

JOURNAL

FOR

WALDORF / RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION

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Editorial

September, 2013
Christchurch, New Zealand

Dear Readers,

Thank you to the students of Class Ten, Abhaya Waldorf School, Hyderabad, for sharing your Australian adventures with us, describing what must be a once in a lifetime Australian experience – being taught surveying by a master teacher, Peter Glasby. Thank you also to our many other contributors including: Lesley Waite, who is currently completing her Master's in philosophy at the Auckland University of Technology, focusing on the philosophy of mathematics teaching; Jack Petrash, a respected master teacher from the States for describing an aspect of a Class four Zoology 4 Main Lesson and Julianne Smutz, for your sharing about the "classroom without desks" movement. To all other contributors, please also accept our thanks.

The regular feature page that I find most difficult to assemble is page 31: the dates, names and venues of forthcoming Waldorf conferences and workshops. Those of you who have ever had to organise a conference will know how tricky it is to get the timing, venue and speakers coinciding.

Florian Osswald, on his recent visit to New Zealand, requested that many of our Journal's back issue articles be translated into German and Spanish for the Pedagogical Section on the Goetheanum website. The original English back issues are freely available after about half or a full year from www.waldorflibrary.org. The Colour article by Van James (issue 13.2 Nov. 2011, *Problems with Painting*) has just been translated for teachers in Romania.

For our next issue, April 2014, we welcome your articles and reports – e.g. from those who attended the Vienna Congress of Steiner Tertiary Educators (Neil Boland delivered a paper on the perceptions of Steiner education from Maori graduates of his University (AUT). We await also reports from the First International Conference for Language Teachers held at the Goetheanum. Our Christchurch Rudolf Steiner School language teacher attended and her enthusiasm was quite contagious upon her return. More recently, in July, a Middle/High School conference was held in Hastings, NZ, with guest lecturers Florian Osswald (co- leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum) and Peter Glasby, who inspired us all. I noticed many attendees taking notes – please do write to us!

Thank you to our peer review team and to our copy editor, Neil Boland (School of Education, AUT), Dr Robin Bacchus, who manages the distribution and payments, Van James, who assists with the visual, artistic layout of our Journal and Peter Glasby - always providing moral and practical support. Peter, as a friend and colleague, has encouraged me in our combined Journal venture over many years. Peter and I look forward to your contributions for Journal 16: please send to waldorf@clear.net.nz and glasby.peter@gmail.com by the end of February, 2014.

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Six Weeks in Australia: Surveying and Scuba Diving

By Class 10, Abhaya School,
Hyderabad, India, edited by
P. Jayesh Narasimhulu

We, the class ten students of Abhaya Waldorf School in Hyderabad, India, were invited in April/ May 2013 by Samford Valley Steiner School in Australia, for a surveying main lesson. Almost as soon as we reached Samford, we were off in buses to learn surveying in Chinchilla, Queensland. We put up our tents at the local showgrounds and slept out in the open, using the kitchen and a big hall for both dining and our classroom work. Putting up the tent itself was an interesting experience as it was the first time for us, as was staying away from our families in another country for a longer period of time. Miriam, our cook and quarter master, was quick to crack the whip if any of us slacked in our washing up duties after each meal. Anupama, a parent of Abhaya School, helped Miriam in the kitchen and we were truly grateful for the Indian curries that she made us every other day.



Peter Glasby with class 10 students

Every morning we had to make our breakfast, pack our lunches and head to the Chinchilla Fossil Reserve our surveying site. Peter Glasby, Tim Dunn and Mark Piper were the teachers who guided us and taught us the tricks of the surveying trade. We were taught various aspects of surveying during the day, such as triangulation, finding true north, tacheometry and vertical profiling, using theodolites, dumpy levels

and surveyors' bands. Using the theodolite and measuring angles was initially a challenge but eventually we mastered it. After dinner, we learnt how to apply the principles of trigonometry, optics and basic mathematics to generate numbers for use in the final map making. We also started preparing our main lesson book during these post-dinner sessions.



After a week of working at the site, we were dropped off at the beginning of a long bush walk. The two-week camp had a three-day bush walk in between, to accommodate shooting enthusiasts who used the rifle range near our site, during weekends. We were given a map and a compass and asked to figure out a way to walk to the end where the bus would pick us up. Much to our glee, on the first day we surprised our teachers, who were keeping a watchful eye on us from a distance, and found them hiding behind the bushes! After walking for a day, we found a flat piece of land to camp. We pitched our tents there, set up our stoves, made dinner, collected water from a creek and slept in our sleeping bags. It was unique experience for us Indians, though the Aussie students may have felt it was just another 'camp' though all of us seemed to enjoy our time without any of the adults snooping around.

After two days of walking with our huge packs, we reached our destination covering approximately 32 kms. At the destination, we all jumped into a pool of flowing water. A couple of our friends who were not so adept at swimming were struggling a bit, so Tim and John, two adults on opposite sides of the bank, jumped in to help them ashore. We returned to Chinchilla to fine tune our raw data, draw maps, work with GPS coordinates and obtain more tacheometry data, to make the vertical profile/map of the site. After the camp we went back to Brisbane for the weekend and gallivanted around the city, watching movies, shopping and generally having fun.

The following week, some serious work was in store for us back at school. It was time for calculations, calculations and more calculations. We made a digital version of our maps on the computer using Quantum GIS software. During four long breaks at school, we played cricket against the Samford Valley High School team. It was a thrilling nail-biting finish which required the umpire and match referee, Mark Piper, to bring out his calculator to decide who won at the end. After a tense situation with the players milling around him, he declared that the Indians had won by one run. A couple of war cries from the Indians and many hugs later, we all went back to class to work on more mundane issues of maths and maps.



On the last day of the school, we watched a popular Bollywood movie - Three idiots - with a group of Aussie host families, teachers and students of Samford Valley Steiner School. We cooked an Indian dinner which we shared with them and thanked them for their kindness and generosity in putting up with a bunch of garrulous Indian adolescents for a couple of weeks. The next day, after tearful goodbyes to all our friends and hosts, we left for Byron Bay to round off an excellent visit to Australia.



The scuba diving course was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for us. Our instructors, Giac, Liz, John and the others at Sun Dive, Byron Bay, were warm and friendly and we enjoyed learning how to dive from them. We saw placid wobbegong sharks on the ocean floor, manta rays, turtles and many more iridescent multi-coloured fish whose names we did not know during the dives. It was a fantastic experience for all of us who got to dive at Julian Rock, in the Pacific Ocean. At the end of the training, many of us got an open water dive certificate and there were happy smiling faces all round.



We spent our time at Byron Bay learning to dive, watching a few Hollywood movies, shopping, eating out and boogie boarding at the beach. Some of us cycled to the Cape Byron

Steiner School and spent an afternoon there with the high school students and teachers. The week at Byron Bay and the journey back to India taught us how to handle money and take independent decisions which affected each one of us, as well as the whole group. The weekend came much too quickly and, with our final goodbyes to Australia, we returned back home with amazing stories to treasure for the rest of our lives. ♦




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STAR WEAVINGS

*A Newsletter of the Australian Association
for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood
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Rudolf Steiner College Seeks President

Rudolf Steiner College | Fair Oaks, California, USA

Board of Trustees of Rudolf Steiner College is looking for an individual who has successful experience leading a mission driven institution. An understanding of Anthroposophy as articulated by Rudolf Steiner and its many related endeavors such as Waldorf education and biodynamic farming, is desirable. The ideal candidate will be vibrant and development-oriented and have experience in an institution of higher learning.

For more information on the position and how to apply, please see www.steinercollege.edu/EO

Presidential Search
Rudolf Steiner College
near Sacramento, CA
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Robin Bacchus in retirement

Since retiring as Programme Director of the Diploma in Rudolf Steiner Education at Taruna College at the end of 2009, I have made 15 trips to Taiwan, China and USA running or participating in Steiner Teacher Preparation Courses and Workshops for both Lower and High School as well as mentoring teachers.

In China in particular, many people are seeking an alternative to the harsh and rigorous state education system and are flocking to Waldorf education and starting kindergartens [now over 200] and schools [about 10 new schools per year since 2010] often without sufficient preparation. They are a people of strong will! So much of the work in China is of a “catch-up” nature rather setting solid foundations before embarking on a venture. The China Waldorf Forum consists of regional representatives and tries to keep track of all these developments; however it is not in a position to regulate what is happening other than by raising consciousness. The Forum strongly encourages these schools to be in close touch with educational authorities and seek official registration – so far two schools have achieved this, the first one in Chengdu taking seven years to do so.

New and prospective teachers (usually parents) attend three-week preparation courses two or three times per year in the school holidays. These run in the main centres of Chengdu, Guangzhou, Xi'an and Beijing, but also elsewhere and have 80 to 120 participants each. The tutors are mainly experienced Waldorf teachers from Europe, America and Australasia who are willing to help. Courses are usually delivered in English and translated into Chinese sentence by sentence.◆



A Journey with Number

Lesley Waite,
Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

Abstract

Number and Numeracy have come under the spotlight in education in New Zealand over the last decade. This article is a historical introduction to the use and learning of Number, as a quantity and as a quality, and offers a personal perspective of the Western World's cultural impact on the teaching of Numeracy in New Zealand'. I have found in my work with students who have difficulties with Numeracy and Mathematics that the thresholds these students face often mirror thresholds found in the historical use of Number. And just as history shows that there has had to be a 'jump' in conscious understanding across those thresholds, so too has the modern-day pupil needed to make such 'jumps'.

