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Waldorf
EDUCATION



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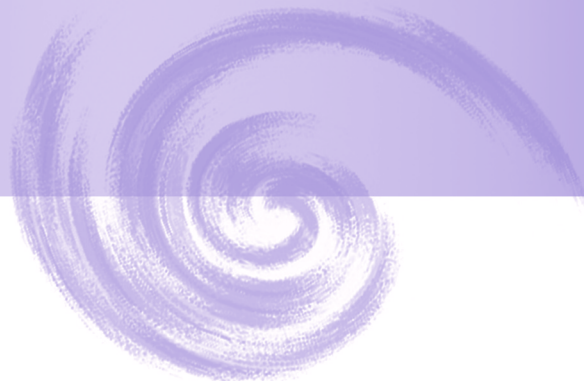
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Editor's Introduction



Ilan Safit

This issue of the *Research Bulletin* is being produced during the global Coronavirus pandemic, after schools have already been shut and stores and restaurants closed. The direct and indirect impact of the invisible virus is very visible in our worlds, a sobering reminder of the wider dimensions of reality beyond that which meets the eye. As the shape of daily life keeps transforming from day to day, Waldorf schools, like all other schools in the country and across the world, are grappling with modes of “distant learning” – a term that sounds so foreign to a Waldorf ear. The distance usually observed by Waldorf educators is that of time rather than of space; that is, the distance between the sowing of the seeds of learning in the classroom and their coming to fruition later in life. A second current term invoking distance—“social distancing”—grinds even harsher on the ear. If one thing has so far become clear to any parent or educator, it is the child’s absolute need for socialization in a shared, un-mediated space. There will be many lessons to be learned from these strange days which are currently upon us, and we can only wish that by the time you read this issue, the trial will have already passed and the learning of lessons begun. To the issue, then.

As we continue to mark Waldorf education’s centennial, we open Volume XXV-1 with a selection of vignettes depicting members of the team that launched the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart under Rudolf Steiner’s direction. These vignettes, written by the Czech Waldorf educator and scholar Tomáš Zdražil of the *Freie Hochschule Stuttgart – Seminar for Waldorf Pedagogy*, were recently published in book form by Waldorf Publications. We proceed with one more overview of the arrival of Waldorf education in the United States, wherein Michael Holdrege traces the birth of the North American Waldorf movement to Carnegie Hall in 1910. There, in a seventh-floor studio, a group of musicians, who had encountered in their European travels the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, started meeting up as an anthroposophical study group. Holdrege draws the general lines that led from these anthroposophical seeds to the first Waldorf school in New York City, in 1928, and the later sprouting of more schools throughout the country. This review includes important reminders of the ongoing challenges Waldorf education faces in this country: the differences between fully independent Waldorf schools

and public Waldorf schools; the difficulties in sustaining fully accredited, full-time teacher-training institutions; and the growing gap in attitude even between progressive public schools and the original impulse of Waldorf education.

We are very pleased to be able to publish here the lecture series delivered by Elan Leibner at the 2019 AWSNA summer conference in Philadelphia. Under the title “A Collaborative Approach to Educational Freedom,” Leibner makes a cogent plea for a continued inspiration of Waldorf pedagogy by anthroposophical impulses and research, while at the same time advocating for a continued effort for innovation and change. Consistency in Waldorf education, Leibner claims in these lectures, should be exercised in the quality of the teaching, not in the content of the curriculum, and innovation is especially needed today to expand the inclusivity of Waldorf communities, to meet the challenges of the time, and to improve the therapeutic efficacy of Waldorf education. Leibner proceeds to offer guidelines, action plans, and institutional structures that would assist schools seeking to develop the art of Waldorf education. We recommend paying close attention to this lecture series not only for the important ideas and guidelines it sketches out but also for the sketching itself, weaving America’s national ideals with the author’s personal experience and with the teachings of anthroposophical insight.

Coming from within the parent-child classrooms designed for babies, toddlers, and their parents, Diana Marshall Mei of the San Francisco Waldorf School describes the importance of Waldorf early childhood activities and their capacity to prevent pedagogical and other obstacles later in life. Jennifer Deathe follows suit with a question that is coming to the forefront in many schools across the country: Why are so many Waldorf schools not as diverse as we would like them to be, and what could be done about it? Applying several research methods and focusing on the Ontario Waldorf school in which she works, Deathe raises two questions: “Why is an independent school based on social justice and democracy and located in the heart of one of Ontario’s most multicultural cities not attracting and retaining families of diversity?” and “Why do families of diversity choose Waldorf education despite the school’s lack of diversity?”

