Rethinking Waldorf Curricula
An Ongoing Process

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Introduction

Can one re-imagine and alter a work of art? Can we fill in the gaps in Shakespeare's plots, tidy up Rembrandt's Night Watch and make the Disciples at Leonardo's Last Supper more culturally representative? Can a work of art be upgraded, updated, even de-colonised? If, as some believe, the Waldorf curriculum is the unique work of genius, perhaps even a gift from the spiritual world, then it could not be modified in any substantial way without a loss of its numinous power. Our view is that what is referred to as 'the Waldorf curriculum' is an ongoing, iterative, rhizomic and emergent process (see Boland and Rawson, 2022). We also hold that it does not merit a definite article: *the* Waldorf curriculum does not exist, only Waldorf curricula, in the plural, all of which are historically and culturally situated. If curricula are works of art, they are performative and collective, which is not to say that they are not artistic, nor that they do not contain a universal core.

We argue that the first Waldorf curriculum published in 1925 and translated into many languages over many decades was *not* the ideal curriculum Steiner spoke of; instead, it represented what was actually taught in the Stuttgart Waldorf School from 1919 to 1925 and therefore culturally situated and contingent to the given circumstances. Likewise, the recent translation (*Tapestry of a Waldorf Curriculum* published in 2020) of the German Richter curriculum (2016 version) is also not *the* Waldorf Curriculum, but *a* Waldorf curriculum. Not only is it already out of date (which is why a curriculum commission is already revising the 2019 version), but out of culture. In the introduction to the most widely internationally-used, translated version of the curriculum, the Rawson & Richter (2000, 2014), the editors clearly state that the document is specific to the UK, that it would need revising after five years, and that it should be culturally adapted at any other country in which it is used. To our knowledge, this has been only partly done. What actually circulates in many countries are hybrids.

The Waldorf movement to date has not really worked out internationally what the nature and status of its curriculum is, pulled between fidelity to its origins myth and the need to offer an education that is relevant to the culture of the students in their specific social environment. Since the 1990s, there has been increasing need for national Waldorf federations to defend the education from statutory standardized state curricula with prescribed learning outcomes and a requirement to show that their curriculum is meaningful, valid, and equivalent. Some countries, such as the UK, Norway, and Australia have successfully gained state recognition for their versions of Waldorf curriculum, others continuously need to show the authorities what the curriculum used in their schools is. But here the pressure has mainly come from without.

Why Change?

There are, we believe, many pressing reasons why we need to rethink curriculum within the Waldorf movement. The core aims of the education are to enable healthy learning and equip school leavers with the abilities they need to contribute to the society they are part of, and, today we might add, to be world citizens capable of autonomous and ethical judgements. Since the inception of Waldorf education, societal change has been more radical than at any other time in human history – globalization, digitalization, new antagonistic geopolitical power structures, climate change, war in Europe... We are faced with rapid, major socio-economic transformations in a multi-polar world, few of which make the world a better or safer place to live in.

What this means for children and young people today is that both the present and the future are highly uncertain: terror, endless crises and risk become the norm; they fear the loss of financial security, many feel marginalized (both minorities and majorities), and they are presented with ever fewer figures of meaningful authority. Neither the political nor justice systems seem to function in the way they were intended to. The media seem to be a branch of the entertainment industry, and social media are a jungle. Even science can be manipulated to serve whatever interests dominate. If we were teenagers today, what would we rebel against and what would we conform to? It is not even clear who the good guys are.

As Bob Dylan sings, "If it keeps on raining, the levee's gonna break, Some people still sleepin', some people are wide awake" (2006, "The Levee's Gonna Break," *Modern Times*). Being awake in the right place at the right time is clearly an ability we urgently need today, which perhaps explains why 'woke culture' is so

demonized by the reactionaries who want their dream of entitlement and privilege to go on forever. The world we call society is crumbling not only due to forces from without – what we tend to identify as *the others* – but also from forces within – the oppressed *others* within one's own society. One aspect of collapsing structures, however, is that it opens up new opportunities for spiritual and social awakening and growth.

