



Report from the Co-Directors

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We appreciate the comments we have received regarding the new look of the *Research Bulletin* as well as positive responses to the initial reports by our newly-appointed Research Fellows, who will continue with each issue of the *Bulletin* to track interesting and relevant educational research worldwide. The present issue includes their latest work and introduces an article by our newest Fellow, Philip Incao, M.D.

In imagining key research topics for future issues of the *Bulletin*, we have drafted a list of twelve areas of interest. They are listed below, not in any particular order. We welcome readers' suggestions and comments.

Twelve Research Questions/Projects

- Research the effects of physical movement on speech (e.g., fluency, syntax, grammar).
- Compare Phase II of our Waldorf Graduates Survey with results of a similar survey of Waldorf students in Germany and Switzerland.
- Analyze Phase II of this survey, especially with regard to the health of Waldorf school graduates. Explore how the physical and mental health of Waldorf school alumni compares with the wellbeing of comparable age groups.
- Research the health and resilience of present Waldorf school students, drawing upon the expertise of Waldorf school early childhood teachers and anthroposophical physicians.
- Support and disseminate recent research on the teaching of grammar in Waldorf elementary and high schools.
- Explore whether or not developmental stages in childhood have accelerated during the past two decades.
- Document whether or not Waldorf education prevents or retards premature sexual development.
- Research the effects of standardized testing on students.

- Investigate different forms of testing, such as multiple choice, matching, fill-in, and essay, and compare them to assessment by means of imaginative recall. Discover which methods best help students retain information.
- Research the effects of academic pressure on preschool children and gauge the effectiveness of play as an antidote.
- Undertake a study of class teacher resilience and longevity, including evaluations that schools use to determine whether or not teachers should carry their classes to the eighth grade or be replaced by specialists during the middle grades.
- Research the nature of the creative moment. Explore which bodies or aspects of the children participate in this moment and how this moment may be transferred to other aspects of the children's life. How do children characterize a creative experience?

We have recently become aware of an interesting European study on school readiness. Our colleagues in the International Kindergarten Association formed a working group, consisting of Margarete Kaiser, Claudia McKeen, Martyn Rawson, and Konrad Schmidt, to study thoroughly the transition from kindergarten to first grade. They devised and implemented research instruments to document child observations, stages of child development, and the learning capacities of children in Waldorf early childhood programs and in the first years of Waldorf schools. The project involved the collaboration of kindergarten teachers, class teachers, and school doctors.

This topic is of immediate interest to us in North America. The Research Institute is partnering with the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN) and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) to translate and distribute this important work to Waldorf schools in North America. The issue of school readiness demarcates a new battle line in the assault of (mis)education on healthy child-

hood. In order to preserve and protect childhood, there must be a greater understanding of the unique nature of learning and development in the early years. In addition, Waldorf educators are increasingly being asked to justify—to parents and to authorities—why Waldorf schools do not introduce abstract academics into kindergarten and the early grades. We need to be able to support our practices with research and documentation.

The European study, once translated, will offer crucial evidence in the debate with government officials and the general public concerning “quality assurance” and policy issues such as the lowering of school entrance age and the early introduction of academic subjects.

It is our hope that every Waldorf teacher in North America will see the value of subscribing to the *Research Bulletin* and that some of them will join our research efforts by participating in the activities of the Research Institute. A new brochure that explains the Research Institute’s mission and activities and that provides a subscription form for the *Research Bulletin* is available by writing to us at

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