To answer these questions, Deathe conducted multiple observations and interviews, which could provide insight for other Waldorf schools across North America. While each school community will need to explore its own solutions to increasing inclusivity, it would be helpful to note Deathe's conclusion: namely, that achieving true diversity and inclusion necessitates *collaborative efforts* among all partners, including school leadership, administration, faculty, parents, and students, along with Waldorf teacher training programs.

Turning to reflective investigation, we are pleased to publish here the second (yet not final) part of Arthur Auer's exploration into the nature of thought, a sequel to his article, "The Image Problem," published in last spring's issue of the *Research Bulletin* (Vol. XXIV No. 1, Spring 2019). While in his earlier essay Auer collected a variety of philosophical, neurological, and psychiatric accounts of the visual aspects of conscious, that is, of thinking in images, here Auer follows a similar path while focusing on the *mobile* characteristics of consciousness and thought. Does consciousness flow like a stream, as William James suggested at the very end of the 19th century, or does it proceed through disjointed "rhythmic pulses" or collections of still images as some contemporary cognitive scientists suggest? Motivated by the characterization of consciousness found in Steiner's work, Auer gathers insights from anthroposophic scholars and scientists such as Theodor Schwenk and Rudolf Treichler and ventures further into the work of contemporary neuroscientists such as Antonio Damasio or the more compassionate psychiatric observations and psychological insights of Oliver Sacks. At the very least, Auer's exploration offers us an impressive, multi-disciplinary collection of descriptions of the mental activity we all experience from within.

From this multi-faceted investigation into consciousness, we take another turn towards developmental psychology. Peter Lawton, an experienced class teacher from City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis and an education scholar, offers here a detailed summary of the work of Robert Kegan, a developmental psychologist and professor emeritus at Harvard Graduate School of Education. A core thesis Lawton teases out of Kegan's work in this meticulous presentation focuses on the emerging sense of self, an inner identity, and how such selfhood is essential to the production of meaning and to the mental skills and emotional experiences of a maturing child. In a follow-up article, to be published in our next issue, Lawton will be exploring the pedagogical implications for the Waldorf classroom of Kegan's view of the child's mental development.

Charles Weems, an experienced Waldorf teacher and seasoned university professor of computer science, follows up on his previous articles on technology in the Waldorf classroom, published both in the *Research Bulletin* and *Renewal*, with a call for Waldorf teachers to be "masters of technology." While Weems fully agrees with resisting our times' technological overload and withholding the teaching of "computational thinking" until adolescence, he does advocate—as did Steiner—for teachers to understand the underlying nature of technology and its wide-reaching effects. This, Weems argues, will allow Waldorf teachers to guide students through a world wherein digital technology is now ubiquitous, "in a manner that actually reinforces their inner humanity."

Staying with the question of technology in the classroom, we conclude with a chapter from Betty Staley's most recent book, *Tending the Spark: Lighting the Future for the Middle School Student*, published by Waldorf Publications in 2019. Guided by decades of experience in Waldorf education, Staley writes on the supervised and unsupervised functions of technology and social media in the life of the middle school student, with some helpful guidelines for parents.

As usual, our issue ends with reports from the Waldorf Online Library and from an especially productive year for Waldorf Publications, which has recently issued *Into the World: How Waldorf Graduates Fare After High School*, an in-depth study of Waldorf alumni written and produced by members of the team that brings you the *Research Bulletin*, and further assisted by Connie Stokes and Andrew Starzynski. We are convinced that this book will greatly benefit the work of teachers, steering committees, administrators, and admission directors, and we invite you to take a glimpse of its cover in Patrice Maynard's "Report from Waldorf Publications."

We wish you all pleasant, inspiring reading and, most of all, that by the time this issue reaches you, the pandemic will have receded into the past.

Authors who wish to have articles considered for publication in the *Research Bulletin* should submit them directly to the editor at: theresearchbulletin@gmail.com.

The First Waldorf Teachers

Historical Vignettes

Tomáš Zdražil

The following selection is taken from Tomáš Zdražil's book, The First Waldorf Teachers: Twelve Vignettes of Leaders at the Original School, recently published by Waldorf Publications in a translation by Jan Kees Saltet. The book offers brief sketches of the team of educators that launched the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart under the direction of Rudolf Steiner. This selection is reproduced here with the kind permission of Waldorf Publications.

E. A. Karl Stockmeyer



Next to Emil Molt, the founder of the Waldorf School, and Rudolf Steiner, the school's leader, there was a third person who filled a highly important role: that of an administrator. It was E. A. Karl Stockmeyer who took on that task. He was 33 years old at the time, and was trained

as a natural scientist. Among anthroposophists, he was the one teacher who, after World War I, was working in the public domain dealing with matters of educational policy.

