

JOURNAL

FOR

WALDORF / RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION

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Dear Readers,

February 22nd marked the second anniversary of the Christchurch earthquake. Our school bell was tolled 185 times to pay respect to those who had lost their lives in that disaster. It was a time for young and old to reflect, to acknowledge departed loved ones, to appreciate the many acts of kindness given to us at the time and since from all around the world, especially from our many friends in Waldorf Schools. It was a time to look confidently towards the future.

Writing this editorial also provides me with an opportunity for reflection and a looking forward with hopefulness. The articles you read in this edition of our Journal may 'only' have taken about a year (sometimes more) to collect, but the combined wisdom and reflective sharing of that wisdom results from the authors' many years of active practice and thoughtful contemplation of their particular arts and life path. Van James, Robyn Ritchie, John Allison, Robin Bacchus, Edith van der Meer, Zewu Li and Li Zhang (of the Chengdu School) and Christof Wiechert: our thanks to you. We hope that our readers will find inspiration and joy from your sharing that will then find its way into collegial or parental discussions and eventually benefit our children – which is the main purpose of our Journal.

We wish our readers to join us in acknowledging that the articles in this Journal are gifted by the

authors. There were many other articles we would have liked to publish or republish, but were restricted by copyright or by being asked to pay substantial royalties. We thank the editors of several Anthroposophical and Waldorf based Journals with whom we correspond, including: Ronald Koetzsch (Renewal), Dorothee Prange (Rundbrief from the Goetheanum), Van James (Pacifica Journal – pacificajournal@gmail.com) and the editors of Waldorf Today (a weekly emailed newsletter, contact@waldorfteachers.com) for their encouragement and support.

For the long term viability of our Journal, the editors request that you purchase hard copy. If you do wish to reprint any thing in your own school publications, please ask the editors and we shall put you in contact with the authors. A donation towards our production costs would be asked for. We always appreciate your emails to tell us what has particularly appealed to readers in Schools or homes. We have some back issues available in hard copy – please email waldorf@clear.net.nz. After 6 months have elapsed, each issue is placed on www.waldorflibrary.org. Deadline for submissions for J15.2 is June 1st, 2013.

With warm greetings, on behalf of our editorial and peer reviewer teams,

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Art and the Integration of Head, Heart and Hand

Van James

The labourer works with his hands, the craftsman works with his hands and his head, the artist works with his hands, his head and his heart.

Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Over the past few decades, the theory that postulates dual operations of the brain has become a popular and practical model in the general public for understanding the contrasting cognitive functions of the brain and resulting human behaviour. The widespread acceptance of this theory has in no small way occurred with the help of mainstream work such as Betty Edwards' book, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*.¹ This workbook approach helped to popularize the idea of lateral brain function because it demonstrated the theory by means of observable, practical application in drawing. If one recognizes right-brain activity (artistic, holistic, imagistic, intuitive, simultaneous, present-future oriented) and left-brain functions (logical, analytical, verbal, literal, sequential, present-past oriented), one can begin to utilize the appropriate brain operations for specific tasks at hand—in this case, the right-brain activity for the purpose of visual thinking to improve one's drawing. According to this theory, various exercises, such as drawing from a picture that is placed upside-down, can shift the brain into a more artistic, imagistic way of seeing, thus making drawing easier. This theory makes the great mysteries of consciousness, cognition, perception and creativity a bit more accessible and understandable. It is helpful as a starting point for understanding aspects of brain activity and the rich nature of our learning process.

Twofold, lateral brain functions occur within the wider context of the trifold brain – the so-called reptilian hindbrain (Rhomb-encephalon—made up of brainstem and cerebellum that deals with involuntary actions and survival mechanisms),

limbic midbrain (Mes-encephalon-thalamus, hypo-thalamus, and other brain centres which control emotion, sexuality and memory), and neo-cortex forebrain or cerebral cortex (Pros-encephalon—neo-mammalian brain involved with muscle function, sense perception, and thought processes). According to contemporary neurology, up to age three, children learn by way of imitation with the engagement of the reptilian and limbic brains. After age three, there is a growth spurt activating the right hemisphere of the neo-cortex. The right hemisphere brings intuitive, imaginative, non-linear thinking into action as well as an integrated functioning between the three brain regions. This integrative functioning is responsible for what Joseph Chilton Pearce calls the “magical” relationship a child has to her world, expressed in simple play and untutored creativity.² Around eight years of age, children develop foveal focus, the ability to visually scan two-dimensional space. About the age of nine, the left hemisphere of the neo-cortex begins to function more actively. This hemisphere of the brain gives us abilities for abstraction, objectivity, and linear thought. These latter two events allow for a momentous cultural leap in learning as they open the possibility for reading and writing to take place, not to mention continued creative activity.

These functions of the three brains, as described by neuro-science, are integrated into the still wider nervous system and sense organization, respiratory and circulatory systems, as well as the metabolic and limb systems. This threefold picture of the human organism – the nerve-sense system, where thinking is headquartered; the rhythmic system, where the heart of feelings and emotions lives; and the metabolic-limb system, the hands and feet of our will – which Rudolf Steiner³ articulated and related so clearly in the context of child development, is the basis

1. Edwards, B. (2102): *The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. 978-1585429202

2. Pearce, J. C. (1992): *The Magical Child*. 978-0452267893

3. Steiner, R. (1996): *Study of Man or Foundations of Human Experience*. 978-0880103923

for an approach to drawing that can encompass the whole human being—the representative areas of the three bodily systems that serve our capacities for thinking, feeling and will. Thinking, feeling and will are in turn faculties of the soul that allow for our understanding and experiential meeting with the world, as well as our awakening to individuality and selfhood. Ultimately, when we act in the world – when we draw – we do so with the use of both our brain hemispheres, the three brain regions, and the three bodily systems, all of which are active to some degree. When we speak of thinking we generally mean the left-brain activity — reflective, logical thinking. If we act or draw with engaged emotion, with awakened feelings, we engage our right-brain activity and supersede the strictly analytical processes of the left brain. Naturally, our limb system is engaged when we draw, and this involves the deeper limbic and reptilian brain functions, i.e. hand-eye coordination and engaged will impulses. According to this picture we know things with our heads (IQ – intellectual quotient), we feel things with our hearts (EQ – emotional quotient), and we experience things through active doing at a gut level or in our fingertips (WQ – will quotient)⁴. All three spheres are forms of knowing and ways in which we learn as human beings.

In teaching and learning any subject it is helpful to keep in mind these three spheres of human activity – thinking, feeling and will – recognizing that especially in the child, access to understanding usually occurs from an active doing, simultaneously involving the engagement of feelings, and only later arriving at the formulation of concepts in thinking. When teaching children it is almost always best to first engage the will in an activity that may be experienced inwardly through the feelings, and then be brought to reflection, after the fact, in order to understand it. As a general guideline, before the age of seven to nine children learn from doing things by example because they learn from imitation not from being told information. You cannot tell a child of this

age “please don’t pick the flowers,” and expect her to follow these instructions if you yourself are constantly picking flowers and demonstrating the opposite behaviour. They will always imitate what they see being done around them more than what they are told.

Based on recent research into children’s brain development, Jane Healy⁵ describes this type of first-order learning in children as concrete knowing. Harvard’s Howard Gardner calls it sensory-motor learning and intuitive knowing.⁶ By the change of teeth and through puberty, roughly ages seven to fourteen, children learn best through their cognitive feeling, through pictures and symbolic knowing (Healy) or notational learning (Gardner). This is why the arts are such effective learning tools for children of this age. Only in adolescence, between fourteen and twenty-one, does independent judgment and abstract learning (Healy) or formal conceptual knowledge (Gardner) begin to come into its own. In each of these life periods learning can be approached differently in order to be most effective, hygienic and developmentally appropriate.

These three stages of knowledge were clearly noted millennia ago by Confucius (551-479 BCE) who declared: “Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, involve me and I will understand.” Telling, showing and involving are the three qualitatively different and progressively deeper forms of knowing: Telling – abstract (thinking), neocortex left-brain function; Showing – symbolic (feeling), neocortex right-brain activity; Involving – concrete (willing), limbic-reptilian and other brain functions. In order to understand the way children and adults learn it is important to take a larger view of learning as a process.

