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**The Value of
a Jam Sandwich**

**Clowning at the
Heart of Teaching**

The Frayed Edges of Imagination

Lesson Preparation

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Steiner Education...

is a magazine for parents, teachers and others interested in Steiner-Waldorf education. Though based in the UK, it has an international perspective. The magazine is dependent on people sending in material and the editorial group welcomes contributions (sent as hard copy and – if possible – electronically as a word file)

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Editorial

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Rudolf Steiner once said that there are several effective ways to educate. I paraphrase; we can appeal to ambition in the pupils (if you go down this path we have carefully laid for you, you will succeed in the race); we can appeal to fear (if you don't go down this path we have so carefully thought out and planned for you, you might fail and get left behind in the race, and don't forget there can only be so many winners and history has little interest in losers). We can also educate through love. It is not hard to guess which of the three possible paths Steiner recommended. Educate through love? What on earth (or even heaven) could that mean in curriculum terms, in terms of educational aims and outcomes?

Love is a curiously indefinable quality. We know it when we feel it. We know it when we can't experience it. We assume it in many life circumstances because it seems the natural basis for parenting and partnership. But what does love mean in education, in the workplace we call school? Personal, intimate love gives us a few clues, though we have to translate them out of the realm of intimacy. True love, as we know, is without conditions. Its unconditional character reveals itself when people we love disappoint us and let us and themselves down. We don't stop loving them, though we can get very cross with them. Parents and lovers know just how cross they can get with the ones they love. If they didn't love them so much it wouldn't matter so much. We love them for what and who they are; we love their higher, better selves, we know there is more to them than they reveal. Many tragedies lie precisely in the knowledge that we, they could do better but somehow can't. Translated into educational terms, it means we offer each child our unconditional, though not uncritical, support because we believe in the child's higher being, in that part of him or her that has not yet become accessible, has not yet engaged and taken hold of his or her destiny.

This kind of unconditional acceptance requires deep, open-hearted interest, and what Mary Jane-Drummond called far-seeing, rich interest. This kind of seeing is not simple or easy to achieve. It requires a trained eye and considerable experience in reading the complex symptoms. It means looking beyond the surface and always asking what comes to expression in this or that manifestation. We look at how a child walks, holds her crayon, breathes, laughs, does mental arithmetic, chooses and speaks her words, how she listens, how she gives and takes.



This kind of looking is qualitatively different from diagnosis in the usual sense when we ask, what's the matter and what can we do to help you? There's nothing wrong with asking that but the question carries the danger of only revealing the answers we know about or expect. And one thing is certain, it is always more complex than we know. The question really is: what are you trying to tell us?

One of the things implicit in the approach Steiner called love, is the assumption that the child brings with him or her intentions, deep unconscious inclinations, that they will spend the rest of their lives exploring how to fulfil. These intentions come to expression (in riddle form) in all the answers to the questions along the lines of: how does he or she do that? In the *how*, the *why* is revealed. The best we can do is help the child find the experiences and the challenges he or she needs to develop the abilities and competencies needed to develop and grow (or *learn* as we put in the school context).

The other thing about love is that while it may be unconditional it is far from detached and objective. Love implies involvement, engagement, commitment. We are ourselves involved with anyone we love. We are changed through our love for them. In loving we create a space in ourselves for the other to reveal themselves, in which they can develop. As teachers (it's also true of parents but in psychologically different ways) we create a space (not simply in school) but in our lives, in which the child can be and become. It doing so we become changed. How we can do this without losing ourselves, or burning out in the process, would take more space to explain than is available here. Some answers are obliquely highlighted in the articles in this number. The process is an Easter one and involves sacrifice, transformation and rebirth.



Two views of Class Three waiting to take the bread out of the oven



The Value of a Jam Sandwich

Curriculum Research

Simon Gillman

Editorial comment: Simon Gillman carried out this piece of practice-based research as part of a Masters degree, which he completed during a sabbatical year from Michael Hall School. We print here the introduction and conclusion to his dissertation.

It is a fine morning early in October and the Class Three (nine year olds) are very busy. In the classroom there are children clearing up the mixing bowls and the boards, and there are rolls rising in the sunshine on the windowsill. These are no ordinary bread rolls; the children have spent several months getting to this point, and their anticipation is high. The wheat has been grown on a small plot of land by the previous Class Three, an area 10m² perhaps. The children have had to gather the grain and dry it in the classroom; they have had to thresh the wheat, sometimes painstakingly by hand, sometimes by beating the sheaves with sticks. The grain has had to be winnowed to get the chaff out, by blowing with the mouth, by throwing it in the air on a windy day, even using a hairdryer! The grain has been sieved and sieved to get the dust out, and ground twice, using hand mills, and then sieved again. The coarse brown flour gradually became whiter

and finer. There is not too much flour, as the cold wet spell back in July slowed the development of the ears, but there is enough and, as one child remarked, the wheat at the local organic farm was not much better. The mixing and kneading was surprisingly difficult, only three or four children had ever done it before, and several asked if this sticky mess really will become bread! The rolls were finally formed and all were different; some a bit cold and hard, some warm and supple, but all will be eaten in the communal lunch. At last the bread is nearly ready!

The children have been busy outdoors too. The plot of land has had to be roughly dug to break the stubble and remove the weeds, for soon the children themselves will be pulling a horse plough and harrow through the soil to prepare to sow a winter cover crop of tares. Is the horse at the farm really stronger than 25 children? The manure

from the nearby stable, along with various bits of kitchen and garden waste, has been made into a dragon shaped compost heap, where on a cold morning the children can take out the straw stuffed in his nose and see the steam pouring out. What a strange and marvellous thing! It was well worth the hard work of making the heap and mixing up soil and straw to make the dragon's head. Later in the year the children will have to dig the tares in, spread the compost, again make a seed bed and sow wheat in the plot where the potatoes grew last year, so that the next Class Three will be able to make bread, too.

Back in our classroom, there are other children putting cream in pots to make the butter whilst the bread rolls rise. The cream has been out of the fridge for a day or so and already looks a little buttery. Lots of vigorous shaking will be necessary soon, then washing the butter when it has come, before salting it and forming it into a pat. A celebratory glass of buttermilk is also there to be had. There are also a few pupils with another teacher at the clay oven outside. The oven, made from local willow, clay, straw and sand by an older class, is currently full of flame. The pupils lit it first thing in the morning and now they have to be really careful as it is getting very hot. Fortunately, the wood the children collected from the hedgerows was good and dry and had been well stored under cover, awaiting this moment. There are nice long thin pieces that

burn quickly with lots of flame, and can be pushed into the oven without getting too close! There is one thickish, sizzly bit in the oven, and a child comments that it is not burning properly and somebody had obviously not understood properly about collecting dead wood.

Finally the children can leave the teacher to guard the oven while the flames die down, and go to see how the butter has come, check that the rolls are rising and see that the pots of hedgerow blackberry jam they have made at the beginning of term are ready on the teacher's table. There is time for a quiet spell while the teacher continues the story they are having about life on the farm. Amazingly, the family in the story are making bread and butter too! After this the trays of rolls need to be carefully wrapped from the cold and taken down by the whole class to the oven. The fire has now gone out, some children are despondent; how will the bread cook if there is no fire? The teacher has pushed the final ashes out into the ash box, using a long metal rake, and is sweeping the rest with a wire brush. Why doesn't he use an ordinary brush for sweeping asks a pupil? Now the teacher is putting some flour into the oven; it burns straight away! The bread will burn, call several children, but the teacher is counting. After thirty seconds he tries again, this time the flour just browns rapidly and smokes. "Count thirty!" says the teacher cheerfully, and after a noisy chant the flour test is done again. This



time the flour does not smoke but browns gently. "Ready!" The rolls are quickly inserted into the oven, the door closed and a big plug of clay put in the chimney to block it up. The pupils are now able to come in small groups to feel how warm the clay of the oven is – it will still be warm at the end of school. Several children understand now that the clay retains the heat and that was why the fire had to go out. The teacher is now squirting water into the oven through a little hole, again without explaining what he is up to. The children are puzzled, and some have a turn at doing it. In the classroom next day, recalling the events, many have understood that it was to create steam so that the bread did not get too hard. Delicious smells are emerging from the oven already; time to have a quick look. The door is opened briefly, everyone peers in. A couple more minutes and out come the rolls, and the children go off for playtime. At lunch their very own jam sandwiches will be ready for consumption.

What is the educational value of such an experience? What does it contribute to the general process of learning in a big class? Is the commitment of an average of three lessons per week out of 24 justified? Two teachers are needed to manage the children safely, and a lot of preparation is involved in the team-teaching. Is this good value for money? Would the school not be using its scarce resources better by buying new readers or installing the latest educational

software? This study attempts to assess the learning outcomes of this programme of practical, experiential learning and to answer the questions above. It does so through many observations of lessons, how the teacher uses the experiences in the classroom and what the children write and draw about it. It has a particular context in that the lessons took place in an English Rudolf Steiner school, where the curriculum and the understanding of child development strongly encourages the generation of such experiences for this age group.

Profile of the Classes

From my experience, I would say that both classes, when I met them at the start of the school year, were "good" ones in the sense that the classes had acquired a sense of their identity as learners, were clear what was expected of them in terms of behaviour and boundaries, and were developmentally in the right space for these lessons. The principle of authority, discussed earlier, was well and healthily established. This is not to say that they were easy classes; both had a wide range of academic and social abilities, and their share of difficult characters and new pupils. So the outdoor lessons at the start of the year, gathering blackberries and collecting apples, which gave the children a high degree of freedom, were structured to allow the teachers to establish new guidelines for outdoor activities. Specific





up; "the only subject that no-one ever complained about", as a class teacher said. The teachers in fact could not identify any pupils who regularly performed or behaved poorly, though some were more interested in the subject matter than others. A telling feature is the absence of any serious disciplinary action, such as exclusion from the lesson which, given the number of children involved, the time commitment and the order needed to work safely outdoors, is a strong testimony.

Conclusion

The general conclusion is that the experiential work made a significant and valuable contribution to the delivery of the Class Three curriculum. The learning of the pupils progressed well and evidence has been presented which suggests that the practical activities have helped to appeal to a greater range of learning styles. The overall picture is supported from all sides. The class teachers both expressed this view, and the parents who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in their satisfaction with the amount of time devoted to the practical activities, perhaps an especially significant feature, given the reduced time for book work and the current fear about children "falling behind". The observations gathered from the range of techniques employed clearly indicate the engagement and enjoyment of the pupils, which was reflected in the mood and quality of the classroom work. In view of the resources invested in the programme, this is a reassuring outcome!

From my own teaching experience, however, I am aware of the differences between classes and their teachers, and that a different case study may have yielded a more complicated picture. I therefore need to stress the importance of the readiness of the classes for this approach, the support and enthusiasm of the class teachers, and the healthy relationship they enjoyed with their pupils. On the other hand, this was not an unusual year either, and the general conclusions stated above would, I suspect, have applied to most other classes who have passed through this programme.

An immediate avenue for research is suggested by the outcomes of the teamworking element. Teachers, parents and pupils all reflected very positively on this aspect of the programme, and its significance for modern working practices gives it

a particular emphasis. Although the development of social competences is inherent in the Steiner Waldorf system, there is no specific set of criteria for assessing progress in this field. The naming of age-appropriate competencies, building on the developmental profile that is in the *Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf School* (Rawson & Richter eds, 2000), and testing its validity, could lead to improvements in this area of school life. This could find a natural space for discussion in the Teachers' Meetings as an action research topic.

Several parents expressed the view that it was a pity that there was not more practical, experiential work in Classes One and Two (or even higher up the school). It must be stressed that the classroom-based work throughout the Lower School includes a great deal of movement, activity and what could be described as learning through doing. The presence of handwork on the curriculum all through the Lower School also shows the commitment to nimble fingers and awakened minds. However, the appeal of the programme examined in this study to such a varied range of children suggests that there may be grounds for some expansion of it. This could be an occasional outdoor activity in the context of a Main Lesson, which would not threaten to overload the timetable. Perhaps it could involve finding a supporting teacher who could undertake to work regularly for a short time with a small group of pupils, whom the class teacher feels would especially benefit from this approach. This could fit into the context of individual education programmes, and my guess would be that this would be of particular benefit to boys; this, again, would be an interesting area to deepen understanding through research. Adopting these ideas would build a stronger bridge to Class Six and beyond, where woodwork, gardening and crafts start as subjects in their own right.

Many issues that arise have this distinctly long-term time frame, which has been referred to above. Possibly the only way to deal with such a complex situation would be a long-term comparative study of pupils passing through a Steiner school with those passing through a state school. With wide-ranging assessment methods this could shed some light on the subject. This is indeed perhaps not so far away, as current Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship negotiations with the government for



state funding have thrown up just this research question, should public monies be made available (see *SWSF Newsletter*, Autumn 2003).

The question of the contribution of a rich, varied and age-appropriate experiential basis to all learning processes has been repeatedly touched on, and is fundamental. It can be seen from this study that even in the short term this approach opens up widely differentiated opportunities for a varied range of learning styles and intelligences. Over time, as experiences become connected to others and the feelings engendered by the experiences effect the individual's readiness for and understanding of others, it becomes ever more difficult to assess; it becomes part of the basis for meaning and action in the individual's life. The modern analytical approach to educational research is, in the end, put in a dilemma by the challenge of holistic assessment and the reinstatement of the role of the teacher in this. In the unique individuality of each child the functions of thinking and feeling, sensing and intuition, imagining and remembering, action and reflection are so inter-related that we may miss seeing the person altogether if we start reducing them to disconnected chunks of analysis, however accurate each individual tool may be. To me it seems that education in our time has arrived at just this point. This is not to argue against a rigorous methodology, but to agree with Wilson when he suggests

[s]elf generated movement is the foundation of thought and willed action, the underlying mechanisms by which the physical and psychological co-ordinates of the self come into being. (Wilson, 1998, p291)

An education for life requires new tools for holistic and non-judgemental assessment and a commitment to learning from real life. This small study has attempted to evaluate just such a process.

Clowning and the Heart of Teaching

Exploring the Self that Teaches

Catherine Bryden

In this article, Catherine Bryden, who works as a language teacher at a Rudolf Steiner school in Germany, looks at the links between Clowning and the art of teaching. She describes how clowning has enabled her to accept and live with the responsibilities of being a teacher, to find lightness, to embrace conflict and to build a balance between her inner and outer world.

*The overall objective of language teaching in a Waldorf school is to give pupils individual experience of the reality of language in the psychological sense intended by Steiner. This means that the essence is neither conceptual, nor literary, nor utilitarian, but sensory. J. Kiersch goes on to explain that while language students are generating a rich store of inner experience, they are at the same time “learning to identify with the perceptions and feelings of others”. Thus, ideally speaking, Waldorf language teaching is a schooling of empathy. It is education for peace which ‘raises consciousness’ not through discussion or the spreading of information, but through improving the **faculty of perception**.*

Johannes Kiersch (Language Teaching in Steiner Waldorf Schools, p. 22)

Can you refrain from moving until the right action arises?

Tao

*The teacher is within,
So you have to learn to be still.
You have to live your life
So that you are listening within
No matter what you are doing.*

Bartholomew

We must continue to open in the face of tremendous opposition. No one is encouraging us to open and still we must peel away the layers of the heart.

Chogyam Trungpa

In *The Courage to Teach* Parker J. Palmer shares his inspiring vision of teachers who refuse to harden their hearts because they love learners, learning, and the teaching life. He speaks of the importance of exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life through reflection, discussion and brainstorming and explains how this is done through the creation of community where complex truths can be observed and investigated, where the inner life of

teachers is supported to grow and change. He states that good teachers have one trait in common: “they are truly present in the classroom, deeply engaged with their students and their subject”. Above all, good teachers “are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts – the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self”.

I am presently working as a language teacher at a Rudolf Steiner school in Germany. I have been involved in teaching in many forms, both informal and formal. When teaching, as in my day-to-day life, my intention is to stay connected to myself, rooted in truth, and in contact with others as completely as possible. My dream is to work with others with a soft, open heart, to teach from the space where intellect, emotion and spirit converge. I believe that this is a learnable ideal. Many questions have surfaced as I explore this direction. First, how to reach such a place and how to teach from it? How does one learn to be fully present in the classroom? How can I stay connected to myself, function on a daily basis, and practice being in contact with heart-full places where I know good teaching flows?