From the end of the war in 1918, Stockmeyer had been working to develop original educational ideas based on Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* and later impulses Steiner had given, ideas that could be implemented to rebuild the German educational system. Stockmeyer published several papers on the subject.

In January 1919, Emil Molt asked Stockmeyer to help in the founding of an independent school in Stuttgart. Stockmeyer first imagined he would be a consultant in the planning process of the school, but things took a different turn when Steiner accepted the position of school leader. At his request, Stockmeyer changed his plans at the end of April 1919 and asked for a leave of absence from his state school in order to join the faculty of the Stuttgart school.

In designing a curriculum, it was quite a struggle for him to work with Steiner's ideas, since it meant letting go of conventions and drawing up something original and uninfluenced by state curricula. It was also hard for him to imagine anything other than a classical state school schedule. But he adjusted. He also took on the task of finding the future group of colleagues, and in July he embarked on a "voyage of discovery" to find the first circle of Waldorf teachers. Rudolf Steiner jokingly said he should go "collect the stars".

In August 1919, Stockmeyer and his family relocated to Stuttgart and moved into an apartment in the new school building. He took on organizing the preparatory course for the new cohort of teachers and all subsequent faculty courses; getting the building ready as well as furniture and school supplies, making the schedule, leading the faculty meetings, communicating with the school officials, and carrying the entire administration of the school.

In his teaching tasks, Stockmeyer focused on the natural sciences of the upper grades. Many subjects in the areas of "practical arts and technology", such as surveying, were introduced into the curriculum by him. He took care of communication between Steiner and the faculty, always maintaining an extraordinarily sovereign position towards him: "His very posture showed this during faculty meetings, where he would be sitting with his hand supporting his chin, weighing every word and pondering it."

Rudolf Steiner was eager for Stockmeyer to earn a PhD, just like Herbert Hahn. But, with all he had to do, this was out of the question. Stockmeyer put all his scientific interests and questions on the back burner for the sake of administering the school, putting his whole life at the disposal of the practical and administrative

side of founding the school. We owe it to him that the organizational miracle of the school's founding succeeded and that ties to the local authorities were consistently good.

In addition, the administering of the fledgling Waldorf School Association (the organization responsible for financing the school) rested largely on Stockmeyer's shoulders. During the economic crisis years of 1922/23, he wrote several hundred letters seeking help from sponsors, both inside and outside of Germany. Who knows if the school would have survived if he hadn't done all that work? [...]

Stockmeyer remained faithful to the school until it was forced to close in 1938, at which time he steadfastly carried through the administrative aspect of the closure procedures. Then he had to write an application letter for a teacher's position. "The work in the Waldorf School, which was led until 1925 by Rudolf Steiner, the most eminent German philosopher, spiritual researcher, and a trailblazing educator, has given me unbelievably strong and fruitful impulses and experiences I couldn't have gained in any other way, all of which I feel obliged to make fruitful for public education for the remainder of my life," he wrote. This was an honest and singularly courageous letter to write in 1940. A political assessment, drawn up around the same time by the NSDAP [National Socialist Party], stated: "Stockmeyer was a fanatical anthroposophist. He played a dominant part in the anthroposophical leadership of the Waldorf School, was a member of the Waldorf School Council, and headed the 100 Waldorf Ortsgruppen [local school groups throughout Germany to fund the Waldorf schools]. He took a sharp stance against National Socialism, even after the party came to power. He is chiefly responsible for the negative position taken by the Waldorf School faculty. Both philosophically and politically, he is to be rejected, and would be unsuitable as a teacher." Nevertheless, he managed to secure a teacher's position in Königsfeld, but his entire anthroposophical library was seized by the Gestapo. After 1945, he helped found the first Waldorf school in Freiburg. He was also responsible for the first systematic outline of the Waldorf elementary school curriculum. In retirement he continued to work on questions of epistemology and Waldorf pedagogy until his death in 1963.

Caroline von Heydebrand



In June 1919, Caroline von Heydebrand [...] applied for a position at the Waldorf School. She was 32 years old at the time and was about to get her PhD at the University of Greifswald. Von Heydebrand, who came from an aristocratic family in Silesia, was broadly educated; she was well-versed in the

classics, spoke several foreign languages, and was thoroughly steeped in anthroposophy.

Rudolf Steiner entrusted the fifth grade to her, which, with 47 students, was the biggest class in the school. She was delicately built and small of stature. Some of her students were as tall as she was! Her voice was so thin and high-pitched that it was hard for her at the beginning to establish herself in her teacher role. Her class consisted of a mixture of children from all kinds of different types of school and social background. Children of the workers at the Waldorf Astoria factory sat next to Felix Goll, the adopted son of the rich factory owner and founder of the school Emil Molt, something which was unheard of at the time. At the beginning of the school year there was no school furniture so the students sat on chairs left over from the days when the building had housed a restaurant, skidding around on the polished floors. One can hardly imagine a more challenging situation for a young, beginning teacher who began without teacher training or classroom experience.

