,” and I believe that this essential tension is indeed generative. The more deeply we study children the more profoundly we change ourselves, which enables us to meet children in a new way with new capacities for studying them. We need the different members of the collaborative to pull our work first deeply in one direction and then deeply in the other so that, through our dialogue, something new emerges.

The third tension is between what I will call the “insiders” and the “newcomers.” Some participants have been engaged with Steiner’s work for more than twenty-five years while others are encountering anthroposophy for the first time. Those with deep familiarity may be frustrated if they feel that they need to speak at an introductory level and that dialogue hinders a deeper examination of the ideas. Newcomers are equally frustrated if they find themselves unable to understand what the insiders are saying. It is difficult work to

allow profound conversation to occur while enabling newcomers to understand, and contribute to, increasingly more of that conversation. It is essential that neither group be allowed to dominate the conversation and to find ways to demand and recognize some participation of every member. Every teacher is able to observe children, however elementary those initial observations may be, and every teacher can participate in some way in text-based exercises. These are ways to begin. Ideally, the collaborative is able to arrive at the place described by Grossman et al. where teachers take responsibility for each other’s learning. In this dimension, that includes the insiders encouraging the newcomers, and the newcomers recognizing when to hold their skepticism in abeyance.

Community is hard work. Intentional community is harder still. Nevertheless, my own experiences in professional learning communities have made me resolutely optimistic about their potential for transforming the nature of teaching and learning.

Endnotes

1. Editor's note: The term "child study" describes an international movement, linked to the birth of developmental psychology, of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Germany and the United States, in particular. In Germany, Wilhelm Preyer's *Die Seele des Kindes* (1882; translated as *The Mind of a Child*) stands as the first published research in child development. In the U.S., in the 1880s, G.S. Hall of Clark University—who later introduced the concept of "adolescence" to discussions of child psychology—introduced to child development the biological idea of recapitulation ("ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"—the development of one individual recapitulates the development of the species or type). These developments contributed to an enthusiastic "child study movement" and, in the U.S., the formation of the Child Study Association of America (CSAA). A typical publication of the time is Benjamin Gruenberg's *Outlines of Child Study: A Manual for Parents and Teachers*, published in 1922. The CSAA also published a journal, *Child Study*, from the 1920s until 1960. Between 1960 and the 1980s, the CSAA gradually dissolved, and it exists no longer.
All of this occurred in the period during which Rudolf Steiner introduced his educational ideas to the world and during which the first Waldorf schools were founded. Early Waldorf school educators, following Steiner, therefore naturally adopted portions of the then-contemporary discourse on education, including the term and concept of child study. The term is now somewhat archaic.
It is in this context that Waldorf educators should see the use of the term "child study." They do well to remember and acknowledge its roots, and even to consider adopting a less archaic formulation to describe their work.
2. Barab, Sasha A., Michael Barnett, and Kurt Squire. 2002. Developing an empirical account of a community of practice: Characterizing the essential tensions. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences* 11 (4):489–542. See also Borko, Hilda. 2004. Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher* 33 (8):3–15. See also Franke, Megan Loef, Thomas P. Carpenter, Linda Levi, and Elizabeth Fennema. 2001. Capturing teachers' generative change: A follow-up study of professional development in mathematics. *American Educational Research Journal* 38 (3):653–689. See also Grossman, Pamela, Samuel Weinburg, and Stephen Woolworth. 2001. Toward a theory of teacher community. *Teachers College Record* 103 (6):942–1012. See also Little, Judith Warren. 1993. Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 15 (2):129–151. See also Schon, David A. 1987. Teaching artistry through reflection-in-action. In *Educating the reflective practitioner: Educating the reflective practitioner for teaching and learning in the professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
3. Grossman, Pamela, Samuel Weinburg, and Stephen Woolworth. 2001. Toward a theory of teacher community. *Teachers College Record* 103 (6):942–1012.
4. Ibid. See also Barab, Sasha A., Michael Barnett, and Kurt Squire. 2002. "Developing an empirical account of a community of practice: Characterizing the essential tensions." *The Journal of the Learning Sciences* 11 (4):489–542.
5. Engestrom, Y. 1987. *Learning by Expanding*. Helsinki, Finland: Orienta-konsultit.
6. Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
7. Grossman, Pamela, Samuel Weinburg, and Stephen Woolworth. 2001. Toward a theory of teacher community. *Teachers College Record* 103 (6):942–1012.
8. Personal Communication. 2008. Advanced Studies Initiative Letter to Participants.
9. Lieberman, Ann, and Lynne Miller, eds. 2008. *Teachers in professional communities, The Series on School Reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.
10. Schon, David A. 1987. Teaching artistry through reflection-in-action. In *Educating the reflective practitioner: Educating the reflective practitioner for teaching and learning in the professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
11. Steiner, Rudolf. 1966. *Study of Man*. Translated by D. Harwood and H. Fox. Second ed. London: Rudolf Steiner Press. Original edition, 1932.
12. Personal Communication. 2008. Advanced Studies Initiative Letter to Participants.
13. Barab, Sasha A., Michael Barnett, and Kurt Squire. 2002. Developing an empirical account of a community of practice: Characterizing the essential tensions. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences* 11 (4):489–542. See also Grossman, Pamela, Samuel Weinburg, and Stephen Woolworth. 2001. Toward a theory of teacher community. *Teachers College Record* 103 (6):942–1012.