How we teach the art of drawing will depend on the age of the child and its particular developmental learning needs: abstract (tell me), symbolic (show me) and concrete (involve me) knowing. As the avenues of hands-on, concrete-intuitive learning provide a foundation for early childhood, and artistic, symbolic-notational

4. Although educators acknowledge IQ and in recent years have confirmed an EQ, recognition of a WQ is only just being considered in studies on Studio Thinking. (See Hetland, L. and E. Winner, S. Veenema, K. Sheridan. (2007): *Studio Thinking: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education*. Teachers College Press: New York. 978-0807748183)

5. Healy, J. (1999): *Endangered Minds*. 978-0684856209

6. Gardner, H. (2000) *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. 978-0465026111

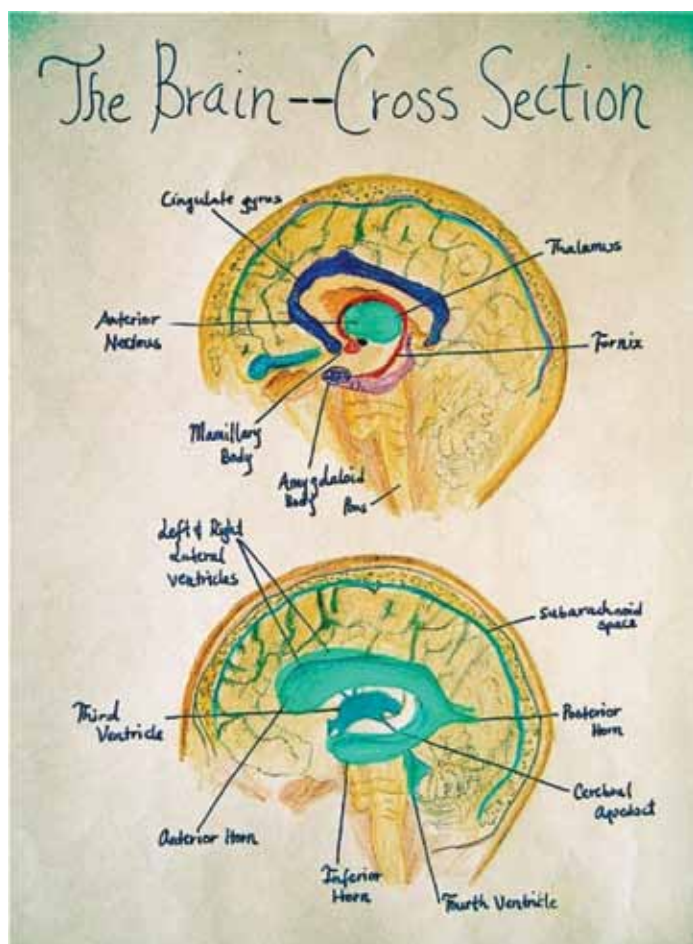


Fig. 1. This class eleven main lesson book drawing shows a student's study of brain physiology.

learning establishes the walls and columns of support in the middle school years, so the formal conceptual, abstract knowing becomes a kind of capping-off and roofing-over in the architecture of education through the first twenty-one years of life.

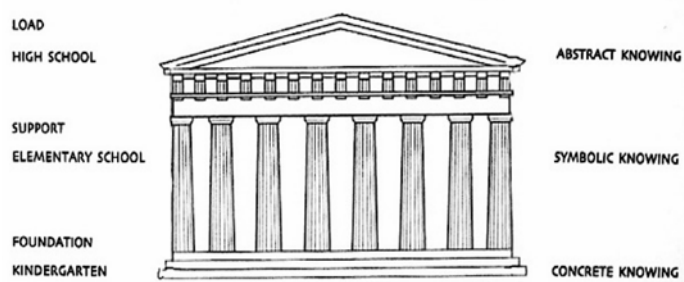


Fig. 2. The education of a child is like the architectural elements of a building, requiring a firm foundation, strong supports, and a protective, over-arching roof or load. Hands-on, concrete-intuitive learning provides a foundation for early childhood, while artistic, symbolic-notational learning establishes the columns of support in the middle school years, and the formal conceptual, abstract knowing becomes a kind of capping-off of the education in adolescence.

As foundation, support and load of education are established, all three types of knowing need to become integrated. "Brain plasticity advocates a balanced education of head, heart, and limbs," according to psychologist and Professor Emeritus of Educational Science, Christian Rittelmeyer. "Only through such 'whole' experiences can human beings, through their organic brain rudiments, react to given challenges in a flexible, socially correct, and creative way."⁷

A healthy integration of these different modes of learning and comprehension of the world are, of course, the key to education. "When students encounter the various forms of knowing operating together in a natural situation," says Gardner; "when they see accomplished adult masters moving back and forth spontaneously among these forms; when they are themselves engaged in rich and engaging projects, which call upon a variety of modes of representation; when they have the opportunity to interact and communicate with individuals who evidence complementary forms of learning — these are the situations that facilitate a proper alignment among the various forms of knowledge. Often it is in the course of acquiring a complex, high-level skill that such combining occurs in a most ecologically reasonable manner."⁸

With a comprehensive picture of the threefold human being we begin to see what a pivotal place the arts hold in the dynamics of learning; for it is between cognition and action that the arts stand as a great mediator. The arts are a form of knowing-doing/doing-knowing that bridge thinking and will. They imbue thinking with warmth, imagination, originality and enthusiasm, while they strengthen, focus, discipline and give order to the will. Therefore, more and more educational research such as the Visible Thinking, Artful Thinking, Studio Thinking, and other arts integration programs move in this direction of recognizing artistic activity as knowing action. As Gardner points out: "...artistic forms of knowledge and expression are less sequential, more holistic and organic, than other forms of knowing."⁹ Artistic forms of knowing are the result of repetitive practice on the one hand and

7. Rittelmeyer, C. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Brain Research for Education," *Research Bulletin*, p.27.

8. Gardner, H. pp.31-32

9. Ibid. p.42..



Fig. 3. Crayon drawing by Class one student.



Fig. 4. Pastel drawing by Class seven student.

on the other, fresh, new delight each time the art is practiced. "The artistic is enjoyed every time, not only the first occasion," observed Rudolf Steiner. "Art has something in its nature which does not only stir one only once but gives one fresh joy repeatedly. Hence ... what we have to do in education is intimately bound up with the



Fig. 5. Crayon and coloured pencil drawing by Class three student.



Fig. 6. Coloured pencil drawing by Class five student.

artistic element.”¹⁰ Art serves as the balance in education and as a bridge to what can make us more fully human in our thoughts, in our feelings, and in our deeds.

“Teachers should love art so much that they do not want this experience to be lost to children,” says Steiner. “They will then see how the children grow through their experiences in art. It is art that awakens their intelligence to full life... [The arts] bring a happy mood into the children’s seriousness and dignity into their joy. With our intellect we merely comprehend nature; it takes artistic feeling to experience it... When children engage in [art] they feel their inner nature uplifted to the ideal plane. They acquire a second level of humanity alongside the first.”¹¹

According to Rittelmeyer, “...research contradicts the intellectual or cognitive interpretation given to it by demands for ‘brain exercise,’ ‘Baby Einstein,’¹² ‘PISA-Power [Program for International Student Assessment] training,’ or similarly uninspiring ‘neuro-didactic recommendations.’ Instead, brain research shows clearly that instructional learning does not lead, in the long run, to ‘storage’ of what has been learned. Rather, sensual experience, happiness and disappointment, and wonder and discomfort are constituent elements of learning and brain development. The ordered multiplicity of experience and association-rich artistic and creative activities, produce an association-rich brain structure, one that in itself seems to be an organic condition for creative thinking and complex emotional cultures. An educational and socio-economic condition that favours channelled experiences [as in accelerated learning programs, ironically] leads to an impoverishment of the ‘pathways’ of the neuro-logical landscape.”¹³

When we make art, when we create drawings, we give expression to our will impulses and urges, our feelings and emotions, our sense experiences, imaginations and our thinking. Art can engage our entire human being, from our dual brain functions and tri-brain system to

our threefold bodily organism and three soul capacities. Within this picture of our trifold humanity – body, soul and spirit – it is art and the creative process that serves as the mediator between our material and our spiritual activity. This is why Steiner suggested: “Art must become the lifeblood of the soul.”¹⁴ In other words, art must become a vital part of our lives, an essential part of our inner life, whatever our profession or lifestyle. Creativity must enter into our daily actions and decision making. And this is why, if we are not to become robotic thinking machines on the one hand or wilful, desire-driven animals on the other, but are to realize our full potentials, our true gifts, it will be in the sphere of creative capacities, the artist in us, that we may find our universally human attributes. In the end it is essential that we look at human beings as complete organisms in relation to the world, and not stop short by considering only brain functions or measurable cognitive processes. After all, we are more than just brains, we are not just our head, we are hands and heart as well!

Any idea that ignores the necessary role of intelligence in the production of works of art is based upon identification of thinking with use of one special kind of material, verbal signs and words....the production of a work of genuine art probably demands more intelligence than does most of the so-called thinking that goes on among those who pride themselves on being “intellectuals.” — John Dewey (1859-1952) ♦

Van James has been a teaching artist at the Honolulu Waldorf School for the past 30 years. He is a regular visiting art’s educator to the US mainland, New Zealand, Australia and many Asian countries. He is an active graphic designer, painter, and illustrator, as well as chair of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai’i, editor of Pacifica Journal, and author of numerous books on art and culture, including *Spirit and Art* and *The Secret Language of Form*. His most recent book is *Drawing with Hand, Head and Heart: A Natural Approach to Learning the Art of Drawing*.



10. Steiner, R. op. cit. p.70.

11. Steiner, R. Lecture delivered in Stuttgart, 25 March 1923. GA36.

12. Walt Disney Company, which holds the copyright on Baby Einstein, Baby Mozart, and Baby Shakespeare, has recently offered consumer refunds on these products because of lack of substantiation of the claims that technological tools can advance the education of infants.

13. Rittelmeyer, op. cit. p.17.

14. Steiner, R. The Younger Generation, GA217. p.120. http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/YounGener/YunGen_index.html



Fig. 7. Pencil and pastel drawings by class eleven students.



Fig. 8. Coloured pencil drawing by class twelve student.

The Impact of Television on Child Development

Robyn Ritchie¹

Using Rudolf Steiner's model of the 12 Senses as a basis and linking this to recent findings in medical and psychological literature.

Should my child watch TV, play computerized games, be exposed to learning based programmes, use an iPad or iPhone? How much is too much? Will my child be deprived of vital learning if we do not allow access to these media?

These are the questions with which we are confronted in this age when visual media invade so much of our lives. It is suggested that the average child in Europe will have spent 1 year of 24 hour days, watching screen media by the time they are 7 years old and 4 years by the time they are 18. This represents a huge percentage of waking time.