A Beginning

We begin where agricultural farming is believed to have originated along the Tigris, Euphrates and Nile valleys. During these Sumerian-Egyptian times the priest-scribes of the temples possessed the formulae within which they 'put' numbers to get their tallies (Bowen, 1972). These formulae and the ability to use number-tallies were considered to be of divine origin, hence their use only by temple priest-scribes. Storage of harvested crops was managed communally within the temples' precincts, and priests gave the growers tokens according to the amount tallied by the priest-scribes, to be redeemed as required during the 'lean' months. These clay tokens were also a precursor to money, and the number inscribed described the quantity of harvested goods stored in the temples' precincts according to the formulae that the priests used.

Arithmetic, as practised during the twentieth century in New Zealand schools up until the early-

mid 1970s, often encouraged a similar 'use' of formulae (Campbell, 1941; MoE, 1992). Teachers (and the textbooks) would present the formulae and show how to find 'the answer' by inserting figures. If one could memorise the formulae and know which figures to put where, the 'right answer' could be (miraculously!) calculated. If one couldn't, the process to a 'right answer' seemed totally out of reach; individual pupils thus felt themselves to be 'not good' enough.

Also during Assyrian-Egyptian times geometric measurement, according to the 'normal' length of a finger digit, foot, hand, forearm, was used to quantify space (Wilkinson, 1978). Buildings (and pyramids!), roads and canals were all developed according to the area and volume measurement calculations of the priest-scribes. Clay tablets and papyri show 'tables' used for quick reckoning in multiplication and division. The Egyptian-Sumerian number system was base-10, but the Babylonians used a base-60 number system, which was later used almost exclusively by astronomers. We still have minutes/seconds to measure angles and time, and use 'hands' to measure the height of a horse.

The Greek Impulse

A qualitative view of number didn't appear until the Greek times of early philosophers such as Pythagoras (570-495BCE) and Protagoras (c.485-411BCE). The Pythagorean School, centred in what is now southern Italy (c.530-500BCE), promulgated the idea that music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy made up mathematics (from Greek: *máthēma*, the 'study of learning, knowledge'). Pythagoras, through the study of harmonics and music, recognised proportion and the relationship (through sound) between numbers; Arithmetic considered the

¹ Although New Zealand enjoys a place in the Pacific, the teaching/learning tradition has been based on Western cultural experiences, rather than Eastern or Oceanic, and I have therefore focused on the historical conventions from that 'Western World'. The 'discrepancy' between this Western model and many Māori and Pasifika students' learning may indicate a reason for the difficulties experienced by the students. (Cf Bishop (1995), Western mathematics: The secret weapon of cultural imperialism.)

'nature' of the number (Greek: *arithmos*), its qualities of one-ness, two-ness, etc., and its virtues (perfect, amicable); Geometry extended ratio and proportion derived from harmony to include two-dimensional and three-dimensional figures; Astronomy included the application of proportion, harmony, and geometry to celestial relationships.

Protagoras, a Sophist and Rhetorician, is credited with the following:

*"Of all things the measure is man,
of the things that are, [how] that they are,
and of the things that are not,
[how] that they are not".²*

Protagoras brought philosophy to a human level suggesting that knowledge is relative to the person 'doing' the knowing, i.e. thinking. Thought became its own independent faculty. Thus, a consideration of the quality of a number coincided with a more individual and conscious style of thinking; a change in consciousness that prefigured existentialism.

During the time of Plato (428-348BCE) and Aristotle (384-322BCE), grammar, dialectics (logic) and rhetoric were added to the four 'arts' that made up mathematics. A well-educated 'free person' needed to have studied all seven, and Plato's and Aristotle's schools encouraged periods of seven years or more to progress from grammar through dialectics, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy to the ultimate, music (Bowen, 1972). Boethius (480-524/5CE) suggested that Number 'in itself' is arithmetic, 'in relations' is music, as 'quantity at rest' is geometry, as 'quantity in motion' is astronomy (Wagner, 1983).

Liberal Arts and Practical Application

While these Liberal Arts (from the Latin: *artes liberalis* - subjects of study proper to free persons) were studied during Graeco-Roman

times³, the Dark Ages precluded much of their study in the West. The School of Chartres (11th - 12th centuries) re-established them⁴, but it was not until after the Black Plague of the 14th century, when universities began to flourish⁵, that the study of the Seven Liberal Arts including the philosophical study of the quality of number, became commonplace (Bowen, 1972; Querido, 2012; Wagner, 1983). Roger Bacon (1214-1294) and John of Holywood (d.1256) both advised that theoretical and practical mathematics be studied in universities.

Meanwhile, the practical application of geometry and arithmetic (Greek: *logistiké* - processes of calculation; Latin: *computāre* - to deem or think, to count or reckon) continued. Surveying of land areas and for roads, mechanics and engineering for construction, and the use of abacus and tallies in the market place ensured that formulae and number as a quantity were constantly practised. Roman numerals were still the written form of numbers, and the clumsiness of the forms prevented much of the more advanced arithmetic and algebra enjoyed today. Gerbert of Aurillac (c.955-1003CE) is believed to have introduced the decimal system and, as he had studied in Spain, to have also used Arabic numerals in his own calculations.

'New' Numbers

In the early 13th century, Fibonacci, who had travelled through the Middle East and Moslem dominions (from Spain to the borders of China) with his merchant father, translated Arabic texts and introduced the Indo-Arabic numeral forms to a wider audience in his book "Liber Abaci". Initially thought of as black magic because their symbols hid common understanding, the numbers were not widely used until the 15th century (Kaplan, 1999).

2 According to Plato's writings Theaetetus. This quotation is not known in what survives of Protagoras's written works.

3 Note also Euclid (fl. 300BCE) and Archimedes (c.287-c.212BCE) and their contribution to mathematics and especially geometry.

4 See descriptions and photographs of the carved Western Portal of Chartres Cathedral, where the seven liberal arts, personified as feminine beings, are depicted within the right hemispherical tympanum. Geometria and Arithmetica stand at the top, with Astronomica, then Musica and Grammatica on one side, and Rhetorica and Dialectica, with Gemini on the other side of the hemisphere.

5 Universities in Paris and Oxford (Merton College) began in the early thirteenth century.

Basic computation (along with some reading and writing of letters - the three 'Rs') had been offered to those who attended small schools associated with cathedrals and local parishes, from the Middle Ages on. In trade and commerce, the abacus, tally sticks and sand tallies, finger counting and knotted strings persisted as counting forms into the Industrial Age, when charity/industrial, as well as the church/parish schools began to give a wider group of the population a chance for some education - and social control (Bishop, 1995; Bowen, 1972; Campbell, 1941). Up until then, only those who could afford tutors or governesses, and university education, were able to take advantage of the 'purer' aspects of mathematics and number.

Finger/digit counting and tallies are still the most common early forms of counting used by pupils today. This concrete representation seems to help consolidate the learning of quantity and magnitude, and there are those students with dyscalculia who cannot easily advance to the more abstract Indo-Arabic numbers that symbolise quantity, yet manage very well with Roman numerals (Rousselle & Noël, 2006). Tamsin Meaney (2006) also rightly considers acquiring a mathematics register as a 'second language' in the classroom environment.

Mathematics Education in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the 1877 Education Act allowed for free, secular and compulsory primary education for up to six years, for children six years of age and over. Up until then, all schools had been based on the English 19th century system of church/charity schooling. The Act also allowed for some provision of secondary schooling through district high schools. Separate acts of Parliament established high schools, which were not free, and followed 'classical' curricula and the traditions of English public and grammar schools (Fraser, 1986). The 'classical' mathematics curriculum included and prepared the student for the more philosophical approach (aligned to the 'seven liberal arts') still practised in universities. In 1904, George Hogben, as Inspector-General of Education, introduced a syllabus aiming

for character formation with a moralistic base (Fraser, 1986) that extended and formalised the 19th century social control approach used in teaching.

It was not until the late 1960s - early 1970s that a child-centred (rather than moralistic society-centred) approach to learning developed out of the neo-romantic radicalism of the time. 'Manipulables' were introduced into basic mathematics (arithmetic) to help the pupil move from finger counting, and to objectify the learning of computation. During the 1980s an economic paradigm of 'input' and 'output' arising from the Scientific Management Theory began to infiltrate the classroom and, in particular, mathematics (Neyland, 2002).

The 1992 (MoE, Mathematics in the New Zealand Curriculum) and 2007 (MoE, The New Zealand Curriculum) curriculum publications encourage a broad learning for a healthy integration of the individual into society. The Numeracy projects (NDP, from 1999), an important part of the government's Literacy and Numeracy strategy up until 2010, focus mathematics learning on discrete steps of numeracy acquisition (Thomas, Tagg & Ward, 2002; MoE, 2005-2007). Beginning in the first year at school with 5 year-olds, the NDP continues for ten years before the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) programmes follow through years 11, 12 and 13. While there is a deserved focus on the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of the teacher, the concentration on achievement of learning steps in numeracy shrinks the enjoyment of mathematics to basic arithmetic and algebra. The recent law regarding National Standards of numeracy tightens this shrinkage.

Unfortunately, the number of changes made to the method of mathematics education in New Zealand schools since the 1970s could be contributing to the lower achievement levels now seen among the 9-11 year olds in international tests. Schuberth (1999) specifically points to changes in methods of teaching, especially when abrupt, contributing towards dyscalculia in pupils.