References

- Barab, Sasha A., Michael Barnett, and Kurt Squire. 2002. Developing an empirical account of a community of practice: Characterizing the essential tensions. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences* 11 (4):489–542.
- Borko, Hilda. 2004. Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher* 33 (8):3–15.
- Engestrom, Y. 1987. *Learning by Expanding*. Helsinki, Finland: Orienta-konsultit.
- Franke, Megan Loef, Thomas P. Carpenter, Linda Levi, and Elizabeth Fennema. 2001. Capturing teachers' generative change: A follow-up study of professional development in mathematics. *American Educational Research Journal* 38 (3):653–689.
- Grossman, Pamela, Samuel Weinburg, and Stephen Woolworth. 2001. Toward a theory of teacher community. *Teachers College Record* 103 (6):942–1012.
- Lieberman, Ann, and Lynne Miller, eds. 2008. Teachers in professional communities, *The Series on School Reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Little, Judith Warren. 1993. Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform. 15 (2):129–151.
- Schon, David A. 1987. Teaching artistry through reflection-in-action. In *Educating the reflective practitioner: Educating the reflective practitioner for teaching and learning in the professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Steiner, Rudolf. 1966. *Study of Man*. Translated by D. Harwood and H. Fox. Second ed. London: Rudolf Steiner Press. Original edition, 1932.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Marisha Plotnik teaches physics and mathematics at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City. A graduate of the Toronto Waldorf School, she earned her Honours B.Sc. (Physics) from Trent University, her B.Ed. from the University of Western Ontario, and her M.A. (Education Leadership) from Columbia University. This article is a condensed version of a research project that she wrote during her Klingenstein Fellowship at Columbia University.



Does Our Educational System Contribute to Attentional and Learning Difficulties in Our Children?

Susan R. Johnson, MD, FAAP

I have great concerns about teaching preschool and kindergarten children to read and write. Developmentally and neurologically it doesn't make sense. There is a developmental progression of sensory-motor skills that a young child needs to master in the first seven years of life. Despite what we think, learning is not "all from our head." The movements of our body in utero, through infancy and childhood, and even in adulthood form the neural pathways in our mind that we later use to read, write, spell, do math, and think in an imaginative and creative way. I see countless numbers of children in my practice who have been diagnosed with "ADD" or "learning disabilities" who miraculously improve when they are taken out of an "academic" kindergarten or given an extra year in a developmental kindergarten that emphasizes movement and the integration of their sensory-motor systems.

My years of experience as a developmental and behavioral pediatrician have shown me that children who have difficulties reading and writing usually have a poorly developed sense of balance, have difficulty making eye contact, have difficulty tracking or following with their eyes, can't easily distinguish the right side of the body from the left, have difficulty sitting still in a chair, and have difficulty locating their bodies in space. Many of these children who have difficulties reading and writing also have poor muscle tone, exemplified by a slumped posture, a tense or fisted pencil grip, and "flat feet" (collapsed arches). Sometimes these children are overly sensitive to touch and have difficulties in their peer relationships because they are using their minds and eyes to help their bodies navigate in space and thus they miss social, non-verbal cues from their playmates. These children also have an overactive sympathetic nervous system ("fight or flight" reaction) and are therefore extra-sensitive to the stimulant effects of sugar, chocolate, lack of sleep, changes in routines, television, and playing video and computer games.