There have been many books and papers written since the early 1980's including "The Plug in Drug" by Marie Wynn and "Endangered Minds" by Jane Healey, showing the disadvantages and dangers of screen viewing. It has been easy for people to dismiss this information as unscientific and not relevant to the wide range of media and computerized learning possibilities now available. Research has been continuing, however, in particular since the year 2000, especially in relation to medical and developmental concerns. A paper prepared for the European Parliament in 2010 by Dr Aric Sigman gives this as a closing statement:

"There is a 'dose-response' relationship between the age at which children start watching screen media, the number of daily hours they watch and negative effects on physical health and well-being irrespective of the quality of the screen material. Screen time must now be considered a major public health issue and reducing screen time must become the new priority for child health".

Also in this article:

"Television viewing hurts the development of children under three years old and poses a certain number of risks, encouraging passivity, slow language acquisition, over-excitedness, troubles with sleep and concentration as well as dependence on screens.....even when it involves channels specifically aimed at them.

(High Audiovisual Council 2008)

Why is screen viewing so damaging in the first three years? New studies show specific results including changes to brain cell structure and function with health implications which span the lifetime.

The infant arrives in the world completely dependent on its care givers – In the course of the first three years three major developmental challenges must be mastered – walking, speaking and thinking (memory, consequence). Thinking and knowing brings with it the beginnings of a sense of self as separate from the world and from other people.

The young child is completely open and receptive to the sensory world. He/she cannot shut off to unwanted stimuli of any kind. The love of parents and other close caregivers surrounds children to support and shield them through the huge growth and development which takes place at this time.

When we describe the impact of the sensory world on child development it is helpful to use the 12 senses model which was proposed by Rudolf Steiner prior to 1923. He spoke of four will senses which have their most important development during the first seven years. These are the senses of touch, life, movement and balance. They are the senses which inform us

1. Paediatric Occupational Therapist, Christchurch, New Zealand. (The editors thank Robyn for this article, written on request upon her return from lecturing at the New York conference of the International Society on Early Intervention, March/April 2011. In October, 2012 Robyn also spoke at another conference run by the same International Society in Perth, in association with the Asia Pacific group)

about our own body. Then there are four senses which allow us to perceive the world around us which bring aspects of antipathy and sympathy to our experience. These are the senses of smell, taste, vision and warmth. Finally we have four senses which facilitate our interaction with other people. Our ability to learn, to share ideas, to be truly human, depends on our senses of hearing, word, thought and the sense of ego.

During the first years we develop the will senses which affirm our sense of self.

TOUCH is nurturing, calming, defining and vital to development. Babies who are not lovingly touched and nurtured do not grow or thrive. Screen viewing is passive and has no tactile component. Children are always irritable after screen viewing and need to fight and bump into the world to re find their bodily self.

The LIFE sense is the sense of well being and encompasses all the rhythmic aspects of our body and our activity. The infant's heart beat and breathing mature throughout childhood. The digestive tract must mature so that it can transition from milk to solid food; sleeping and waking need to be established. The child's brain is only gradually building connections between actions, emotions and meaning. Studies now show that children exposed to screen viewing from infancy have delayed development, sleeping is disturbed, excitably or passivity is induced and crucial brain pathways, associated with socialization and problem solving, are underdeveloped. Rhythms associated with eating and daily routines give way to the demand of the screen programme.

The results of studies also show that background TV exposure is as damaging as direct viewing.

The MOVEMENT sense arises from information from muscles and joints and is used to inform the brain where the legs, arms and fingers are so that we can learn to move with skill. The infant must 'grow down' into its limbs, down to the toes and the fingertips in the critical first year which culminates in the child walking. The interaction with significant care givers is vital in this process. As you move, the baby moves, as you speak the babies' body echo's the movement in a loving devotion to everything that you do. This loving

bond is what calls the baby into activity. A person on a screen cannot do this. A baby cannot interpret movement on a screen. Our movement is ensouled and embodied with emotion. We move with love, with anger, with care. Every aspect of a gesture is taken in, later to be mirrored back as the child is the master of its own movements and its relationship to space. Studies show decreasing interpersonal contact time and ever increasing eye to screen time which is impacting on the development of skilled movement.

We stand upright in EQUILIBRIUM having mastered gravity and the challenges of balance. At birth the infant cannot even raise its head and yet, over the first year, gravity is conquered and uprightness achieved. An unobserved but vital part of this balancing process is the integration or working together of the two sides of the body – which culminates in a dominant side being established and with this specialization of the functions of each side of the brain. Recent research shows the detrimental effect of screen viewing on children's motor skills development with a reduction in motivation to move. Equally importantly amongst the changes to the brain structure are reductions in the size and condition of brain cells in the orbito-frontal (thinking) part of the brain as well in the corpus callosum which is the bridge which links and unites the two sides of the brain and is vital to integration, the establishment of dominance and speed of processing information.

The second group of senses described by Rudolf Steiner have significance in relation to the life of feeling. They are awake from birth, but become refined as conscious senses during the second seven year period. These are the senses of smell, taste, vision and warmth.

SMELL and TASTE build our first memories in relation to our closest care givers. Our essential well-being depends on knowing whether we are hungry or not, knowing if what we take in is good or not. Screen viewing means that the metabolism is slower and fewer calories are burned. Children are more likely to be overweight. Internal cues telling us we have eaten enough are not registered and over eating is likely to result. One study has found hours of television viewing to

be independently associated with percentage of body fat at seven years, every hour of additional viewing equating to an additional kilo of body weight.

VISION is represented in the brain by hundreds of thousands of light sensitive cells. Vision is a very awake sense through which we move out of ourselves to take in the form and activity of our world. Our ability to perceive depth, the form and the relationship of objects to each other, to perceive movement and to judge our own movement in relation to movement in the environment, is not innate, it must be learned. The infant learns to perceive visual space through doing – by learning to crawl, to stand, to fall and get up again, to hop, jump, run and skip and by watching the movement of important people in the environment from the earliest age. The eyes need to move in unison and independently from the head movement, for skill to develop in hand/eye integration.

Looking at a screen of any sort requires that the viewer is able to interpret what is passively seen. Infants do not have this ability, but can be fascinated by light and colour. Eyes are static in this process of looking and the eye muscles are not exercised.

Screen viewing produces minimal brain activity, moving it into sleep mode. Even playing computer games is associated with limited neurological activity. Heavy screen viewers have been found to have fewer skills in goal directed behaviour, attention, working memory, inhibition of behaviour, problem solving and self regulation; demonstrating that the passivity of viewing does not stimulate brain growth.

The ability to create an internal picture is vital to creative thought. When we listen to a story we create our own pictures. Screen viewing gives a picture which does not encourage creativity.

The sense of WARMTH relates to both physical and emotional warmth. Children grow in loving, interactive relationship; the caregiver's interest generates warmth and enthusiasm. Enthusiasm stimulates ideas and is mirrored back by the child in the two way process of learning. Studies have shown that over the last 20 years eye to

eye contact in the home has gone down and eye to screen contact has gone up. People spend more time in front of a screen than interacting with other human beings. British children aged 11-15 spend 53 hours per week, 55 percent of their waking time, watching screen media.

The four highest senses are those which give us the possibility to be social human beings. These are the senses of hearing, word, thought and the sense of ego.

To HEAR we need to be inwardly still and quiet. The impact of screen media is very largely visual. For small children the sound may be captured and repeated but there is not time or space to create the inner pictures which give meaning and allow information to be understood and generalized. Story reading and storytelling allow the child to be inwardly creative. The emotional and thought content of what is spoken is integrated. The reader or the speaker can respond contingently to the listener.

Many children today have not learned to listen. They are unable to select and 'tune in' to a specific voice. Their ability to process auditory information has been affected by the dominance of visual information, ear preference is not achieved. Language development is delayed. Studies show that babies who watched programmes, such as "Baby Einstein", had 8-10 less words at 18 months than infants who did not watch visual media programmes.

The sense of WORD is developed during the first year to 18 months through interaction with significant caregivers. As noted previously, there is a delay in language acquisition in children who are both active and passive screen viewers. When TV and other media are consistently present in the young child's environment less time is spent in face to face interaction. A screen talks to you, but it does not respond contingently to every facial expression or utterance as a devoted parent does.

The sense of THOUGHT is the sense that gives us the possibility to interpret what others are saying. To understand the thought behind what is spoken and to be receptive to an others thoughts, we need to be able to stand in our own

space as individuals, to be still, balanced and receptive, we need to be able to read the words, the gestures and the emotional content of what has been said. Studies are showing a significant decrease in empathy in today's teenage population and a decrease in the ability to read the nuances of others verbal communication. We are becoming more self focused and moving towards behaviours descriptive of the Autism Spectrum.

Finally, the sense of EGO is the highest sense, through which we have the possibility of truly meeting and appreciating the individuality of another person, through which we see the Christ reflected.

The visual media is making it harder for our children to achieve the highest goal of our humanity – to be conscious, caring human beings.

Visual media induce a state of sensory deprivation – they negatively impact on development. Scientific research recognizes the first three years as especially important here. We know, however, that the development of the senses does not stop at three years and that that the journey to becoming fully human spans 21 years. The senses, all twelve, are our windows to the world and allow us connection to what is most human.

Love for the earth and love for the other – these are what will change the world. To give our

children the possibility to be fully human we need to be brave enough to change the way we live to protect them and nurture their development.

The screen media have become integral to our lives and to banish them completely from our daily working is hugely challenging. As with all that we do our consciousness is needed to protect the very small and to monitor both our own, and our children's, viewing. One half to two hours is the recommended daily maximum for older children. For some, this will already feel too much, others will be challenged when adding time on computers, 'iPads', 'Skype' connections, Facebook and TV to see that their current viewing is far greater than this level.