Practicing an open heart

My enthused, sometimes overly enthusiastic, approach to all aspects of life has led me to a fairly regular practice of meditation and yoga. When I meditate or do yoga, I am able to deepen my connection to myself, find a deeper sense of balance and I can stay in soft and open heart-space. However, this is a solitary exercise. I realise that the true challenge is to remain in this meditative space once I am in contact with other people. According to Buddhist philosophy, contact with

‘other’ can be a source of great confusion and pain. As I encounter another, even a stranger on the street, I see myself shut down in order to function. It is a form of protection that serves me to a point so I am able to ‘keep it together’; but where does this leave me in relation to my students?

Clowning: a safe playground in being

A search for a practice beyond meditation and yoga brought me to the art of clowning. The workshops are described as an opportunity to find one's inner clown. I would say that inner clown and inner being are one and the same. From what I have experienced, clowning has involved continual contact with myself, with other partners on stage and with an audience. Through these workshops, I found a secure, albeit occasionally uncomfortable and disconcerting play ground where I can dive into my inner pools with others.

I have found clowning to be an exercise in learning, growing and playing with others. It is a bridge between being alone and with other people in a secure open space. Both the warm up exercises and the clowning work to strip away preconceived ideas of the inner and outer world, bringing you closer to a sense of truth, closer to oneself and to the others.

An example

One of the first clowning exercises following a series of warm-ups involves getting on stage where an object has been placed in the centre. The task is to come on stage, look at the audience and, without planning anything beforehand, meet and connect with the object. I step up to the stage. Stop. Wait. I feel stage fright, panic, and waves of anxiety. Slowly I turn to face the audience. Their sympathetic faces are only a minor comfort because I am struck with a bolt of expectation from the audience. I feel even more unnerved.

I take a deep breath then face the audience again, my body no longer holding back the panic. I know I am all red and my palms are sweating. I start moving towards the object. Blank. No need to worry about not planning anything, my mind is blank. I look at the audience. They laugh. They know. It doesn't feel funny to me. I look down again at the object. Years are passing by. *Don't wait. Make contact with the object* – gentle probing from our facilitator. I reach down and touch. Soft. Fuzzy. Heavy. Soothing. Comforting. Audience. I scrunch up under what is actually



a piano cover. More comfort. Relief. *Look at us. Look up.* Snickers and giggles. My new-found comfort must be more than obvious. I hold up my ‘blanky’ sheepishly. I curl up a little tighter and enjoy the security. *Remember to breathe.* I hesitate, and then reluctantly move out from under the blanket and off the stage. One split second off the stage and my mind floods with critical thoughts of how childish the ‘performance’ was, how embarrassing to be seen so needy, so young, so naked. Someone calls out ‘natural,’ another ‘endearing.’ I try to take in the moment, to land. I’m sweaty and lightheaded as I turn to watch the next adventurer stepping on stage.

With some time to digest and watch the other participants inch, dance, crawl, slide or hurdle themselves across the stage. And to see the object become a baby, mud, and bridal gown, the knot in my gut relaxes. With some laughs and supportive feedback, we all are a little more at ease with our initiatives on stage. As more time passes, I realise how long it has been since I felt so many raw emotions in the presence of other people. I see how the biggest challenge is to stay with the feelings, be present to what is going on, keep connecting to the audience and sharing what I am experiencing, and then to learn to

be patient and wait for the object to speak to me. The structure in the exercise is the form that we all follow. The beauty and spontaneity come from staying connected to myself and to the others, and this touched, coloured and seeped into my life after the workshop.

I can't say exactly why, however, following a weekend of clowning, I have felt as though an undercurrent of energy was seeping into my conscious life. The result has been a sensation of life opening up to my impulse, spontaneous interactions and wonderful moments of insight which have had me feeling more directly in contact with my students.

Reflections on the spiritual nature of clowning

My feeling is that the art of clowning takes place somewhere between the spiritual and physical worlds, perhaps as in the inner circle of a Celtic cross, the place where the horizontal and vertical sections intersect. This intersection, this circle, is the delicate place where I am connected to the depths of inspiration and my soul, while reaching up to the heights of the limitless creative possibilities, all the while keeping my two feet firmly planted in the physical world.

The rules of clowning

The rules of clowning are sacred and actively touch on an impressive number of aspects of life that can be applied within the classroom.

For example, there are the social aspects that come from working in a group and with others and touch on *ritual, community and communication* in which you confront, head on, questions of your own *freedom* and that of others. Through *presence, listening, receiving and giving* you learn to work together to resolve *conflicts*.

Clowning also offers a playful exploration into the emotional realms of life. What is the place for *joy or fear, gratitude, terror, for empathy, sympathy and antipathy* in my life? The expression of my emotions requires *self-awareness and authenticity*.

Its theatrical aspect brings an awareness of *sound, rhythm, structure, stillness, silence, activity, space, movement, contact, action*.

Then there are all the lessons that simply come from playing your life on stage, *chaos, humility, absurdity, security, insecurity, paradox, creativity, reality*,



spontaneity, transformation, mistakes and resolution. I will look at some of these below.

Empathy

If I, as a language teacher, aim to school a student in empathy, I must first practise and develop my own skills in this area. Many of the exercises in clowning involve heightening listening skills, honing skills in observation, intuitiveness and spontaneity. Exercises are regularly followed up with a chance to look back, share impressions and observations. As a result, the process becomes a concrete learning process for developing reflection, self-reflection and listening abilities. Learning to listen to myself in action and listen to others.

The inner life of any great thing will be incomprehensible to me until I develop and deepen an inner life of my own. I cannot know in another being what I do not know in myself.

... the real issue is teaching ourselves to listen.
(The Courage to Teach, p. 110)

In a classroom, I have interpreted this as turning towards the students in the sense of learning to receive what they are offering, learning to take them in, and respond to them in an authentic creative way. Moving away from fear, resistance and reaction, towards surprise, awe and mystery.

When I arrive in the classroom with an open heart, prepared but in a state of receptivity, it is at this

moment that true teaching takes place. Teaching which reflects the present moment, the magic of interaction between the teacher and the students, the creation of a class. With this approach, each class becomes an original work of art.

to teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practised.

(The Courage to Teach, p. 90)

Creating a learning space...

The space should be bounded and open.

The space should be hospitable and "charged".

The space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group.

The space should honor the "little" stories of the students and the "big" stories of the disciplines and tradition.

The space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community.

The space should welcome both silence and speech.

(The Courage to Teach, p. 74)

Clowning has helped me initiate movement in deep levels of my soul. I have experienced shifts in my behavior patterns that have extended far beyond the weekend workshop in clowning. The only explanation I have is that practising clowning untangles deeply-bedded knots in the soul and shifts stuck energy in places that are not easily accessible. The results are difficult to describe, but highly tangible. The practice of putting myself on the line, facing my fear of standing on an empty stage with a miniature mask, has invited a transformative process on unconscious levels which in turn manifest on conscious levels.

Living with the mess

...if we want to work for change, we must learn to live with the mess.

(The Courage to Teach, p. 176)

Clowning is a celebration of all the things in life we try desperately not to be.

Vivian

Discussions among teachers often gravitate towards digging up solutions for the problems we encounter in our teaching, so we can get rid of the problem and move on. One of a clown's many strengths is the ability to stay with a problem or a seemingly problematic situation. Clowning is a practice of not ignoring a problem, but being with a difficulty or glitch. It is this ability to remain present and fully involved in a situation that enables the clown to find creative resolutions in unexpected and often absurd

places. The clown is able to remain in an area of discomfort, not push away or run from the problem, and therefore the clown is not swallowed up by fear and anxiety. Clowning is a practice in becoming completely enchanted with the struggles life offers.

Living with conflict

I have noticed that some teachers have a fear of public conflict and confrontation. A difficult situation is often avoided, not seen as an opportunity for growth, and this bypassing a situation creates a barrier or a breakdown to open communication. The practice of clowning provides helpful training for staying in the moment, particularly when the truth of the situation is not such a comfortable place to be standing in. For example, in front of a group of 40 frustrated grade 9 students, instead of getting defensive and feeling overly responsible for the situation, I can breathe. Stop. Listen to the students. Watch their reactions attentively. Let them share all they need to share so they feel heard. Wait till a natural and gratifying solution takes form instead of jumping in with a pat prefabricated solution. Clowning is a perfect reminder that conflict is a paradoxical path to health and harmony.

Living with change and the unexpected

Teaching can be done with a preset list of objectives that one teaches or feeds to the students. The students consume the material and the outcome is relatively predictable. I have noticed that both my students and I have felt particularly enriched however when we are faced with surprising facts or situations which have led to a novel outcome. These are often the times when my lesson plans do not go as planned, when the students are late, when they walk in after a defeating test in another class or have found out they have a free period after English. Instead of holding on to my plan for dear life and instead of feeling like a failure at the turn of events, I am learning to accept the change and see what opportunity is present. I can even go into the classroom knowing that this is the arena where change will take place if I make room for it. Again it brings me back to being receptive to the actual situation.

Transforming problems into opportunities for learning

Another pleasing side effect of clowning I have noticed is a personal change. As I face problems and feel more comfortable with uncomfortable moments, the situations are transformed, energy

is freed up which no longer has the opportunity to fester in underlying layers of my self. The lightness and unpredictability offers a sense of fun that also diffuses negative energy. As a result, I am less likely to be delivering hidden or subtle messages to the students, messages that could potentially be damaging to the full development and expansion of a child.

Serious, but not

Both teaching and clowning is a serious business. Living up to my self-generated ideals can be a nightmare. I seem to gravitate between overgoverning myself with responsibility and control and sending my mind reeling into a whirl of panic as I fret about the impact – healthy or not, growthful or not – on the future of the students. Reality can be daunting.

Clowning is a mix of reality and the surreal and sprinkles the seriousness of life with touches of absurdity and lightness.

As an example of this absurd mix of reality and the surreal, I remember an improvisation where I ended being little Red Riding Hood. At one point, I got to Grandma's house and was desperate to find a way to get into her house. I found myself having to run around trying to jump through a window that kept moving away from me. The window was in fact an empty picture frame held up and moved around by none other than the Big Bad Wolf (my partner on stage). The picture frame, my running around and my frustration in trying to get into the house were real. The situation of a moving window was absurd and surreal. This absurd mixture of drama and lightness creates laughter and is what clowning invites you into.

Developing awareness of breath, rhythm, gesture and emotion

Clowning offers the possibility of learning about oneself in relation to others. Through various exercises, I have been able to develop a clearer sense of the effects of my rhythm, of my gestures and emotional expressions on an audience.

Clowning has transformed the way I see myself and the way I see others, creating a shift in my perspective. The time spent talking with the facilitator and participants is as valuable to the learning process as the exercises themselves. These discussions honour the mistakes, the feelings, and the growth process. The simplest of actions and

interactions offer a wealth of humour and insight.

Who is the self that teaches?

In this article, I have described how clowning has enabled me to accept and live with the responsibilities of being a teacher, to find lightness, to embrace conflict, to build a balance between my inner and outer world, and to dwell in the middle circle – the connection between the two worlds.

Clowning has helped me answer the questions asked by Palmer "Who is the self that teaches?" and "How can educational institutions help teachers sustain and deepen the self-hood from which good teaching comes?"

I am certain there are many venues for doing this and many more to come, but one tool within easy reach is clowning.

I would define clowning for teachers as an active and creative communicative meditation process that offers the distinct opportunity to practise being present, receptive and open while interacting with others. The activities and exercises involve concrete chances at personal transformation through introspection, laughter, communication and silliness.

Clowning has helped me move closer to my intention of being a teacher and an artist; the practice is assisting me in the process of being connected inwardly and outwardly, and in exploring the experience of being fully present, fully aware and fully open.

Wouldn't the world be beautiful if the smallest things were important?

Vivian



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The Frayed Edges of Imagination

Robert McNeer

Though it is true / that fire is the enemy of water, / moist heat is the creator of all things: / discordant concord is the path life needs.

Ovid "Metamorphoses"



Robert McNeer and his daughter, Angel

A great Kabuki actor, near the end of his life, said to his disciples: "I can show you the form of 'looking at the moon'. I can teach you the proper sequence of the proper postures, from the soles of your feet to the tip of your finger. But, from the tip of your finger to the moon, that's your responsibility".

I think this is a good thumbnail sketch of what truly inspirational art does: it challenges us in that way. It reminds us – and in this case the term "remind" is particularly apt: it literally reminds us – that true perception is a creative act, and it does so by inviting us to partake in that act of creation. I, the audience, the spectator, am invited onstage, as it were, to sing in the chorus of creation. In this sense great art is open-ended:

not *representation* but *evocation*, and though it may show us the way, from the tip of our fingers to the moon, that's the responsibility of each of us.

I'd like to try an experiment with you. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath, and enjoy the feeling of relaxed attention. Now bring your attention to your skin.

Tour your skin with your consciousness, as if it were a vast landscape. Skim over your whole body, the ins and outs, over the wrinkles, the bulges and depressions of it...don't be depressed about the bulges, just tour it like a landscape you're discovering for the first time... where it's stretched, where it's folded, where it's pressed by your weight, hugged by your clothing, and where it's free... into its most intimate folds, returns, meanders...wrapped like a well-cut cloak over your shoulder blades, your flanks, stretched over your neck, your throat, over your scalp, under your hair, beneath your nails, between your toes... hugging the swirls of your ears, under your cheekbones, over the public places of your face, your neck, your hands. This is the border of your body, where your body ends and the world begins. It defines your physical presence, it is that which separates your body from the world, wrapped around you like a foil around a chocolate.

Now stay with your skin, and begin to feel it as the inner edge of the world, where your body meets the world, where the world embraces your body. This is what unites your body with the world. Feel the air which caresses you, which you invite into your nose with your breath, your mouth as you breathe, on down your throat, into your lungs, and out again, a continuous song.

This is the theme of my article: seeing the border not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity. Transcending, through knowing and loving the

border, not through fighting it. As I hope you've just felt through your own skin, your *attitude* toward your own borders can significantly change the experience you have of them, can decide, in fact, whether you'll transcend them at all. I'll be looking at the way different artists have approached this question.

When I was 25 I took part in a workshop in Japan which included an exhibition of Indian Kathakali dance. An actress danced one of the scenes of the *Mahabharata*. I don't remember the names of the characters, but it was a classical scene of jealousy, such as we find often also in Greek mythology: the god has been out cavorting with the nymphs all night long, now it's dawn and he comes home to find that his wife, the goddess, is waiting for him at the door, immobile and furious. It's a wonderful scene, as we enjoy his denial, her fury, his braggadocio, her petulance, his remorse, the growing eros between them, and finally their loving reconciliation, all very recognisable human situations, which one can enjoy greatly without understanding the intricacies of Kathakali dance, all danced brilliantly by a lone actress, performing both the god and the goddess, in full regalia: costume jewels, mirrors and makeup. This was an actress in her prime: I would say, about 40, by turns swaggering, pouting, alluring: beautifully, sensually vibrant, like a ripe fruit bursting with eros – a joy to observe.

But her guru, who was present, was not altogether satisfied. There were some points which he would like to see developed differently. So he gets up and dances it: does the same dance, or rather the same choreography, for it's a completely different dance in his body. He's over 70 years old, like a small, dried twig, wearing a t-shirt and jeans: I remember when he stood up I had an image of clothing hanging on a clothes hanger. So he stands up, the musicians start playing, and he turns his head. Just his head: no arms, no chest breathing, no mudras, just head and eyes. And it's all there: suddenly the air is electric with tension. No makeup, no costume, no flirting with the audience: just the essence of betrayal. Then he's the husband, playing at penitence, and we see the duplicity, but also the need to be loved...he's like an empty pocket. Well, it was incredibly moving. I can't say it was better or worse: it didn't have the shiny brilliance of her performance, but it had something else: a depth in the simplest gestures.

In *Secrets of the Noh*, which is a 15th Century treatise on acting written by a Japanese master

named Zeami, he talks about the stages an actor goes through, in what he calls the "three flowers". The first stage is that of the beauty of the skin: the actor radiates a kind of beauty through his skin, and this beauty will accompany the actor up to the age of about 25 years. Of course, in Hollywood the careers of many actors have consisted entirely of this phase – and consequently plastic surgery is very good business there – but we're talking about Noh theatre here, not Hollywood. After 25, the actor enters the next phase, that of the beauty of the muscle. This is a phase in which the joy of watching the actor consists in an admiration for his use of technique. Sean Penn comes to mind.

At about 45, the actor no longer has the physique to perfectly execute his technique. At this point, he must take stock, deciding what he can do, and what he can no longer or will never do. Interestingly enough, according to Zeami this is when he should start teaching, for his relationship with his students will stimulate his internal growth, and prepare him for the last flower. At about 55, the actor enters the phase of the last flower, which has the beauty of the bone. At this point the actor's technique seems to evaporate: he doesn't seem to be doing anything at all, and yet we are profoundly moved. I think of Marcello Mastroianni's last years.