Children who are ready to read and write should be able to accomplish these tasks:

- To pay attention and sit still in a chair for at least 20 minutes, without needing to wiggle or sit on their feet or wrap their feet around the legs of the chair as a way to locate their bodies in space by muscle movement or activation of pressure receptors.
- To balance on one foot, without their knees touching, and in stillness, with both arms extended out to their sides while they count backward without losing their balance.
- To stand on one foot, with arms stretched out in front of them, palms facing up, with both eyes closed for 10 seconds without falling.
- To reproduce patterns of abstract lines and curves (e.g., various geometric shapes, numbers, or letters) on a piece of paper with a pencil when someone else draws these shapes, numbers or letters on their backs.
- To walk slowly on a balance beam, skip, and jump rope.

If children can't do these tasks easily then they haven't integrated their vestibular and proprioceptive (sensory-motor) systems, and they will have difficulty sitting still, listening, focusing their eyes, focusing their attention, and remembering numbers and letters in the classroom. Children integrate their sensory-motor system through body movements and not through flash cards or playing electronic games. Physical movements such as skipping, hopping, rolling down hills, playing catch with a ball, jumping rope, running, walking, clapping games and circle games, as well as doing lots of fine motor activities with their fingers—cutting with scissors, digging in the garden, kneading bread dough, pulling weeds, painting, beading, drawing, sewing, finger knitting—build and strengthen neural pathways. In contrast, watching television or videos and playing comput-

er games are extremely poor sources of stimulation for their sensory-motor development and actually prevent the integration of their nervous systems by keeping children in a state of stress, and activating their sympathetic nervous systems, their “fight or flight” response.

Finally, the ability to print and match a particular sound to a specific letter (phonics) in children is predominately a left-sided (analytic) brain activity. Developmentally, the left side of the brain doesn’t fully start to develop or myelinate until ages 7 to 9 years (this is especially true for boys). When we teach children to read or write at an earlier age, we stress their minds and their bodies and force them to use only the right side of their brains for reading (sight memory). The right brain is more intuitive and looks at the whole picture rather than at details, so the child usually looks only at the first and last letter and the length of a word and then makes a guess at what the word might be, without sounding it out. Some children can easily switch from the right hemisphere to the left as they get older, but many children (especially the ones who can’t skip) haven’t developed the pathway (corpus callosum) to quickly travel from the right side of the brain to the left side; these are then stuck trying to read and spell with the right hemisphere. These children often write letters backward, can’t spell, and can’t seem to remember which sounds go with which letters. The effort required to write is also tremendous.

Our American diet, which is high in simple sugars, high in partially hydrogenated (“bad”) fats, and low in omega 3 fatty acids, contributes to our current epidemic in attentional and learning problems, and I wonder if much of our current epidemic also comes from our children watching too much television, playing too many video games, spending too much time in front of a computer screen, and being pushed to read and write too early.

We need to surround young children with what I call the “Buddha” state. This is regulated by the parasympathetic nervous system, which is best supported by adequate sleep, predictable rhythms and routines, wholesome nutrition, warmth, harmonious non-competitive rhythmic movements, and most importantly, our love. Children’s brains develop and integrate when they are in the “Buddha” state. Their brains can’t fully integrate or develop when they are in a state of stress or in survival mode, i.e. “fight or flight.”

I support, therefore, preschools and kindergartens that emphasize healthy movements, promote daily living skills (e.g., sweeping and stirring), as well as encourage creative “pretend” play. If preschools and kindergartens, and the government laws that set the standards for education, can support these healthy activities and stop trying to teach our young children to read and write, then I believe we will start to see healthier 8 and 9 year olds who can listen, focus, sit still, write, read, pay attention, and learn with ease.

Susan R. Johnson, MD, FAAP, is a behavioral and developmental pediatrician in private practice in Colfax, CA. She was a pediatric resident at Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago and a fellow in behavioral and developmental pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco, during which time she directed the Early Childhood Clinic at UCSF and diagnosed children with Autism, PPD, Asperger’s Syndrome, and ADD. She worked for 7 years with the San Francisco Unified School District as Physician Director at the School Health Center. She is a certified Waldorf school teacher, and she has trained in sensory-motor integration at Rudolf Steiner College and in anthroposophical medicine in Switzerland..