But von Heydebrand met the challenge with characteristic intensity, tenacity, and artistry. She introduced the children to Greek culture, telling them stories from mythology and using sculptures for illustrations. She told them about the Greek gods and heroes, and had them draw Greek motives to go with the stories. She soon succeeded in winning the children's hearts, and they called her "Fräulein Doktor".

Right after the war, there were enormous differences in skill levels among the students, both in German language and in mathematics, which presented her with considerable challenges. However, she had a thorough command of the material, both because she was highly educated and because she prepared assiduously; in short order she made great strides,

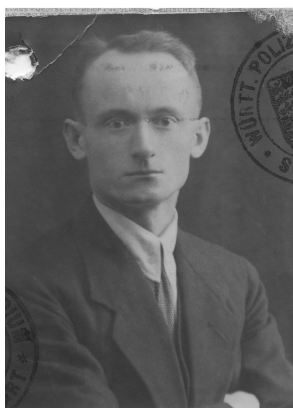
especially because she was able to penetrate everything with great imagination.

She paired meticulous lesson planning with sensitive child observations. In addition, she began early on to write pedagogical publications containing highly detailed reflections based on her classroom experience. Steiner was able to observe her classes and often singled her out for praise in his lectures on the new art of education, holding her up as an example of how to integrate anthroposophical insights. She often accompanied him on his lecture tours to England, which felt like a second home to her.

In this way von Heydebrand became a master of the new art of education and devoted her whole life to it. She wrote a number of artistic texts to be used in the classroom, put together readers, edited the first magazine devoted to Waldorf pedagogy, wrote articles, gave lectures, and trained new teachers. Spurred on by Rudolf Steiner, she gained a thorough knowledge of the pedagogical renewal efforts prevalent in Germany at the time, drawing attention to their narrow focus on cognitive development, and observing how little such theories were able to contribute to a healthy and living practice in the classroom.

Three classes had the great pleasure of having her as their class teacher. In 1935 she felt compelled to step back from teaching due to health reasons, political pressures, and tensions within the faculty. She died in the summer of 1938 after the Stuttgart school had been closed by the National Socialists, who had already banned her publications. She can truly be called one of the most eminent pioneers of Waldorf pedagogy, both because of her outstanding pedagogical contributions and her publications.

Elisabeth and Paul Baumann



In addition to eight class teachers, Rudolf Steiner invited four subject teachers to be part of the team that was summoned to Stuttgart to build up the new school. First among these specialist teachers were Paul and Elisabeth Baumann. From day one, they dedicated themselves fully to the task of shaping the arts curriculum.

Paul Baumann, born in 1889, attended the grammar school in Karlsruhe, where he met E.A. Karl Stockmeyer, who would later introduce him to anthroposophy. Baumann worked as a music conductor at several German theaters before World War I, and after completing military service, he landed in Zürich, where he joined the anthroposophical movement for the threefold social organism. There he met Elisabeth Dollfuss, a eurythmist eight years his junior, whom he married on the last day of the preparatory course for Waldorf teachers, just before the festive opening of the Stuttgart school.

Elisabeth, who grew up in an anthroposophical family, spent a number of years in anthroposophical circles in Munich. There she studied eurythmy with Lory Smits and was soon giving courses herself. As a 24-year-old, she would become the youngest member of the faculty of Waldorf teachers.

The pair was like a living picture of the manner in which the arts—in their case music and eurythmy—could be married in Waldorf education. “Everyone was overjoyed, and wished the couple well from the bottom of their hearts” (Emil Molt). From then on, they both devoted themselves with great energy to the task of building up the music and eurythmy curriculum, permeating the school with art. This started right from the moment of the opening celebration, for which Paul played music by J. S. Bach and Elisabeth performed eurythmy. They were the center of all the monthly assemblies and Christmas celebrations.

Paul Baumann composed the majority of the musical contributions himself. Right from the beginning, he also started writing about the pedagogical aims of the school. He lectured about the place of eurythmy and music in the new art of education, for example on October 1920 at the first anthroposophical “Hochschulkurs” [advanced course] in Dornach. His lasting contribution, however, is the body of musical compositions he wrote for the new school, including many songs which arose from a revolutionary, new musical impulse. The songs pointed the way to original creation, springing from entirely sovereign sources.