One (minor) manifestation of this process of awakening are voices within the Waldorf movement asking questions about the cultural assumptions underlying current Waldorf curricula. There is also a growing awareness that the originally Eurocentric (or, within Europe, German-centric) curriculum needs to be significantly adapted to take into account geographical locations and cultural histories outside Middle Europe. This has led to calls to recontextualize and even decolonize the curriculum by incorporating non-European cultures and histories, indigenous voices, the history of the oppressed, and the full scope of postcolonialism. In addition, we are called upon to take account of new gender consciousness and to reflect contemporary values regarding family life, work, and equal opportunities. Some (perhaps still few) Waldorf teachers feel that the versions of Waldorf curriculum in use have not adequately addressed these issues. At the same time, they fear de-stabilizing the whole education by questioning the integrity of the curriculum, and the risk appears greater the more one holds on to the notion of an ideal curriculum at the heart of the origins myth – not least at a time when everything else we had faith in is losing its authority.

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There is another issue, which in itself is controversial within the Waldorf movement. This is the extent to which Waldorf wishes to or needs to open up to the wider educational discourse. Some voices say Waldorf already has the best possible system, so let the others catch up with us. Others, and we would align with these, say Waldorf can learn much from other educational approaches, just as we have ideas and practices that could contribute to the overall educational discourse. Not everyone wants to share what we have, believing that Waldorf is a hermetically sealed package of (best) practices that cannot be modified and can only be applied on an all-or-nothing basis. Firstly, this is an elitist view that paints us into a corner; secondly, this view is entirely illusory. Even if Waldorf education continuously renewed itself from within its own resources, which it doesn't very effectively, it would still be impossible to ignore what is happening in the world. Not even the Amish are that isolated. Waldorf communities are open, people join them all the time with other experiences, and these flow into the ongoing development, whether this is intended or not. We can imagine that they shed these experiences and adopt the Waldorf worldview, but they don't and shouldn't. Not all of Steiner's insights came from within himself. He read books, spoke to people, adopted ideas (and sometimes dropped them again), took on board new information and continually adjusted his perspectives and approach. Contemporary Waldorf should too.

We believe that we have a duty to contribute to the overall educational discourse *and* it is also a good way of protecting what we have, because then people take us seriously. We think it is good for Waldorf quality if our qualifications are accredited and recognized. We believe we can make a difference. In Europe, we have seen that ideas from Waldorf education can make significant contributions to public education, notably in the fields of emergency education, media pedagogy (we are major players in this field with a grant of half a million Euros from the European Commission to disseminate our ideas outside of Waldorf and our work on digital technologies in school was quoted 16 times in a recent United Nations Report), in the field of early years, and in blended learning. Martyn represents Waldorf Education in the European Commission's Working Group on the future of education and works with UNICEF on education for wellbeing. He is there because these organizations take Waldorf seriously (now that we speak a language they understand).

Finally, it is obvious that we cannot keep adding new content (e.g. new science, history, literature, technologies, materials, sources of energy) to the already full curriculum. This prompts the question, what to leave out? Which tried and tested classic Main Lessons should we scrap? Therefore, we need an approach to curriculum development that makes change possible but doesn't lose the essence of Waldorf education.

Searching for a Model for International Curriculum Development

Over the years, a number of attempts have been made to define key features of Waldorf schools, of Waldorf education and teacher education, and to establish

general criteria for the international development of curriculum, but we believe these have been hampered by some conceptual problems. One of these problems is the historical development of the Waldorf movement and the role that the curriculum has played in it, including the question of what is canonical and what needs to be adapted and changed. Another issue is the question of translation in the broadest sense (from one language to another, from one culture to another, from one time and place to another, especially when common words like curriculum, education, teaching, or pedagogy actually have different meanings in different cultures, see Boland & Rawson, 2022).