Survey on Waldorf School Trustee Education

*Martin Novom
and Jean Yeager*

Background

Over the past 15 years a heightened degree of interest has been devoted to Waldorf school organizational life, and deservedly so. This interest has prompted a widening circle of Waldorf schools to recognize the need for greater professionalism and a spiritual approach to administration. At the same time, many have expressed the idea that school boards of trustees have received insufficient attention. Questions of board function—including the delicate issue of what to do when boards don't function well—are a lingering source of puzzlement and frustration. We hope that our research will contribute to a better understanding of Waldorf school boards and help to raise the level of discussion of questions of board function.

As directors of a training program focused on the organizational life of Waldorf schools, we appreciate the passion and desire for improvement that has driven discussions about trusteeship. It is our observation, however, that many of the sometimes divergent views about trusteeship have been fueled more by opinion than by data. As a result of these observations we decided to create a survey focused on trustee education.

Why trustee education? We believe that the window through which we query colleagues about trusteeship shapes the direction of conversation, so we gave considerable thought to how best to approach questions of trusteeship. It is our view that the quality and depth of the education that individual trustees bring to their task, or receive during their tenure, supports or limits what they can achieve collectively as a board. As educators, we are interested in exploring what kind of education Waldorf school boards provide for their trustees, what education trustees provide for themselves, how that education is obtained, and whether or not trustees believe they are being well-equipped to serve their school communities.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to talk about the education of trustees without talking about values. On the basis of which values do current Waldorf school trustees, and therefore their boards, operate? In our role as directors of the Waldorf Administration Program, we focus our curriculum on those approaches that support Waldorf pedagogy and that are consistent with anthroposophy. While we seek to display to the students as wide a set of methods of articulating those values as possible, it is up to students to interpret the values for themselves and integrate them into their work environments.

We summarize survey responses below, and, based on these responses, we offer some recommendations.

The Survey

We asked seven questions, six of them ending with an open-ended comment section, which yielded a number of specific responses.

1. What position(s) do you hold, have you held, or do you expect shortly to hold?
2. Indicate the level of your prior experience with nonprofit trusteeship.
3. Indicate any reading, studying, or training you personally have done on nonprofit trusteeship.
4. Indicate what familiarity you have with authors or methods of nonprofit trusteeship.
5. Share your opinions about your current board effectiveness.
6. Describe the practices of your board.
7. Please indicate what affects board decision-making.

To conduct the survey we distributed a link to Survey Monkey, a web-based survey service, via email. We sent four different messages over eight weeks in an effort to gain as much participation as possible. In the end we received 120 responses.

Responses

1. *What views and opinions do trustees (and others) have about trusteeship?*

The respondents, mostly trustees, but also some parents, teachers, and administrators who are not trustees, say that, for the most part, they are satisfied with the general level of practice and behavior of their boards. Many say, however, that they are not adequately serving their school, at least in part because the awareness, understanding, and study of Waldorf pedagogy and anthropology are insufficient.

2. *What level of experience is there on Waldorf school boards?*

Slightly more than 50% have two to seven years' experience. Fewer than 30% have seven or more years' experience as a trustee. In chairing board committees, levels are similar: 30% have chaired a committee, 28% have chaired a committee two or three times, and 19% have chaired a committee four times or more. 48% have served as board president, but only 20% have served as president two or more times.

We believe that, given the relatively few years of experience, the fact that trustees generally meet infrequently compared to faculty groups has implications for the potential quality of performance.

3. *What kinds of preparation have trustees and boards undertaken in order to perform their tasks?*

As individuals, sources for trustee preparation include, in descending order: books, magazines or journals, pamphlets, webseminars, and DVDs or videos. For boards as a whole, also in descending order, these include: workshop sessions, all-day workshops, multi-day workshops, and training programs.

More important than the order of these choices is the frequency of usage of these sources. The greatest number, only 41%, report some reading in magazines or journals. Given the relative lack of prior experience, this is troubling. For the full board, things are not much better. Here the greatest number, 37%, report they have done a small number of workshop sessions.

We asked the open-ended question: "Describe the kind of reading, studying, or training YOUR BOARD engages in." The wide variety of responses indicates that many boards are doing something. Are they, however, doing enough? And what type or quality of education are they undertaking?

One way we sought to gauge this was to ask respondents: "What authors or methods of trusteeship are you familiar with?" We selected six authors or methods of trusteeship that are, in our opinion, most widely read and recommended, and that have the highest profile in the contemporary nonprofit arena. The highest percentages reported point to the marginal effort trustees are making to gain knowledge and understanding. Only 19% had "heard of but only barely" John Carver and his Policy Governance method. In the higher ranked "have read some" category, the numbers are similar—17% for Robert K. Greenleaf and his servant leadership approach, and 19% for Carver. These are startlingly low levels of awareness or familiarity with writers who offer the fundamentals of the discipline of trusteeship.