When I read this, it rang true, because it explained what I had seen in Japan, that intergenerational dance performance, and it was perhaps the first time that respect for my elders made a kind of cosmic sense, was more than just being polite to someone who will probably die before you will.

That respect is not for an individual, but for a deepened experience. The last words of 'King Lear' are Edgar's: *"The weight of this sad time we must obey, / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say. / The oldest hath born most, we who are young / Shall never see so much, nor live so long"*.

It is not that "we who are young" cannot see, or bear what Lear bears and sees, but if we do, we will no longer be ourselves, we will have transcended that boundary which defines us as "we who are young". That's why at 25 I couldn't possibly have rendered what that guru did at 75. But I'm getting there, year by year!

I find the word "yoga" very interesting in this context, because it can be traced etymologically to the word "yoke", which is that which the ox

bears, that to which it submits and which imposes a limit on the animal's movement, but it also a synonym of "union", and in fact it is the yoke which joins the ox with his fellow-oxen.

The guru doesn't attempt to hide or fight his frailty: quite the contrary, he accepts it as his yoke, and thus facilitates a mysterious transformation: that yoke becomes no longer a constraint, but rather a union – that which unites him with humanity, in this case the audience.

I think a compassionate teacher can cultivate this discovery, in which the student's apparent limit can reveal itself as a bridge, which unites him with the world, which spans the fearful gap between himself and the other, but it's important that you, the teacher, recognise the "limit", not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity, and invite the student to enjoy, rather than fight, the quality that he has. For that boundary is a very rich, very fertile zone.

For instance, if you have a student very timid about using her voice, it's probably counterproductive to ask her to sing Figaro, for instance, or *Die Walkeri*: that's exactly what she won't do, because she's afraid, and the nature of fear is contraction. But if you have the others close their eyes and ask her to make the *sound* of a sunset, you might unlock something in her. I often find this kind of synesthetic crossover very liberating.

We close our eyes while she graces us with the sound of sunset. By the way, this will work ONLY if you, the teacher, honestly have no preconception about the *correct* sound of a sunset: if there is one molecule of your being prepared to judge the response, then you're lost from the start. You must remain very light, because you're facilitating a bridge, and it could collapse: the artist – in this case the timid student – has to create a connection between what everyone knows – a sunset is red, and what only she knows – a sunset *sounds* like this... This is for me what transcending boundaries is about: a sense of union. "I know you through me, I know me through you". Because it's the listening, as much as the sound, which creates the act. The other students, eyes closed, listening for the sound of sunset, can maintain a wave of attention which invites that transcendence.

And this is the zone where the imagination resides, the space between me and you whose *lingua franca* is poetry, which communicates more

through innuendo than by declaration. Wallace Stevens said: *"I do not know which to prefer, / the beauty of inflections, / or the beauty of innuendos: / the blackbird whistling, / or just after"*.

In an essay on the poetry of Derek Walcott entitled *The Sound of the Tide*. Joseph Brodsky writes: *"Because civilizations are finite, in the life of each of them comes a moment when centers cease to hold. What keeps them at such times from disintegration is not legions but languages... The job of holding at such times is done by the men from the provinces, from the outskirts. Contrary to popular belief, the outskirts are not where the world ends – they are precisely where it unravels. That affects a language no less than an eye"...*

He goes on to explore what that means in the poetry of Derek Walcott, who grew up in the Caribbean, at the outskirts of the English language. Brodsky speaks of the linguistic riches of Walcott's upbringing, in an English in contact with *"French, Hindu, Creole patois, Swahili, Japanese, Spanish..."*. In one of his poems, Walcott speaks like this:

*I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
I had a sound colonial education,
I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.*

I'm intrigued by this image of the unravelled edge, the rough interface between the empire and the unknown. Brodsky places the poet historically on the edge of the empire, but Walcott makes of himself a nation – *"either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation"* – so that the edge of this microcosmic empire is the skin of this *"red nigger who love the sea"*.

There's a sequence of massage I sometimes use in teaching in which the students massage one another first with an attention to the structure of the bones, and the articulation of the skeleton. Then they bring their attention to the muscles, using the massage to free the muscular flow of movement. Finally they proceed to the skin, using the most subtle means, sometimes barely touching or skimming, sometimes just using the breath or the heat of their hands to stimulate the skin. And often the most amazing thing happens: people start crying. Not in the deep massage of the bones or the rigorous muscular manipulation. People are most deeply moved in the feather-light fairy-touch of the skin. The first times this happened I was surprised, and I must say it's still a wonder to me. But as I've thought about it over the years I've realised it has its logic. The skin, as we've experimented

today, is the uncertain place where I stop and the world begins, where me ends, and not-me begins, where the constant negotiation with the other takes place. It is precisely here, I think, that our most creative work takes place, at our edges, at our limits, and I would propose that the more comfortable we are navigating that zone, the deeper, the more far-reaching our creativity will be.

And yet this separation itself is an illusion, as the mystics of every religion remind us, and it is in the exploration, explicit or implicit, of this illusion, that any art worth the name is born.

Teilhard de Chardin expressed it thus:

The farther and more deeply we penetrate into matter, by means of increasingly powerful methods, the more we are confounded by the interdependence of its parts... It is impossible to cut into this network, to isolate a portion without it becoming frayed and unravelled at all its edges.

I believe that there is something in the spirit of each of us which recognises the artificiality of this separation, which is unsatisfied with this frayed quality. This is the part of us which struggles with the feeling that reality, the ultimate reality, is always just escaping, always just around the corner, behind the horizon, or just glimpsed through a glass, darkly. There's a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson which expresses very beautifully that struggle.. It's called *Ulysses*, and is a poetic monologue. Ulysses has returned to Ithaka, his wandering behind him. Sitting on his throne, Ulysses broods over the meaning of his life and destiny: the king is restless. He says:

*I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, ...
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move...
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die...
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are –
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*

Tennyson here describes the search for meaning as looking through an arch:

*Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough / Gleams
that untraveled world whose margin fades / forever and
forever when I move....*

We will be looking through that arch again in a moment, but for now I would just like to note that the “untraveled world” has the quality of the horizon: the more we move towards it, the more it recedes. At the same time that Tennyson celebrates the discipline, the yoga, which tirelessly strives to transcend the boundaries with which our life of the senses seems to confront us, he recognises the limit of that struggle, which ironically enough seems to repulse its own object: “*whose margin fades / forever and forever when I move...*”.

And this is because the struggling, the willed, upward striving is not alone enough to accompany us through the frayed edges. There is also a crucial balancing factor. The mystic tradition of the cabala presents us with a very useful image, that of the *zefirot*. The *zefirot* is a ladder of experience, later adopted by the neoplatonists to trace the progress of the philosophical adept. Each rung of the ladder is a crisis of development which will either be overcome, to be followed by the next rung, or succumbed to, at which point the adept falls off the ladder altogether. (I've always suspected that the children's game “snakes and ladders” came from this model.) But the interesting point, for me, is not the rungs, but the verticals of this ladder. Of course you need two verticals, or the rungs have nothing on which to stand. In the cabala tradition, one vertical is “justice”, the other, “mercy”. These are two forces that must be in harmony for the ladder to stand at all. In Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia speaks eloquently of the need for mercy to balance justice's harsh reality. In the court of law, Shylock asks on what compulsion he must show mercy, and she replies:

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain of heaven
Upon the place beneath...
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.*

By the way, it's interesting to note that what we have here is a woman *pretending* to be a man quoting Jewish mystical tradition to defeat a

Jew in a Catholic court of law. Or, if we take one more step back, a boy-actor pretending to be a woman pretending to be a man *pretending* to defeat a Gentile pretending to be a Jew on a stage *pretending* to be a Catholic court of law in a country where the actual practice of catholicism would be rewarded with beheading. That we are truly, and deeply moved by all this pretence attests to the tremendous force of imagination.

So we have here two complementary forces: the individual will striving upwards towards the absolute truth, as in Tennyson's *Ulysses*, and divine compassion, which, in Portia's exquisite phrase, “droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath”. It is, I think, in the balance between these two forces that we truly transcend our boundaries. If we think of the upward striving energy as fire, and the downward grace, with Portia, as water, then the above quote from Ovid begins resonating more fully.

Ken Wilbur, in his book *A Brief History of Everything*, states it thus:

Wisdom and compassion... transcendence and immanence, the love that reaches up and the love that reaches down... (The central historical point in all this is that with the great non-dual systems, from Plotinus in the West to Nagarjuna in the East), we see an emphasis on balancing and integrating these two movements...and the union of these two...is the source and goal and ground of genuine spirituality.

So it's not just about struggle, it's also about acceptance. Much Sufi mystic poetry is dedicated to this acceptance. The soul is often portrayed as a woman, longing for God's embrace. I'd like to share with you a few poems from Hafiz, the great Persian Sufi master, which express beautifully the need and benefits of surrendering to grace, in order to transcend our (apparent) limits, to reweave the frayed edge left by tearing our self out of creation's infinite embrace:

Without Brushing My Hair

*The
Closer
I get to you, Beloved,
The more I can see
It is just You and I all alone
In this
World.
I hear
A knock at my door,*

*Who else could it be,
So I rush without brushing
My hair.*

*For too
Many nights
I have begged for Your
Return.*

*And what
Is the use of vanity
At this late hour, at this divine season,
That has now come to my folded
Knees?*

*If your love letters are true dear God
I will surrender myself to
Who you keep saying
I
Am.*

Often the poet portrays himself as a drunk, forever raising his voice in an ecstatic, raucous, late night chorus, awash in the infinite joy and playfulness that come from the act of surrender:

Cucumbers and Prayers

*All day long
The earth shouts
“Gee, thanks”.*

*Such an exuberant gee,
It starts throwing
Things*

*As if God were passing by in a parade encouraging
Rowdy behaviour
By looking so beautiful –
That a whole avalanche of mania swoops in!*

*I like this idea of throwing things at God,
And especially – His making us rowdy!*

*Thus, as soon as Hafiz is out of bed
I start stuffing large sacks
Of old shoes, cucumbers,
And
Prayers*

*For the upcoming
Consecrated*

*Free-for-all –
And who knows
What else.*

Two Giant Fat People

God

And I have become

Like two giant fat people

Living in a

Tiny boat.

We

Keep

Bumping into each other and

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I think the balance between these two movements: the striving upward movement that Tennyson describes, and the crazy, playful rendering of Hafiz, is what enables us to transcend our boundaries.

From 1973 to 1975, a remarkable experiment was conducted by Duane Elgin at Stanford Research Institute in California. He attempted to influence a magnetometer with his intentionality alone. A magnetometer is a machine that can measure changes in a magnetic field, recording them on a sheet of paper. I read from *The Life We Are Given*, by George Leonard and Michael Murphy:

The first few exercises generally followed the same course. Elgin would sit or stand a few feet from the magnetometer, where he could see the recording device, and focus all the force of his will on the instrument, trying to influence it and thus make the needle move. He would continue this concentrated effort for 20 to 30 minutes, watching the needle tracing an almost straight line – but with no results. Finally, exhausted and exasperated, he would say to himself, “I give up”. At that moment, the needle would start indicating a change in the magnetic field. These changes were by no means insignificant. In some...exercises, the needle went entirely off the scale; to get such results by normal means would take a force estimated to be one thousand times stronger than that of the earth’s magnetic field. Nor did physical distance lessen

Elgin’s effectiveness. In one instance, he was able to affect the magnetometer strongly from his home several miles away.

Later, Elgin learned to refine his technique. “I’d spend 20 to 30 minutes doing the best I could to establish a sense of rapport and connectedness with the instrument, and with great will and concentration I would coalesce that sense of connectedness into a field of palpable energy. I’d feel myself coming into the magnetic field and pulsing it to respond. Then, when there would be a moment of total surrender, the response would occur”. George Leonard coined a very useful term for this process: focused surrender.

It’s my experience that the more we can explore the nature of our boundaries in this spirit of focused surrender, the more we can revel in their “frayedness”, the more creative we become. Because in this way we begin to experience that unravelled quality, not as a *danger*, but as an *opportunity*, as a constant invitation to interact with the sensual world around us.

Danger and opportunity. As an actor, one has a lot of truck with those twins. I understand the Chinese ideogram for “crisis” consists of two figures: the figure for “danger”, and that for “opportunity”. I think our borders, in that sense, are real “crisis zones”. Whether we choose to live them fundamentally as zones of danger or of opportunity has profound, and far-reaching consequences, from psychosomatic illness to international politics.

Again, I think a sensitive teacher can enormously influence the attitude that the student has to that which is outside his boundaries.

How? With mindfulness. By paying careful attention, and encouraging the student to pay careful attention to the apparently unimportant detail, paying heed to the spaces between and the spaces beyond the field of vision, as a continuous source of opportunity, of inspiration. I’m constantly reminding my students, when we do physical exercises, to pay attention less to the other bodies around them, and more to the spaces between the bodies, for it is in this space, in this air, that mind can be found.

This is from *The Spell of the Sensuous*, by anthropologist David Abrams:

Nothing is more common to the diverse indigenous cultures of the earth than a recognition of the air, the wind, and the breath, as aspects of a singularly sacred power...of all that is ineffable, unknowable,

yet undeniably real and efficacious. Its obvious ties to speech...lends the air a deep association with linguistic meaning and with thought. Indeed, the ineffability of the air seems akin to the ineffability of awareness itself, and we should not be surprised that many indigenous peoples construe awareness, or “mind”, not as a power that resides inside their heads, but rather as a quality that they themselves are inside of, along with the other animals and plants, the mountains and the clouds...

I’d like to return for a moment to language. In the above quotes both Brodsky and Abrams immediately light upon language and linguistic meaning as a quality of mind. This summer I learned the etymology of the word “metaphor”; it comes from the Greek words “meta, from one place to another”, and “pherein, to carry”, as in ferry-boat. So a metaphor is something that carries from one place to another. I think that’s very interesting in respect of this border zone, this place at the edge where the world unravels, because it’s like the linguistic equivalent of yoga, the union or the bridge, or if you prefer the ferry-boat which negotiates our boundaries, which carries the commerce between that which we know and that which we don’t, between that which we can literally see and that which we can see only with the imagination.

A propos sight, there’s a metaphor of Shakespeare’s which has been under my skin since I first read it 25 years ago. At the age of 19 at university I took a Shakespeare course in which we read them all. All 35. And in 35 plays, the metaphor that struck me the most, and for the oddest reason, was from *The Tempest*. In act I scene ii, Prospero reveals to his daughter the prince of Naples, Ferdinand. This is an extremely manipulated blind date, and it behoves me to fill you in quickly on the plot up to that point. *The Tempest* starts, fittingly enough, with a storm. The ship goes down with the king of Naples, his son the prince Ferdinand, some courtiers (one nice and a little silly and two very nasty), and two drunken butlers. They wash up on an island, let’s say somewhere between Bermuda and Corfu. They are in four groups, each of which thinks to be the only surviving one: sailors, king and courtiers, drunken butlers, and Prince Ferdinand, who’s all alone and feeling blue because his beloved father is dead and “those are pearls that were his eyes”.

But we’ve already learned that this was actually a magical storm arranged by the head honcho on this island, a magician on the verge of retirement by the name of Prospero, who’s directing the whole thing with the assistance of his spirit slave, Ariel. Now Prospero has a few fish to fry, one of which is the

marriage of his daughter, who’s name is Miranda, and his plan is to marry her to Prince Ferdinand, which is why he’s arranged this meeting. But the meeting is very special for another reason: Miranda has never seen a man before, except for her father, and Caliban, who’s barely human.

And when he brings his daughter to observe the Prince, Prospero uses a metaphor that I can honestly say stuck in my memory more than any other in all 35 plays. Does anyone else remember? “*The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance, / and say what thou seest yond*”.

Now the reason this metaphor struck me so strongly was because it seemed to me so clumsy. I’m sorry, and I apologise humbly to the ‘bardophiles’ in the group, but I just felt the old guy wasn’t quite up to par. It was his last play, he was facing retirement himself, we know he wrote under deadline pressure, he was probably a little tired, probably thought ‘we’ll let it stand for now, I’ll get back to it’ and never did. I mean come on: “*the fringed curtains of thine eyes*”...that’s a metaphor to stumble over. At one point I thought it might be a theatre reference, to when the burgundy velvet curtain opens and the overture begins, then I remembered Shakespeare’s theatre had no burgundy velvet curtain, so that didn’t work. I understand: you have eyelashes, and that could be considered a fringe if your eyelids are the curtains and her name is Miranda which comes from “mirare” which means to look or even “to wonder” as in “admire”, so a metaphor about looking is appropriate, but I’m sorry, it just didn’t work. Too self-conscious. A little overproduced.