Caroline von Heydebrand, who published the first curriculum in 1925, was very clear in her brief introduction, that teaching is based on the following processes:

- A pedagogical anthropology based on spiritual science, on the basis of which teaching methods and didactics – the art of teaching – should be built.
- On the basis of the ideal nature of the developing human being, a curriculum would be developed containing all the things that students should learn in each year.
- Steiner gave some examples, but teachers should develop the curriculum based on the above principles and their own insights.
- The ideal curriculum must trace the changing image of the nascent human nature at its various ages, but "like every ideal, it faces and must fit in with the full reality of life" (von Heydebrand, 1925, page 1).

Over the years leading up to the 1990s, this first curriculum (along with Stockmeyer's collection of curriculum notes from Steiner's lectures and his work with teachers in Stuttgart) was expanded and translated into various languages. It is not possible here to show this process in detail (see Rawson, 2021a), but the original curriculum presentation was often literally translated, with more or less adaptation to meet local cultural needs (other languages, histories, literatures, geographies, etc.).

Following lengthy consultations, a German version of the curriculum was published in manuscript form (Richter, 1995), though this met with a lot of criticism by teachers who felt that any published curriculum was a limit to teacher autonomy. An English translation was circulated in the US. This book has been revised and republished a number of times, most recently in 2019, and a new version is currently being worked on. In 1997, in the UK, a comparison between the UK Waldorf curriculum and the National Curriculum was published (Mepham & Rawson, 1997). In 2000, a curriculum was published in English (Rawson & Richter, 2000, revised by Avison in 2014), which blended the work done by Richter with the new UK Waldorf curriculum. This book included a section on early years, a description of Waldorf education, and topics such as school governance, student assessment and even guidelines for learning outcomes in maths, English, and the first foreign language. This book was written so that non-Waldorf educationalists could relate to it. It was subsequently translated into many languages and became the most widely used curriculum internationally. With the exception of the German curricula, all subsequent curricula have built on this work (e.g. Australian Steiner Curriculum). Recently, an English translation of the 2016 edition of the German Richter curriculum was published (*Tapestry of a Waldorf Curriculum*, 2020).

Figure 1. Some Waldorf curricula (ranging from 40 to 800 pages)

Metaphors for Curriculum Dissemination and Development

How can we best describe the dissemination of Waldorf curricula? We have chosen a botanical metaphor to describe this process. One can think of the Waldorf curriculum as a tree with a strong trunk and deep roots that has many branches. The fruits of this tree are collected by educational 'botanists' and planted in educational 'botanical gardens' in their own countries. There, the various seeds grow into essentially the same tree, depending on soil and climate conditions and state of care. In botany, imported species are known as *exotics* and are distinguished from *native* plants. This image

represents a model Waldorf education, its practices and curriculum, transported to other countries where they generally thrive, but predominantly as exotics (and they are often even valued for being *German* exotics). The exotic model may initially be the preferred method for the (always well-intentioned) 'missionary' process.

The alternative image for the spread of Waldorf education is that of a rhizome spreading from an "underground" or invisible network, from which new shoots emerge wherever conditions are suitable for growth. Local growth is thus 'native'.

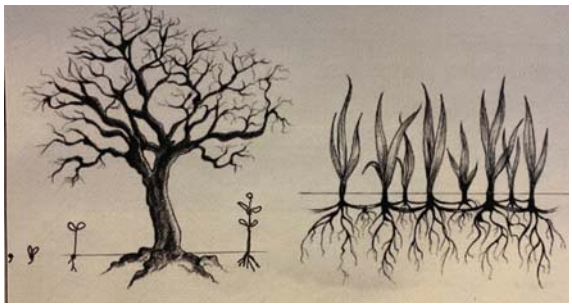

Figure 2. A comparison of tree-like and rhizome-like metaphors for the spread of Waldorf education and curricula.