Waldorf trustees face their task with low levels of prior experience and, as individuals and collectively as boards, they make only a nominal effort to prepare for and advance their performance on the job. This should be a concern for the Waldorf school movement and for boards of trustees themselves.

4. *How well do boards perform?*

Trustee selection, trustee orientation, cultivation of skills, and officer succession report the lowest performance levels, with two thirds or more ranking their performance as "Barely passable to Moderate."

Things improve in the areas of clarity of board's role, clarity or cultivation of board's vision, effectiveness of committees, transparency of nominating process, and willingness to participate in charitable giving. Here a solid two thirds or more report "Moderate to Very good."

Even better are the ratings for quality of board meetings and board-wide commitment to participate in board activities, where about two thirds report "Very good to Well done."

The lowest ratings are reported in connection with the areas of anthroposophical study and Waldorf education study, with about 25% ranking these “Extremely poor.” This contrasts with the areas of interaction with administration and quality of meaningful discussion, which greater than 25% report as “Well done.”

In the areas of interaction with administration, sticking to the agenda, quality of listening, and quality of meaningful discussion, the rating category of “Very good” received responses in the range of 50 to 65%. The areas of meetings starting and ending on time, inclusiveness of diverse views, interaction with faculty, and quality of facilitation received a lower rating, with a range of 39 to 50% “Very good.”

We also asked: “Out of which set of values do Boards of Trustees want their trustees, and therefore their boards, to be operating?” Here, 54% report that the role of Waldorf values is “Extremely important” and 46% say that the role of anthroposophy is “important” in guiding decisions and discussions. These responses present a strong contrast with the fact that a lower number, 36%, believe that trustees being on a path of self-knowledge is “important.”

Our perception is that, overall, trustees try hard and bring good intentions and vitality to their boards. By their own measure, however, they are significantly underperforming in the areas of defining and cultivating leadership, and integrating Waldorf education and anthroposophical concepts.

Conclusion

Waldorf school trustees around the continent view their boards as performing moderately well with regard to the technical competencies of details such as running meetings and reaching decisions. Beyond these, however, performance suffers.

First, there is tension between trustees’ lack of experience and the relative lack of effort that they expend to gain needed knowledge and skills. Boards of trustees can make clear improvements by improving member selection and orientation and planning for succession.

Second, there is tension between the view that knowledge and understanding of Waldorf pedagogy, values, and anthroposophy are important and the lack of commitment that trustees

and boards report to gain this knowledge and understanding.

Third, there is tension between the acknowledged importance of school boards and our commitment to provide the training and support that trustees need.

Fortunately, we are not without resources. We have a body of knowledge, aligned and consistent with Waldorf pedagogy, that can point us in the direction to develop and create a curriculum for Waldorf trustees. We can look to the many lectures that Rudolf Steiner gave on social development. These are widely studied, for example, in the Camphill movement. In addition, we can find contemporary concepts and philosophies of trustee practice that are consistent with an anthroposophical approach to trusteeship. These, too, need to be a part of trustee education.

Values are not just what we say we believe. They are also expressed in what we do. One solution to the tensions outlined above and illuminated by our survey is to gather the resources necessary to develop and direct affordable, flexible, and geographically diverse training and education for Waldorf trustees.

Martin L. Novom, CFRE, is the Director of the Waldorf Administration Program at Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, CA. He has been a member of the planning group of the Healthy Waldorf Schools Conference. He provides consulting services to Waldorf schools and other nonprofit organizations as a member of Skystone Ryan, an international fundraising consulting firm. Martin has developed and produced an annual multi-school workshop series for Waldorf schools since 2000. He is the editor and lead author of *The Fundraising Feasibility Study—It’s not About the Money*. You may contact him at mnovom@skystoneryan.com.

Jean W. Yeager was Co-Director of the Waldorf Administration Program at Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, CA, where he serves as president of the Board of Trustees. Jean has been a board member of the Biodynamic Farming & Gardening Association, the Kimberton Waldorf School, Sunbridge College, and the Waldorf Teacher Development Association. He has served as Administrative Director of the Anthroposophical Society in America, and he continues to oversee anti-defamation activities for the Council of Anthroposophical Organizations (CAO). Jean is publisher of the *Journal for Anthroposophy*. You may contact him at jwyaeager@igc.org.