Developing understanding and raising awareness of the detrimental effects of screen viewing empowers us to make good decisions for our children, ourselves and for others in our care. ♦

Robyn Ritchie has worked as a Paediatric Occupational Therapist and Extra Lesson Therapist for more than 35 years. Rudolf Steiner's work on the 12 senses has provided the vital impetus and inspiration for her work with children. She currently works in an Early Intervention Programme with children on the Autism Spectrum as well as with a small number of school aged children at Helios Integrative Medical Centre in Christchurch.



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Manners were once instilled into children as habitual behaviour. For instance, as a child I was taught that ‘children should be seen and not heard’, to ‘only speak when you’re spoken to’, to ‘hold the door open for ladies’, and to ‘stand up on the bus for your elders’. If I did these things I was ‘good’. If I didn’t, I was ‘bad’. Such lessons were so ingrained that children generally were praised only in terms of being a good ‘habit-being’. The breaching of manners incurred wrath / blame / shame / punishment — often a ‘clip over the ear’. As children we were repressed in the realm of life.

Something has changed, and it is a fundamental shift. It is also an important developmental change. People often comment that today children mostly seem not to be taught these things. In fact they often seem very rude. And if we try to repress or blame or punish them, their resistance is remarkable. There are many sociological theories that explain this. Rather than look at these, I intend to assume that ‘it’s just the way it is’, and suggest another way of looking at and dealing with behaviour in children. It is summed up in the word ‘boundaries’.

Children need a range of different boundaries, and they need them at particular stages. For instance, the baby learning to crawl and then walk needs **physical safety boundaries**. At a later stage they need behavioural **social boundaries**. A little later still they need behavioural **attitude boundaries**. At each stage they need an approach from parents and teachers that supports and encourages their development in self-esteem and, progressively, in self-management.

Mostly, whenever we talk about children needing boundaries, we are referring to their behaviour. And here I think it is interesting to consider the word ‘boundaries’ in the same way that it is meant in team sports, as an analogy for

what takes place in the human ‘life field’. Our co-operative participation in the ‘game’ represents a more conscious attitude to behaviour than the enforcement of ‘manners’. I find that boys especially can get hold of the parallel, and often we find it is boys who are really ‘pushing the boundaries’.

Everyone knows that the game works best when everyone knows the rules and agrees to subscribe to them. Then the game can flow, and we can all enjoy it... Having to stop the game to teach or enforce the rules breaks up the flow of play, spoiling the game. However, not being aware of the rules is simply ineptitude and ignorance, not wrong-doing. And clumsiness in playing the game is not ‘bad behaviour’; it simply is incapability.

Therefore, accidental breaking of the rules is any transgression that stops the flow of play. That’s just the way it is. And clumsiness requires more skills practice. However, deliberate breaking of the rules is foul-play, leading first to penalties, with subsequent repetition to the ‘sin-bin’, and perhaps even to disqualification, suspension, or other punishment.

So in the game of life there is a distinction between ‘trespass’ and ‘temptation’. The first can be forgiven, ‘as we forgive them who trespass against us’. But if the rule-breaking is repeated we must decide whether the person is inept or malicious. If we conclude it is inept, a special training-session is required. If it is malicious, then we conclude the person has given way to ‘temptation’, and then ‘sorry’ is not enough — in fact even the promise to change probably is not enough, and there must be amends, and perhaps ‘time-out’ for the person to contemplate their responsibility and its consequences, in order to reinforce the need for change.

¹ © John Allison 2006

I think it is important when we deal with children's behaviour to make a distinction between incidental boundary-crossing and deliberate boundary-flouting. This requires us to identify those actions arising from the more-or-less unconscious asocial patterns that are part of our 'habit-being', and to respond appropriately — usually in ways different to our response to those actions of the more *intentional antisocial reactions* characteristic of the 'attitude-being'. Both kinds of behaviour need refereeing and coaching, but there is a distinction here.

Particularly in the latter case, our approach needs to take into account the reactive nature of the emotional 'attitude-being' when challenged. This typically includes varying degrees of denial, anger, and compulsive bargaining. These reactions are what usually resulted in the 'clipped ear' or the 'belting' of the past, through which our 'good' behaviour was bullied into us. But there are techniques through which parents and teachers can get past this 'attitude being' to engage the child's **conscience**. Everyone has within them this quiet witness to their own actions. If we let it speak, the voice of conscience is able to announce its own verdict. We can then engage it in conversation, and encourage it to dictate change.

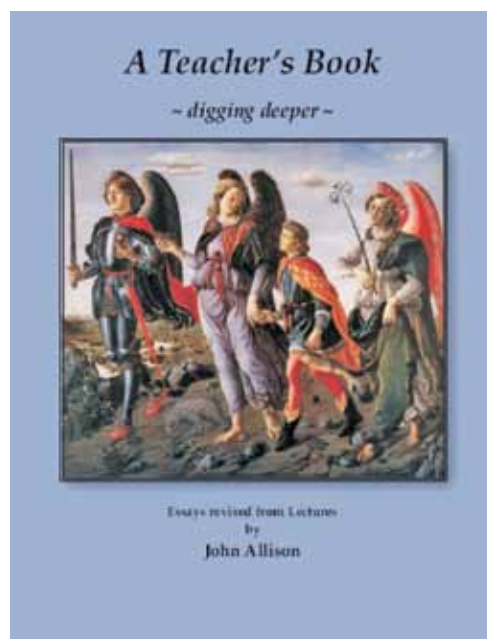
Just as a good referee or umpire is able to support and guide the flow of play in a game, so we can support and guide behaviour. What I am introducing here is a 'no blame' approach to children's behaviour, which is relevant for dealing with instances of individual behaviour and for group behaviour such as bullying. It works equally well in the home, in the classroom, in the playground, and on the sports field. Some training is necessary, though, and the 'attitude-being' can need a work-out in the soul-gym. A 'no blame' approach is not a 'no action' approach; it is informed by guidelines and rules, and by clearly presented consequences.

Summary:

Trespass: includes all breakdowns in the flow of play that result from clumsiness, ineptness, lack of understanding and / or skills, when the

player may or may not know better, and may not be able to do better without support. Needs clear refereeing / coaching of understanding and skills — instruction, encouragement, practice — and the chance to have another go.

Temptation: includes all breakdowns in the flow of play resulting from negative, obstructive attitudes, spoiling the fun of others, deliberate fouls (including your own), when it's clear the player knows better and could do better. Needs clear refereeing etc. as above but also a focus on the attitude issues — strategies include penalties, time-out ('dragging' / 'benching' / 'sin-binning') and suspension ('grounding'), tribunal, review and appeal processes, contracts etc. — leading to a chance to have another go. ♦



John Allison is a lecturer, workshop facilitator, consultant and life coach, writer and poet living in Melbourne. On the Writings and Newsletters page of John Allison's website www.johnallison.com.au, readers will find numerous articles, newsletters and lecture transcripts available as free downloads. This body of writing arises from his work with teachers and parents in Steiner schools in New Zealand and Australia during the past decade. In particular, for readers who have appreciated the current article, the lecture-transcript "Social Discipline and Restorative Practices" presents a comprehensive approach to behaviour developed from anthroposophical principles. There is also a flyer for 'A Teacher's Book' (2008) which can be purchased direct from the publisher at Immortal Books (www.immortalbooks.com.au).



“Our Long March”

Zewu Li and Li Zhang¹

Chengdu Waldorf School

A milestone was reached for worldwide Waldorf education on 10 January 2012 when the Chengdu Waldorf School received a full license as a grade school (as well as kindergarten) from the education authorities in Chengdu, Sichuan province. This was the result of a “Long March” and some tireless work over seven years by the whole faculty, especially the three founding teachers Li Zhang, Harry Huang, and Zewu Li.

The city of Chengdu suffered severe damage during the May 2008 earthquake. With their own school in shambles, the teachers went out into the city to hospitals and parks to play games and tell stories to the children they would meet. The school also received some donations from Australia and New Zealand to rebuild the new kindergarten.

A number of Teachers from New Zealand and Australia have travelled to Chengdu (and elsewhere in China) in recent years to assist in Teacher Preparation programs there. Chengdu is a focal point for all of China, where around 30 new Waldorf Schools initiatives have been founded by the end of 2012.

“If we do it, we will realize it.”

– Chengdu Waldorf School Song

2011 was over, we had entered into 2012. It is a good time to reflect on our work and a joy to share with friends who helped us. Last year was important – the 7th year in the cycle of Chengdu Waldorf School development. We have accomplished some significant mile stones.

The first notable milestone was granting the Grade School License. We applied for the license 3 years ago and the local Education District issued permission allowing us to undertake the preparation process over the next 3 years. We negotiated with the educational department and they agreed we could start with a single class for each grade, not the previously required 3

classes for each grade. The government made an exception for us. But, we needed to build a new school building that met the code for schooling. We started to raise funds for building the new school building. We had some money from our school, some money from our parents, and some - which is so important - from German Friends of Waldorf. We had leased our land for the school from local village with condition that we could only build temporary buildings. Once the money had been raised we had to negotiate with the government for permission to build.

We had to work hard to get around this and build the new school building. We built for the children! We take some risks without a building permit. It took only half year to complete the ground and structure work. We tried to complete



¹ On behalf of Chengdu Waldorf School Executive Group, Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, China

the building before the government knew about it and stopped the building process. That is something you may not be able to understand of life in China.