The rhizome model has the advantage that teachers in Taiwan, if they want to adapt the Waldorf curriculum, do not have to cultivate the Central European exotic 'plant' and graft onto it some local equivalent content, such as Chinese alternatives for the Old Testament or Norse mythology. Similarly, they are not restricted to methods of introducing the letters of the alphabet through picture stories (not least because the Chinese language has neither an alphabet nor a phonetic link between symbol and sound). Rather, these educators "grow" their curriculum locally, but on the basis of the common rhizomic network of ideas from which Waldorf practice can emerge.

The main difference between these two models of dissemination is that in the rhizomic version all the different plants have the same status and validity. They are not the fruits of a single, central, original tree, but grow from a common source. Thus, a rhizomic Waldorf curriculum in Taiwan would have the same status as Heydebrand's; it would describe what is taught in the Ci Xin School based on the Waldorf model of human development. One could even go further and suggest that "international bees" could fly from the Asian, European, South or North American or African flowers of curriculum trees and cross-pollinate each other, producing perhaps stronger, healthier hybrids. OK, that is perhaps stretching the metaphor too far! However, the metaphor can work as a heuristic to asking the question: To what extent is our curriculum exotic and to what extent is it native and rhizomic? The spectrum along the continuum between exotic and native is probably wide.

Ideal Curriculum

According to Steiner,

> We have to approach the curriculum quite differently. We need to be able to develop our curriculum ourselves at any moment, by learning to read from the children what they need, depending on their age. Tomorrow we will compare the ideal curriculum with the one currently used in Central European state schools. We will be prepared for this if we have really internalized what we need to know in order to understand the curriculum.
>
> (Steiner, 2019, p. 311)

Steiner argues that teachers must engage with what comes to the children from their social environment. He hoped that Waldorf education would contribute to social change by making an impact in the educational environment, which is unlikely if Waldorf schools remain private, niche schools. In the meantime, the ideal curriculum must be adapted according to the age of the students, local cultural expectations, and the given situation.

The characteristic *ideal* is usually interpreted in the sense of perfect, complete, accomplished, exemplary, or as a timeless generalization. In effect, anything less than ideal is a poor or unfortunate compromise. And this may be how Steiner understood the term, since he clearly looked towards a time when all curricula would reflect the development of the whole human being as mainstream education recognizes the value of this. However, the term 'ideal curriculum' can also be understood in terms of Max Weber's[1] notion of an *Idealtypus* or 'ideal type'. An ideal type is an idea that integrates a number of aspects that are considered important (by the social scientist) to provide a point of reference for understanding real social phenomena. In the human and social sciences, the function of an ideal type is to provide a heuristic model that contains as much as possible of observed reality, selected for a particular purpose or perspective, and which serves as orientation for measuring social reality. Steiner's notion of a threefold social commonwealth is an ideal type for structuring social organisms; it doesn't describe actual social structures, but rather offers a series of functional

1 Max Weber (1864-1920) was a contemporary of Steiner and pioneer of modern sociology; like Steiner, he was politically active with a program for social renewal in 1918-19.

or generative principles as orientation for the respective social domains. An ideal type curriculum therefore offers a central coherent idea and a set of generative principles derived from it, which can be applied to develop and assess curriculum practice. What are the key elements in this ideal type?