Three Ways of Knowing

Knowledge is not singular. Knowing the names of stars is not like knowing how to play the piano or like knowing how to offer solace to someone in pain. Like intelligence, which we used to believe was one thing—measured on an IQ test, for example—knowledge comes in different forms. We can know in different ways. Waldorf and Steiner schools emphasize three ways of knowing, the development of each corresponding roughly with preschool, elementary school, and high school.

Michael Polanyi called a first kind of knowing “tacit knowing,” knowing “more than we can say.” We can “know” how to cut a carrot, or the taste of the soup it makes, or how to play the viola, or how to solve a problem in geometry. We can describe these things in language, but the value, meaning, and even truth of these knowledges—cutting, tasting, playing, solving—does not translate into language. It becomes apparent only when we do these things ourselves. Without the experience of doing, knowing has little meaning. Hence, in Waldorf schools, the importance of “doing” in preschool, before we emphasize other forms of knowing.

A second kind of knowing is aesthetic knowing. Its value is apparent in contrast to our concept of something that is anaesthetic, or numbing. Aesthetic knowing is alive, awake, and sensitive. It is knowing in heart and gut (yes, the brain plays its role, but we feel our feelings in our hearts and lungs and guts). It is intuitive, “taught from within.” It is a form of knowing especially valuable for artists, musicians, clinical psychologists, and even advertising copywriters. It is a form of knowing that connects us powerfully to the world. It develops in children most readily when they have separated from their parents and begin to comprehend the world around them for themselves. Hence, in Waldorf schools, the importance of beauty and feeling in the elementary school.

A third kind of knowing is knowing through thinking. By thinking, however, I mean a particular kind of thinking that attempts in Henri Bortoft’s phrase to “swim upstream,” reversing fragmentation, categorization, and specialization in order to recover wholeness. Thinking logically with given postulates, thinking algorithmically, is “downstream” thinking, the outcome determined by the input. It is powerful but dead. Synthetic, living thinking can encompass or embrace analysis, logic, and critical thinking. It seeks to go beyond them to recover or reach the origin of creative thought and imagination. It develops in students who are wrestling not so much with the world around them as with their own identities in that world. Hence, in Waldorf schools, the importance in high school of the development of thinking.

These three ways of knowing are cumulative and integrative. We do not leave one for the next, but build on what comes before. As adults, our thinking is enriched if we also know how to do and to feel. All three forms of knowing are present earlier too; young children learning to walk and talk (two of the most important forms of doing) can also feel and think. By emphasizing one way of knowing at the appropriate time, allowing other ways to develop simultaneously but sleepily, we work in accordance with children’s growth away from their parents and into the world and themselves.

— Stephen Keith Sagarin

News from the Online Waldorf Library

Marianne Alsop

The Online Waldorf Library provides information and resources to all who are interested in Waldorf education. We answer requests from Waldorf teachers, teacher education students in seminars and programs all over the world, and parents wishing to bring Waldorf education into their home lives and home schooling. Each day brings email questions that are as varied as the topics we have online. The OWL Administrator deals personally with every question.

In response to the increasing interest in our online books, we have added four new titles, including three by Karl König: *Reading and Writing—Conferences and Seminars for Teachers*; *Arithmetic (with references to Zoology)*; *Embryology and World Evolution* as well as *Creating Social Sacraments* by Dieter Brüll. You can now find more than 30 complete online books on OWL by going to the Focus Search page and clicking on Online Book under the Resource Type category. Teacher education students have let us know how much they appreciate having the entire Foundations of Education series by Rudolf Steiner available as Online Books.

All articles in back issues of the *Research Bulletin*, *The Waldorf Science Newsletter*, and *Gateways*, dating back to 1995, are also available online. From the Home page, click on Journals and select the journal of choice to view, read, or download the articles. Archival articles from *Education as an Art*, from the 1940s, continue to

be of interest as well as those published in the *Waldorf Clearinghouse Newsletter*, dating to the 1960s.

Recent research topics, questions, and information requests have included the following:

- Class plays
- Play spaces for young children
- Homeschooling resources for history teaching
- Teaching writing and reading
- Creating a media use policy for home and school
- Translating OWL articles into Portuguese
- Should class teachers teach 4 years instead of 8?
- Reading lists for grades 1 to 8
- Play-based early childhood education
- Upper elementary school math
- Waldorf school administration issues and questions

The Online Waldorf Library invites your questions and comments and appreciates your interest and support.