Conclusion

It could be argued that a thorough understanding of the basic concepts of numeracy is rudimentary to the broader mathematics curriculum. While students continue to complete their schooling without such a numeracy understanding, there is concern for their future contribution to society. Education is considered an important aspect of the continuing culture of a societal group (Bowen, 1972), but education for the good of society leaves out the importance of education for the individual. A philosophical context, that encompasses existentialism, will do more for the growth and adaptability of a society and culture, than an orientation on discrete steps of acquisition. The quality of a number is just as important as the quantity. Too often, we lose sight of the 'wood for all the trees'. And, just as in nature, students may feel lost within the concentration on the details. Historically, the practice of arithmetical computation within technology (abacus and tally boards) helped anchor such learning, and may now give valued and real context to numeracy acquisition. The concept of Number, as presently taught within New Zealand schools aiming to

meet the National Standards, has shrunk to a social need rather than being a learned element of a healthily integrated person. ♦

Note: An earlier version of this article was published in AUT University's Educational Provocations 2012.

Author Lesley Waite is a full-time M Phil student in the School of Education at AUT University in Auckland. Her interests include phenomenological research, philosophy of education and Steiner Waldorf philosophy and education.



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How You Are Like Eagles

Thought, Imagination, and Fourth-Grade Nature Study

Jack Petrash

(published with kind permission from
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It was a perfect fourth-grade question: “Who is the fastest runner in the class!” The hands shot up. I knew they would. Fourth graders divide their classes like fractions into a wide array of categories, the fastest runner being just one of them.

“Matthew” was the first answer that came from the students, and there were nods of agreement throughout the classroom.

“Who’s second?” I asked.

“Lydia is the second fastest.” Again there were nods of agreement, no dissension.

“Third!” I continued.

“Ben,” they said.

“Okay,” I said. “If I were to ask Matthew to stand by the window of our classroom and, when I said “Go,” to run across the playground, touch the fence, turn around and run back, how long do you think it would take him?”

The students thought for a few seconds and then the hands went up again.

“Sixty-five seconds,” one student suggested. “No, that’s too long,” came an immediate reply. “Forty seconds.”

“Twenty-seven seconds,” an exacting student offered.

I wrote all of the times up on the board and then said something that I knew would make this lesson memorable.

“Matthew, stand up. I want you to climb out of the classroom window and, when I say “Go,” you are to run across the playground, touch the fence and run all the way back. But first, who has a watch with a stopwatch?” (There is always a fourth-grade boy with one of these!)

Matthew climbed out the window while envious classmates looked on. He waited for his signal and raced across the playground and was back in thirty-two seconds. Lydia went next. Her time was thirty-five seconds. Ben was third, and his time was thirty-seven seconds.

Of course, there were more students who wanted a turn, both to run and climb out the window, but we needed to move on. I had a lesson in mind, and all of this was just the beginning.

I started my Waldorf teaching career nearly forty years ago, and I can’t always remember where I get my ideas for lessons. So many conversations have faded in my memory that I have started to think that these ideas are mine. But the lesson I wanted to impart on this day I knew originated with Dorothy Harrer.

Dorothy Harrer was a master class teacher for many years at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City back in the 1950s and 1960s. Her imaginative and effective methods of presenting the Waldorf curriculum have been preserved in a series of books on teaching mathematics, English, and other subjects. The lesson I was planning to use in our fourth-grade study of the eagle came from Harrer’s book *Nature Ways*¹.

Now I was ready to ask my students the next question. “Can anyone think of a way to get to the fence and back more quickly? I scanned the faces of my students and I could see by the look on one student’s face that I had not been precise enough with my question.

“But you cannot use a machine,” I added.

The student in question sighed with exasperation. He had been thinking “motorcycle.” However, his spirits revived instantly.

¹ Harrer, D. (1973). *Nature ways in story and verse*. Chicopee, MA :Inspiration House

“Bicycle,” he said.

He was disappointed when I informed him that the bicycle is also a machine even though it doesn't have a motor. Now the rest of the class was puzzled, as well.

Then a quiet girl who sat in the back of the room calmly raised her hand. When she answered, I realised once again how perceptive and thoughtful these quiet children can be “With my eyes,” she said. “I can look at the fence and look back to the school instantly.”

I smiled and then said to her, “But what if I had asked Matthew to run all the way down the hill to where the first-grade plays at recess? What if I had asked him to go to a place that you couldn't see, how could you get there quickly?”

Another thoughtful child in the back of the room raised her hand.

“In my imagination,” she said. “In my imagination I could go to the first-grade playground and back in an instant.”

Now we were at the place where we could really begin Dorothy Harrer's lesson. I asked the children to close their eyes and to imagine that they were all outside the classroom, as Matthew and Lydia and Ben had been. Then I asked them to imagine themselves in the air above the school, something they had done when they had made their map of the school grounds - also part of the fourth grade curriculum.

“And now,” I said, “imagine yourself flying west above the asphalt. Look down; there are the basketball courts and the trees by the first-grade playground. Let's cross the Potomac River. We are over the state of Virginia. Look up, you see the mountains in the distance. Those are the Blue Ridge Mountains. Let's keep going.”

I continued to describe our imaginative journey across West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois - states which, as I told them, we would study in fifth grade. We crossed the Mississippi and looked down on the Great Plains. Finally, we could see the Rocky Mountains in the distance. From this point on the lesson was pure Dorothy Harrer:



Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia in the distance

Let's let our quick, wakeful thought make its way, now, in this instant, to the high mountain cliff that rises up above the prairie way off to the west, farther than the eye can see, or legs can run. Let's go to the rocky ledge, like a platform, where the storms have made the rock break away. Far below us lies the prairie. Far up above rises the top of the cliff. Here on the ledge we find that a bird has its dwelling, which looks like a giant robin's nest. Sitting in the nest are three strange-looking young birds, already bigger than any robin. We hear the sound of wings beating in the air. As we are only here in thought, we are invisible, and the great bird that soars down to the nest doesn't even see us. And life goes on as if we weren't there at all. The big bird has a body that is almost as long as Neal is tall. Its wings spread out so far on each side that we could lay a yardstick down three times from one wing tip to the other. Now we know that it is an eagle.

In its great, hooked claws the eagle carries a fat, but lifeless jackrabbit. This it lays before the young birds, which crouch and spread their small wings and utter squeals of excitement; but they do not approach the rabbit. The mother bird then stands on the dead rabbit and with her strong hooked beak begins to tear it into pieces, swallowing some herself and passing some with her beak over to the beaks of her children. Each one of the eaglets patiently awaits his turn. It isn't long before the rabbit has disappeared entirely.

Just as the meal is over, the father eagle soars down from the blue sky, carrying in one foot a dead mole, which he soon disposes of with a few sharp strokes of his beak.

Then, as the mother settles down and draws her eaglets under her great wings, the father perches on the rim of the ledge. He scans the sky as if on the lookout for any enemy that might sail down upon them. He peers downward toward the prairie as if to spy out another meal moving among the grasses far below.



Water colour by a Taruna Diploma Student – Tutor: Van James

As I describe the eagle lifting up and rising on the warm air currents, I tell the children how the eagle is a kin of the air, how its feathers have air within them, as do its bones, and how it even has small air-filled sacs within its body. I describe how, as the eagle rises high above the land, it can with its keen vision spot prey hundreds of feet below. “The eagle,” I say to the children, “has remarkable eyesight. I have been told that if an eagle could read, it could read a newspaper from a quarter of a mile away.” When I finish saying this, the eagle draws in its wings and plummets toward the earth like a bolt of lightning, grasps the prey with those sharp talons and carries it away. Finally I say to the class:

Do you know, children, how you are like an eagle? It is in your thinking that you can see so clearly. It is in your thinking and your imagination that you can soar to such height and move from one place to another in an instant. It is in your thought-filled, wide-awake mind that you are like eagles.

That was my moment of insight, and I wondered why it had been so long in coming. In a Waldorf school, we are continually helping the children understand what it means to be

a human being. We teach many subjects and develop a wide array of capacities, but that understanding is the underlying aim. I realize that above our school entrance there is a sign, written in invisible letters, like that in Plato’s Academy: Human being, know thyself. What else should a school based on anthroposophy - the wisdom of the human being - offer its students?

I had started out to teach the children about the eagle. But, in the end, they also learned something about themselves as human beings, that in their capacity for imagination and thought, they have the power and strength of that magnificent ruler of the skies.◆

Jack Petrash is currently the sixth grade teacher at the Washington Waldorf School. He is also the director of the Nova Institute (www.novainstitute.org) an organisation working with parent and teacher education and teacher renewal. Jack is the author of *Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out* and *Covering Home: Lessons on the Art of Fathering from the Game of Baseball*. Over the years Jack’s articles have appeared in *Renewal* and the *Washington Post* and his audio segments have been broadcast on National Public Radio.



Movable Classroom Concept Moves to Waldorf School in St. Louis

Julianne Smutz,
Missouri, USA)

(published by kind permission of the
author- first printed in *Webster Groves
Patch Newsletter*, 16 April, 2013, and later
in *Waldorf Today*).

Shining Rivers Waldorf School in Webster Groves (Missouri) introduces innovative Movable Classroom concept to Grades 1 and 2, balancing children's need for movement with their desire to learn creatively.

At Shining Rivers Waldorf School, the most recent innovation in the classroom is decidedly old-school. It doesn't have any batteries or bells and whistles, and it doesn't run on a computer. It is a bench – a beautiful, handmade, hardwood bench. Actually, seven of them, arranged in a circle.