There were no existing school traditions upon which Baumann could build. He composed songs with courage and verve, basing himself on anthroposophical insights and the impulse of freedom that permeated the new pedagogy and art of education. His compositions “were meant to join in the growing chorus with which we appeal to all human beings, striving to save education from being stifled by restrictions imposed by political parties of the state.... These songs could only arise in independent schools, in consonance with a curriculum which couples practical aims for everyday life with the true demands of education as recognized by Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophy, and the psychological insights resulting from it. These songs could only come into being within a collaborative group of teachers who never ceased to work on themselves in order to throw off tendencies of narrowmindedness or abstract prescriptions imposed by conventional pedagogical theories. When these songs succeed in breathing something of the spirit of the Waldorf school, and if listeners are touched by that breath, the songs will have fulfilled their mission.” [...]

Baumann’s wife Elisabeth was not only the first eurythmist to develop pedagogical eurythmy alongside artistic eurythmy. She also observed that many children had health problems after the war or needed help to overcome hindrances in their development. This prompted her to ask Rudolf Steiner to give indications for hygienic and therapeutic applications of eurythmy, which in turn led to the therapeutic eurythmy course given in Dornach in 1921. It is thanks to her initiative that we now have therapeutic eurythmy.

Paul and Elisabeth Baumann worked at the Waldorf school in Stuttgart until 1937, right up to a few months before it had to close its doors. At that point, they retired from teaching and spent the rest of their lives in France and Switzerland.

Walter Johannes Stein

The festive celebration of September 7, 1919 also marked the end of the preparatory course for the new cohort of teachers, and participants who had not been assigned a task by Rudolf Steiner the day before were preparing to return to their previous occupations.

This was the situation that Walter Johannes Stein, 28 years old at the time, found himself in. Like Caroline von Heydebrand, he had just completed his last doctoral examinations a few weeks before in Vienna. Indeed, he was the first to write a dissertation about Rudolf Steiner. Next to philosophy, Stein had studied mathematics and

physics. He had also put a great deal of effort into promoting the movement for social threefolding in Vienna during the spring and summer of 1919. He had pleaded with Rudolf Steiner for permission to take part in the teachers course in Stuttgart, to which he had not at first been invited. After the ceremony on the 7th, Stein was literally plucked from the street in front of the school by E. A. Karl Stockmeyer, who gave him the assignment from Rudolf Steiner to serve as a substitute teacher. Stein must have been overjoyed to be asked, and he was inwardly prepared to give his all to this new task.

Stein spent the first weeks in grade one, substituting for Leonie von Mirbach, the first grade teacher. By the end of November 1919, however, it became clear that Rudolf Treichler, who alternated with E. A. Karl Stockmeyer in teaching grades 7 and 8, had to focus all his efforts on teaching foreign languages. Though a natural scientist by training, Walter Johannes Stein now had to teach German and history. With characteristic zeal, he strove to penetrate the subjects which were foreign territory for him up to then, and he taught them brilliantly. [...] In the early years, Rudolf Steiner singled him and Caroline von Heydebrand out for praise for his ability to imbue his lesson material with anthroposophical understanding.

Stein combined teaching with an extensive lecturing schedule; he was also a prolific anthroposophical author. The themes he covered were many: in addition to educational topics in the context of contemporary politics, Waldorf pedagogy, and history, he also lectured on anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner’s work. Stein also set himself the task of protecting Rudolf Steiner against numerous attacks from various quarters. He did it with expertise, courage, and verbal acumen that were unbeatable, even feared.

Working together with a faculty of highly gifted and anthroposophically trained colleagues—Herbert Hahn and Caroline von Heydebrand, to name but two—was a source of great happiness for Stein. His good friends and fellow students from Vienna, Eugen Kolisko and Hermann von Baravalle, soon joined the Stuttgart school, much to his delight.

After a short time, however, Stein went through a deep professional and personal crisis, which was compounded by the many extra activities he had taken on. Instead of really teaching, he tended to lecture, holding high school students captive by propounding anthroposophical theses. This led to estrangement in the high school and discipline problems. Rudolf Steiner was upset and

criticized Stein just as unsparingly as he had praised him two years before for his exemplary teaching.

Stein was shocked about himself and questioned his own capacity as a teacher. Two elements sustained him through this crisis: a boundless devotion to Rudolf Steiner's authority and an iron will. This combination helped him to overcome what he had to face and made him a brilliant teacher again.

After the death of Rudolf Steiner—news of which he had to bring to the faculty—Stein went through a very difficult time involving many tensions and conflicts as people struggled with the question of how to continue anthroposophical work and uphold the life of the Anthroposophical Society. Stein felt compelled to take an uncompromising stance, which often led to polarization. In the end, he left Germany in 1932 and moved to England. He did not work as a teacher there, however, but as a journalist, lecturer, and coordinator. Surprisingly, he developed therapeutic capacities and worked as a curative practitioner until his death in London in 1957.