Visit the Online Waldorf Library at

www.waldorflibrary.org.

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.

Summary of Activities Supported by the Research Institute

Research Projects

Art in Human Development
 Attention-Related Disorders Research Project
 Effects of High-Stakes Testing on Children
 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
 Results of Waldorf Education

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
 Chemistry
 United States History
 Mathematics
 English
 Computer and Information Technology
 Life Science and Environmental Studies
 World History – Symptomatology
 Physics
 Grammar

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
Education, Teaching, and Practical Life by Rudolf Steiner
Developmental Signatures – new source book
 Over 200 articles placed on-OWL from Steiner Library
 Multiple E-books.

Board of Directors

Douglas Sloan, President
Susan Howard, Secretary
Virginia Flynn, Treasurer
David Mitchell, Co-Director
Douglas Gerwin, Co-Director
Alice Bennett Groh
Arthur Zajonc
Natalie Adams

Administrator

Milan Daler

Supporting Members

Academe of the Oaks
Alan Howard Waldorf School
Ashwood Waldorf School
Aurora Waldorf School of Alaska
Austin Waldorf School
AWSNA
Camellia Waldorf School
Camphill Special School - Beaver Run
Cape Ann Waldorf School
Center for Anthroposophy
Chicago Waldorf School
City of Lakes Waldorf School
Denver Waldorf School
East Bay Waldorf School
Emerson Waldorf School
Escuela Waldorf de Cuernavaca
Eugene Waldorf School
Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School
Green Meadow Waldorf School
Haleakala Waldorf School
Halton Waldorf School
Hartsbrook School
Hawthorne Valley School
High Mowing School
Highland Hall Waldorf School
Honolulu Waldorf School
Kimberton Waldorf School
Lake Champlain Waldorf School
Les Enfants de la Terre
Marin Waldorf School
Merriconeag Waldorf School
Monadnock Waldorf School
Pasadena Waldorf School
Pine Hill Waldorf School
Portland Waldorf School
Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto
Rudolf Steiner College

Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor
Rudolf Steiner School, NY
Sacramento Waldorf School
San Francisco Waldorf School
Santa Cruz Waldorf School
Santa Fe Waldorf School
Seattle Waldorf School
Shining Mountain Waldorf School
Sound Circle Center for Arts and Anthroposophy
Spring Garden Waldorf School
Summerfield Waldorf School & Farm
Sunbridge College
Susquehanna Waldorf School
The Waldorf School, Lexington
The Winkler Center for Adult Learning
Toronto Waldorf School
Tucson Waldorf Education Association
Vancouver Waldorf School
Waldorf High School of Massachusetts Bay
Waldorf School of Garden City
Waldorf School of Orange County
Waldorf School of Pittsburgh
Waldorf School of Princeton
Waldorf School of San Diego
Waldorf School of the Peninsula
Washington Waldorf School
Waldorf Teacher Training, Eugene

Please visit our website at:
www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org

Research Bulletin

Editor: Stephen Keith Sagarin
Art/cover: David Mitchell
Copy editing: Douglas Gerwin
Proofreading: Ann Erwin
Production/layout: David Mitchell

The Research Institute for Waldorf Education

Douglas Gerwin and David Mitchell
Co-Directors
P.O. Box 307
Wilton, NH 03086
Phone: (603) 654-2566
Fax: (603) 654-5258
e-mail: researchinstitute@earthlink.net

Donations
for the continuation of the work of the
Research Institute are tax deductible.

Research Institute for Waldorf Education

Subscription Form for the *Research Bulletin*

I would like an annual subscription to the *Research Bulletin*, starting with the next issue (Volume XV number 2). There are two issues each year.

Name _____

(School) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Supporting Membership (20 copies of each issue; 2 issues per year)

\$275.00

Individual Subscription (2 *Bulletins* per year)

\$25.00

Single copy

\$15.00

Additional International Postage & Handling

Canada: U.S. \$3.00 = \$28.00

Europe and South America: \$7.00 = \$32.00

Africa and Asia: \$9.00 = \$34.00

Please make checks payable in U.S. currency to

“Research Institute for Waldorf Education.”

Mail this subscription form to:

Research Institute for Waldorf Education

P.O. Box 307

Wilton, NH 03086

U.S.A.