These benches form the backbone of the Movable Classroom, a new approach to children's learning that Shining Rivers Waldorf School is pioneering in its Early Childhood classrooms in Webster Groves.

Moving from the play-based education of Pre-K and Kindergarten into a grades classroom traditionally means having to sit in chairs at desks for long periods of time, which can be challenging for some children. In order to support young students during this transition, Shining Rivers Waldorf School teachers do not tell fidgeting young schoolchildren to "sit down." Instead, the teachers encourage the children to "get moving."



Each day, the children will re-design their classroom in advance of every lesson, placing the benches into different configurations that promote active learning.

In a Movable Classroom, desks are replaced with wide, hardwood benches. The wooden benches serve as seats, tables, workspaces and play surfaces – they can even become a stage for a puppet show. The teacher can arrange the benches into rows, but they can also be placed end-to-end to become a long lunch table, a circle, an obstacle course or a horseshoe. Flip over the bench and you have a balance beam.



This innovative classroom design offers teachers ultimate flexibility to create an environment that meets the needs of the lesson at hand, supports the child's body in a way that frees the mind to focus, and eases the transition from play to classroom studies.

The Movable Classroom idea first appeared in Scandinavia about twenty years ago but was further developed in Germany. Today, a third of the 222 Waldorf schools in Germany have classrooms of this type. Shining Rivers is the only school in the Midwest to feature this innovation.

The benches and seats in the Movable Classroom are far more than just a nostalgic look backward at a simpler time, far more than simply another way to bring fun and games into the school day. They actually serve as a remedy for what children today seem to be lacking – movement at school, and all of the benefits that flow from that.

The benches and pillows also promote a healthy kinaesthetic awareness in children. The Movable Classroom, with its thousands of possibilities for use, enables full-body learning that naturally encourages the child's sense of balance and movement. The Movable Classroom

also supports proprioceptive awareness (sense of the location and motion of different parts of the body) that is the necessary forerunner to skills like writing and reading. Proprioceptive awareness becomes increasingly important as children's lives have become more sedentary in the Internet and Smartphone era. For children learning in a Movable Classroom, the body works in partnership with the mind.

At Shining Rivers Waldorf School, the Movable Classroom was a parent-driven initiative. In the summer of 2012 parents in the Grade 1 and Grade 2 classrooms came together before the beginning of the school year to build the benches and sew the pillows. The wooden benches are handmade out of maple and birch hardwood, finished with natural lacquer and sealed with a beeswax finish. For this project, the parents were inspired by their children: doing it by hand delivers a sense of pride, accomplishment and community that builds confidence, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Not to mention, creating the Movable Classroom benches really got the parents moving, too.

For more information, please contact Ann Weidemann at aweidemann@shiningrivers.org.♦



Supporting Development and Learning at Little Yarra Steiner School

Julie Sale and **Imelda Verbraak**,
Victoria, Australia

For five years, the teachers and staff at Little Yarra Steiner School in Victoria, Australia (LYSS) have been working towards enhancing children's development and learning by introducing new initiatives aimed at improving and harmonising their growth and development.

As educators, we seek to meet the unique needs of each child. The class teacher does this through adapting the rich curriculum which itself supports each developmental phase as well as developing a rich social and emotional environment in the classroom. However, there are children in each class who have developmental needs beyond what this offers. At Little Yarra, we offer therapeutic eurythmy for such children and have developed a specialised programme within the school called the Tobias Class to meet their needs.

Archetypally in the first years of life, the development of the child is focused on the shaping of the bodily organs. In a way, invisible forces work as an architect whose insight and imagination manifests itself in the building of the material form. Behind this is the imagination of the etheric/life body as builder, the astral body as architect and the ego as owner¹.

The completion of this first phase becomes visible when, often during the seventh year, the change of teeth begins. This is a sign that forces hitherto used to form the physical being are released to take on a different task. The child becomes eager to learn and this learning is nourished by the vivid, engaging images given by the teacher.

Around the age of nine, the child begins to perceive the world differently. She begins to



feel the difference between the outer world and herself. A new way of perceiving and discriminating between different elements in the world can become evident. This process is often accompanied by feelings of loneliness or isolation – for the first time the child confronts its own mortality. It is a time when the inner being of the child comes into its own.

At 12, this inner essence, which first emerged at nine, begins developing strongly and growing to

¹ See Steiner, R. (1973). Theosophy. London, United Kingdom: Rudolf Steiner Press for details

a point where it can flower and become manifest. At this time, the child is especially sensitive and vulnerable and she reaches out into the social element. Social interaction becomes essential in supporting this process.

However, not every child follows this archetypal path. There are those in each class who have further and specific developmental needs. They are the children whose physical, emotional or inner development does not appear to keep pace with their peers. Their learning differs from the classical model and they need individual attention beyond that which is possible in a classroom situation. When this attention is given at just the right point in time, it can influence further development in a positive way.

At LYSS we offer two ways of supporting children: the Tobias Class and therapeutic eurythmy.



The Tobias Class

The Tobias Class contains approximately six children of a range of ages. They join the class for varying reasons ranging from specific learning difficulties to finding that a busy classroom creates “sensory overload”. The focus of the class is to engage the children in various hands-on activities as well as more formal studies. It suits kinesthetic learners especially who are able to participate in small building projects, caring for farm animals, gardening or cooking on a regular basis. All these activities have a therapeutic and

harmonising aspect. They allow the children to experience a learning environment which is not stressful. They begin to develop confidence and more resilience as their progress is supported.

Children attend the Tobias Class for their main lesson and most other lessons until lunch time. They return to their own classes for morning tea and at break times as well as for activities which are socially inclusive like orchestra, singing, eurythmy and crafts. In this way, the children remain strongly part of the social fabric of the class, but also have a smaller and socially inclusive group where they are comfortable. During the week, the children also have a session of therapeutic eurythmy.

This model of learning is established in Germany, England, New Zealand and other countries. The main difference between the schools in these countries and the Tobias Class at Little Yarra is that elsewhere classes are usually separate from the main school streams. The Tobias Class straddles the gap between therapeutic and mainstream education – an educational model which is inclusive and where individual needs can be met.

Therapeutic Eurythmy

In the physical body many processes take place that are, in the first instance, invisible; one becomes aware of them when an illness occurs. The forces that build up and maintain the physical body are used for expression in eurythmy through the movement of the arms and the legs. Eurythmy is an art form that makes visible forces otherwise invisible in the human being. It is somewhat like the process of activation in the larynx before a sound is made. The forces behind the speech become visible in eurythmic movement².

There are three forms of eurythmy: artistic eurythmy, which is done on the stage and serves the audience; pedagogical eurythmy which is done with a group and pertains to the group as a whole. The eurythmist often works with the children who are the same age and are at the same stage of development; lastly, therapeutic or individual eurythmy where the gestures are made

² For an introduction, see Spock, M. (1980). Eurythmy. Hudson, NY: Steiner Books.

closer to the physical body to harmonise where disharmony exists. This can be most effective with children.

As the child moves through the stages of development, there is always a possibility of regression or congestion. At such moments therapeutic eurythmy can help the child move forward in their development more easily.

At Little Yarra, we see it as beneficial to offer therapeutic eurythmy to each child from kindergarten to class 2 in the form of a series of individual sessions. There is always a possibility for particular children to work more intensively or longer when the need arises, throughout their time at school.

These two approaches to supporting the child's development in the primary school are proving successful. It can be seen as smoothing the path of development thereby making the child's educational experience enjoyable and rewarding. ♦



Imelda Verbraak studied eurythmy in Den Haag, and eurythmy therapy in England. In Holland she worked for fourteen years as a eurythmy teacher and later as a eurythmy therapist at a primary school, as well as at an anthroposophic clinic. Imelda has performed on stage in Steiner Schools in her area as well as in Steiner's mystery plays (in Dutch).

For the past six years she has lived and worked in Australia and is associated with the Little Yarra Steiner School where therapeutic eurythmy has become part of the curriculum and is offered to each child. She gives lectures and performances in the area around Melbourne as well as in Chengdu, China.

Julie Sale: lives outside Melbourne in Victoria where she is a support education teacher at the Little Yarra Steiner School in the Yarra Valley. Before working in the area of support education, Julie was a class teacher for many years. She is able to bring this experience to developing the Tobias programme at the School. Julie began teaching at the Little Yarra Steiner School in the school's beginning years and has taught at the school ever since. In the Tobias class she is able to bring her practical experience of being brought up on a property in Queensland to the children.

RoSE – Research on Steiner Education

[http:// www.rosejournal.com](http://www.rosejournal.com)

The journal RoSE: Research on Steiner Education is an on-line, bilingual (English and German) peer-reviewed academic journal with the purpose of serving the theoretical and practical development of Steiner Waldorf education in ways that are relevant to our contemporary globalising world. RoSE wishes to establish links and dialogues between Steiner education and other alternative as well as mainstream educational discourses and practices. The journal publishes articles based on empirical as well as on theoretical or philosophical research. Reviews of books, as well as of Doctoral and Master's Theses are also part of the journal. The journal welcomes both critical and appreciative approaches to Steiner education, as long as they adhere to general academic standards. While references to Rudolf Steiner's works are natural considering the purpose of the journal, we also welcome papers that do not refer to Steiner as long as they are otherwise relevant to the journal's purpose. Articles that engage in rigorous dialogue between Steiner philosophy/pedagogy and other, particularly contemporary, pedagogical, psychological or philosophical approaches are especially welcome. The journal publishes two issues per year. Submitted papers will be anonymously peer-reviewed by two members of the editorial board, or by academic colleagues especially chosen by these members. RoSE is founded by a cooperation (co-hosting) between two institutions: The English section is established at the Rudolf Steiner University College, Oslo and the German part is located at the Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Alfter.