We thought we can go on without the government stopping the process. But then the Fire department stopped the process. The Fire Department would not come to inspect the building if it had been built without proper permission. But as we said we could never get that due to the land lease issue. Just like a chicken and egg puzzle. We used all the people we knew related to the fire department to get the department to give us permission to run a school. Then we did it.

Third challenge: inspection. The educational department inspected us four times. They made a long list of items for us to improve after first inspection two and half years ago. We made progress through that. They came again after a year and gave us another list of improvements which we did. Then last September. Then last November. It was a Long March. Then the license came. They said that the school was more and more like a school. And in reality, it was so. The environment and administration of our school really was more like a school which should be formal and mature. The process was a big learning for us as well.

We finished the grade school's new building and yard and moved in September 2011. It was really beautiful with flat "M" shape traditional Chinese style, which we designed by ourselves. The classrooms are bigger than before with wooden floor and nice lazure-painted walls. The

environment of classrooms had been totally changed. Our students felt so good and more peaceful in a beautiful environment.

The other important thing for the school is that our student numbers kept growing this year. Now the kindergarten has reached about 110 children, with about 140 in the grade school. Future enrolment is full as well for the lower grades – only the higher grades have a little flexibility. All the staff of the school number about 60.

Financially this year is cheerful and also a milestone for the school development. We raised the tuition fees by around 58%. We went little bit crazy but it succeeded. We did an annual review of our finance and created a clear budget for coming year. We had lots of core group meetings and met with our parents. We showed our financial reality leaving illusion behind. Our training programme gave 2000 Yuan to each student per year for their expenses in school whereas in fact it should have gone to hardware for building or school equipment. On other hand our teacher salary level was low. We did not have enough money to reward their work. Our goal is to manage over state teacher salaries eventually. Maybe in 5 years. We have to survive financially to create stability for teachers and manage the long term running of our school. We decided fully that we did not want our previous situation continuing. When we told our parents it caused struggling – no one want to pay more and, also, the increase was too sharp. But the other reality is the parents have money mostly and we give up to 8% of total amount of school tuition fee for scholarship. In the end we did raise the fee successfully. Simultaneously we raised our teachers' salaries



New school building and yard which we moved into in September 2011.



about 58%, same as tuition fee raising ratio. Before we raised the salary we reviewed our payment policy carefully with the core group of teachers. And then we announced to others and got feedback to adjust it. In September 2011, we all received new salaries and everyone's face was smiling. The other good sign was donations from domestic fund raising was up largely. The school got around 1,200,000 RMB at home and only 3,400 RMB from abroad. This was just upside down. In the school's beginning the donations came mostly from abroad, from USA and mainly German. The year before last year there had been a crisis between teachers and parents: it seemed parents mostly did not trust teachers. So it was good that at last through our work we seemly gained their trust again. That is good base for farther work with parents.

Last year we also got more recognition from government and other institutions. Firstly, Fu Yonglin, the Vice-Mayor of Chengdu came to the school with district-related people following. He said this is 'a new education' and after the visiting he promoted our school to others which gave a good reputation for our school and also directly influenced our license.

The other important person for us is Zhu Yongxin. Mr Zhu is standing member of Chinese



People's Congress. He is the Executive Chair of Minjin Party, which is one of the democratic parties of China. He met Zewu and Li in Beijing and wanted to put some Waldorf content into the New Education which he has been promoting for years. His influence from Beijing is a useful umbrella for us. We also got labelled 'New Educational School' from his stream, but he allows us try what we could do in Waldorf. We also successfully hosted on our school Campus the first half of Sichuan Normal University Kindergarten Training Program which gained college credits. That means it is a beginning of Waldorf content being recognized at an Academic level.

We continuously study curriculum. We are leading local grade-based curriculum research in our country, hopefully finishing in this coming



year. This will give a solid foundation for our school itself as well as the whole of China.

Graduation is a key issue of our school. Where will our students go after eight years of Waldorf study has been a big problem. After serious discussion we decided to start a High School Training Program and eventually set up a High School in several years' time.

More things are still hovering in our mind that have to be done in the next few years:

- to build up curriculum strongly.
- to make administration work professional.
- to train more good teachers.
- land issues - we have to solve the land issue totally because we rented this beautiful piece of land and have to make it stable for use. We do not want to move the whole school somewhere else.
- expanding kindergarten and school classrooms.

Thanks to all those of you who have helped us in various way – we are really grateful. ♦



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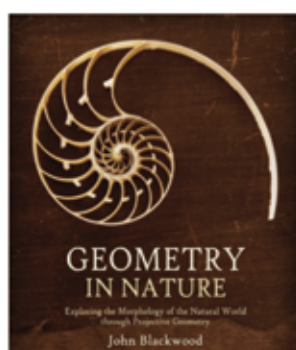
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The first Waldorf-inspired kindergarten in Jakarta, Indonesia

In December, 2011, Hans and Ineke van Florenstein Mulder asked me if I would be interested to spend some time in a small Waldorf kindergarten initiative in Jakarta. I had never entertained the idea of going overseas to support teachers. I always felt there was plenty to do near home. However, when the question of Indonesia came, I had to take it seriously. It felt like a destiny question, as both my parents were born in Indonesia and grew up there (during the Dutch colonial times). My childhood was enriched with things Indonesian. My question became one of maybe I have something to offer to this beloved country of my parents?

After the contacts were established and approved by the international organisation IASWECE we started to plan for my arrival. Initially I had contact with the founder, Mr. Irdhal Lala, but later I corresponded with the two teachers, who both speak English. The kindergarten was started three years ago with the help of Maria Domning from Germany who spent 3 months here prior to any children attending.

The house in which the kindergarten is operating is spacious, with a large garden, an outdoor gazebo with a traditional thatched roof and an outdoor toilet in the same style. The property borders on a dam with a lake, which is a social 'hang-out' space for the general population as there are very few green spaces in Jakarta.

People send their children here for two reasons: they perceive a difference in education and they like the fact that their children will also learn a little bit of English.

I arrived on 7 July with a suitcase full of books, resources and craft materials. It was a very warm welcome, in more ways than one as I had to get used to +30°C. My room was on the second floor of the house and luckily it had air condition.

The first week was still their mid-year holiday and the teachers and I spent the time getting to know each other, lazuring the room, and finding our way with what we all could do in the next 5 weeks.

The kindergarten is attended still by only very few children, four at most, but we soon saw a need to start a playgroup, where under-threes attend with their mothers. This way, as always, one is able to impart some of the essentials of Waldorf education and support mothers in their parenting process. This new development looks very promising. Word-of-mouth will be a key factor in its growth.

I certainly did not come to turn everything they had established upside down, but the room did require some focus in the shape of a dolls/house corner, a drawing table and general ordering of resources in baskets. We spent time discussing the rhythm of the day. We made some changes,



¹ Coromandel, New Zealand. edith.vandermeer@gmail.com



Playgroup, which is called Nursery group here.

as we felt that outdoor play was suited more first thing in the morning, when the temperature is still reasonable. We also decided to do away with lunch boxes brought from home with a less desirable variety of snacks. Unfortunately the kindergarten room does not have the kitchen integrated in it, so the children miss seeing the meals being prepared. However, our meal time together, blessed with a Waldorf verse and an Islamic prayer soon became the highlight of the morning.

A lot of my time was spent explaining and stressing the importance of free creative play and the influences that cause the decline of this vital way of learning for young children. A draw-back of having to find out what Waldorf education is about without training or the support of experienced teachers is that very soon it becomes a method, instead of a living experience. We had to break through some barriers of what had become a kind of noose around the teachers' necks.

My humble opinion has always been that this education has to fit in the particular culture of the place where the kindergarten is. The teachers had struggled working with the Grimm fairytales. They would tell them in English, but for most children this is their second language and at best only very limited. We set out finding and adapting original Indonesian stories and making them suitable for puppet play. I soon realised that these stories have the same moral qualities as the Grimm fairytales do. It has been very

satisfying for all to create the puppets and tell the story on a daily basis. It became an anchor for the children, especially when we decided that they had to be told in Bahasa Indonesian as opposed to English. We will build on this and I will challenge the teachers to find more suitable stories. This place wants to be rooted in all things Indonesian from Islam to other religions and in local cultures (and there are many!).

Our afternoons were spent either studying topics like the fourfold human being with an emphasis



The last night of Ramadhan- a puppet story.

on the etheric (NB. An excellent book that has become our new 'friend' is: *Nurturing Potential in the Kindergarten Years* by Cornelis Boogerd²), television, play, human development, the senses and being creative in making resources. A lot of new skills were learnt.

Irdhal, the founder, very often took part in these afternoons and more and more he came to observe in the kindergarten so he could get a feel for it in order to better support the teachers when I leave.

We further worked on two events. On 28 July we held a seminar for interested people on 'Protecting Childhood'. An enormous amount of publicity was put into this event (there were even 10 banners with my name on it all over south Jakarta!), but due to the fact that it was Ramadhan, there was a very disappointing turnout. However, one of the participants was a journalist for an on-line publication and she wrote

² Boogerd, Cornelis (2011): *Nurturing Potential in the Kindergarten Years: A Guide for Teachers, Carers and Parents*. Translated by Matthew Dexter. Floris Books 978-0863158360



The seminar



The parents' morning



3 articles about the education. So the word will still get out. On 3 August we had a parents' morning and we found the questions and the discussions to be very stimulating and the content well-received.