Elisabeth von Grunelius

Rudolf Steiner had invited Elisabeth von Grunelius, whom he had known since 1914, to be the first kindergarten teacher. She was a delicate young lady who had come to Dornach to work on the carving of the capitals of the first Goetheanum when she was 19 years old. Born in Alsace, she had completed the Comenius kindergarten seminar in Bonn in 1914, and wanted to go on from there to study psychology. After a year and a half in Dornach, she took a leave of absence and went to Berlin in order to do a practicum for kindergarten, nursery, and social work in order to obtain her diploma in the Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Seminar, which would qualify her to train students.

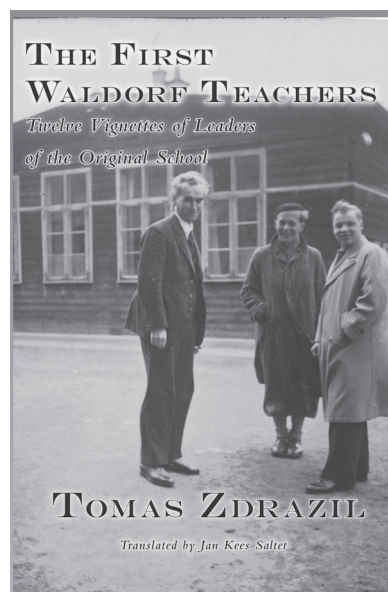
After the war, she returned to Alsace, which by then had become French territory. When Rudolf Steiner asked her to join the faculty of the first Waldorf school, she came, but worked only as a substitute teacher for some time. Rudolf Steiner frequently mentions how difficult it was to fit a kindergarten into the existing configuration of the school grounds. As late as April 1923, Steiner is recorded as saying in one of the faculty meetings that “we can’t even think of a kindergarten at the present time”.

During the second year of the school's existence, Elisabeth assisted Leonie von Mirbach by taking over the second half of main lesson. In the third school year, that class of 52 children was split into two, and she took

one half (3b). After one year of that, she left to study eurythmy and painting in Dornach.

It was only in 1924 that the school managed to carve out a place to build the kindergarten, tucked in a far corner of the playground. This was largely due to the energetic efforts of Herbert Hahn, and the kindergarten was ready for occupancy in 1926. From then on, Elisabeth von Grunelius built up the kindergarten. Since Steiner had died in 1925, she didn't have his direct indications during the initial build-up phase, so it was she who outlined the original foundations of the kindergarten work in the Waldorf school. Later she went on to found the international Waldorf kindergarten movement. She died in 1989, at age 94, the last member of the original faculty at the Stuttgart school.

Tomáš Zdražil studied history and pedagogy in Prague, Stuttgart, and Bielefeld. For several years he was a Waldorf class teacher and edited works on Waldorf education. Since 2007, he has been teaching at the Freie Hochschule Stuttgart Waldorf teacher training center, specializing in the classes on the anthroposophical and anthropological basis of Waldorf education.



Tomáš Zdražil, *The First Waldorf Teachers: Twelve Vignettes of Leaders of the Original School*, translated by Jan Kees Saltet (Waldorf Publications, 2019).



Waldorf Education in the United States

Historical Overview

Michael Holdrege

The ideas of Rudolf Steiner found their first footing in the United States on the 7th floor of the world-famous Carnegie Hall building in New York City. Beginning in 1910, several individuals with significant musical backgrounds—several of whom had met Rudolf Steiner in Europe through their singing career—began meeting as an anthroposophical study group in the Carnegie Hall studio of one of its members. This group can be credited for preparing the soil for planting the first seed of Waldorf education in North America—which then sprouted in New York City with the founding of the Rudolf Steiner School, in 1928.

The ideals of Waldorf education were anticipated on this continent by the educational philosophy of John Dewey (1854-1952), who, several decades before the advent of Waldorf education, was advocating for schools grounded in practical activities, human experience, and the pursuit of the arts. His reformist ideas were carried forth by a host “progressive schools,” starting an educational movement that in one form or another is still going strong today. The Rudolf Steiner School grew slowly but steadily to become the first full K-12 Waldorf school on this continent.

The nurturing of this first Waldorf school received significant assistance from many European friends during those early decades. Individuals such as Lucy van der Pals-Neuscheller, Leo Neuscheller, Friedrich Hiebel, Hermann Poppelbaum, and Karl Ege taught classes at the New York City School, which, starting in the 1940s, was led for many years by Henry Barnes, who had trained in Stuttgart and then taught at the first established Waldorf school in England before returning to his native America.