Gudrun Koller's angel tapestries: Work with at-risk children

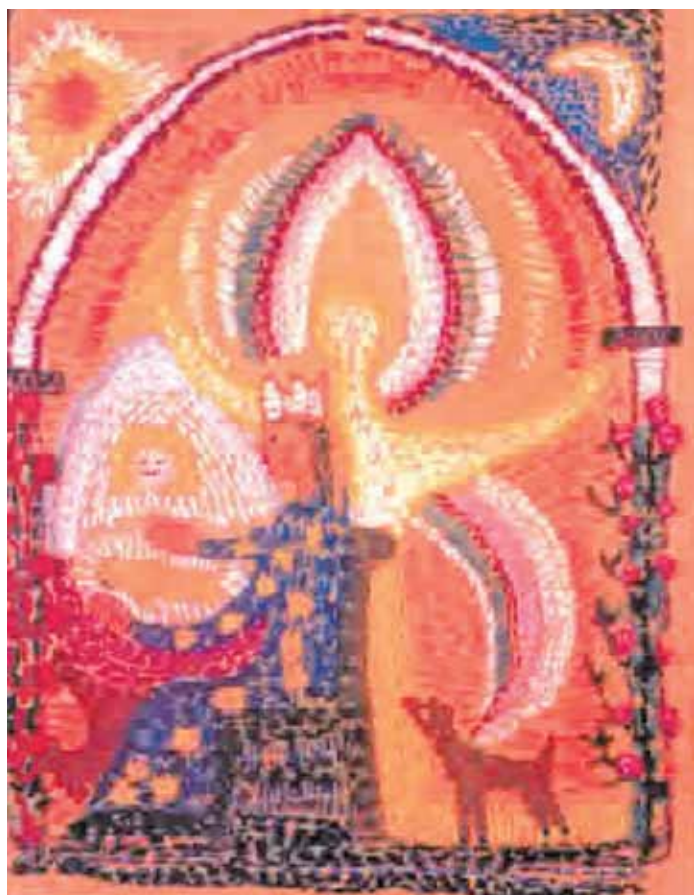
(Reprinted by kind
permission of *Waldorf Today*,
first published: 5 June, 2012)

Gudrun Koller was born 1942 in Leverkusen, Germany. She studied to become a primary helper and curative teacher, completed her Steiner teacher training and studied speech formation. After teaching in a Steiner school, she became a public school teacher in Zurich, Switzerland in District Four, an area historically inhabited by migrant workers. Aussersihl, especially its Langstrasse quarter, remains notorious for its high quota of foreigners, high crime rate, prostitution and drug dealing.

"There is a reason why this particular school district was declared a disaster area. With an almost totally foreign population, the children come from the most difficult social conditions. Teaching begins with us first having breakfast together. I prefer to pay for that out of myself

rather than watch the children 'breakfast' solely on Coke, Red Bull and such things. In most cases, both parents are working. As a rule, the children are not cared for enough, so that in the first grade they often have a soul development deficiency of three to four years."

"The parents are always under pressure to achieve more. By means of signed leasing contracts, they live beyond their means. They do not get enough sleep and they eat irregularly. Under these tensions they lose patience and frequently hit and otherwise abuse their children. We can see the results on their bodies when they dress to swim, for example. But actually, little can be done. Even professional counsellors are helpless. The families merely change to another



district of the city when it gets too risky and start again. I don't consider it my job to judge or even call in the police. I am a confident, the teacher of these children, and have to suffer this powerlessness, too. Only in this way can I give the children a place where they can have security at least during the day along with boundaries and meaning. All the same, the first graders already receive up to twenty-six hours of teaching in a week."

Working with the children in District Four inspired Gudrun Koller to guide them in creating the "Angel Tapestries" in her after school programme.

"I experience children – and especially the children here – as unusually open to the spiritual world, for the life of the spirit. For them it is very clear: there are angels, there are guardian angels and, by means of the embroidery, there



are angels that are months in the making; the children come into inner conversation with these helping guardian angels."

"The children themselves brought me to it ten years ago through the initiative of a young boy: "There was a dead man in front of our door. The police came. Please draw me an angel; I want to embroider it."

"In the school these children have so many lessons of 'instruction' and little time for digestion. In order for the parents to be able to work, blocks were set up with afternoon child care, because the maximum time for lessons for first graders was eighteen hours a week. So instead we work – usually daily – on these embroidered pictures. The picture's design is put on burlap with wax crayons and then stretched onto a wooden frame. The work can then begin with thick embroidery needles and many colours. The children are free to choose the kind of stitches. Since embroidery is not part of the school curriculum at this age level, I have to pay for all the materials myself.

"I came to this project because I was desperately looking for something meaningful for the children to do on these long school days. Otherwise they often get bored, aggressive and difficult. With an artistic activity like embroidery, they become quiet inwardly and a beautiful atmosphere in the classroom is created." ♦



In Celebration of the Life on Earth of David Mitchell

Let the wind blow through you and it will not blow you down — Lakota saying

Having difficulty in finding words to describe David Mitchell, who worked lifelong with language and the crafting of words, is an enormous paradox. The paradox heightens the challenge of managing the feelings that rise up in remembering and picturing a human being with a spirit so powerful, so vast in vision.

David and I first met in 1987. Later, I felt very lucky to stay in his home for the three summers of my teacher training at Antioch University New England. I learned as much from late-night talks with David and his wife, Anniken, as ever I did in class. I learned, too, of a way of relationship, partnership - maybe it is accurate to say "artnership" - of two powerful, gifted people who laughed at human foibles, especially their own, and insisted on clear and high standards from each other and from the world.

For me, David embodied the purpose and the work of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). His work as the initiator and chair of AWSNA Publications inspired lasting gratitude in me as a teacher. Until about 1999, my eighth year of teaching, I read almost every book AWSNA Publications produced. Then it became too much. David laid hands on all he could to get into print for the world - for teachers most especially - to better understand the significance and purpose of Waldorf Education. In all, he oversaw the publication of over 300 books and monographs.

It was a shock to both of us, in a way, when I was appointed to the position I now hold as "leader for outreach and development of AWSNA" with overall responsibility for publications. The upstart Waldorf teacher had, in effect, become David's supervisor. It took David and me two years to work through what our relationship as professionals in this new circumstance would be and become. But together we forged an understanding, first between us and then among our colleagues in

By **Patrice Maynard**,
Association of
Waldorf Schools
in North America
– AWSNA) (from
Renewal vol 21
no 2 2012)



Waldorf schools and beyond, of the magnificent body of work that David made available to the English-speaking world.

David not only published books. He was a one-man research centre for Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education. Questions of all kinds came to him from around the world, and he took the time to answer each no matter who the questioner was. One could find David in the ancient stacks of the Rudolf Steiner Library, searching for hours without a break, pondering conundrums and discussing them energetically, all to find the answer to a question or to follow a line of research he knew would be useful. Clearinghouse, teacher, scientist, translator, recogniser, direction setter - he was all these in a single individual.

Some years ago, I attempted to write a poem to David and about him. The poem failed. It turned out to be a not-very-good, unfinished poem. However, through the effort of writing it, I realised a truth for me that brought to my heart a gesture of appreciation and admiration that this man so deserved.

Through the poem I came to see David as embodying the nature of the winds. Mighty, gentle, forming things in its path, sometimes terrible in its ferociousness and always kind in its ultimate motives - cleansing, pruning, refreshing, carrying seeds, bearing the breath of the Earth, ringing chimes, and lofting the birds of the air, like thoughts, thousands of miles beyond where they could ever go without him.

The experience of trusting and being formed by David, as by the wind - this won't end with David's new journey. Like the wind, it will go on without end.◆



David Mitchell, China, 2009

Parzival – a main lesson block

Tintin Ongpin-Montes,
Class 11 Sponsor, Manila, Philippines

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from *The Seekers* (Sept.,
2011), Manila Waldorf School.

“What ails thee?” – the question Parzival had to ask to heal the Grail King

We have just finished an intense and meaningful main lesson: Parzival. As we let the rich imagery of this medieval story unfold, the students and I gradually discovered many facets of ourselves. Questions, doubts, realisations, discoveries and changes in our thinking surfaced. It was not difficult for the class to see themselves mirrored in the experiences of Parzival through his transformation from being a fool to an outcast to becoming the Grail King. The students also delved deeply into their own thoughts in their philosophical essays: *Why is there pain? How can I tell if I am truly learning? What is compassion? Why do I feel alone, even if I have my family and friends around me? What is destiny—will I ever fulfil mine?*

The class worked hard. They were made aware that their marks and achievements were their responsibility. They picked their own topics to write about—not an easy feat! This challenged the capacity for independent and analytical thinking. We analysed the characters and scenes from the book and discussed symbolism in the story and the metaphors embedded in Parzival’s life. Our days were filled with creative tasks: drawing, painting a personal coat of arms, poetry writing, a tableau and drama exercise, singing the Grail song as well as daily speech exercises. The students worked in groups and individually. It was a joy to hear some of them say that the block was not stressful and yet they were doing so much work!