But while thinking about this article, about the frayed edges of consciousness, it suddenly all became clear. It’s much more than a theatrical metaphor, it’s a metaphysical one. The artificer, or artist, is talking to his female, feeling part, his innocent soul, who has never seen a man and who will, on the instant, fall in love. Miranda’s nonplussed response, on seeing the prince, is: “*What, is’t a spirit? / Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir, / it carries a brave form. But ‘tis a spirit*”...

Form and spirit. Form *animated* by spirit. Prospero has here played God, apparently breathing life into the clay for his innocent audience. Under the gaze of Miranda, a miracle takes place, and suddenly the metaphor is not ponderous, but a simple, one-line preparation for the momentousness of his dear soul’s discovery. Her eyelids are literally fringed curtains, but they are also the frayed boundaries where human interaction begins, where the spirit can be ferried from one body to another.

It is a metaphor for metaphor, or at least for the miraculous place where metaphor can occur.

I think it's remarkable the way Shakespeare, in his last play, brings to the fore the act of perception: *"The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance, and say what thou seest yond"* could equally well be addressed directly to the spectator, the silent observer of the scene. It has been pointed out that no great drama unfolds in *The Tempest*. The story is programmed from the start by Prospero, the director (and besides two plots for murderous usurpation – both summarily truncated before anything develops), almost the only tension is temporal: Prospero is constantly fretting that time is running out, as if those miraculous curtains might close before he shows his last and best trick, in which he disappears, in preparation for which, he here pushes the drama forward, off the stage, into the very eye of the spectator *"advance the fringed curtains of thine eyes"*, because very soon the demigod will be no more, and it will be the god within you, within each one of you, who will direct the show.

But Prospero is not simply a sage, he's an artist, and as an artist, he manipulates form ("it carries a brave form") to *invoke* that which is both beyond and within form ("But 'tis a spirit"). It's interesting that Miranda doesn't say "it *hath* a brave form," but

rather "it *carries* a brave form". The spirit is not one with the form, but rather it *carries* its form, as the metaphor *carries* meaning.

In this way the artist uses the form to transcend the form, not permanently – for the nature of a curtain is to open and close, to reveal, and conceal – but playfully, celebrating the interdependent co-arising of form and spirit.

For all his power, Prospero recognises that he cannot do it for you. He can but point and show a *way* to that which you can only see *for yourself*. "From your finger to the moon, that's your responsibility". Prospero invites us to see afresh the beautiful dance of form and spirit, and he does so by offering us a living metaphor. If we so choose, this metaphor can carry us from that which we are, to that which we may become.

Robert McNeer (USA), is an actor, director and writer who has lived for the last 20 years in Puglia, in southern Italy. He teaches theatre and communication techniques to educators, amateurs and professionals. He is co-founder of "La Luna nel Pozzo", a cultural centre near Ostuni (Brindisi), where he creates theatre and hosts international workshops and seminars on many topics involving performing arts and human potential. "La Luna nel Pozzo" offers dormitory and eating facilities for 15 (more in nice weather), an ample dance studio and a stone amphitheatre, pictured below.



SE Interview with Pra Piroj

SE: Tell us about your background in Thailand.

I was born in a small village in the western town of Siam called Kanchanaburi where I received my primary and secondary schooling. My Thai village accent is dialect, which is totally different from Kanchanaburi city dwellers and from the official Bangkokian accent.

My vivid recollection about my childhood is of running in the rice paddy fields, playing with home-made kites, modelling clay from the rice field, playing traditional games (this included chasing monkeys on the tree). There was a central Buddhist monastery in the village where I became a temple boy and spent lots of hours each day with the Buddhist monks.

During my childhood I had many rich cultural experiences. I recall my mum singing folk songs and telling stories. She was a talented folk singer and this was part of our village culture and contributed to the richness of life in the small village where I lived called Tungsamore. My father taught me how to play Thai wooden xylophone, gongs and drum in an ensemble, known as Thai Gamalan. Rituals and festivities to do with religious celebrations, seasons and agriculture happened all year round. When I moved from my village to Kanchanaburi town for secondary education, I felt uncivilised due to my rural identity. This led to my experiencing an identity crisis. In those days, there was an influx of western culture in Kanchanaburi town and Bangkok. When I moved later to Bangkok to receive education at a higher level, I encountered culture shock, as I truly believed I held my own cultural values strongly, playing Thai classical music, Thai songs and all the traditional stuff but I found this was not valued by the mainstream. Fortunately, I got over this when I was a Buddhist monk and had time to reflect.

SE: Please tell us a little about your life as Buddhist monk.

After completing my studies and obtaining a Bachelor of Education degree, I decided to enter the monastic life and became a Buddhist monk in the forest tradition. There I had an opportunity to reflect upon my life at a deeper level. I studied Buddhist philosophy and trained myself to put these philosophies into practice. The three pillars



of Buddhist education are called Tri-Sikkha (tri means three, sikkha means education). These are Sila (morality), Samadhi (concentration or meditation) and Panya (wisdom or insight).

In the forest monastery I lived simply, getting up at 4 a.m., chanting and reciting the sutras (discourses) and following the rhythm of the day. This was meditation, going for alms-round, having food – one meal a day, doing more meditation – walking and sitting, sweeping the leaves, cleaning the kuti (small hut) and meditation hall, having a bath, evening chanting with meditation and retiring to bed by 10 p.m. The main focus of these activities was to cultivate the energy of mindfulness in every action, weaving and synchronising the mind, body and spirit together into an harmonious whole. Part of the forest tradition training was going on jungle walks with my teacher to develop the skills of how to live simply in nature and to confront the unknown. After some years of meditation training, I went to meet the world and taught meditation and Buddhist philosophy to adults and also at primary and secondary schools, eventually becoming involved with INEB (International Network for Socially Engaged Buddhism). I also became involved with SEM (Spirit in Education Movement) established by the well-known social reformer, Suluk Sivaraksa. This led to my developing interest in Waldorf Education.

SE: How did you first encounter Waldorf education?

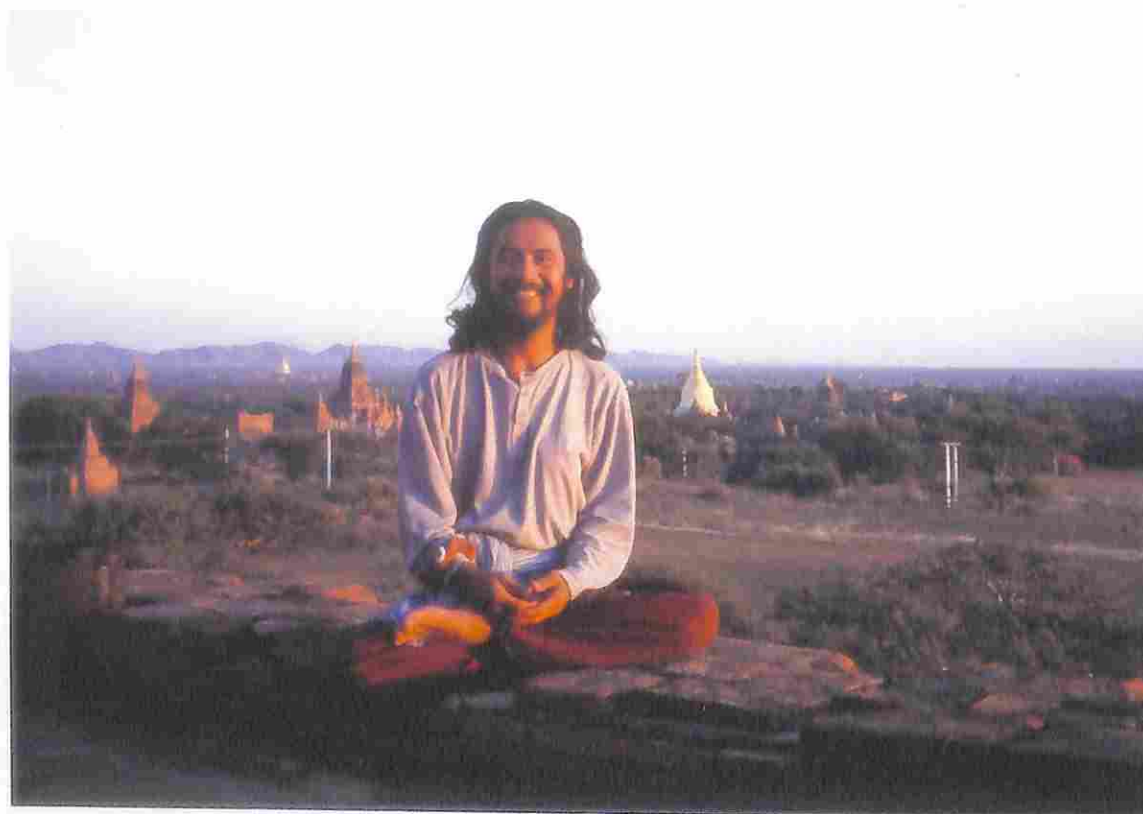
During the INEB international conference in Surin Province, N.E. of Siam, I met a Thai woman who was involved with Waldorf Education in Germany and she told me about her experiences. This led me to meet others with similar experience. I felt very privileged to meet these Waldorf-inspired teachers. Subsequently, I

received an invitation from Martyn Rawson to learn more about Waldorf Education in action and this led to my travels abroad to Europe where I visited various Waldorf schools.

SE: What led you to becoming a Waldorf teacher?

My great journey overseas opened up a whole new world. The more I got to know about Waldorf education, the more I realised that this learning and teaching style was well suited to my cultural background, spiritual growth and professional development and this was a way that I could contribute in the field of education. I finally decided to leave the monkhood to pursue a career in education; destiny led me to New Zealand where I did a one year training course in Waldorf Education. This, however, was not sufficient to allow me to teach in the schools in New Zealand. For practical reasons, I embarked on a further one-year Diploma of Primary Teaching that I will complete at the end of this year. Ideally, this will enable me to teach in the Waldorf Schools as a fully registered teacher.

In life we need inspiration from people so that our spirit can move in the right direction. I have received this inspiration from some of the experienced people I have met in the Waldorf educational field.



SE: Do you think Buddhism is compatible with Waldorf Education?

I would say that Buddhist philosophy and Anthroposophy are compatible. Healing, self-knowledge and inner transformation are priorities in both philosophies, as is the desire to awaken so that we can be of benefit to others.

At the heart of Buddhist teachings are the teachings of awakening, wisdom and compassion. Tri Sikkha is the threefoldness of Buddhist education, (Sila, Samadhi and Panya) which leads humanity to wholeness and ultimately to experiencing true freedom. We can see these aspects also in Anthroposophy.

In Anthroposophy, the threefoldness in mankind – willing, feeling and thinking – are prominent tools to understand our human nature. Waldorf educators have transferred this knowledge to educational practices for many decades. Socially engaged Buddhism is an attempt to integrate Buddhist philosophies into the modern day world, which includes the educational field. I believe that the tools necessary to understand human nature are already there in Buddhist philosophy but the methods of delivery of the philosophy need to be refined to meet the changing needs of today's society, especially in the education field.

A few thoughts on lesson preparation¹

The following short article is taken from a forthcoming publication, A Waldorf Lesson Planner, which has been produced by Martyn Rawson and Jan Swann. The Planner has been developed as part of a research project within the Integrated Masters Programme at Plymouth University. The Planner includes examples for lesson preparation and review and includes checklists for self-evaluation, pupil studies and practice-based research. It was developed in association with a group of experienced teachers in several countries and a group of new teachers in their first year of teaching.

The *Planner* will be published by IPF Publications in time for the new school year 2005/6.



Introduction

The challenge of creating lessons is to engage the imagination and stimulate the initiative of the pupils. This means finding a balance between the material and the self-activity of the pupil. We have to prepare and present the material in such a way that it engages the imagination and does not stifle it, awakens initiative and does not send it to sleep. Teaching always has to work with these two archetypal processes that one could symbolise with the image from *Genesis* of the Tree of Knowledge (whose fruits humankind seeks to learn) and the Tree of Life (representing here the processes of arriving at knowledge and the enlivening of our actions through insight

gained in learning through doing). The task of the teacher is to lead (*e-ducere* – Latin, to lead out) the pupil to a living knowledge, to a knowledge of life and to a life made meaningful through the process and outcomes of knowledge. I have been inspired by something my colleague Michael Rose once said (and later wrote up); our task as teachers is therapeutic as well as pedagogical.

The task of the teacher is to find the right ways to bring truth to life. Both balance and timing are involved in this. Too much truth, too soon, and life suffers. Too much vitality, for too long, and consciousness is dimmed... The lives of the children who come to us for education are, for the most part, already out of joint. They will generally have tasted too much from the

Tree of Knowledge, too little from the Tree of Life. As teachers, we shall – all of us – have to work remedially. But we must also know that our remedies, being in effect the right things at the wrong time, are now potentially poisons. (Rose, 1998, p. 3)

The teacher has to prepare and present the material in such a way that it engages the imagination and does not stifle it, awakens initiative and does not send it to sleep. If we get the balance wrong we can de-motivate pupils through overload or under-challenging and this can be very harmful for their development, especially if it leads them to lose their will to learn. What makes knowledge meaningful is the real life context in which it belongs – in other words its relevance.

Therefore, one of the key criteria for reviewing lessons is to observe how active the pupils actually were and to note their response during and after the lessons. Above all, the teacher must ask him/herself and the pupils, is the relevance clear?

This means as teachers, for example, avoiding presentations that, however brilliant, leave the pupils with nothing left to do but sit back and enjoy it, or worse, leave them with endless useless notes, or copied texts or simply regurgitating what the teacher has presented. We also have to give the pupils tasks that engage their imaginations and thus stimulate their thirst to learn. It is the pupils who should be doing most of the thinking, doing and using their imaginations in and beyond the lessons. The major imaginative activity of the teacher is before and after the lessons.

And we have to do this in an age of information and entertainment overload.

Rudolf Steiner was already aware of this problem:

When preparing lessons one tries to take into account everything that the modern social conditions require that a fourteen year old should have already learned, one can ask, is it at all possible?

He then formulated the following practical principle:²

The aims of Waldorf Education are to arrange the entire teaching in such a way that within the shortest time the maximum amount of content can be given to the pupils with the simplest means possible. This helps the children to retain an overall view of their subjects, not so much intellectually, but very much with regard to their feeling life.

To summarise:

- The teacher should present the maximum amount of content in the shortest time using the simplest means possible.
- And the children should always have the feeling that they understand the context of what they are learning.

The importance of the right feelings

The dangers implicit in the first maxim, of cramming children with as much material in as little time as possible, is clearly balanced by the second maxim which requires that they *also* have the feeling that they understand what they are learning and see the wider context. It is interesting that Steiner emphasises the element of feeling. The pupils should have the *feeling* that they understand, should be comfortable with what they have heard.

This highlights a more general point about appealing to the feelings of the pupils. Positive feelings are clearly not only important for memory retention – children remember best what they have enjoyed but they are also important because, as recent neurological research has shown, feelings also help us to juggle meaningfully with complex information and at the same time strengthen the emergent sense of self.

Feelings help us solve nonstandard problems involving creativity, judgement, and decision-making that require the display and manipulation of vast amounts of knowledge... Occurring in an autobiographical setting, feelings generate a concern for the individual experiencing them. The past, the now, and the anticipated future are given the appropriate saliences and a better chance to influence the reasoning and decision-making process. (Damasio, 2004, pp. 177-178)

Underlying our emotional life are the primary life processes which are constantly being brought biologically and psychologically into a state of homeostasis, or homeodynamics – a dynamic equilibrium, a term Professor Steven Rose with good justification prefers (Rose, 1997, p. 246). Emotions are responses to a variety of body states from the level of metabolic regulation, up through instinctive behaviours, pain and pleasure up to motives and drives and our thoughts and feelings. Emotions provide the background to our mental state of being and register our sense of well-being or discomfort (Damasio, 2004, pp. 44-46). As Steiner also pointed out (Steiner, 1996,



p. 109), a disturbance in one of the life processes leads to emotional states, such as a disturbance of breathing is experienced as anxiety. The body state that reflects equilibrium is often mirrored in the underlying state of mind. This fact indeed reveals the evolutionary origins of emotions, since they have a very fundamental function of warning the individual concerned that something in his/her organism is amiss and that internal or external causes need to be sought so that remedial or evasive action can be taken.