A Method School

Steiner often referred to the Waldorf school as a 'method school'; for example, when he said during his lectures in Oxford in 1922:

> [T]he Waldorf school principle is not a principle that wants to make a school with a particular worldview, but a method school. What is to be achieved by a method based on knowledge of the human being is that of turning children into physically healthy and strong, mentally free, and spiritually clear human beings.
>
> (GA 305, p.157 trans. MR)

As Angelika Wiehl (2015) has shown, the term 'method school' here means that the way of teaching (*hodos* in ancient Greek means 'way', and *methodos* the way for striving towards something), as the pathway to achieving the intended outcomes, is derived from the anthroposophical understanding of the developing human being. As Martyn (Rawson, 2021b) has shown, we can derive a set of generative principles from this pedagogical anthropology and apply them in developing (and reviewing) pedagogical practice (or *methodos).* Therefore, a Waldorf school is one that bases its methods of teaching and learning on an understanding of the nature of the developing human being (taking the spiritual dimension into account), and it does this in a given sociocultural context. A school with a worldview (*Weltanschauung*) would have a specific system that shapes all aspects of the education. Waldorf doesn't have a system with a set of standardized practices; its 'medium' – the developing human being – is the method.

A New Way of Thinking about Curriculum

We concluded that in order to meet the various demands on curriculum (e.g. to provide a foundation for all Waldorf curricula everywhere, to adapt curriculum to changing circumstances, to have rhizomic rather than centralized dissemination, etc.), we must return to the core question of what curriculum is and what its functions are. The function of curriculum is to provide learning opportunities for students to engage with their developmental tasks (see below). Curriculum is therefore a pedagogical practice.

We then built on Bo Dahlin's (2017) definition of curriculum: curriculum is anything that pedagogically influences children and young people's learning. This includes the content, the teaching methods, when and where something is taught and who teaches it, and also the school climate. Curriculum therefore offers a series of structured learning opportunities and experiences that stimulate learning in certain directions and thus supports development. Each successful stage of learning and development opens up new possibilities for learning, and so learning drives development (an idea also expressed by the American philosopher and education reformer, John Dewey, 1938).

Steiner's pedagogical anthropology forms the basis, but this has been supplemented in recent years by new insights, for example, into the nature and functions of the senses, salutogenic theory, phenomenological science, symptomatology in the humanities, foreign language learning, media pedagogy, arts and crafting, pedagogical evaluation, inclusion and learning support, action research, teacher training, and the introduction of Waldorf theory into academic discourse.

A number of generative principles (e.g., learning is a rhythmical process, teaching must be artistic, experience must come before concept) can be derived from Waldorf pedagogical anthropology (Rawson, 2021). These principles can be applied to generate practice, such as the class-teacher role, the steps in the learning process, Main Lesson blocks, and curriculum.

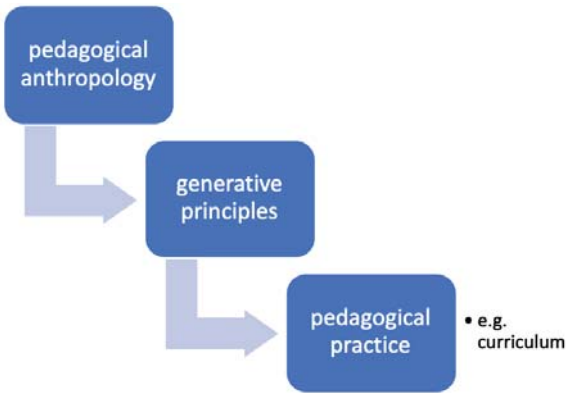

Figure 3. The relationship between pedagogical anthropology and curriculum

We can participate in established pedagogical practice and assimilate it, and we can develop pedagogical intuition (or tact), which enables us to respond in the moment. When we reflect on this, it can also change

the practice of our teaching community. As Martyn (2012, 2022) has argued, Waldorf teachers can develop dispositions to pedagogical intuition when they study, internalize and embody the ideas of anthroposophical pedagogical anthropology as habits of mind that direct the gaze towards subtle pedagogical processes and towards understanding children. Thus doing pedagogical practice can lead to an ongoing development of practice and enhance teachers' capabilities.