Children in Jakarta are faced with enormous challenges: many primary schools require the children to sit a reading and writing test, for which kindergartens need to prepare them. At Bunga this will not be done. Lacking green spaces and gardens many children spend enormous amounts of time in front of screens. The traffic in Jakarta is beyond words, so for children lots of time is spent in cars or on the back of motorbikes. In general there seems to be a huge decline in the ability of children to play which was noticeable in some who attend this kindergarten. But how exciting it was to see that with a little bit of time and given the right environment, imitation and imagination was still alive and well!

It has been a very rich and intense five weeks for everyone concerned and it is encouraging to hear that my stay has created new enthusiasm and a resolve to make it happen. Bunga, which means 'Flower', exists; the right people are here and under the guidance of Irdhal Lala, with his vision for a better education for young children in Indonesia, it will come to fruition. I hope to be a part of this place and its people for a long time to come! Selamat Tinggal!

NB. As with all initiatives, Bunga would be helped tremendously by someone, a trained and/or experienced Waldorf teacher who would be able to stay for a much longer period of time. If you think you are that person, please feel free to contact me. edith.vandermeer@gmail.com ♦

Edith van der Meer has been a handwork teacher at Taikura Rudolf Steiner School for 14 years and a kindergarten teacher at the same school for 7 years. She is currently involved in kindergarten support, and gives parent and craft courses. She helps to coordinate the Early Childhood In-Service course with Kathy McFarlane and Marjorie Theyer. This course will start its fourth intake with 33 students in January 2013.



Edith is married to Ton and is mother of four grown children (and their partners) and has recently become a grandmother. The young child has always been the centre of her life and to be following the development of this first grandchild has been awe-inspiring!

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Foreign Language Teaching and the Art of Educating¹

Christof Wiechert²

Translated by Margot Saar

“Each language penetrates us differently and reveals human nature in a different way, which is why we must complement the effect of the mother tongue with other languages”³

“Naturally this does introduce into the lessons something that makes teaching somewhat strenuous.”⁴

Interesting developments have occurred in the almost hundred years since the inception of Waldorf education. One of these developments is that, over the decades, the institution of the class teacher has gained prominence at the expense of the subject teachers. This is particularly true in the case of foreign language teachers who are sometimes treated as if they were an inferior kind of species.

There is no point in trying to work out why this is so.

We will instead look at the great importance that Rudolf Steiner attached to the foreign languages in his concept of Waldorf education. Just before the first school was founded he even identified the new school with the early learning of foreign languages which he saw as one of its particular strengths.

Let us try and trace how Rudolf Steiner envisaged the teaching of foreign languages. He certainly wanted it to be different (in the case of modern languages) from any conventional approach. (We will not consider the classical languages which, from today's point of view, took up too much of the curriculum in the early years). We assume that there is general awareness in the Waldorf movement of the fact that Steiner proposed to teach modern foreign languages from

an early age to make use of the abating powers of imitation that enabled the children to learn their mother tongue. (This is the reason why Steiner suggested that under certain conditions a second mother tongue could be started in kindergarten).

For reasons of clarity it should be mentioned that main stream science knows today that the acquisition of the mother tongue is not based on cognition, or intellectual activity, but on quite different faculties. Steiner envisaged (or explained) that foreign languages must be learned entirely from the human encounter, from the conversation between teacher and pupils, from dialogue: just as it happens with the mother tongue, through verbal interaction: comprehension and the ability to speak must arise out of the activity.

Before the school was founded, during the weeks when Steiner worked on the ***Study of Man***⁵, he knew that his intention was extraordinary. He told the teachers – who weren't teachers yet – about the foreign language teaching in the future school:

“Naturally this does introduce into the lessons something that makes teaching somewhat strenuous. But you cannot avoid that particularly in the lessons with the pupils who will enter into the older classes, a certain amount of effort will be needed.”

Steiner did not spend much time explaining the beginnings of foreign language teaching. Conversation should be practised based on imitation, poems learned, as much as possible memorized. He stressed that foreign language teaching in the lower school was most successful if taught continuously by the same teacher.

1 First published in the Journal of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Nr 46, Christmas, 2012

2 Leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum from 2001 to 2011.

3 Steiner, Rudolf (2004): A Modern Art of Education. Ilkley [5 to 17 August 1923] GA307, Lecture 11, 978-0880105118

4 Steiner, Rudolf (2000): Practical Advice to Teachers. (Translated, revised & edited by Johanna Collis) Stuttgart [21 Aug to 5 Sept 1919] GA294, Lecture 9: On the Teaching of Languages. 978-0880104678

5 Now published as: Steiner, Rudolf (2004): Foundations of Human Experience. (Translated by Robert Lathe, Nancy Whittaker) Stuttgart [20 Aug to 5 Sept 1919] GA293. 978-0880103923

If you have experienced the constant changes of 'foreign language' teachers you will know what he was talking about: much of what pupils learn is lost because it is rare that a proper handover takes place. It's like changing one's piano teacher. "You must start from scratch, dear. You can forget what you have learned so far."

Foreign language teachers who stay with a class over years know what the pupils have learned in terms of vocabulary, poems and verses and what they can build on. If one takes foreign language teaching seriously one must make sure, as far as possible, that the classes keep the same teacher in each foreign language for many years.

Just imagine that you can, for three years, spend two lessons a week with a class in a language, without writing or teaching formal grammar! And you can carefully develop the vocabulary, make sure children repeat whole sentences correctly, teach poems, verses, songs, encourage dialogue between the pupils – a three-year crescendo.

Like a juggler who keeps the juggling balls in the air, the foreign language teacher keeps the pupils' knowledge alive; but the balls must rise higher and higher and they don't only consist of songs and poems.

"It is not until the second stage, from age 9 to 12, that we begin to develop conscious awareness of the language. This we do by introducing grammar."

These simple statements refer to the change that occurs in the children at that time. What has been learned so far is now made conscious through grammar. Thoroughly! Speaking and conversation are now used to draw attention to the grammar.

"Only the rules should be written down in the book that the children use for regular grammar and syntax learning. It will therefore be very economical and good for the children, if you allow them to discover a particular grammatical rule of the language in question based on an example you have invented, and if tomorrow and on the next day you return to that rule and ask children to find their own

examples. The educational value of this method must not be underestimated. (...) There is a big difference between just asking children about a grammar rule and letting them read out examples dictated to them and preparing examples in a way that allows the children to forget them and asking them to find their own. The activity that the children carry out in finding their own examples is immensely educational. (...) But you too must also make up some careful examples and not hesitate to make the children aware of this"

Steiner then continues: ***"... if you manage to awaken enough interest in the children that they ask their parents over supper: can you make up an example for this rule? – then you will have been really successful. You achieve this if you throw yourself heart and soul into your teaching."***

The above passages are taken from Steiner's considerations regarding foreign language teaching in "Practical Advice for Teachers"⁶. The question is: do they reflect Steiner's enthusiasm for this kind of teaching or are they archetypal instructions for Waldorf teaching? We will keep this question at the back of our minds while we look at some more passages:

"It would be particularly good with regard to foreign languages if the lessons could be organized in a way that would allow the different languages the children have to learn for one reason or another to stand side by side. (...) Much would be gained if one and the same thought developed by a teacher with a pupil in one language could be developed by another pupil in another language and a third in a third language, so that one language would abundantly support the other. Of course such things can only be done if one has the necessary means, in this case the teachers. (...) He learns a thing far better if he has in his soul the method of applying it in a number of directions."

All the quotations given above are taken from Lecture 9 of "Practical Advice for Teachers." The lecture was given just weeks before lessons at

⁶ Practical Advice for Teachers, see note 3. (translator's note: the translation of the quotations have here partly been adapted to give consistency of style and terminology)

the Waldorf School began. In Lecture 10 Steiner goes a step further when he says: ***“If you read something aloud to your class while the pupils follow the text in their books you do nothing but waste their time. It is the worst you could possibly do. The right way is for teachers to relate freely whatever they wants to put across to the children or, if they wants to present a passage or poem verbatim, to speak it by heart without using a book ... Or, if this is not expecting too much of children, they can be given for homework the task of reading what has been dealt with during the lesson. In foreign languages, too, homework should be restricted mainly to reading tasks.”***

These considerations are followed by comments regarding essays in the foreign language (and in the mother tongue: *“free composition really has no place in school before the age of fourteen, fifteen”* (!) Steiner concludes this chapter by pointing out that the method he described would allow teachers to ***“always bring together will and intellect in the right way”***.

Is this Steiner speaking as an idealist or as a realist? If we understand him rightly he says that ideas and their implementation always go together. How far are we away from this ideal with our teaching? Or do we teach in this way? There is excellent foreign language teaching going on in upper schools where one can really say that teachers ***“throw themselves heart and soul into the teaching”***.

How is it in the lower and middle school? Are the instructions given above being put into practice there? We will not go into the crisis that occurred when the teachers didn't want to implement Steiner's recommendation for pupils who joined the school later (introducing streaming across classes).

The next question we want to address, using the example of foreign language teaching, is whether these indications by Rudolf Steiner determine 'the art of educating' at the exclusion of other approaches?

This is an inconvenient, if not dangerous question, but – just before the hundredth anniversary of the art of educating and its primary

application in Waldorf schools – this question needs to be asked. There is secondary literature on foreign language teaching that does not consider this question. It offers its own proposals which are not based on Steiner's indications.

We must ask ourselves whether the teaching of foreign languages up to the upper school, that is, in the lower and middle school, really observes Steiner's indications.