As Damasio points out, feelings are emotions raised to greater consciousness. We can form mental images of our feelings and relate to them through memory or by thinking about them. Steiner too made the point that the 'I', the central core of individuality (Steiner, 1970, p. 36) – the one who *has* the feeling – is not necessarily involved at the level of emotions but becomes engaged in the life of feelings in the activity of forming judgements, creating mental images, recalling memories and so on. Steiner stated that since it is the 'I' that learns and acquires new abilities (Steiner, 1970, p. 51) it

is important to address it through the feelings (Steiner, 1988, p. 103ff).

Emotions that underlie feelings

One long-term factor that influences children's emotional states (apart from their immediate life circumstances over which one as a teacher has little control – though being aware of them certainly helps) is their general state of physical well being, which is in turn often influenced by their sense of physical balance, which helps give a child a sense of being in control of themselves, and of being secure in themselves. This sense of physical inner balance also affects learning (*"Higher cognitive skills such as reading and writing, which require directional awareness... depend upon stable balance... as indeed residual non-integrated primitive and postural reflexes also do"*) (Goddard Blythe, 2004, pp. 17-18). Sally Goddard Blythe also points out that:

The vestibular system can also have a profound effect on the emotions. It is linked ... to the limbic system. The limbic system ... is that part of the brain where raw feelings, instincts and emotions are processed and generated. (Ibid, p. 18).

The retention of primary reflexes and hyper or hypo-active vestibular functioning can result in corresponding over or under arousal of the limbic system, which either responds by stimulating the sympathetic ("fight or flight" reaction) or parasympathetic (slows down basic life processes) systems with corresponding biochemical changes in the body state and emotional responses.

The message for the lesson planning teacher is to strengthen children's sense of balance and check for residual reflexes (and seek professional help), (Goddard, 2002). This fact should influence the rhythmical part of the lesson and sharpen the observation of individual children's motor and reflex behaviour.

How do emotions underlie feelings and how can they be influenced in teaching?

This question would be worthy of a doctoral thesis. It is only possible here to give a few indications. Essentially our emotions reflect stimuli that belong to the interior milieu of the human being. Thus one can see the importance



of bringing the children into a state of well-being and security and to cultivate the experience of the positive social emotions such as awe, wonder, gratitude, sympathy, kindness and sense of being at ease with others, trust and willingness to share and so on (Damasio, 2004, p. 156). These emotions stem from a harmonising of bodily states, generating a relaxed, open, alert mood which is a precondition for learning. Knowing how to help children move quickly towards this ideal state (for example through rhythmical activities, repetition of familiar experiences, prayer, stimulation of the basal senses – balance, coordinated movement, listening etc.) is an important part of lesson planning.

The other sphere that influences our mental state is what we perceive through the senses that are directed towards the world without. This includes what the teachers tells or shows to the pupils. The importance of the total context in teaching and learning including the interior state of the child is clearly described by Stephen Crashen and Tracy Terrell in their book on language acquisition (though the description is apt for almost any teaching situation):

Activities in the classroom focus at all times on topics which are interesting and relevant to the students and

encourage them to express their ideas, opinions, desires, emotions, and feelings. An environment which is conducive to acquisition must be created by the instructor – low level anxiety, good rapport with the teacher, friendly relationship with other students; otherwise acquisition will be impossible. Such an atmosphere is not a luxury but a necessity. (Crashen and Terrell, 1983, cited in Lutzker, P. and Rawson, M., 2002).

Such a learning-conducive atmosphere partly results from the attitude of the teacher which is composed of the total gesture of the body and emotional state (Rugg 1963, cited in Lutzker 1996, p. 243). I am in complete agreement with my colleague Peter Lutzke when he asserts that the best teaching is the outcome of optimal motor and gestural dynamic of the teacher and its reflection in the pupils (Lutzker, 1996, p 243).

For each artistic presentation (by the teacher) and each lesson it is necessary that there is accord between the movement and the ideas. Whether one is teaching literature, history or physics, the power and meaning of what is said will more or less depend on whether the teacher has 'become' the poem, the explanation of the phenomenon... In every learning situation empathy and participation have to be an essential component for the attainment of any higher goal. (Ibid, pp. 245-246).

The message for the teacher is relatively easy to formulate but highly complex to realise. To learn to create the right atmosphere in the classroom and how to 'become' the material one is presenting are not achieved simply by being aware of the problem. It suggests that teachers need to develop certain skills – skills that would be more familiar to an actor. Here is a huge area for further research, one that my colleague Peter Lutzker has already alluded to (Lutzker, 1996, p. 258ff) and which he is currently researching. I hope to see practical consequences for Waldorf teacher training emerging out of this research.

Soul Economy

Steiner continued, in the passage quoted above, to explain how this can best be done:

I have become convinced – and I stress this because it is not always practised – that if a teacher applies the method I have called 'soul-economy', she will have to spend at least 2 or 3 hours of concentrated preparation in order to teach for about half an hour in such a way that the whole topic can be brought in a living, organic context. And this she must be willing to do if she wishes to avoid inflicting harm upon her pupils.

There then follows a description of what we know as the Main Lesson.

What implications does this have for our preparation? Another few key thoughts from Steiner can help further:

The teaching will be economical if the teacher has so thoroughly mastered the main points of her subject matter before she goes into the classroom that it is no longer necessary for her to ponder over anything because, if rightly prepared, it is plastically before her soul. One will teach economically, if one is so prepared that the only thing still to be done is the artistic shaping of the lesson. The question of teaching is not a matter of the pupil's interest, diligence and devotion but primarily a question of the teacher's interest, diligence and devotion.

No lesson should be given that has not previously been a matter of deep experience in the spirit of the teacher. Obviously the organisation of the teachers as a group – the college or faculty – has to be such that each teacher has time to fully experience that which he or she is to teach.²

An interpretation with some questions and a few answers:

- **The teaching should be economical in a way**

that doesn't harm the children. We can ask: What would actually harm them? In this context, we can say: not engaging their will through their imagination would harm them, e.g., by giving them information or concepts without tangible meaning or context; it would also be harmful if it made them passive or frustrated through not giving them meaningful tasks, it would be harmful to allow them to lose interest by not firing their enthusiasm for learning. The forces of learning and intelligence should be turned to the world and the individual's relationship to the world. If they are turned inwards or simply not engaged they can become pathological.

- **A half hour of teaching requires 2 to 3 hours of preparation** – and that is just the new content, what about the rest of the preparation, the review, the corrections, planning assignments, learning the poem...? That means we have to prepare the content well before the actual lessons.
- **The teacher should have mastered the material and crystallised out the essential points.** This means having criteria to know *what* is relevant. In order to find criteria I must know what my aims are.
- **The actual preparation then consists, presumably the day before, in finding an artistic form for the whole.** Giving the lesson an artistic form can mean many things. But it certainly includes presenting the material in pictures – a picture is by definition economical because it expresses more than one level of meaning in a single image; furthermore the parts have an implicit, though not necessarily explicit, relation to the whole – and sensing the inner structure (either of the lesson or the presentation, even over several days) activates the imagination of the children; artistic also means that it relates to a higher meaning. Perhaps it is easier to describe the opposite being artistic: that would be predictable, schematic, additive, with predetermined outcomes – or simply boring. An artistically formed lesson cannot be planned in detail, some of it must be improvised. Speaking personally, the clearer I am about my aims, the more I can improvise.
- **The school should be so organised that teachers have quality time to prepare.** I will reluctantly leave this aspect without further comment except to suggest that Steiner meant this realistically and not in any utopian sense.

- **When the teacher is well-prepared, it is not necessary to tell the pupils everything she knows.** Younger children are curious to know what their teacher knows and older pupils are more interested in knowing what more there is to know about the subject. The outcome is the same. The pupils' urge to know (which is not always conscious and expresses itself as a desire to know) is transformed into a love of knowledge because their imagination and will is unconsciously (and even consciously) stimulated by the 'I' or Ego activity of the teacher in making this subject her own. The effort I make to grasp the essentials of the subject matter is emulated by the pupils and becomes a love of learning. This process of identification with the subject through the teacher underpins the role of the teacher in Waldorf education.

What preparation goes into planning lessons – other than my whole life up until this moment? Where do I start?

What to teach

- I orientate myself to the Waldorf curriculum. The book, *The Educational Tasks and Content of the*

Steiner Waldorf Curriculum (edited by M. Rawson and T. Richter)², gives developmental profiles for the various age groups as well as curriculum recommendations. There I find indicators and developmental motifs for the class I am going to teach. This is a good starting point.

- I compare these statements to the actual children I am about to teach. What do I know about this class? How would I characterise their development?
- If the pupils are older, I may have asked them to give feedback on their lesson, or to formulate questions that interest them. This gives me insight into their way of seeing their educational needs. I can interpret this.
- If I have taught this subject or Main Lesson before, I look up my notes, especially at my self-evaluation of the teaching. This gives me important indicators of what worked well and what would need to be further developed.
- I am not alone but part of a team. I try to be aware what my colleagues are doing with the class.
- I gather all the material needed for the content

The following table gives pointers to the different realms of preparation that we need to think about and provides a framework for identifying the way in which these principles relate to the four-fold nature of the human being.

	Relationships	Competence	Autonomy
Physical environment	I structure the classroom in such a way that the children can work with each other and can find the materials they need	I ensure that each child has the support material he/she needs to develop trust in their own abilities	It is possible in my classroom for a few children to work on their own
Habits, rhythms life-processes	The working habits, routines and rules are so self-evident that children can work with minimum disturbance (of the lessons or of each other)	The children know that I provide effective support for individuals to work independently	The lessons are well prepared and materials ready; this gives the children confidence
Emotional Setting	The lesson is so structured that I have time and opportunity to observe the children	I ensure that the right balance of tasks and questions for the pupils to respond to	I ensure that the tasks enable the children to make their own discoveries
Individuality	I like all the children. They interest me and they know that	I pay serious attention to what the pupils say about the lessons	I enjoy it most when the pupils say, "let us do it"

of the new Main Lesson or teaching block. This may include my own notes, the notes of other teachers, books on the subject and books of the teaching methods for this subject. I browse this material, reminding myself what the key points were. I mark key passages, so I can find them again. If I am very efficient I make an index of the key material.

- I formulate, in note form, what I think are the main points from the perspective of the subject I am teaching, the main points of content.
- I read all I can about this age group and try to put it into my own words. I formulate aims for this Main Lesson taking into account the age, the curriculum and the needs of this particular class.
- I formulate what the main pedagogical aims of this subject for this age group are.
- On the basis of these sets of aims, I formulate aims for the Main Lesson or period of lessons that are being planned. These should express what the content has to do with the development of the children.
- In summary these steps are examples of what Steiner called **taking in or studying the nature of the developing human being**.³

How to teach?

- More and more in recent years I have turned the focus of my attention in the preparation from what the teacher does to what the pupil does. I have shifted my focus from the teaching to the learning. How children and youngsters learn is more relevant to my preparation than how I teach. We place so much emphasis on the teaching content and the anthroposophical theory but not enough on observing and learning about how children actually learn. And they do learn differently at different times and in different places.
- I regularly reflect on various aspects of child development from an anthroposophical point of view; I study this periodically with my colleagues. I think about individual pupils and I reflect on various aspects of development described by Steiner.
- Together with my colleagues in teachers' meetings, we discuss how various teaching methods work and explore how these vary in the different age groups.

The balance between knowledge and skills

One of the key issues in lesson preparation is balancing the need to generate knowledge and that of cultivating skills.

Elsbeth Stern of the Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung (educational research) speaks of the importance of knowledge (Wissen) for learning. She criticizes the "fashionable" tendency in contemporary education policies to see competencies, core skills or key qualifications, such as learning or social competence, as more important than knowledge on the grounds that such competencies are based on knowledge. Successful teamwork depends on knowing what the strengths and weakness of the individual team members are. A central learning competence is to know which method of reading is appropriate to a given task – one must know of various strategies such as scanning a text or reading it word for word. Social competence or learning competence, she insists, are meaningless without content or context. She makes the point that:

Social or learning competence really can be learned but only indirectly taught. In a successful learning environment they occur as the most highly useful by-products. As teacher one should encourage group work and systematic learning and reading but only together with the successful communication of content... without knowledge we can't do anything, but we can't always do everything with knowledge. There is however intelligent knowledge and less intelligent knowledge, or one could speak of useful and not useful knowledge – that means knowledge that is useful for mastering certain tasks we consider important. (Stern, 2003, p. 15)

Stern's main point in this lecture is to make clear that real learning competence depends on knowledge that has become habitual through practice and learning by heart in a meaningful context.

It is the case that habitual knowledge is the precondition of understanding, precisely because one needs free (mental) capacity for the understanding processes... habitual knowledge must always be embedded in meaning-creating learning. (Stern 2003, p. 17)

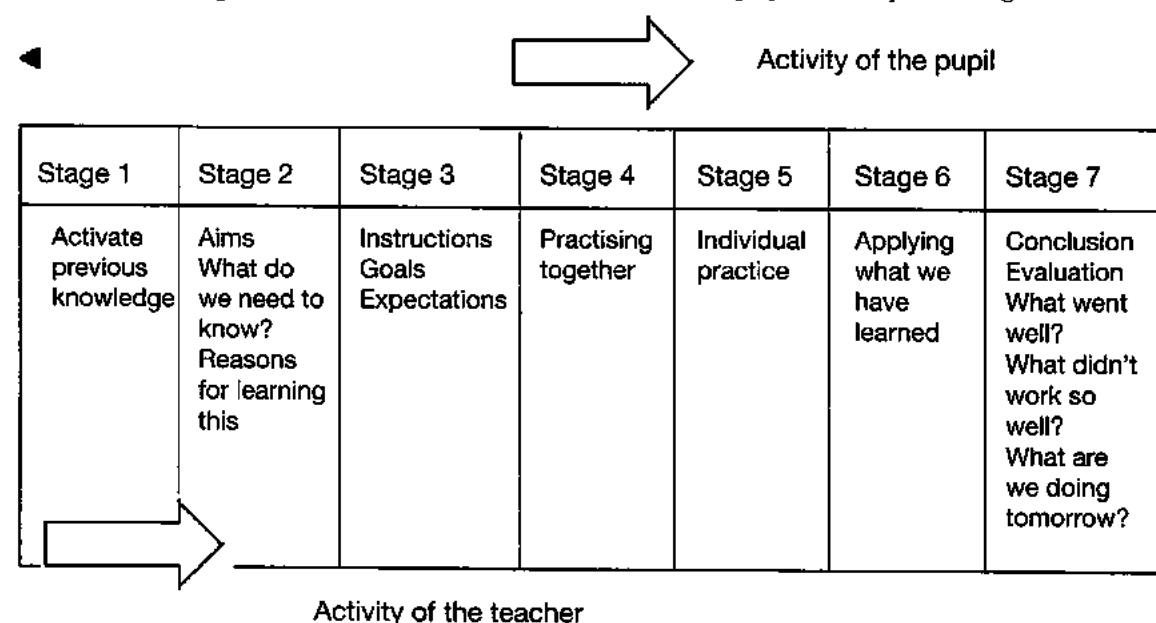
If one of our main aims in teaching to enable children to develop real competencies, these must be based on practical knowledge (I interpret Stern's *Wissen* as knowledge learned in context and therefore of immediate practical use) and on the regular practice of skills. Indeed key elements in Waldorf teaching are recall, repetition, practice and learning by heart (Rawson & Richter 2000, pp. 19-22)² and in respecting the stages of the

learning process may be briefly summarised in the sequence experience, judgement, understanding, application. (Avison, 2004, p. 39).³

From active teacher to active pupil

The following diagram shows the typical phases of a Waldorf lesson and highlights the stages from the teacher's activity to the activity of the pupils. The following approach is designed to encourage independent working habits.

In the diagram below, the emphasis on the activity of the teacher and the activity of the pupils sees a transition from teacher to pupil. Whilst the pupils are working, either together, in groups or alone, the teacher is making observations, helping groups or individuals or working him or herself.



The following notes point to aspects of the lessons in which the pupils become active:⁴

Stage one: Activating previously acquired knowledge or experience

- Daily recall
- Summary of what was learned or experienced in the previous lesson
- Discussion of previous lesson
- Clarify, explain or fill in gaps in previous knowledge

Comment: this strengthens the pupil's sense of autonomy

Stage two: Formulating aims for the lesson

- The pupils should have a clear understanding of the aims for the lesson – where are we going?
- The pupil should know which instructions are most important

Comment: The pupil's sense of competence is strengthened when he/she knows what has to be done, and how it is going to be done.

Stage three: Instructions

- The pupils should know why they have to do something (in age appropriate ways)
- The learning process should be broken down into clear steps
- Examples should be given
- The thought processes involved should be overtly articulated at this stage
- Keep the language as simple as possible, focus on the essentials
- Practice each step
- Look out for all the difficulties that arise as soon as the pupils start practising

- Notice which children join in, which drop out
- Stop as soon as you notice that the children are dropping out
- Ensure that the tasks are not too difficult (or too easy)

Comment: The pupils should know when instructions are being given and be in a receptive state to take them in.