Developmental Tasks

Curriculum relates to the development of the child and young person – but how? The term *developmental tasks* is very useful here. It refers to the developing person's engagement with internal, physical, and mental dispositions and the external challenges of the social and ecological environment at the various stages of the life course, a process that drives an ongoing course of becoming individual and socially capable. Hurrelmann and Bauer (2018) call this process the productive processing of reality (i.e. the person produces her reality in processing this dialectic between internal and individualistic elements, on the one end, and external and environmental ones, on the other). The Waldorf perspective on this (in particular as developed by Peter Loebell, 2012) has added a third dimension to this dialectic, namely the biographical intentions and dispositions of the person that belong to their spiritual self, thus creating a trialectic dynamic.

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Thus the developmental tasks the students have to engage with have three sources that we take into account in planning curriculum:

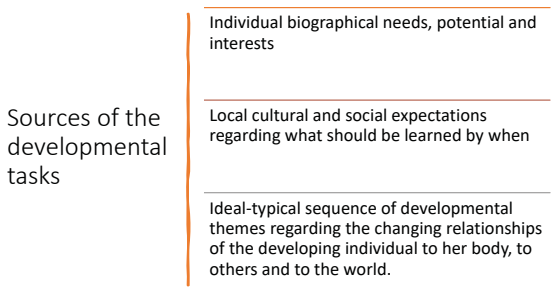

Figure 4. The three primary sources of developmental tasks

As Steiner outlined in the First Teachers' Course (Steiner, 2020), human beings undergo common developmental processes throughout their life course (here we are concerned with childhood and youth), involving ongoing interactions between the self as spiritual core, the growing body, and the emerging soul. These manifest in changing the relationships of the person to her body, to other people, and to the world, particularly at key phases of transition.

However, as Remo Largo (2019), the great Swiss pediatrician (and friend of Waldorf education) points out, human development is highly individual. Wide variation is the norm. As Gertrude Reif Hughes (2012) puts it, "All human beings are 'I-beings'. Our uniqueness is what we have in common. Paradoxically, the reality processes by which we individuate are universal ones" (248). Furthermore, we also know that even the biological processes of maturation do not follow a fixed, universal timetable but can vary and are influenced by external factors such as stress, trauma, diet, social and cultural expectations. Puberty, for example, now occurs several years earlier than in 1919 when the curriculum was first created. Therefore, we cannot meaningfully characterize child and youth development in fine-grained, year by year steps that all children and young people take at the same time, nor can we say that the traditional curriculum matches this development. The matter is more complex and more interesting.

What makes Waldorf education distinctive is that it lays down developmental pathways that children and young people are invited to follow together with their peers (i.e. the heterogeneous Waldorf class). By following these paths, they encounter a sequence of developmental challenges that provide them with learning and developmental opportunities that are deemed to foster healthy (salutogenic) development. This sequence is framed in terms of developmental themes that relate the person to her body, to other people and to the world in particular ways at particular times. It is important to stress that whilst these themes and their sequence are considered to be generally valid across all cultures, the exact age at which they are met can vary. We know from emergency education (Rutishauser and Stolz, 2018) that trauma can delay or set development back but that under the right conditions, children can catch up relatively quickly. In other words, we can slow down or accelerate the sequence.

The ideal curriculum that Steiner spoke about can be understood in this sense. The developmental sequence of themes at the macro level (see graphic below) is a model we can pedagogically orientate ourselves to. However, this layer of curriculum is not characterised

by content. What we teach belongs to the meso layer and responds to the local requirements, as does the methodology. An example of this is the introduction of literacy. Steiner felt that the conventional methods of learning to write and read weaken the child's health creating forces, and that it would be healthier for literacy to be emergent when the children were ready, which would likely be for some children several years later than the age of six. However, he knew that neither the education authorities nor the parents would accept this, so he suggested that the teaching of literacy should be artistic because this would minimize (but not eliminate) the harmful effects (Steiner 1995, see lecture from 26.9.1921).