In many ways, the first Waldorf school in North America can be viewed as a developing organism that needed care and fostering for some thirteen years before it was able to send out sprouts into its environment. The first new unfolding of Waldorf education then took hold at the Kimberton Waldorf School in the state of Pennsylvania (1941), followed in 1942 by High Mowing School in New Hampshire as the first Waldorf high school on the North American continent. Five years thereafter (1947), what is now called the Waldorf School of Garden City, not far from New York City, opened its

doors. In the 1950s three more Waldorf Schools were founded, and five more followed in the 1960s. Besides a strong collection of schools in the Eastern U.S., two of these early schools found footing on the West Coast of the country: Highland Hall in Los Angeles and the Sacramento Waldorf School in Northern California. In 1968, these 12 schools joined together in a loose confederation that later took the name Association of Waldorf Schools in North America (AWSNA).

Of the many European helpers during those years, one figure in particular stands out: Dr. Hermann von Baravalle. Baravalle, who was chosen by Rudolf Steiner to teach in the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, became a frequent visitor to the Rudolf Steiner School in New York and was later connected with the founding of nearly every Waldorf school in the United States, from the 1940s to the 1960s. His presence was so significant that he was sometimes referred to as the “Johnny Appleseed” of Waldorf education in the United States. Baravalle held the strong conviction that in America, Rudolf Steiner’s esotericism should be avoided when presenting Waldorf education to the public and also in teacher training. This perspective was not shared by all and represented the opposite end of the spectrum from the anthroposophy-centered and European-rooted approach of the Rudolf Steiner School in New York.

In the late 1960s, at the time when AWSNA was still in its embryonic forming, the country as a whole found itself in great turbulence. Key factors were the civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam, and the rebellion against the latter by a large portion of the country’s student population. People at that time were learning the power of “peaceful” demonstrations. Students understood how to use that “voice” as a driving force for change, not only at the political level, but also in terms of educational reform.

During these very exciting years of “awakening,” a number of young Americans began to discover anthroposophy and the work of Rudolf Steiner. Particularly significant in this process was a naturalized Englishman named Francis Edmunds. In the late 1960s and during the 1970s, Edmunds traveled each year across the United States, lecturing on Waldorf education and the work of Rudolf Steiner. In this context, he would also

inform his audiences of an idyllic place where anthroposophy could be experienced and studied: at Emerson College on a biodynamic farm in the south of England. As a result of Edmunds' peregrinations, hundreds of young Americans went to study anthroposophy at Emerson College; many stayed to train as Waldorf teachers or move on to London to study eurythmy or speech formation. Some even ventured further, crossing the English Channel to study various aspects of anthroposophy in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, or Scandinavia.

This large wave of young Americans who crossed the Atlantic to learn anthroposophy and its many applications had a huge influence on the development of Waldorf education in the United States during the ensuing years. Most of these individuals—sooner or later—returned to the U.S. and many of them became enthusiastic Waldorf teachers. This led to a rapid expansion of Waldorf schools across the country in the 1970s and 80s. Between 1928 and 1970, on average a new Waldorf school started every three years. Starting in the 1970s, by contrast, typically three schools opened each year. Today there are 124 recognized Waldorf schools, according to the international listing of Waldorf schools.

In addition to these independent or private schools, over 40 public or so-called “charter” schools have sprung up under the umbrella of what is now called the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (APWE). In the United States, a public Waldorf school typically takes the forms and methods of independent Waldorf schools and adapts them to the public-school environment and some state mandated requirements. The curriculum and content are usually adjusted and students are bound by mandated state tests, but the approach to teaching, such as the Main Lesson, the daily and weekly rhythms, the integration of artistic activity into every subject area, etc. are all applied. By contrast, students in the independent Waldorf schools are not required to take regular state examinations.

Waldorf schools cannot exist without trained teachers, of course, and the teacher training landscape that makes this possible has gone through considerable changes over the past half century. After the wave of returning Emerson College students began to slow, two institutions, in particular, moved into the foreground of Waldorf teacher training in the U.S.: Sunbridge College

in Spring Valley, New York (originally in Detroit) and Rudolf Steiner College (RSC) in Sacramento, California. Founded in 1967 (Sunbridge) and 1976 (RSC), respectively, both institutions eventually experienced a major expansion as “the place to go” for those who wanted to explore anthroposophy and study Waldorf education. Starting in 1983, a third degree-granting Waldorf program was inaugurated within the Education Department of what was then called Antioch Graduate School of New England, based in Keene, New Hampshire.

During the 1980s and 90s, these three institutions were the largest centers for the development of Waldorf education in the U.S. However, as the new century approached, things grew more difficult for both Sunbridge and RSC. Economic challenges facing college-age students became a serious hindrance to pursuing post-graduate study at an anthroposophical institution.