Stage four: Practising together, in groups and alone

- Practise with the whole class
- Let them practise on their own
- The pupils should apply what they are learning on their own
- Question the class systematically and frequently to see what they have understood (and encourage them to listen to each others' answers)
- Observe whether the children are inwardly active and alert.

- Observe whether the tasks are within the pupils' capabilities
- Check that the pupils have a sense of success when solving the problems (are they too hard? Irrelevant? Too complicated?)
- Keep practising and encourage pleasure and satisfaction in hard work ("that was great, we worked hard today, well done")
- If necessary summarise the work steps on work cards or on the board

Comment: Pupils should have a sense of the relevance of practice and they should by and large enjoy it.

Stage five: Individual application of what has been learned

- Enable the children to start working as soon as they want to
- Written work usually follows at this stage
- Ensure that the working phase is not interrupted by questions (should have been asked before), by having the right material (should have been prepared before), being quiet, not leaving the room (toilet, visit to curative eurythmy in this work phase etc.)
- Encourage the pupils to help each other without disturbing others.
- Ensure that the pupils know that their work will be appreciated, corrected and evaluated

Comment: If the children know what the goal is, they are more likely to want to practice and be able to work on their own.

Stage six: Reflection

- Give feedback regularly to the class and individuals (let them give you feedback too)
- Correct mistakes immediately
- Give encouragement
- Set high standards and show the pupils where they collectively and individually are in relation to those standards. Value criteria such as presentation, aesthetic values, originality (in the right place), creativity and read out (or show) good examples of work

Comment: Reflecting on the learning process is a crucial part of the learning process itself. It is central to learning competence and life-long learning.

Stage seven: Closing the lesson

- Establish who has achieved all that was required
- Identify what was difficult
- Identify what was easy

- Ask the pupils how they think the lesson should continue tomorrow
- Ask if they think certain aspects need to be gone over again or practised further
- Identify what can be done better

Comment: Such reflection, evaluation and expectations enable the pupils to understand the learning process, identify with it and find motivation to go on.

Some preconditions for good teaching

The well-being of the child depends on the right balance between the teaching environment, the teacher's input and attitudes and the pupil's self-activity.

The pupil feels secure when he/she knows in concrete terms what is expected.
The pupil feels motivated when he/she knows why we are learning something.
The pupil feels capable when he/she knows how to learn and what skills are needed.

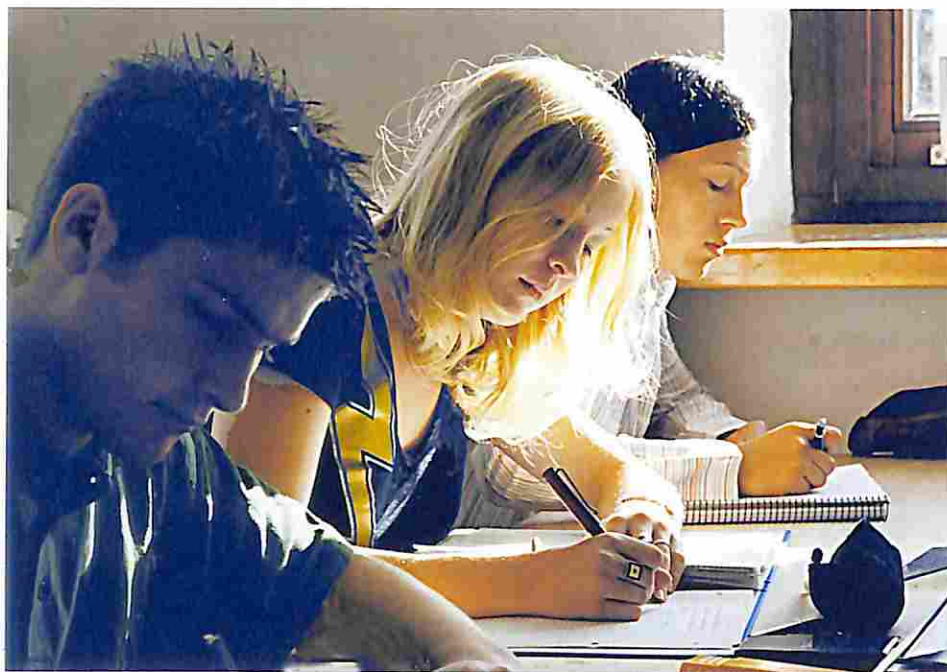
All learning needs to be based on:

- Relations: how we relate to what we are doing and what we have to learn about determines the strength and direction of our motivation. This requires an understanding of the context, or questions about it (e.g. Where does that come from? How is it made? What happens when we use it? What has it got to do with me?)
- Competence: the child has a feeling for what he/she can do or needs to be able to do. Knowing what we can do strengthens our sense of coherence and our self-respect. Competence builds trust. Being able to trust is also a competence.
- Autonomy: is the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning process.

Teaching has to respect these basic principles.

Inner preparation

- When I sit down to prepare I invoke the teacher's meditations⁵ before my preparation and in the morning before I teach. When I have the time, I also practice other short exercises as part of my preparation. These help me focus, create an inner calm, in which I can better hear what needs doing. This is a kind of counterpoint to my enthusiasm for the subject. I put that aside and try to allow space for the pupils.
- Whether I am planning the year, a new Main Lesson, or tomorrow's lesson, the most effective and consistent technique I have is to go for a walk in the woods, preferably in the rain and



wind because I tend to walk faster and that helps generate the ideas.

- In the recommended reading list are some books we recommend to help with inner preparation.
- This is what Steiner referred to as the next stage, **meditating on the nature of the developing human being.**

Post-preparation

- Teaching develops continuously. We need to reflect on our work and learn the lessons life teaches us. I review my lessons daily and I review the whole Main Lesson in relation to the aims I have set myself. Were the aims appropriate? Did we fulfil them? What am I looking for in the pupils? How do I know they were really engaged? My (older) pupils do a written review as a conclusion to their folder. Are there other aspects I should be taking into account?
- This process of reviewing and critically reflecting what actually happens in relation to my educational ideals and the nature of human development is what Steiner called **practising the 'Study of Man', especially when it leads to changes**

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1. This article is based on a lecture given at the World Teachers Conference at the Goetheanum, Easter 2004.
2. The quotes are taken from the Ilkley Course, 14th August 1923.
3. In the "Meditatively Acquired Knowledge of Man" lectures, 21st September, 1920 in Stuttgart.
4. Thanks to Gerard Reijngoud of the Dutch Waldorf Schools Advisory Service for helping to developing these ideas.
5. See *Towards a Deepening of Waldorf Education* published by the Pedagogical Section.

Book Reviews

Mary-Anne Lumley reviews *The Winding Road – Family treasury of poems and verses*. Compiled by Matthew Barton, ISBN: 1 903458 47 1, £12.99

A magical piece of luggage is how Matthew Barton, who compiled *The Winding Road*, describes this book. Each item is a treasure in itself, and has the capacity to enrich and inspire the traveller. *The Winding Road*, according to Barton, accompanies the traveller from conception to late adolescence, and each stage has its own collection of poems.

The first section comprises poems of conception, of birth and of naming/baptism. Most of these evocative poems are for quiet reading and reflection by parents, for example in the following extract from *Self-conceiving* by Matthew Barton:

*Father and mother...
I'm tying you into me, drawing up
Your deeper will from unknown depths
To serve me, give me shape between you, make
Love into life.*

Part two concerns the rhythms of a young child's day and year. It contains morning and evening verses; a wide selection of graces for young and old, and of course birthday verses – including one for an adopted child. Most of the verses are for saying aloud with children, and gradually, imperceptibly and effortlessly the children learn them by heart:

*Birds in the air
Stones on the land
Fishes in the water
I'm in God's hands.* (Angelus Silesius)

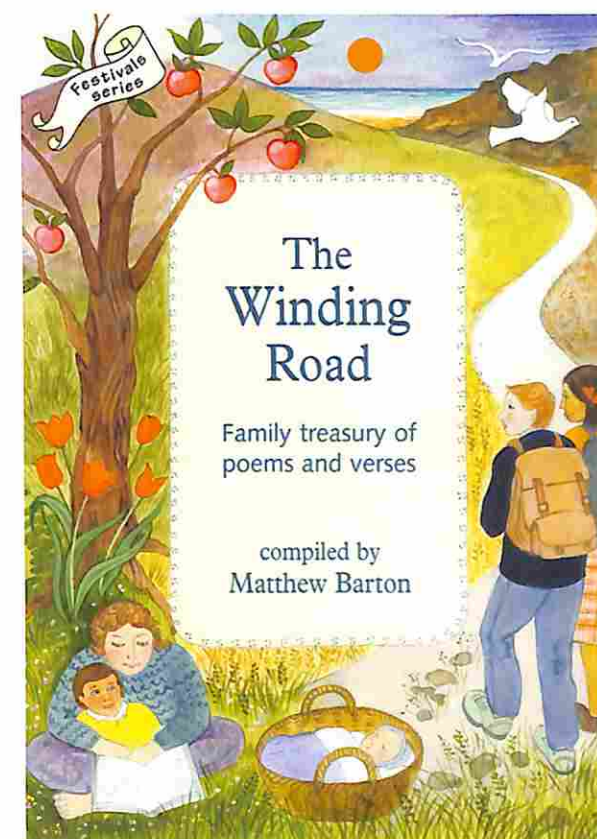
Or the humorous and well-known 'grace' by Robbie Burns on page 56:

Some hae meat and canna eat...

This section also includes, as a grace, Paul Matthew's *Love's Fabric*:

*May this tablecloth be spread
first
with your family bread*

*then a grace come about you
that whenever you shake
crumbs out at the door*



*the sparrows might carry
sweetness to the sour
salt to the savourless...*

The third part of the 'road' marks ...some of the stages in a journey through the first eight years or so of childhood... There are classics by William Blake, Thomas Traherne, William Wordsworth and Robert Louis Stevenson; several contributions from modern poets, and poems by children themselves, such as six-year-old Florence Kayll's delightful:

My quiet place is in my cupboard...

There is a timelessness about these poems. What could be more sympathetically written for an eight-year-old school boy than William Blake's:

*How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing?
How can a child, when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget the youthful spring?* (From *The Schoolboy*)

And what could be more wickedly delicious than Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Children's Hour*?

*...A whisper then a silence:
Yet I know by their merry eyes*

*They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise...*

The section continues with poems of a more sober nature for times of illness and pain, including several by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Then follows a section of poems for times of bereavement. There is a remarkable poem by 12-year-old Catherine Peters:

*They think that I am dead
All weeping by the bed....*

*Farewell then, and God bless you, for I go
Out through the window like a sprite:
Out from this dark enclosing cell of flesh
Into the freedom and the light....*

(*The Dead Girl*)

The final section is *Stepping Out and Growing Away* – which accompanies the loneliness of a nine-year-old to the emerging self-hood of the adolescent and sounds the ‘sweet melody’ of farewells. Several ‘threshold’ poems and Celtic invocations are treasures for this part of the journey. Some of them beg to be read aloud, such as Siegfried Sassoon’s:

Suddenly everyone burst out singing...

Others evoke a more reflective mood, and a few by Alan Jackson ask for several readings in order to penetrate their essence. Poems, such as Olivia Baird’s *A Child Leaves Home*, offer such comfort and understanding to parents:

*I squirrel them away; while they stay
You must return. After we left you...*

Others are gifts for the young person him/herself embarking on a new journey:

*Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me...*

(From Walt Whitman’s *Song of the Open Road*)

There is a supplementary section of verses by Rudolf Steiner, written for classroom use. Other beautiful and appropriate verses by Steiner are contained in the relevant section. However *The Winding Road* also stands alone as a collection of poems with universal appeal. It is not, and does not pretend to be, a comprehensive anthology nor, thankfully, is it a collection of so-called children’s verses that caters to the lowest common denominator of what some adults think most children like to hear. It is

healthy that children are exposed to a diversity of language forms, and it is healthy that some of these are words that have been finely crafted. It is also important for the young child to hear and absorb, then recite these forms; sound oral skills are a foundation for literacy.

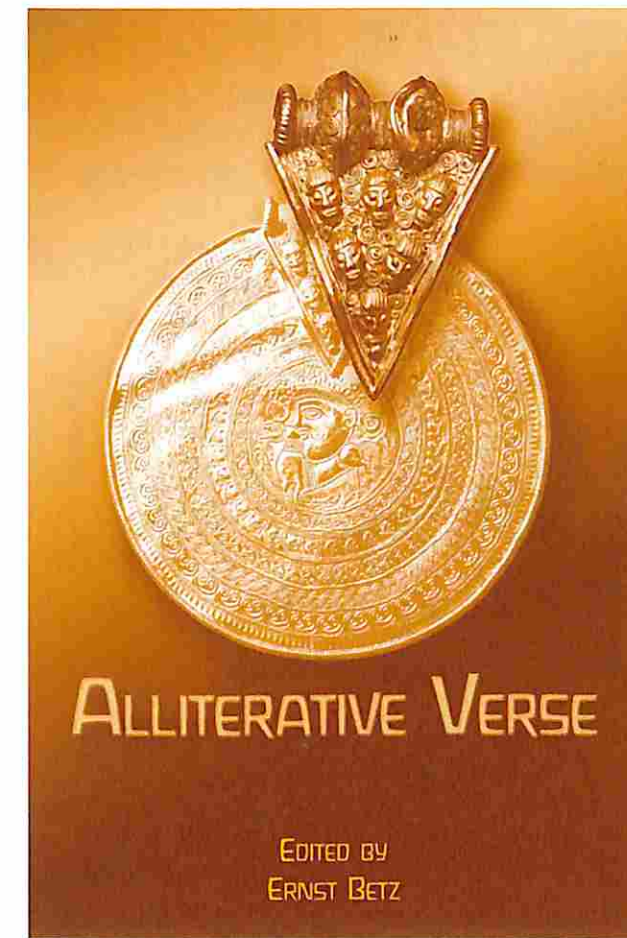
The Winding Road fills a gap, with a rucksack full of poems for parents and their children for their journey together. The collection brings evocative language, humour, pathos, wonder and beauty. Most of the poems will be appreciated again and again.

Martyn Rawson reviews *Alliterative Verse; working with alliterative verse, resource material for Class Teachers and Eurythmists*, edited by Ernst Betz. Published by the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle, Stuttgart

One of the *Urprobleme* of the Waldorf Curriculum is how to transfer or translate curriculum elements that have an obvious link to the German language. One of the most important of these indications is the recommendation that Norse or Germanic mythology should be told in the fourth class and in this context Steiner emphasised the important of stave rhyme, or alliteration. The developmental situation of the child in the ninth and tenth year was frequently described as a ‘Rubicon’ meaning an important developmental threshold, with no return.

Although many presentations on the Waldorf Curriculum give the impression that Norse mythology and stave rhyme are *ex cathedra* recommendations of Steiner’s, in fact there is no such indication from Steiner. Rather it comes from Caroline von Heydebrand, one of the teachers in the original Waldorf School in Stuttgart who worked with Steiner in developing the curriculum. She suggested, and presumably Steiner agreed, that Norse mythology was important in Class Four and that stave rhyme or alliterative verse would be good for that age in Eurythmy. There is evidence that Nora von Baditz, the school Eurythmist at the time, did so with the explicit support of Steiner. So even if we don’t have it from the Doctor himself we have impeccable sources who testify to his support for the idea and practice.

Ernst Betz recalls the wonderful anecdote from Nora von Baditz, “Dr. Steiner once came to see me teaching in class 4. I was busy with alliteration. After the lesson, I approached him and asked, ‘How did you find my lesson, Doctor?’ He replied,



‘Very good. But you stamped around too much while doing alliteration’. Standing in the doorway, Rudolf Steiner looked at the wall and saw a fly crawling about, ‘Tell me why the fly does not fall off’. I studied the fly and after a while, I said, ‘It’s because the fly has little suckers on its feet’. ‘Just so’, said the Doctor, ‘and with alliteration, that is how you have to tread, sucking yourself onto the earth (meaning stamping is unnecessary)’.” Betz adds, “the mountain farmer emits consonants, in his struggle with the environment. Thus alliteration comes into being”.

Steiner is further quoted with the advice (this time to a mother about her daughter, “She should however think (when stepping alliterative verse) about the fact that originally alliteration only appeared in northern countries, where storm, cliffs, and the crashing and roaring of the waves join in one grand harmony of all the elements. She ought to imagine herself as one of the old bards, walking at the coast, upright through the storm, a lyre on her arm...”