For the sake of clarity I will try and extract the quintessence of these indications. According to Rudolf Steiner, the aims of foreign language teaching include:

- Establishing a learning process based on intense interaction between teacher and pupils from class one
- Oral teaching only in the first years
- Vocabulary and conversation are conveyed through dialogue, complemented by verses, poems and songs which are not, in themselves, the aim of the lesson. The aim of the lesson is to learn to speak and understand the language by using it.
- The main purpose of the lessons is the learning of the language, so there needs to be continuous progress from class 1 to enable the children to gain the confidence to continue.
- According to Rudolf Steiner, reading books together in class makes no sense for language acquisition. He suggests a separation of listening and reading: the teacher should narrate the content of the book by heart while the children just listen, and the pupils read the same passage afterwards in the book.
- Foreign language learning is enhanced if the same topics are dealt with in different languages at the same time (which is also possible if the teachers are different as long as they work together).
- The energy of the grammar lessons lies in the simultaneous finding of examples for the application of grammar rules by pupils and teacher. Examples must not be written down.
- Understanding does not grow from literal translation but from rephrasing what has been read.

In summary we could say – to use a term from biochemistry – that foreign teaching is energy-rich in the highest degree!

Main lesson blocks, in contrast, are elegiac-phlegmatic: they stretch over a long period of time, allowing pupils to deeply enter into the matter, expand, brood, write, draw, and even digest what has been taken in. Foreign language teaching, as Rudolf Steiner envisages it, is quite different: it is all concentration, intense dialogue between pupil and teacher and between pupil and pupil. The whole lesson is intense and energy-rich. Or, as Steiner says in this context: **“Up to the age of 9 foreign language learning consists in learning to speak”**.

If we look at the art of educating today we frequently come across unintended inversions which have somehow emerged. People tend to think, for instance, that lessons in the lower classes are all about imagination and that from class five one must come “to the point”. Steiner explains that it is exactly the other way round and that between the ages of 10 and 15, imagination is the highest principle.

The idea that the class teacher has superiority over his foreign language teaching colleagues could be another such unintended inversion. Foreign language teaching might provide the wake-up energy that can warm and permeate the entire school day. Maybe a hygienic-pedagogical mystery lies hidden somewhere here. It might well be that, due to their strong contrast, main lesson and foreign language lessons can mutually enhance each other, because of the stimulating effect that polar opposites have. Shortly after the first Waldorf school had started, Rudolf Steiner noted with regret: **“Language teaching is seen as secondary here; the teachers are already tired.”**

During the Christmas course of 1921/22⁷ he said to an eager audience in Dornach:

“Next to the main lessons, the foreign languages are the most important subjects”.

As soon as the school had started, Rudolf

Steiner realized that it was extremely difficult to apply the Waldorf method to foreign language teaching. The teachers did not achieve what was expected of them and their reaction was to resort to “conventional” foreign language teaching methods for which they were then criticized by Steiner.

The problem largely persists to this day. If we look at foreign language teaching up to and including class eight we find considerable deficits in Waldorf-specific teaching and therefore also in pupil performance.

Steiner said in the faculty meetings: **“What is fertile in our method must first be developed”**. Elsewhere he said: **“If the Waldorf method is really applied the results will also come.”** Or: **“... it is difficult to achieve progress in the foreign languages if one does not master the necessary method.”** [...] **“The general impression is that the children know too little”**.

The Waldorf school movement is approaching its one-hundredth anniversary and it is time to look at the gains and losses. What does the balance look like? Much will depend on a serious retrospective and on whether school will continue to develop the Waldorf method. The first step: **“You can achieve such successes if you throw yourself heart and soul into your teaching”**. ♦

Christof Wiechert, born 1945. Pupil at the Waldorf School in The Hague, Netherlands. After studying education and geography, 30 years of teaching at the Waldorf school in The Hague. During this time he was co-founder of the Dutch State Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar. For many years he was a Council member in the Anthroposophical Society in the Netherlands. Together with Ate Koopmans he developed the “Art of Child Study” course. He has lectured in many countries. Since September 1999 he has worked for the Pedagogical Section, from October 2001 to December 2010 as head of the Educational Department of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach/Switzerland. He now continues to work for the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum and on pedagogical and anthroposophical themes in different countries. He is married with five children.



7 Steiner, Rudolf (2003): Soul Economy and Waldorf Education. (Translated by Roland Everett, revised by SteinerBooks) Dornach, 16 lectures [23 Dec 1921 to 7 Jan 1922] 978-0880105170

A Vocation

Many people are drawn or called to the vocation of 'teacher', perhaps recognising it as a task second in importance only to parenting. Some remember with warmth the joys of school and childhood and want to contribute in this sphere. Others recall bad experiences from their schooling and wish to redress the balance both for themselves and for future generations.

Others have been parents and, having seen and supported their own children through school, feel very close to the task. Although not everyone who starts training joins the ranks of those teaching, all learn much of benefit to themselves along the way. So what does being a teacher involve? In what follows I give my picture of what it means to be a teacher in a Rudolf Steiner Waldorf School.

What is the Role of a Teacher?

Children may approach their very first teacher sparkling with anticipation or wide-eyed with uncertainty, this being their first major step away from home. The teacher receives the children into her care, in a homely and safe environment, full of reverence for the emerging human being. Rudolf Steiner put it in brief:

***Receive the child with reverence,
Educate the child in love,
Send the child forth in freedom.***²

Our task is not, as frequently seems to be the case, to fill their minds with predetermined (programmed) information in order to fit them into the most appropriate economic slot in our society's framework. Our task is to support the individual spirit of each child, to develop its personality, not to imprison its soul in conventionality.

The Social Aims of Waldorf Education

Rudolf Steiner indicated that the education he inaugurated had deeper social aims for the whole of society in our times.³

In home, Nursery and Kindergarten, children before their seventh year are in the care of adults whose endeavour is to make every action worthy of imitation. Striving to create a homely, wholesome environment for the young child, they may be engaged in appropriate activities such as preparing food, baking, watercolour painting, drawing, circle games, cleaning and tidying. The child is not taught, but 'imbibes' what is happening around it. Imaginative faculties are stimulated with stories, especially simple folk and fairy stories, and through the exploration of 'free' creative play. Here 'play' - bringing into 'reality' what lives as a picture in the mind - is work.

The attitude of the kindergartener leads the children towards a reverence for all creation and an experience that the world is good (of god). This childhood experience of reverence and freedom-to-play transforms, in later life, into a reverent respect for the freedom of each individual human spirit, which is the basis for an INDEPENDENT CULTURAL LIFE in adult society.

In the Lower (Primary) School, by approaching thinking not abstractly but through pictorial descriptions, stories and artistic activities, the teacher develops in the children a feeling for beauty and for what is fair or just. The stories can come from all cultures and continents: fairy stories, fables, folk tales, legends, myths, the Bible, etc. as appropriate for the age. For motivation, the joy of one's own and of other's participation and achievement is fostered rather

1 Programme Director Emeritus Diploma in Rudolf Steiner Education Taruna College, Havelock North, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand. International Waldorf Education Consultant visiting Taiwan, China and USA ©2010.

2 Cited in Trostli, Roberto (1998), *Rhythms of Learning*. SteinerBooks. ISBN 0880104511. pg xiv

3 Steiner, Rudolf (1997): *Education as a force for Social Change*. 6 lectures, Dornach, August 9-17, 1919 http://steinerbooks.org/research/archive/education_as_a_force_for_social_change/

than personal ambition (egotism) via competition and examinations. When it is a matter of discipline, developing a pictorial understanding of the consequences of one's actions, remorse for hurt feelings and the desire to do better is used in gentle guidance rather than more forceful intimidation, discrimination, sarcasm or negative comparison. For instance, if there has been an instance of teasing, a story picturing a similar situation can be told where the feelings of the victim are graphically depicted and a healing process is worked through. Not an authoritarian imposed 'quick fix' but a longer term developmental process. Such a process can help the perpetrators to develop better social skills. This maintenance of dignity in personal relations lays a foundation for the feeling of equality between human souls, which is the basis for a HEALTHY RIGHTS LIFE in adult society.

At secondary level in the High School, students continue their studies in all subject areas, balancing the academic with artistic and practical activities. The emphasis now is on seeking the truth, true knowledge - knowledge of one-self and knowledge of the world. From an awareness of the true needs of the world and of one's own capacities arise the call of vocation and a love of the human ideals of freedom, equality and community. A COMPASSIONATE WORLD ECONOMY in adult society will grow when our work (production) focuses in a brotherly-sisterly way on meeting the needs of others rather than satisfying ourselves.

In this way Rudolf Steiner's educational paradigm supports the renewed social ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity [Freedom, Fairness, Fellowship].

The Teacher for Different Ages

As children grow through the various ages and stages of development, quite different characteristics in a good or effective teacher are called for. For young children under the age of seven (before their hard, permanent teeth appear) their inner organs are still developing and maturing. The child is like a sense organ imbibing in its 'environment' all that goes on. For this the

Early Childhood teacher needs to be a model, an example in the way that one thinks, speaks and moves, in moral uprightness: a person that the child may freely and whole-heartedly imitate.

For the primary school age child before puberty, the teacher needs to be a leader, a creative, passionate guide to what is beautiful and fair; a person with authority that the child can trust, follow like a disciple, be proud of, look up to and revere. The basis of teachers' authority is the distillation of their own life experience.

Secondary school aged young people are now developing their ability to stretch their intellect, to weigh arguments and make judgement. For them the teacher needs to be a knowledgeable enthusiast who is excited by all that is to be found in the world and is prepared to explore, investigate and experiment without prejudice, a thinker seeking the truth; willing to walk one's talk: an inspirational and role model for young people.