As the days passed, I started to sense a different mood and attitude among the students; they became more contemplative, tolerant of themselves and of each other, forward looking, hard working and courageous. I believe they saw



in Parzival the picture of who they can become if they strive toward their goals and keep true to themselves. Despite the fears and doubts these adolescents undoubtedly carry, they hold within them the hope of finding the Holy Grail.

Teaching this main lesson has always been a privilege, but now more so as I have witnessed the transformation of these young people for four years already. I am humbled by the process that the students are going through on this journey. It is an honour to be with them.



These lines are from poems by students. They were written one cool morning, after a lecture on Parzival’s trials. Some students went down to the gym where they lay on a mat to write; some stayed in the room, quietly pondering; one sat on the balcony overlooking the campus and the cityscape.

- ... I'm lost within a maze, no exits to be found as time catches up. The glimpses of hope dissolve. It's time to start running. I'll burrow through this somehow ...
- ... My road-trip on this barren wasteland we call life...I still have no clue about where my destination is, wasting gas in this pursuit of purpose. ... Although I have company in this adventure, I will eventually have to drop them off, for I have to journey on, on my own.
- Now I can breathe. Now I know that I am not lost, that pain is indeed inevitable. That I seek peace inside myself, so that I may exude it ...
- But wait! I see a light! A light leading me out of the hole, rebuilding everything I lost, everything I shall gain!
- I realise that I may be capable of being left alone in the dark and finding the light by myself. Right now, I'm slowly letting go of fingertips pulling me back into the familiar ...
- I try to survive, and I will survive. It's only a matter of time till I break free.
- The world around me is new and this journey I am about to embark on will become my legacy...
- I have walked far and still I am walking. My path has taken me through sweet meadows, rolling hills, merry streams and [up] steep mountains hidden in clouds which I thought I'd never climb ...
- As I look up [to] the sky, I see flocks of birds. Where have they been? Where are they going? How does it feel flying up there so high? I want to soar, too, not just sit here and wait for the rain or bask in the sun ...
- There is the sound that whispers to me. The one my heart sings, the word my soul speaks. A voice I must listen to.
- And in my hand, the key. In my hand, the key. ♦



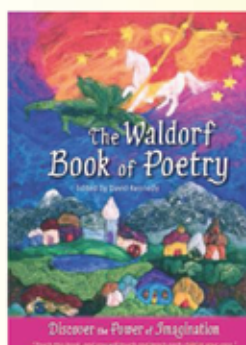
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Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference, Seoul, May 2013

Kathy MacFarlane,
Kindergarten Teacher, Auckland,
New Zealand

*Out of the gravity of our time
There must be born
Courage for deeds,
Give to your teaching
What the Spirit has given you,
And you will liberate mankind
From the nightmare
That weighs upon it
Through materialism.*

Rudolf Steiner

"Anthroposophy gives us knowledge; however the reality is, we are still just ourselves. We can give tear-jerking lectures on the temperaments but do we know how to transform them ourselves?" This is how Christoff Wiechert, the former leader of the Pedagogical Section, started the Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference in South Korea in May 2013.

460 practising teachers from Japan, China, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, India and of course Korea met for a week in Seoul to deepen their understanding of the child and their knowledge of Steiner education. Within this, there were two main topics: the first was the understanding of the development of the child and its needs at any specific moment of development; the second was cultivating a deep and thorough enthusiasm for what we teach and how we teach it.

These two thoughts were brought to life over the seven days of the conference.

Christoff spoke about the specific tasks each epoch has had, and the particular task of our time. This, he explained, is to rediscover consciously the human being as a threefold being, of body, soul and spirit. This was the accepted view in the

west the Catholic church proclaimed the human being to be of body and soul only, twofold. Over the past sixty years or so, you could argue that modern science appears portrays an image of the human being as body only, single-fold picture.

He gave the opinion that 'mainstream' education tends to only educate the physical aspect of the human being, hence concentrating on early academic achievement and sport. Countering this one-sided picture of the human being is the challenge of our time.

One of tasks in a Steiner/Waldorf school is to integrate the soul and spirit with the physical body. Steiner puts forward the concept that we can do this through helping children to sleep and to breathe correctly¹.

As teachers we need to have a threefold approach to our lessons which will help our children breathe in a healthy way.

The physical aspect to our teaching is to do with reading and writing; maths, geometry and everything that gives an understanding of life address the soul realm; what is artistic addresses the spiritual realm.

We need to achieve a balanced approach in order for education to be truly health giving, not only academic, which ties the children too strongly to the physical body and not only involving the artistic which can be too 'excarinating' for the children.

A child should approach each new school day with a gesture of wonder and expectation; they should end the day with a wonderful feeling of satisfaction. An aim of the indications which form the curriculum in Steiner schools is to help the soul and spirit connect to the physical body.

¹ Steiner, R. (1996). *The foundations of human experience, lecture 1* (R. F. Lathe, Trans.). Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press. Lecture 1.

The stresses of contemporary life can make this especially challenging.

In the early years, 0-7, we are helping the child connect to their physical body. Each child needs to feel at home in the physical body. It does this through a healthy development of their four physical senses, touch, life sense, movement and balance². The children are adapting to the rhythms of life and social rhythms. This can give the child a resilience and security for life. It needs to be done artistically; a rhythm is very different from an inflexible beat.

In the lower or primary school, this healthy school rhythm continues. The rhythmical part of the day does not start and end with the morning circle but needs to be throughout the whole day. In the lower classes we are dealing more with the eye and the ear, sight and hearing. Both of these senses work differently within the human being. Too much 'eye' activity will exhaust the child; too much 'ear' activity will make the children excited. There needs to be a balance between these activities.

In the high school, the child begins to connect more strongly to what Steiner calls the astral body³, the emotional life. We do not want this to happen too early any more than we would like the child to be born prematurely.

Christoff ended the week with saying that our task as teachers was to help children be able to be open to receive the impulse to achieve the tasks they need to do on earth; this impulse comes from the spiritual world.

This requires us as teachers to have a well-developed knowledge of the growing child which we should enliven through our own experience and knowledge of the world. This can lead us to have the intuition and sensitivity to do the right thing at the right time to support the children we encounter.

Over the last ten years there has been an enormous upsurge in public interest in Steiner/

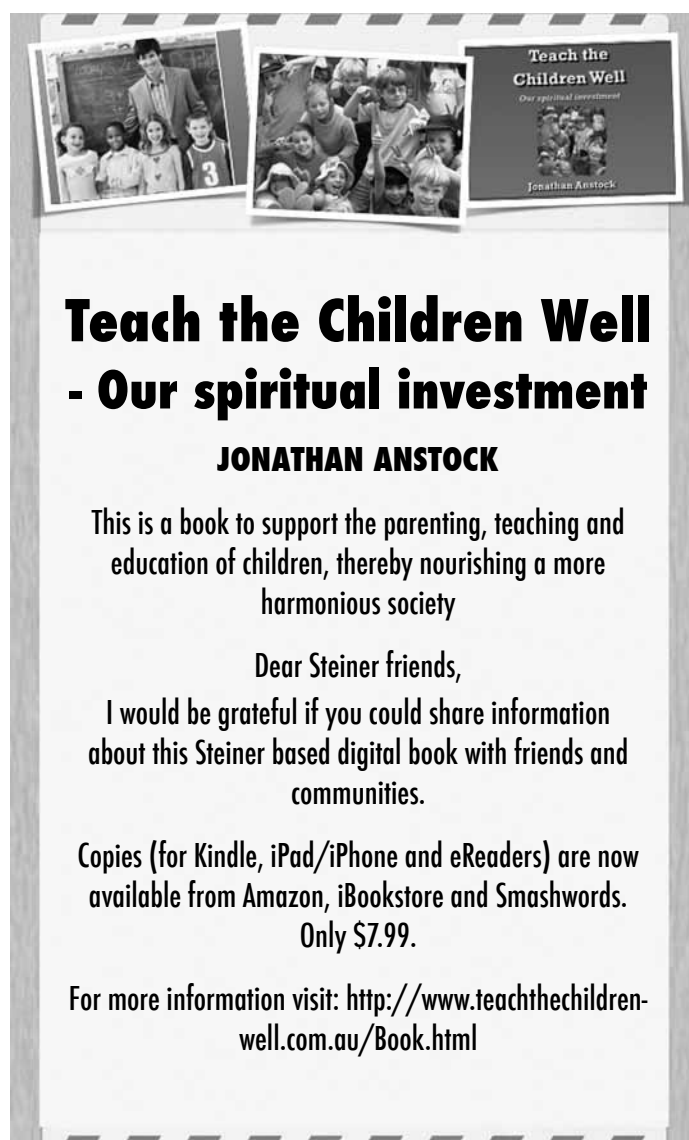
2 For details of Steiner's concept of the senses, see Soesman, A. (2001). *The twelve senses*. Stroud, United Kingdom: Hawthorn.

3 See Steiner, R. (1973). *Theosophy*. London, United Kingdom: Rudolf Steiner Press

Waldorf education in South-East Asian countries and strong growth of anthroposophically-inspired initiatives.

Steiner/Waldorf education can respond to this need. Arising out of the spiritual research and insights of Rudolf Steiner, it offers a holistic education, independent of nation or belief whose aim is to foster free minds, true hearts and brave spirits; to cultivate healthy human beings who will be more than capable of meeting the social challenges of the future with flexibility, imagination and responsibility.