And ever since these elements have been important in the Class Four curriculum, even in countries that don’t speak German.

In this slim volume Ernst Betz summarises the

anthroposophical background for this aspect of the curriculum. He defines alliterative verse and its variations, explains the metric principles as used in poetry and describes the differences between Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse with regard to alliteration. He gives notes on how to speak the poetry aloud, “the reader should feel free to introduce tonal nuances, changes of speed, prolongations for emphasis and rhetorical pauses. The alliterating stresses come out clearly, strongly and regularly, with passes between half-lines...”. He gives advice on how to pronounce Anglo-Saxon and Norse words and script. The book also contains a summary of the main sources such as *Beowulf*, *The Seafarer*, *The Unfruitful Land*, *Riddles from the Exeter Book* as well as Old Norse sources and *The Edda*. The book has numerous examples in the best translations, including of course texts from Seamus Heaney. And the book is beautifully illustrated with runes, carvings and patterns from the appropriate cultural sources.

The most astonishing thing is that Ernst Betz, a retired Waldorf teacher from Bremen, has published this book simultaneously in English and German, the German edition containing many articles collected from other sources. He himself delivered the translation, which his colleague the Englishman (and Geordie) Geoff Hunter also worked on.

The book can be warmly recommended to all class teachers anywhere near Class Four, and eurythmists.

Maria Barguirdjian reviews *Ninetta Sombart* by Volker Harlan, published by Harlan/Urachams

Volker Harlan has done us a great service in compiling and presenting the life work of the painter Ninetta Sombart. He is an art historian and theologian eminently qualified for this task: as a priest of the Christian Community he focuses on the deep religiosity and the meditative nature of her art. As an art historian he shows her progressive development as a painter.

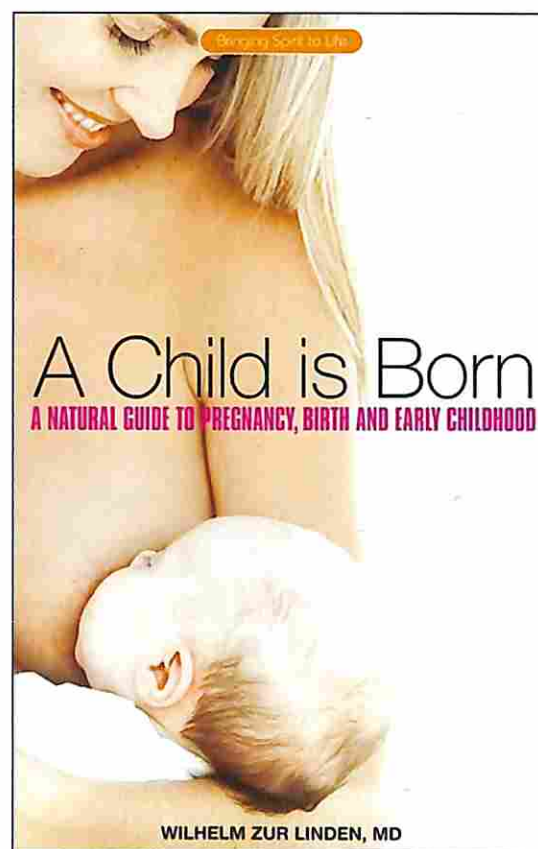
Ninetta Sombart was born in Berlin in 1925 and was, in her childhood, surrounded by a world of privilege and learning. Her father was an academician and professor of Economics and Sociology. Her mother brought from her native country the rich world of Romanian orthodoxy and culture into the family life. With the father’s death in 1941 and the destruction of the family

house, life in the aftermath of the last war in Germany became a struggle for survival. Ninetta started to design posters to earn a living, and through this work met a German-speaking American soldier whom she married. They moved to America, living for a time near Chicago, and later in New York. Four children were born. Ninetta had to support the family through her painting. They were hard years and took their toll on her. A serious illness meant that she had to seek healing and restoration of her health.

In 1962 she went to live in the Black Forest in Germany, eventually becoming PR manager of an industrial concern in Basel. During this time she severed her ties with the USA and later moved to Arlesheim where she lived and worked for 18 years. Her painting style changes profoundly during this time. The influence of the American school of painting is still visible in her earlier work. It is Volker Harlan's merit that this book shows the changes and progressive developments in her art.

I thought that already at a quite early stage Ninetta Sombart shows the deep influence of Orthodox Christianity on her art. The ikons of the Romanian church were familiar to her from childhood. She understood the severe discipline practised by the monks who painted them – that they were not simple religious artefacts, but spiritual symbols. The preparation for this was intense inner work. A strong meditative element becomes the dominant quality in her pictures. This inner development combines with the way she now finds into pure colour, and how she uses it. The themes of her pictures are the events narrated in the Gospels – nearly all of them with Christ at the centre. I almost hesitate to call them “pictures” – as I found that the more I looked at them, contemplated them – immersing myself in the “Awakening of Lazarus” for instance – I was taken over an inner threshold, leaving me with a feeling that I had “been somewhere I could not go before”. It helps the viewer that Volker Harlan accompanies each picture in his book with a very sensitive record of the relevant Gospel story, providing one more key to understanding the artist's attempt to express on canvas an insight into the great Christian mysteries. Ninetta Sombart deserves to be taken very seriously. Not many ‘modern’ artists achieve her stupendous mastery of the medium of COLOUR – still a mystery in itself – and the total surrender of the artist to the objective.

The book is a treasure, not excessively priced, with 90 most beautifully produced colour prints. It is rounded off with a biographical sketch and photographs of the artist, something that I found helpful in trying to make a connection with such different and remarkable work. I am glad, and grateful, that Ninetta Sombart is still with us and, I believe, at almost 90 years of age, still creatively at work.



Susanne Fuller, parent and registered nurse reviews *A Child is Born – A Natural Guide to Pregnancy, Birth and Early Childhood* by Wilhelm zur Linden, M.D. Sophia Books, 2004.

A Child Is Born by Dr. Wilhelm zur Linden is a new edition of a well-established book on natural childcare, incorporating many new sections from the comprehensive original edition, in German, which have not previously appeared in English translations.

It is a beautifully-produced book, covering pregnancy, birth, breast and bottle feeding, childhood illnesses and much more; written in a clear style and with plenty of practical advice, this is a wonderful reference book and highly recommended reading for all parents and parents to be.

Children with Special Needs in the Early Years – a School Doctor's Perspective

Dr Bettina Lohn

The younger the child, the greater the mystery. A child's development is a journey of discovery, both for the child and the family. Parents are usually the closest people to accompany a child, but with increasing age a growing number of individuals become involved in a child's life. Sometimes a school doctor has this privilege. This article intends to describe, as a general outline, how the school doctor can help to facilitate the identification of special needs and to assure that they are adequately recognised and addressed.

What are “special needs”?

Traditionally school doctors have had little involvement with the Early Years Department, i.e. Nursery and Kindergarten. This has been changing for a variety of reasons – not least the children themselves. In most people's experience children and childhood are changing, granting at times a glimpse into the future. How best to facilitate these future potentials is part of the challenge of education. In settings like the Nursery or Kindergarten these changes can show in the children's apparent need for more individual accompaniment. The children don't appear to fit easily anymore into a group with existing routines and rules. Equally their play, social interactions and engagement in activities pose new challenges. One can get the impression that the children are asking for their “special needs” to be taken into account, referring to both abilities and difficulties. So, in principle one can apply this term to every child, as every individual has his/her special needs. Nevertheless, we know that some children's needs are more apparent than others and that the term is commonly used for children, who experience varying degrees of difficulties during their development and learning. Increasingly the needs of gifted children are also recognised.

A wide range of problems may be encountered. They frequently relate to a child's development and/or behaviour. Behaviour issues arise more frequently these days and can be challenging

and multifaceted. They might hide a multitude of other issues and often require some detective activity. Problems can for instance be due to an unsettled home situation or a difficulty with spoken language, which is either due to hearing problems (e.g. glue ear) or a problem with comprehension. Problems in the areas of speech and language as well as movement and co-ordination have noticeably increased. In addition there are children with established medical or other conditions (e.g. epilepsy, Down's Syndrome) known to require special accompaniment in a Nursery/Kindergarten environment.

Ways of identifying special needs

One of the most challenging tasks is to identify a child's special needs and subsequently find appropriate ways of meeting them. The only starting point can be our own observations and questions. These initially make us wonder about certain difficulties and/or abilities in a child and can then lead to further assessments. Depending on the nature of the concern, providing parental consent is given, further professionals can then become involved. Whether these are professionals connected to the school and/or outside depends on the nature of the problem. Some people experience any “assessment” as a judgement of the child, but it is only meant as an evaluation of certain agreed aspects. It is not a moral judgement and leaves the core individuality of the child untouched. A sensitive and professional approach is of course asked for. Equally the use of a “normality scale” with certain cut off points can only serve as an orientation.

When identifying a child's difficulties, a number of aspects need consideration and can be relevant. These include the time scale of the difficulty, the child's age, the child's developmental history, any known medical conditions, general health (including for instance sleep pattern), the child's constitution, social integration in the group (e.g. group dynamic, bullying?), family circumstances and history, dependence on setting (problem present predominantly at home or in school). This list can of course be extended.

Ways of providing helpful support

Following the identification of a problem it will need to be decided whether any intervention will be required at this point in time or whether continued observation would be more appropriate.

If further action is considered appropriate, following conversation between all involved, a variety of support can be available. This can either be provided within school or help from outside agencies may be requested. Together with parents and teachers, the school doctor is usually closely involved with these considerations. The decision about the kind of intervention has to consider several aspects (please also see below), firstly the nature of the problem and secondly the parents' own view on health and development. Of course close collaboration is desirable, ideally also in line with the Steiner Waldorf School's ethos, but the parental choice has to be respected. In addition, it is relevant to consider whether the issues are best addressed in or outside school, taking the child's and family's needs and privacy into account.

Communication and collaboration

Independent of the nature of the concern, good communication and collaboration between everybody involved with the child are essential, even when differences of opinion exist. In a Nursery/Kindergarten situation, the initial contact, when a concern arises, should in my opinion usually be between the parent and the Nursery/KG teacher. This gives an opportunity to share concerns and perceptions. There may at times be occasions when a teacher might approach a teacher colleague or the school doctor for a preliminary orientating discussion, but the parent's involvement is essential. Should a disagreement arise between teacher and parent, the parent's views need to be respected and any action will be limited and dependent on parental consent. In exceptional circumstances the teacher's concern for the child's safety and well-being may be so serious that in his/her opinion it warrants the involvement of the school's child protection officer. But also in this situation the parents should be informed, unless very exceptional circumstances prevail.

The School Doctor's contribution

As school doctors we are usually involved in a variety of ways. We have contact with pupils

and parents across all classes and ages but are increasingly involved with the younger children. Depending on situation, availability and personal preference a school doctor has individual consultations with the children and their parents, observes in lessons, attends parents' evenings and consults with the teachers. All these activities provide opportunities to perceive and share potential difficulties, which will then be further discussed with all involved. As mentioned above, open communication is essential for the process. However, confidentiality applies to school doctors in the same way as to all other doctors.

We are also involved in the decision about possible further assessments outside school and will liaise with outside agencies, for instance the child's GP. The independent status of the Steiner Waldorf Schools does not usually allow direct access to outside agencies, both education and health services. Involvement of Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy etc. usually requires a referral by the GP. However, once these agencies are involved, they are in my experience willing to work together with the school.

Within school, our involvement will range from discussions with the teachers about educational measures in the group/class to prescribing anthroposophical medicines. Frequently an advisory conversation with parents and the referral to an available therapist, either in- or outside of school, can be very helpful. For the younger age group the eurythmy therapist, massage therapist and play therapist are in my experience especially helpful. Accompaniment and reviews following any intervention are essential and strongly recommended.

In my own experience, holding the balance between social integration and individual diversity is an ongoing challenge. Every situation is new and requires an open approach to avoid prejudice and do justice to the child. It is like juggling balls, which all have different shapes and weights resulting in individual aerodynamic capacities... like intentions and possibilities. However challenging, it is a joy and privilege to be part of these journeys of discovery into life.

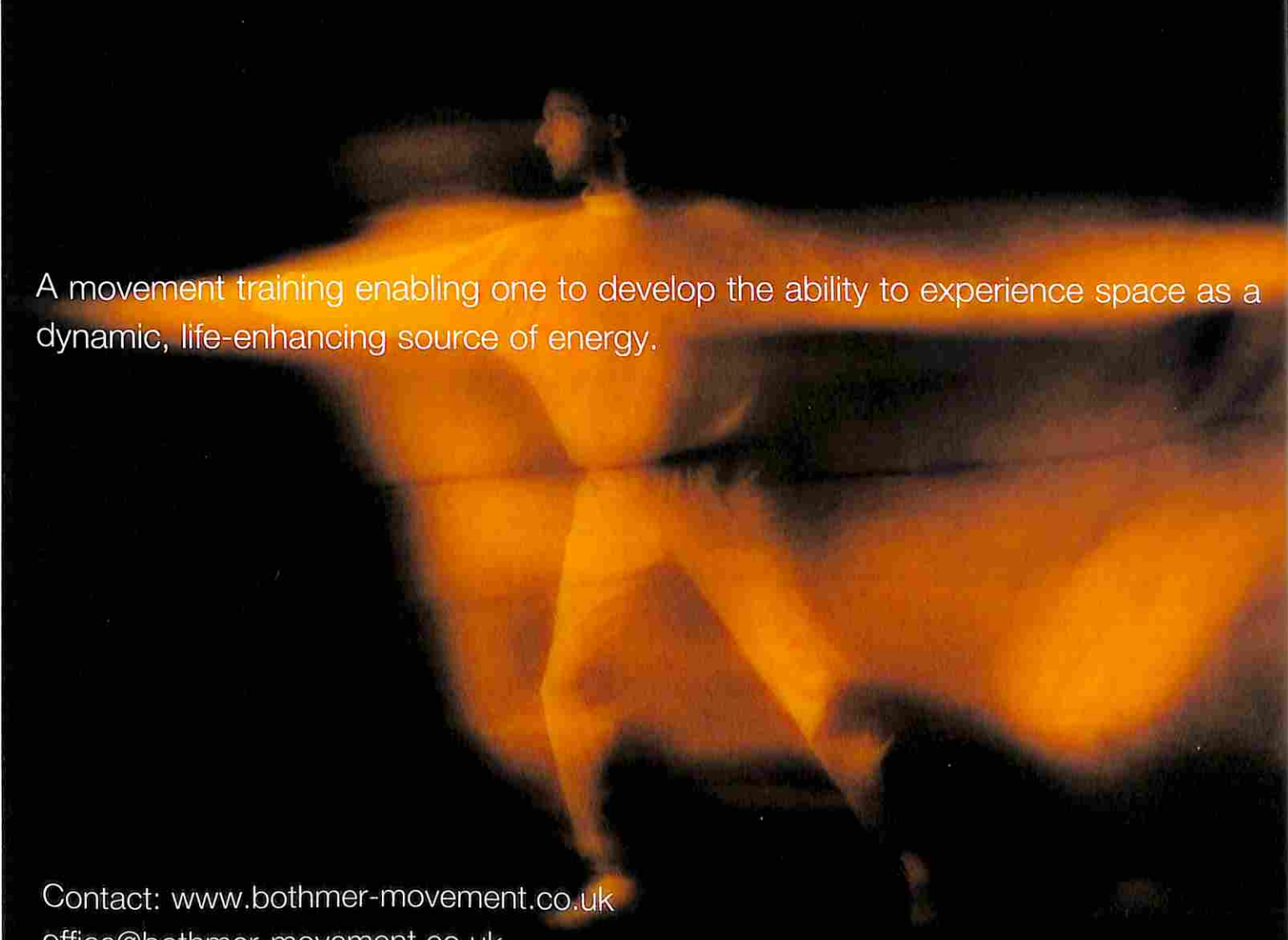
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Please contact the school secretary for application forms at Redland Hill House, Redland Hill, Bristol BS6 6UX
Tel: 0117 933 9990 Fax: 0117 933 9999
Email: office@steiner.bristol.sch.uk

HEREFORD WALDORF SCHOOL

Much Dewchurch, Hereford HR2 8DL
Tel: 01981 540221 Fax 01981 541237
Web: www.herefordwaldorfschool.org
Email: info@herefordwaldorfschool.org

TEACHER VACANCIES NOW! URGENTLY NEEDED

Class I and Class III Teachers
to take on a delightful group of 13 children and 19 children respectively
These could be either temporary posts, or for teachers seeking a permanent position. Good support and mentoring offered by our experienced and friendly team of lower-school teachers

P/T German Teacher
to relieve the load on our over-worked German teacher, by taking Classes I – III & possibly Class IV

From September 2005 –
We will be looking for a qualified teacher to take on the new Class I

Our warm and friendly school is located in rural Herefordshire about 6 miles south of the city of Hereford. We have around 228 pupils on our roll from Nursery to Class X.