Further, in a changing balance, the teacher needs, on the one hand for the younger children, to be nurturing, motherly, holding the children close and safe, to affirm and accept them. On the other hand as the children grow older, the teacher needs to be outwardly gazing, fatherly, getting young people to face and enter the world outside the home, challenging them and making demands on them, developing self discipline.



The Inner life of the Teacher

The child's moving outward into the world is mirrored by the teacher's exploration of the inward world, striving for inner discipline and insight, for insight into what are the daily soul, spiritual and physical needs of the children in his/her care. Each night before sleep, teachers openly 'picture' their pupils as they appear, asking what situations and challenges each one needs, and preparing by exploring possible solutions. Then in the morning on awaking, they listen or tune into any answers that arise for them as a confirmation or guide for their actions.

I recall the struggle of a student to grasp a mathematical concept and my consequent struggle to find a way to present this, exploring many possibilities. Then one morning I pictured her discovering the concept for herself with the help of a 'hands-on' process. I was thus guided to an idea which worked to the joy of us both using hand and limb activity to awaken thinking.

This regular activity, where the teacher pictures the children, forges the invisible link which Rudolf Steiner described, between teacher and child and their guardian angels. A supersensible link, which Rudolf Steiner considered, was the basis of a truly human education. These are spiritual aspects, which no computer or audio-visual module (that has no awareness of the actual child) can emulate!

Preparation for Teaching

At first this picture of a teacher may seem unreachable like a distant star. However it is the striving, the journey, not the arrival, which is important.

For those preparing themselves to teach, the words: "Know Thyself; Know the World" are as true as they were for novitiates of Ancient Greek Mystery Centres. What does it mean for the Waldorf teacher? It means a striving for self knowledge achieved through inner exercises and art; and world knowledge achieved through a transformed life experience.

Self knowledge

Rudolf Steiner gave six basic exercises⁴, for training the thinking, feeling and will, which are an important basis for the soul hygiene of the teacher. In short these are clear thinking; initiative of action; equanimity; positive attitude or abstention from criticism; open-mindedness; thankfulness or harmony.

Working in the arts, especially those of modeling and painting, music, speech (poetry and drama) and eurythmy the teacher develops powers of imagination and within these encounters gets to know aspects of herself and her temperament. And, of course, she attains some of the skills necessary to teach these subjects in the classroom.

Rudolf Steiner's insights into the make-up of the human being and the stages of development of the growing child sharpen our observation and awareness. It is hard, at first, to recognise what is happening for the children one is teaching and to adapt and balance accordingly. Skills of observation need to be developed and practised. The developmental stages are a primary guide to what children need in their education – the teacher's observations and reflections give individual pictures of each child's needs.



⁴ Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment. EAN 978-1564597359.

It is useful to learn how other teachers have met these needs, and to learn to apply creative curriculum solutions. Eventually teachers become ‘authors’ of their own solutions. They learn to perceive, understand and meet the child’s questions and needs. Such a teacher becomes a true ‘authority’ for the children, an authority which is granted and recognised by the children themselves. It is not the authority associated with authoritarian repression or imposition imposed by a power without.

A teacher is like the leader of an orchestra. He has to become aware of his own temperament and modify it to suit the music, the day, the subject, and the children. At the end of his training course for the first Waldorf School teachers⁵ Rudolf Steiner gave the following challenging admonitions:

- The teacher must be a person of initiative in general and in detail.
- The teacher must be interested in every aspect of the world and of humanity.
- The teacher must never make a compromise with what is untrue.
- The teacher must never become stale or grow sour.

World Knowledge

The gift the teacher brings is life and world experience. Children only learn from teachers who are themselves still learners. The struggle and striving in the journey to be educated and to solve life’s questions is important. The fruits of this journey that can be shared with the children are of the greatest educational value.

For example in history and the history of the visual arts, literature, music and architecture we follow the evolution of human consciousness which enables us to get a perspective on the

events of our times, of interweaving human destinies and perhaps a glimpse of the forces shaping the future. People sharing history in autobiographies is a sign of our times.

In geography we relate to the living being and elemental forces of the earth, the landmasses, oceans and atmosphere, which shape the outer environment and conditions under which we live our earthly lives.

In science the sense of wonder and the art of observation of the world around us is cultivated and, through interpretation, the ability to make fair judgements and form clear concepts.

In mathematics we learn logical thinking and sense-free thinking – the link between Natural Science and Spiritual Science.

We need to know which subjects, and the way we treat them, will help the child to breathe in, concentrate or focus, and which help to breathe out, relax and enter the world of imagination. We need to recognise when each is necessary in the rhythm of a day that will bring health and balanced growth to children⁶.

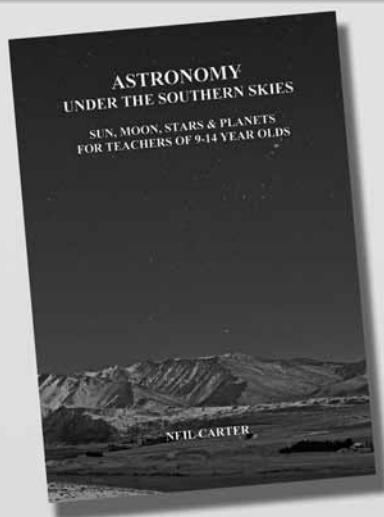
Consider taking up this wonderful vocation! ♦

Robin Bacchus studied Civil Engineering, exploring the weakening effect and liquefaction of soils caused by earthquake shaking of building foundations for his PhD. After 2 years studying at Emerson College with his wife Diana, he turned to teaching high school science in Wynstones, England [4y] and Taikura, NZ [8y] before taking an 8-year class teacher journey, while raising 4 sons. This experience was consolidated taking over as Programme Director of the Diploma in Rudolf Steiner Education at Taruna College for 17 years. Retirement has seen him travelling frequently to Asia and America as a Waldorf Education Consultant giving Teacher Preparation Seminars and observing and mentoring teachers.



5 *Foundations of Human Experience [Study of Man]; Practical Course for Teachers and Discussions with Teachers* given to the first teachers of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart from 20 August to 6 September 1919. 978-0880103923; 978-0880104678; 978-0880104081

6 See Rudolf Steiner (2007) “Balance in Teaching” Steinerbooks. ISBN: 9780880105514



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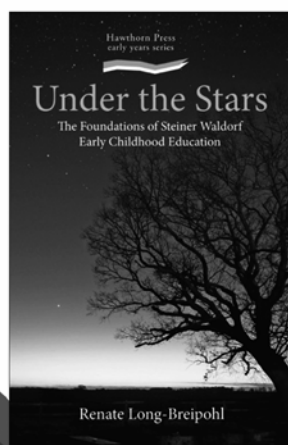
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr Renate Long-Breipohl taught kindergarten for many years. She now advises and lectures around the world in early childhood education and with the Parsifal College Sydney. This book originated as much from her own experience and research with young children as from Rudolf Steiner, though she believes that engaging with his thinking is a crucial foundation for educators.

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Asian Waldorf Teacher Conference, Christof Wiechert, **Developing Social Healing Out of Anthroposophy**, Seoul, Korea. Contact: eunhwalee@lycos.co.kr or berlin@freunde-waldorf.de

May 1-3

The Educator's View of the Human Being, Vienna, Austria

Contact: www.2020teachereducation.org

May 19-25 (beginners); **May 26-June 1** (advanced)

Waldorf Education Seminar, DC School, Khandala, Maharashtra, India.

Contact: Aban Bana abanbana123@rediffmail.com

May 23-24

SEA Numeracy Workshop with Greg Noakes & AIS, Class 1-3 May 23; Class 4-7 May 24
Sydney, NSW, Australia sea@steinereducation.edu.au

June 30 – July 4

Sydney Rudolf Steiner College High School Intensives, Mittagong, NSW, Australia

Contact: distance@sydneyrudolfsteinercollege.com

July 7-12

Early Childhood Australia, Vital Years Conference. Rhythm and the Young Child.

Collaroy Centre, NSW, Australia. Contact: <http://vitalyears2013.blogspot.com.au/>

July 12-15

Class 6-12: **Middle School/High School Conference**. Taikura Rudolf Steiner School, Hastings, New Zealand. Contact: rosiesimpson@taikurasteiner.school.nz

August 22-25

Kolisko Conference – Dr Michaela Glöckler, Taiwan Contact: to be notified next email

September 21-22

SEA Governance, Leadership and Management Conference. Australia

Contact: sea@steinereducation.edu.au

September 27 – October 2

2013 Australian National Teachers Conference. Inner Life of the Teacher and the Religious Education of the Child. Little Yarra Steiner School, Victoria, Australia Contact: conference@steiner.edu.au

September 29-October 3

Biennial NZ Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Conference. Mauri ora - Essential well being: from normal to healthy with Dr Renate Long-Breipohl and Mary Willow. St Peter's College, Cambridge, New Zealand.
Contact: Kathy MacFarlane k8macfarlane@gmail.com

October 3-6

Annual Conference of the Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand. Being in Reality

Michael Park School, Auckland, New Zealand Contact: sue.simpson0@gmail.com

October 4-7

Australian Anthroposophical Society National Conference. Canberra, ACT, Australia

Contact: Marilyn Lewis marilyn.lewis@gmail.com

October 7-11

Art and Movement in Waldorf Schools. Van James and Jan Baker-Finch, Prerana School, Hyderabad, India. Contact: prerana_mbanjara@yahoo.com

many young people in higher concentrations of bacteria and have 20-fold more anti-*Y. enterocolitica* IgG than very low relative risk would be one indicator for young people eating



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