The Asian Waldorf Teachers' conferences support the teachers in these countries in their commitment to develop not only a working practise as teachers but also to deepen their understanding of Steiner/Waldorf education and Anthroposophy. ♦



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BOOK REVIEW

Under the southern skies:

A review of Neil Carter's book on astronomy for teachers of 9- 14 year olds

Neil Carter, author of the book, *Astronomy under the southern skies*, gives us a perspective from New Zealand and Australia, using references to southern constellations, accurately explaining the path of the sun, moon and stars in our southern skies (including coordinates for several towns in both Australia and New Zealand).

This book offers teaching methods based on observations, giving many ideas for practical sessions with a class. The book is very accurate in the sense that every fact can be checked by the students themselves without needing a telescope. This provides a good sense of what science is which is of great value for any child.

The book helps a lot when it comes to explaining how the rotation of the earth affects the position of the sun, planets and stars in the sky. It is particularly useful when explaining the common questions like: Why do constellations sometimes appear upside down? Why is Venus sometimes visible in the morning and at other times visible in the evening? Why is it never visible in the middle of the night? Why do the outer planets sometimes appear to go backwards? Why is the sun higher in the sky in summer? Why doesn't it always set on the same spot on the horizon?

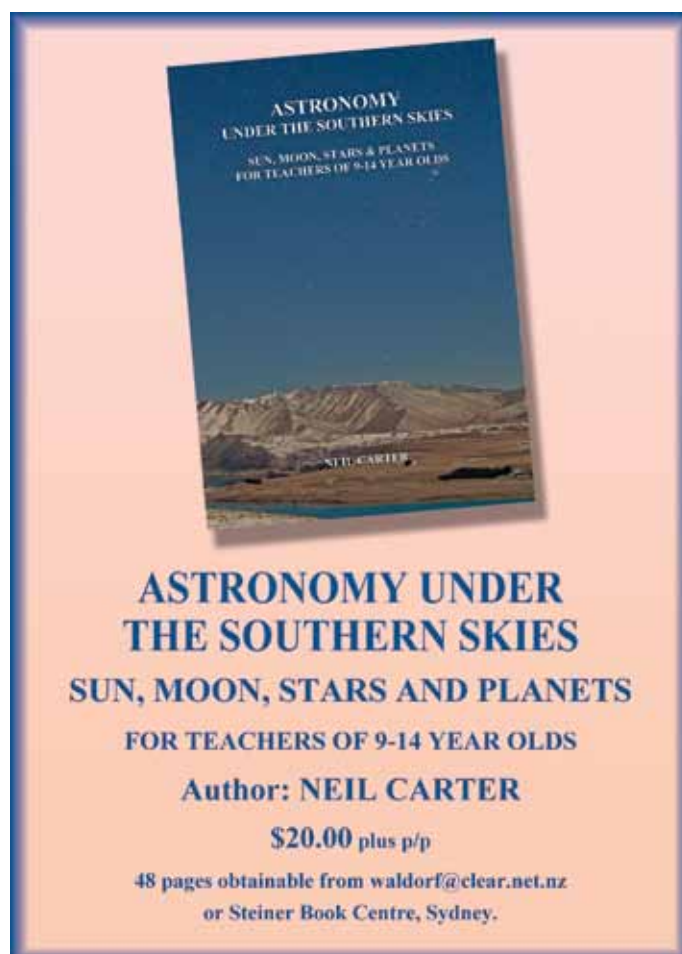
The large amount of practical activity is great for the age group targeted by this book: nine to fourteen years old. I especially enjoyed the construction of a hand-held model of the sun's daily path, which students can bring home and use to explain (and reinforce) what they have learned at school. Observational astronomy gives us the first tools to truly understand our place in the solar system. Too many of us jump straight into the human exploration of space, galactic astronomy or even cosmology without studying this link between us and space first.

Reviewed by **Florian Neumaison**,
Astrophysicist, High School Teacher,
Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand

Neil Carter's book covers all the basics which are often quite tricky to teach. The knowledge gained these lessons can then be used to pursue further space exploration.

I have personally used Neil's book when teaching my year 9 class at Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and I would recommend it to everyone, not just teachers.

Carter, N. (revised edition 2013). *Astronomy under the southern skies: Sun, Moon, stars and planets for teachers of 9-14 year olds*. Christchurch, New Zealand.♦



The Power of the Word:

A retrospective book review of *The Silent Spring*

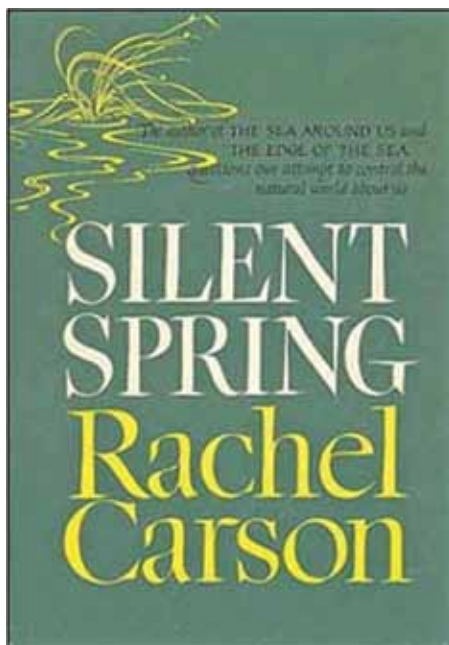
Ann Gastinger,

Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand

The word is the most potent force to bring about change. Not only “holy” books but scientific books have also wrought massive change in history (remember Darwin’s book *On the Origin of Species* in 1859). Like a seed, the word has force. It works its way through all the obstacles. Fifty years ago, American marine biologist Rachel Carson published a compelling body of scientific research in her book *The Silent Spring*¹. For the first time, information and evidence that had been remained in the domain of scientists was brought to public attention. The devastating consequences of certain synthetic pesticides on the environment and on human health - such as those designed to target and kill specific insects - were laid bare for all to see. The public learned that, not only were these chemicals harming creatures other than those being targeted, but they were being transmitted up the food chain and could potentially alter chromosomes and hence lead to irreversible hereditary changes in future generations.

Carson’s work demonstrated that synthetic pesticides do not necessarily behave selectively *in vivo* (in life) but could indiscriminately maim, disease, and kill organisms other than their targets in a manner not foreseen when tested *in vitro* (under laboratory conditions). She showed how, under real life conditions, these insecticides could increase in toxicity when inadvertently in contact with second agents such as another chemical or plasticiser, and that even things as innocuous as sunlight or water could change the nature of the chemicals’ initial toxicity.

The indiscriminate distribution methods, such as aerial spraying, used to deliver these



pesticides also covered fields, rivers and private land outside of targeted zones, blanketing vegetation and ground leaf litter which were later digested by worms, a favourite food source of birds. Pesticides like DDT were transmitted up each layer of the food chain by predators whose misfortune it was to rely on the affected prey for food. Carson showed how these pesticides bioaccumulate in increasingly harmful concentrations at each level, the chemical trail cumulating in the top predator – humankind.

The book’s release created a furore, with chemical companies threatening lawsuits against Carson’s allegations that their agricultural chemical arsenal was endangering human health and harming the environment.

But the research spoke for itself - reigniting what was a fledgling organic movement and galvanising communities to take heed of environmental issues. Rachel Carson died two years later of breast cancer but her work’s legacy was the phrasing out and eventual ban throughout the western world of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) in the early 1970s. The World Health Organisation now registers DDT as a Class 2b possible carcinogen for humans. The United States’ Environment Protection Agency classifies DDT as a Class 2a probable carcinogen based on findings that it behaves like a hormone and can cause cancer in humans.

Carson’s intent was never to malign chemicals, rather to emphasise the need for a cautionary approach to their use, urging increased accountability from industries that produce them. ♦

¹ Carson, R. (2002). *The silent spring*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Under the Stars:

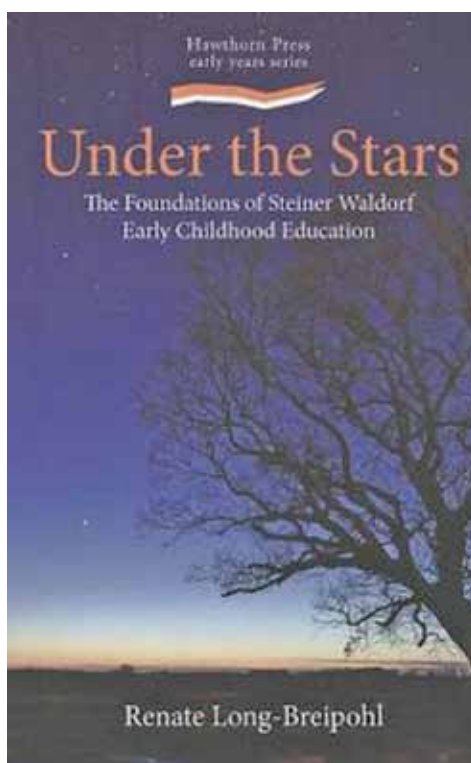
The foundations of Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education

Long-Breipohl, R. (2012). *Under the stars: Foundations of Steiner early childhood education: Collected essays*. Stroud, United Kingdom: Hawthorn Press

This is a thoughtful book of essays that provides a stimulating journey through the phenomena of early childhood development. The author is not only an experienced early childhood practitioner and international adult educator, she is also an admirable researcher and thinker. The introduction includes an interesting historical overview of how Steiner Waldorf early childhood work developed purely through oral and experiential tutoring for 25 years, before any publications on the subject or formal training courses appeared.