To learn more about the school, please visit our website. Applications and/or enquiries should be sent to the Chairman of the College of Teachers or the Administrator at the above postal or email address.

Emerson College

Forest Row, East Sussex, RH18 5JX

Courses in Steiner Waldorf Education

Art of Education

Next intake September 2005
A three year full-time training

Teaching as an Art

Next intake September 2006
A two year part-time course

Early Years Course

Starts September 2005
A two year part-time course

Full summer course brochure now available
Courses in storytelling, clowning, meditation, astrology, biodynamics, sculpture, poetry, crafts and more!

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A FOUNDATION DEGREE IN STEINER WALDORF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

This programme in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood, offers flexible delivery systems, providing opportunities for Early Years Practitioners, teaching assistants, parents and those wishing to specialise in early childhood to achieve a professional qualification.

The programme is approved by the University of Plymouth in partnership with the UK Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

The course takes place over two years, but the modules can be completed within a five year period.

For potential students who have previous experience of Steiner Early Childhood Education, it would be possible to apply for previous learning and experience to be accredited, where relevant. The first group of students began in

September 2004 with a monthly weekend programme in York and two short residential courses held at Elmfield School in the West Midlands.

Please contact the address below for further details and a preliminary application form to register your interest.

Abi McCullough, Faculty of Education, University of Plymouth,
Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2AT
education.enq@plymouth.ac.uk Tel: 01395 255325

You might also be interested in checking the following web-links: <http://www.steiner-teacher.org/foundation.htm>

[http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/2822/FdA Steiner+Waldorf+Early+Childhood+Education](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/2822/FdA%20Steiner+Waldorf+Early+Childhood+Education)

THE Hiram TRUST

Practical Skills Teacher Development Course

LIVING AND LEARNING WITH THE
LOCAL RESOURCES OF NATURE
using the school grounds for developing
a practical skills curriculum relevant to
the handwork/craft/science domains
in Steiner Waldorf education

12 level 3 OCN units, 7 weekends contact time

Enquiries and applications for the 2005-6 run,
to

The Hiram Trust, Upper Grange, Lovedays
Mead, Stroud, Glos GL5 1XB

Tel/fax: 01453 764065

Email: info@hiramtrust.org.uk



Cambridge Steiner School Project

Vacancy

CLASS 1 TEACHER
September 2005

We are looking for our new Class 1 teacher! Our school is well established in the beautiful university city of Cambridge.

You will work with a supportive and dynamic team of colleagues and parents. Our school has two kindergartens and currently extends from Class 1 to Class 4/5, growing by one class every year.

Please contact our administrator for an application form:

Suzanna Wikstrom

Cambridge Steiner School
24 Roseford Road, Cambridge, CB4 2HD
Email: admin@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk

If you are interested in discussing this position or arranging a visit, please contact our school secretary:

Netty Smith - Tel: 01223 415492

Email: school@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk

Cambridge Steiner School Registered Charity No.1028116
www.cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk

THE BATH STEINER KINDERGARTEN 2005

NEW INITIATIVE

Bath has five long-established parent and toddler groups, and now has firm foundations for moving onto a kindergarten

We are seeking:
an experienced **Kindergarten Teacher**
and a **Kindergarten Assistant**

We offer: Excellent rates of pay
A Strong, Supportive Governance Team
Ongoing Educational Workshops for parents

For further information please ring 01225 444118
Or: vicky@bathsteiner.org.uk

Closing date: 4th April 2005

Following the success of
Cardiff Steiner Early Years Centre
Cardiff Steiner School/Ysgol Steiner Caerdydd
a new school opening Sept 2005, has vacancies for

A class teacher for combined class 1 and 2
Various subject teachers
P/T Administrator

For further information contact Cardiff Steiner EYC

Tel 029 2019 0099

email: cardiffsteiner@aol.com

website: < www.cardiffsteiner.org.uk >

Ruskin Mill College

An innovative residential specialist college, inspired by the work of Rudolph Steiner, providing further education for students with special learning needs, has a vacancy for a

Houseparent couple to live in and manage a household

Responsible couple required to create a homely environment for up to 3 students in one of Ruskin Mill's houses near Nailsworth.

Good training and package of salary and benefits.

For information contact
Richard Rogers
Head of College - Residential
Ruskin Mill College
Old Bristol Road, Nailsworth,
Glos GL6 0PL
Tel: 01453 837500
e-mail: richard.rogers@ruskin-mill.org.uk
Ruskin Mill Educational Trust.
Reg Charity No. 1053705

Rudolf Steiner Library
65 Fern Hill Road
Ghent, NY 12075
(518) 672-7690
rsteinerlibrary@taconic.net

PHILPOTS MANOR SCHOOL AND FURTHER TRAINING CENTRE

HOUSEPARENT VACANCIES

Located in an idyllic setting on the Sussex Weald, we are a small co-educational residential special school for students aged 9-19, with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; many of whom also have learning difficulties. The care and education we provide is based on the principles of Rudolf Steiner.

We are looking for houseparents to live on-site and share the responsibility of the management of our residential units. Relevant training and experience is needed, with NVQ Level 3 Caring for Young People preferred.

One position is to start as soon as possible.

Salary: £7,800 – £15,000, accommodation provided and non-contributory pension scheme.

Please contact Karen Brown on 01342 810268 or by email at philpotsmanorschool@tiscali.co.uk

FORTHCOMING FROM



IPF PUBLICATIONS

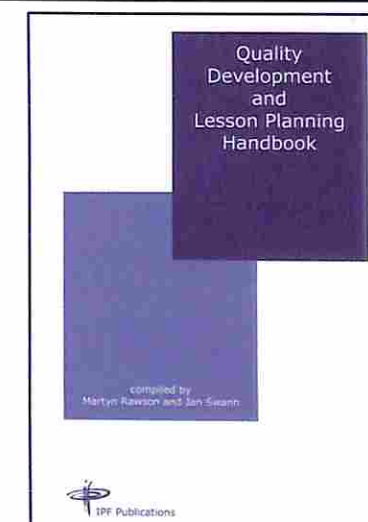
A WALDORF LESSON PLANNER QUALITY DEVELOPMENT AND LESSON PLANNING HANDBOOK

WRITTEN BY MARTYN RAWSON AND JAN SWANN

LOOK OUT FOR THE ORDER FORM IN YOUR SCHOOL –
ORDER EARLY FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR



A Waldorf Lesson Planner provides class teachers and subject teachers with daily, weekly and main lesson planning sheets with space for lesson reviews. The planner also includes year overview, timetable, class lists, check lists for self-evaluation, pupil studies and IEPs. The accompanying booklet contains advice on lesson planning and reviewing, spiritual time management, organisational development and meetings, agenda preparation, mentoring new teachers and tips on survival and action research. These books were developed as part of a Master Degree research project at the University of Plymouth.



Planner available as ring bound annual planner or loose leaf for use in a ring binder
See leaflet for prices and order forms



BA (Hons) Degree in Steiner Waldorf Education

In partnership with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, the University of Plymouth has run this degree programme since 1992. Based at the University's Exmouth campus, and integrated within the Faculty of Education, students are offered a three-year programme in Steiner Waldorf teacher education. Students may study the programme part or full time. Distance learning options are also available for practising Waldorf teachers.

Students on the course are offered a broad-based introduction to Steiner Waldorf education with emphasis on teaching children in the Class Teacher period (6-14 years).

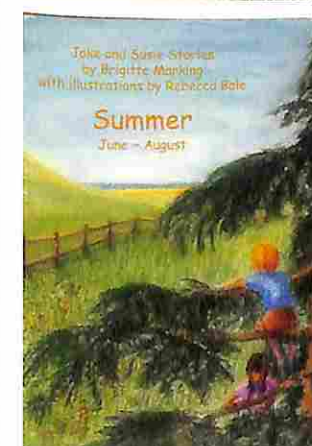
The course is modular and includes units in:

- Introduction to the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum
- Practical Pedagogy: classroom management and classroom skills
- Perspectives on Child Development
- Artistic activities including eurythmy, music, painting, drawing modelling, and speech

- School-based observation and teaching practice
- Evolution of consciousness
- Anthroposophy and Philosophy
- Physiology and art: the image of the human being derived from anthroposophy
- The esoteric basis of Steiner Waldorf education
- Education in the early years
- Science Teaching
- Education through the crafts
- Comparative Studies
- Independent Study Options

In addition, students are able to select alternative modules within the broad programme offered within the Faculty.

For further details, please contact:
Faculty of Education, University of Plymouth
Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2AT
T: 0044 (0)1395 255325
christine.dowling@plymouth.ac.uk
www.plymouth.ac.uk/steinerwaldorf



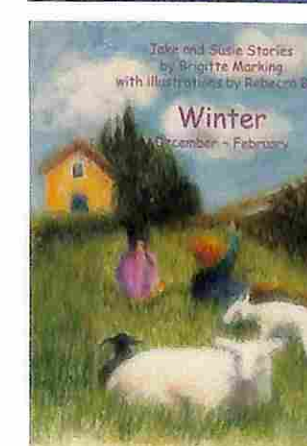
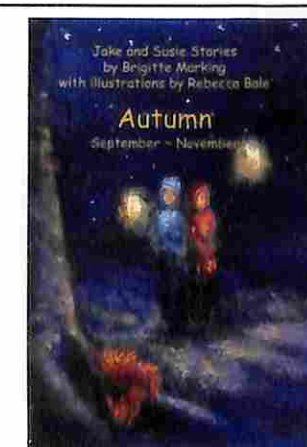
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Each booklet is based on a specific season, with one story for each month. The stories describe what is happening in nature as well as seasonal events, such as finding Easter eggs, playing Pooh-sticks, going on a lantern walk and decorating the Christmas tree.

The stories will take the young reader back to seasonal experiences at home and in the Kindergarten. Some of them include songs familiar to many children.

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and available shortly from SSF Publications
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e-mail: info@steinschoolbooks.com



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Encouraging Meaningful Play

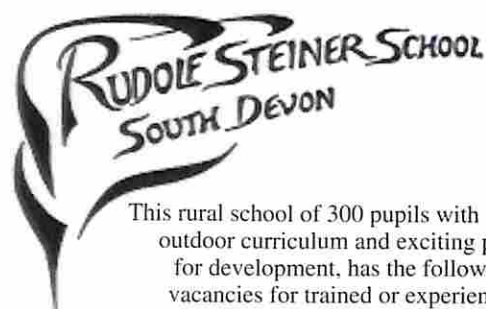
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Vacancies at the



This rural school of 300 pupils with a strong outdoor curriculum and exciting plans for development, has the following vacancies for trained or experienced Steiner/Waldorf personnel.

Administrator – Willing to be flexible in this transitional stage. A permanent post, beginning in April. Initially for maternity cover, a min. of 30 hrs per week – 46 weeks a year. May expand to full-time. Application deadline – 22 March.

For September 2005 (applications by 1 June):

Class Teachers including Class 1

Kindergarten Teacher – for 1 year sabbatical cover

Nursery Teacher – p/t

Early Years Assistants – p/t

Art Teacher – p/t (Classes 6-8)

Handwork Teacher – p/t

Games Teacher – p/t (min. 10 lessons)

For **Upper School** (14–16 yr olds) conversant or open to Waldorf pedagogy–

Science Teacher – p/t, for Biology, Chemistry &

Ecology (incl. field trips)

German Teacher – p/t, able to carry GCSE work.

Please apply in writing with a current CV to:

Education Manager, Rudolf Steiner School South Devon,

Hood Manor, Dartington, Devon TQ9 6AB

e-mail enquiries@steiner-south-devon.org details on

www.steiner-south-devon.org



VACANCIES AT THE EDINBURGH RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL

This well-established, dynamic school, situated in the leafy suburbs of the beautiful Scottish capital, is looking for enthusiastic, dedicated teachers to join our present staff.

- **Class One teacher for August 2005**
To join our group of excellent experienced class teachers
- **Part-time Upper School art teacher for August 2005**
Teaching experience and enthusiasm for working with teenagers are especially valued
- **Full-time PE teacher for immediate start**
Knowledge of the Steiner/Waldorf curriculum and special dynamics would be an advantage
- **Part-time Eurythmy teacher for August 2005**
To work with the upper and of the Lower School and the Upper School
- **Part-time Learning Support teacher for August 2005**
(see previous text)

Please apply in writing with a current CV to:

The Management Group

Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School

60 Spylaw Road, Edinburgh EH10 5BR

Tel: 0131 337 3410

Fax: 0131 538 6066

E-mail: management@SteinerWeb.org.uk

"The college gives us freedom to take responsibility and to be true to ourselves, not just to feel obliged to conform. By pursuing our passions or natural interests within the context of science and art, we take ownership of our learning. We are encouraged to work with the elements as a starting point and rebuild our connection with the land... We have over time removed ourselves in so many ways from what is real, true and sacred on our planet... and the 'earth.' Sustainable education is a step we need to take if we wish to become more than consumers." *2nd Year Student.*

"From everything we went through we learned and grew a great deal. I remember in the first term feeling ill but not wanting to stay off college because I felt that just by missing one day I would miss so much. This was in great contrast to when I had been at school and slept with the window open in winter trying to make myself ill so that I wouldn't have to go to school." *2nd Year Student.*

"Society is becoming more aware of the problems of the present educational system, that it is not meeting the needs of many of today's youth, let alone bringing out the best in us." *2nd Year Student.*

"My life's path has led me to become part of a very exciting and vital educational venture here at The Waldorf College Project in Stroud, where we learn from hands-on experience. We are involved in constructing our curriculum and are given responsibility and opportunity which encourages our self-motivation and interests to grow and develop in ways that are not given in the confines of the usual system. We are encouraged and helped to discover the importance and relevance of what we learn." *2nd Year Student.*

"We shouldn't ask: what does a person need to know or be able to do in order to fit into an existing social order? Rather we should ask: what lives in each person and what can be developed in him or her? Only then will it be possible to direct the new qualities of each emerging generation into society. Society will then become what young people, as whole human beings, make out of the existing social conditions. The new generation should not just be made to become what society wants it to become..... The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility, these are the very nerve of education... The great Thing is to enable the human being to find his or her place in the world with due confidence in his or her own power of Judgement... Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able to impart purpose and direction to their lives."

R Steiner

*"...Whatever you can do,
or dream you can do,
DO IT ..."*

Goethe

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Web Page: www.waldorf-college-project.org.uk

**A two year accredited experiential course
integrating science and art for students aged 16 to 19**

Photo by: - Bryde Gordon, 1st Year Student on our Sinai Desert Journey

NEW CRAFT
BOOK



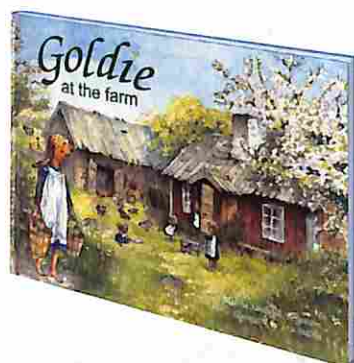
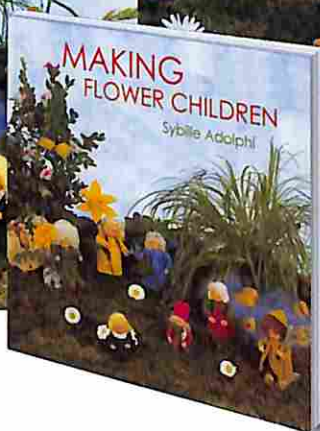
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35 colour photographs

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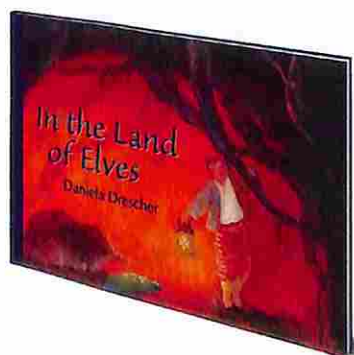
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In this much-awaited sequel, Goldie settles into life on the farm as a maid to the family who live there. But she longs to go to school like the other children. Will she get her wish, or remain as a maid?

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Age 5-8

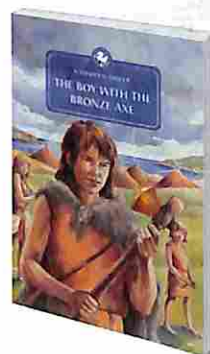
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