> Since the inception of Waldorf education, societal change has been more radical than at any other time in human history

The topics, content, materials and methods chosen, relate on one hand to the ideal-typical sequence of developmental themes of the macro curriculum, but also take into account the (meso-level) requirements for literacy and numeracy and also issues relating to diversity, social justice and multiculturalism, which are so important today. How the teacher modifies this to meet the needs and interests of individual pupils, for example by differentiating the assignments, requires skilled artistry at the micro level of curriculum. Reading and interpreting the individual child's or and young person's biographical *mythos* (Goschel, 2012) in case studies is part of this process. In Aristotle's terms, the *mythos* is the narrative of the drama, the underlying story of the destiny in focus.

This understanding of the curriculum enables us to identify three layers:

The layered curriculum

- Macro layer: sequence of developmental themes, structured for each class and developmental phase.
- Meso layer: content that provides opportunities to experience the developmental themes, and sets of knowledge and skills required at this age in response to local, national expectations.
- Micro layer: individual teaching plans in response to specific learning needs of the group and individual biographic needs and intentions.

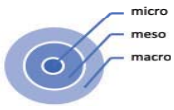

Figure 5: The layered curriculum, which could also be shown as nested

An Example

Let us look at an example of how curriculum both addresses the macro level developmental themes and responds to current, local issues and educational responsibilities. In grade three, the developmental themes at the macro level include the emergence of a new relationship of the self to the community (sometimes known as the Rubicon crisis), how the community regulates its social relationships, and how the community culturally relates to its natural geographical environment. A traditional curriculum response is to explore house building, the range of crafts involved, and farming. At this age we are dealing with these activities in a historical, pre-industrial and (for 9-10-year-olds) comprehensible form. At the same time, we want to emphasize ecological and intercultural aspects, which perhaps the traditional curriculum has not addressed, and we want to enable the children to have authentic experience of work.

If our school is located on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, for example, we could compare early settler farming with indigenous Native American approaches, in ways that do not assume a Eurocentric sense of progress as discovering, cultivating, and "civilizing" the wilderness.

Farming involves an intensive relationship to nature. Indeed, the term 'farming' makes a number of assumptions that the term 'cultivating' doesn't. The colonists farmed the land; they used methods brought from Europe, involving ploughing and initially using imported barley and peas, before adopting native corn and beans. On the other hand, the natives cultivated domesticated crops such as squashes, maize, beans, and a wide variety of wild plants. Whilst the colonists grew field crops and soon specialized in plantation cash crops like tobacco, rice, and later cotton that involved intensive labor (through indentured servants and, from 1619 on, African slaves), the natives used the famous 'three sisters' approach, in which the beans enriched the soil with nutrients (nitrogen), the squash kept down the weeds, and the corn provided support and wind shelter for the beans. Both communities supplemented their livelihoods with hunting and gathering, though the natives were far more knowledgeable about their environment and how to use its resources. These two communities had quite different relationships to their environment and to spirituality. (This would also be a good opportunity to explore the origins of Thanksgiving.)

The social structures, leadership, laws, and belief systems (simplified for grade three students) were also quite different. The colonists brought their English social hierarchy and notions of ownership, the natives were more structured along democratic lines with

councils and confederations and with important roles for women. The cultural encounters can be mediated through the stories of John Smith, Pocahontas, and John Rolfe. Both groups had slaves, but in most native communities, slaves were generally war captives who could be integrated into the tribe through marriage or gain recognition and social status through their individual qualities. In both groups, housebuilding was a communal activity, using local materials, which the colonists supplemented with imported materials and tools. The Iroquois longhouses (the tribal name *Haudenosaunee* means 'people of longhouses') are famous constructions, as are the smaller wigwams, though they share similar materials and building techniques. Colonist houses adapted English models (or models from other colonial countries) to the local materials – primarily wood and stone (sometimes brick) with rectangular plans and pitched roofs and chimneys and leaded glass windows.