The first three chapters address the life forces, thinking and the will. Attachment to the prime carer is now acknowledged as deeply formative for the child under three years old. Renate suggests in the fourth chapter that it is the early awakening of the 'I' that is the danger when the young child and mother figure are separated too soon. The following chapter also tackles a modern idea, that of the 'Indigo' or 'Star' child. Has there been an evolutionary shift that has brought a new kind of child into the world now, or is it just environmental pressures that have caused children to bring so many new challenges to those who try to care for and educate them?

In the essay on movement, Renate explores the interwoven nature of the development of physical and soul movement alongside the much bigger picture of the spiritual evolution of



Edited review by **Jill Taplin**, (Early childhood teacher, UK, jill@neswec.org.uk)

humanity. Renate outlines her 'six dimensions of play' while offering a critical appraisal of other theorists. The short essay on child observation focusses our attention on learning to read the messages the child gives us or 'letting the child speak'. In the final essay, Renate shares with her readers a personal exploration of eight of the twelve virtues indicated by Rudolf Steiner and their connection with the circle of the zodiac.

This book provides a source of much future study for those engaged in the practice of working with young children in Steiner Waldorf settings. It is fully referenced and benefits

from research, including access to German texts which are not available in English.

Renate Long-Breipohl

Renate was a kindergarten teacher at the Samford Valley Steiner School in Brisbane between 1989 and 1997, then moved to Sydney to take the role of coordinator and senior tutor in the early childhood training courses at Sydney Rudolf Steiner College (formerly Parsifal College). Renate has lectured widely in Australia and the South East Asia Pacific region and she was one of the guest lecturers presenting at the international early childhood conference in Dornach last year. In addition to Under the Stars, she has recently published Supporting Self-Directed Play. She will be a guest speaker at the biennial conference for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Education in New Zealand in October, 2013. ♦

Drawing with Hand, Head, and Heart:

A Natural Approach to Learning the Art of Drawing

By Van James, Steiner Books, 2013, USD 30- (soon to be available in NZ and Australia) 312 pages, 576 illustrations in colour and black & white.

... Teachers should love art so much that they do not want this experience to be lost to children,

... 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.

(Rudolf Steiner, 1923)

The above words are among the scores of inspiring quotes by Steiner and others to be found in this remarkable new book by Van James, *Drawing with Hand, Head, and Heart*.

Van James has actually created two books: the first is a drawing manual specifically for teachers, and the second is an instruction manual for anyone learning to draw. The sections complement one another. Van James' creative cross-referencing will invariably draw you to want to read the other section, as well.

Part One is at once an exemplary collection of Waldorf student art from the Nursery / Kindergarten through to Grade Twelve, with a clear description of the Waldorf curriculum in those grades, a concise overview of the child's psychological and physiological development from birth to age eighteen *and* a guide to teaching children to draw.

James takes up work with the young child in a chapter entitled "Growing the Picture," which I would urge any and all class teachers to read. James goes to the heart of many issues: Straight and Curved Lines, Blackboard Drawing, Visual Intelligence, How often should new blackboard drawings appear? Block or stick crayons for younger children? What about black crayons? When are pencils appropriate? What about "slant (stroke) drawing"? Should children draw with the right hand only?

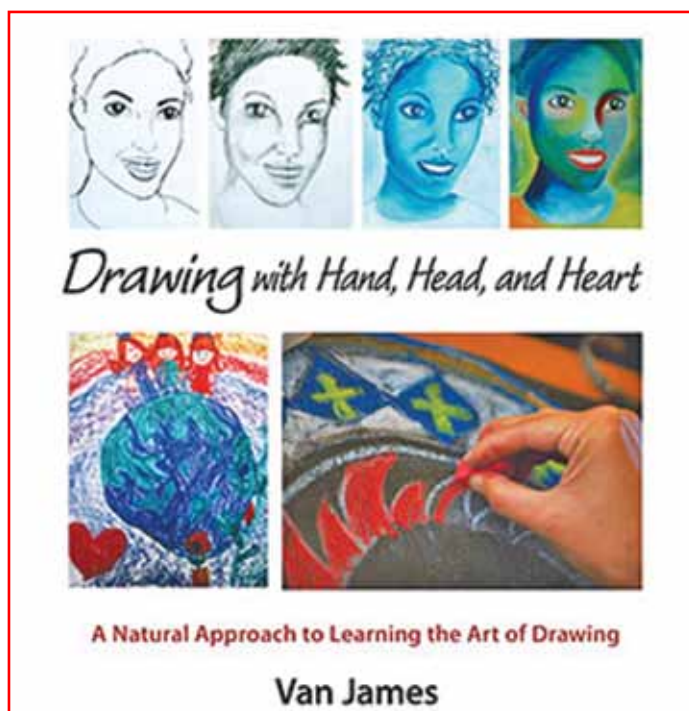
Reviewed by **Eugene Schwartz**,
www.millennialchild.com

(Shortened by permission: NC- editor)

James cites the many points of view that have attached themselves to these issues, acknowledges their virtues, and usually concludes with a surprising quote from Rudolf Steiner.... Reproductions of blackboard drawings by Van James himself lay out the simple and systematic "growing" of the picture that characterizes his approach....

In the chapter , A New Perspective, James surveys art in the Waldorf High School. Now we see how the deceptively simple exercises of "growing the picture" and the austere structures of Form Drawing have laid a foundation for self-expression and creativity on the one hand and dispassionate observation and objectivity on the other. ...Throughout this section we can sense that we are in the presence of a master teacher who leads his high school students through the example of his own openness to the world and his artistic sensibility.....

I recommend it highly. ♦





Diploma in Rudolf Steiner Education 2014



This is a one-year full time course taught in Hawkes Bay New Zealand. The programme follows the academic year of the Southern Hemisphere and runs from February to December 2014.

The Diploma course aims to do far more than impart knowledge and understanding of

Rudolf Steiner education. As a one-year residential course, it offers the possibility for each student to achieve a measure of self-transformation. We are all different and true learning comes about when we deepen our understanding of ourselves and find the forces in ourselves to change and grow. This is not always a comfortable experience but always worthwhile and particularly possible in a learning community where there is a genuine impulse towards tolerance and a recognition that sustainable learning is a developmental process taking place over time.



Over the months, students are led to go deeper into the ideas and practices that inform teaching in a Rudolf Steiner school. They become familiar with the core ideas of anthroposophy and have the opportunity to engage with them critically, testing them out to see if they have relevance for classroom practice as well as in their own, personal thinking and feeling. Here, the value of being part of a residential learning community becomes evident.

Visiting tutors arrive: Van James, from the Honolulu Waldorf School, runs an intensive two week course on the Visual Arts; Mary Willow, an Early Years specialist, offers a similar course on working with the will of young children in age of uncertain and confused parenting. There are weekly sessions on Movement and Pedagogy, Evolution of Consciousness, Curriculum Studies and Preparation for Teaching Practice. Students have weekly sessions on developing musical skills. In the afternoons there are regular sessions of Eurythmy, Handwork, Woodwork and Weaving as well as a continuing practice with the Visual Arts.

For further information or to enrol, please contact Taruna, phone: 06 8777 174, email: info@taruna.ac.nz or check out our website: www.taruna.ac.nz



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CONFERENCES/SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS 2013 & 2014

2013

September 29 – October 3rd

Biennial NZ Rudolf Steiner early childhood conference. *Mauri ora - Essential well being: from Normal to Healthy*. Dr Renate Long-Briepohl and Mary Willow, St Peter's College, Cambridge, Waikato, New Zealand. Contact: Kathy MacFarlane k8ymacfarlane@gmail.com

October 3-6th

Annual Conference of the Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand. *Being in Reality*
Michael Park School, Auckland, New Zealand. Contact: sue.simpson0@gmail.com

October 4-7th

The Anthroposophical Society of Australia National conference. *Spiritual Ideas for Cultural Democracy*
Orana Steiner School, Canberra, Australia. Contact: www.asc-au.com

October 7-11th

***The role of Art in Education*.** Van James, Prerana Waldorf School, Hyderabad, India
Contact: prerana_mbanjara@yahoo.com; waldorfprerana@gmail.com

October 8th – 12th

***The Inspired Teacher – Mining Inner Resources*.** 5 day Module
Rudolf Steiner College, Perth, Australia. Contact: Jennifer.kornberger@gmail.com

October 9-11th

Mathematical Study Days 2013 - Geometry in Nature and Engineering
Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland. Contact: www.goetheanum.org

October 26th-27th

Eurythmy Workshop. With Paries Orange & Lakshmi Prasanna
Shearwater, The Mullumbimby Steiner School, Australia. Contact: cristina@rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au

2014

January 2-18th

Main lesson in Oceanography & Meteorology with Marine Art. Peter Glasby and Van James
Havelock Islands, Andaman's, India. Contact: jayesh_1958@yahoo.com, Mobile: +91 98850 23377

January 13th- 17th

Glenaeon Class Teacher Curriculum Intensives, Classes 1-7, in different groups
Introductory session: Sunday 12th January 4-7pm for new teachers.
Contact: curriculum.intensives@glenaeon.nsw.edu.au

February 15th – 17th

Annual Waldorf Education Conference.

Developing Living Thinking: Science and Art in Waldorf Education

Michael D'Aleo, Honolulu Waldorf School, Hawai'i. Contact: www.honoluluwaldorf.org



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