The macro level curriculum maps out the developmental themes of grade three, for which the term 'Rubicon' is shorthand. The pedagogical response to these developmental tasks at the meso level curriculum is to provide opportunities for learning in the field of housebuilding and farming in the context of small-scale traditional communities and locating these activities in a simplified historical rather than archetypal or mythical context. Quite apart from the opportunities for hands-on experience of teamwork, whilst integrating literacy, numeracy, nature studies, and art, this approach also addresses the meso curriculum challenge of providing a multicultural perspective. The Rubicon as a developmental task today includes our ecological relationship to the natural world as well as issues of cultural or racial[2] identity, not least if you are a Black, Hispanic, Asian or Muslim child in a predominantly white class.

The alternative image for the spread of Waldorf education is that of a rhizome spreading from an "underground" or invisible network, from which new shoots emerge wherever conditions are suitable for growth.

Looking at natives and colonists (in however simplified ways) is a way of starting the story of cultural relationships. The stories from the Old Testament are important because they form an important background to American culture; but so, too, are the origins stories and legends of the Native Americans. Integrating these themes into a curriculum seems a fitting background for the developmental tasks of the Rubicon.

Finally, these developmental themes, dealt with in grade three terms, build on earlier experiences and provide a basis for further development of the themes of identity, belonging, community, society, religion, ecology, nutrition, and technology throughout the spiral curriculum. One need only think of the grade 10 main lessons that look at the origins of human societies, our relationship to the earth, livelihood, dwelling, perception, intercultural exchange and mobility, and linguistics.

A Structure for Renewal

This layered curriculum structure provides opportunities for addressing the problem of adding new content (e.g., digitalization, 21st century history, recent literature, media pedagogy, de-colonization, wellbeing, gender issues, etc.). We cannot simply keep adding to an already full curriculum. We have to set new priorities. By using the macro level developmental themes for orientation and—once we have consensus on their formulation—we can make choices by asking, in effect: What questions do the developmental tasks pose and how can these be answered in the fields of media, interculturalism, gender etc.? In other words, we can ask: At what age do we think young people's identities are shaped by digital and social media and when can they structure their relationships using media? When do questions of gender need to be addressed indirectly (e.g., in story form) and when directly? If we think it is important to know about early cultures, which ones are most relevant to our own current cultural challenges? If certain periods of history are important, such as the Middle Ages, why do we restrict this to Europe, when, during the same period of history, Asia was the center of the world – and isn't understanding Asia more important today? Then, we have crucial themes such as the origins and forms of racism that have not been given much space in Waldorf curricula, so far. At which points along the curriculum pathway do we need to land this theme in all its complexity? After all, it appears in history, language studies (e.g., 'enslaved people' rather than 'slaves,' 'pre-Columbian America' rather that 'The New World,' 'conquest' rather than 'discovery'), economics, law and rights, and so on—or does Waldorf sit out the debates on critical race theory?

2 To our contemporary European linguistic and cultural sensitivities the term race has no place in our vocabulary, though racism and racial discrimination do. However, we recognize that in the US context, the term has a wider, more complex range of meanings.

Of course, choosing material and weaving it into a coherent narrative is always an artistic task requiring knowledgeable skilled artistry. Teachers have to understand and make judgements about what they need to do, rather than copy lesson plans from 'master teachers' (though this is perhaps a necessary step for novices). Therefore, curriculum is not a given, but a set of tasks. This requires a culture of educational reflection and research, and not all schools are in a position to do this on their own. Therefore, expertise needs to be developed, shared, and disseminated in ways that don't become fixed or dogmatic.

In the UK, we—the present authors—have developed a curriculum process (Bransby & Rawson, 2020) and a digital tool to apply it, based on the layered curriculum model, designed to assist teachers to plan and review lessons. This process is being trialled in several countries at present. This work will be available soon in published form, titled *The Art of Teaching and Learning*. The same authors have also produced a UK version of this new curriculum approach, which can be used for comparison in other countries.

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