The cost of an undergraduate (bachelor's) degree had grown so high that most students arrived at the end of their university studies with significant student loans. (The total amount of outstanding student loans reached \$1.41 trillion in 2019.) This meant that most needed to go to work immediately upon graduation and continue working for many years to pay off the money they had borrowed to attend university. For many, going back to school full-time to study anthroposophy and Waldorf education—an option

more readily available to earlier generations—was no longer a realistic choice. These circumstances had a serious effect on enrollment at Sunbridge and Rudolf Steiner College. Both went eventually from master's-degree-granting, full-time programs to non-degree-granting, low-residency, part-time programs. Although Sunbridge Institute (which is officially no longer a college) still offers such courses, Rudolf Steiner College has closed its teacher training programs. As a result, the only degree-granting, year-round program remaining in the U.S. is the Waldorf Teacher Education Program at Antioch University New England, located in New Hampshire.

These days, instead of full-time programs, the most commonly-practiced format for Waldorf teacher training involves school-year weekends or month-long summer sessions located near or connected with Waldorf schools in various parts of the country.

The first Waldorf school in North America can be viewed as a developing organism that needed care and fostering for some thirteen years before it was able to send out sprouts into its environment.

Over the past century, public schools in the United States have increasingly taken on a more “top-down” form of organization run by school boards and school administrations. The central goal has become to apply “objective” data to a “soft” and seemingly undisciplined field—to identify the right “outcome targets” and then to “organize” the entire system on that basis. This has led to a classroom dynamic in public education that is commonly characterized as “teaching to the test.” Such a cultural context also influences organizational tendencies in 21st century Waldorf schools. It is often difficult to find a healthy balance between managerial procedures and “bottom line” considerations coming from board members and administrators, on the one hand, and the viewpoints brought by teachers and other individuals who work day-to-day with the children from a developmental perspective, on the other. Schools may succeed in finding a balance between such differing viewpoints for periods of time, but there is increasingly the tendency to fall into “top-down” organizational forms when things are not going well.

In his vision of a threefold school organism, Rudolf Steiner clearly saw that meeting such challenges is healthy and grounding for teachers, but he also knew that such issues can never be resolved “once and for all.” Such organizational questions must be met actively and with creative imagination again and again – as Waldorf schools in the United States have experienced repeatedly over the past 90 years.

Michael Holdrege teaches life and earth sciences, economics, and German at the Chicago Waldorf School. He is also a faculty member at the Arcturus Rudolf Steiner Education Program in Chicago and at the Waldorf Teacher Training Program in Xi'an, China. Michael is author of *From Creative Ideas to Innovative Practices: Change-adept Organizations for a Changing World*.

A Collaborative Approach to Educational Freedom

Lecture Series presented at the AWSNA Summer Conference, 2019

Elan Leibner

Lecture 1: Vidar's Triumph: Useful Leather and Worn-out Shoes

The title of this conference is *Responsible Innovation: A Collaborative Approach to Educational Freedom*. There is something so poetically appropriate about tackling the themes of responsibility, innovation, collaboration, and freedom in this city, Philadelphia, and at this time. Waldorf education just completed the 100th academic year since the first school opened its doors in Stuttgart. We have done it against long odds and in the face of opposing cultural currents. We have also done it in the face of opposing inner currents, collectively and within each one of us.

It is especially poetic that we meet here, in this city, where a bold group of men met some 243 years ago and articulated in *The Declaration of Independence* the ideals that are still, by and large, the defining ideals of a country that has struggled ever since to live up to them. The story of this country should give us heart: we are not the first to see goals that we find difficult to realize.

The Founding Fathers were, most of them, not able to live up to their stated ideals. Their thoughts and aspirations reached much higher than their practices. Their continuing practice of enslaving other people is the most obvious aspect of the discrepancy; the enslaved suffered on an unimaginable scale at the hand of the very people who wrote this document that declares "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" as unalienable rights of all; and let's not forget that women, religious minorities, and people with non-traditional sexual or gender orientations suffered discrimination as well, and still do.

The Founders understood the idea of the free and autonomous individual, but understood it in the narrow sense of those that looked like them: white and male. The story of the U.S., and by extension the story of the Western world ever since, has been a gradual, non-linear progression towards the full realization of the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Individually and collectively, this country has sinned against those ideals over and over again, but it has also worked to

advance them again and again. Freedom and autonomy are challenging concepts, especially when you have to share power and wealth if you would abide by those principles. It has not been easy, and it still isn't, but the arc of time seems to expand the roster of those who come under the umbrella. Freedom and autonomy in education are no less challenging, and we will address these concepts in their educational sense in what follows.

But let us agree at the outset that falling short of realizing our aspirations is an inevitable consequence of *having* high aspirations. Our spirit can discern where we should go, but realizing that discernment "in the flesh" takes time. Still, just like the suffragettes, the leaders of the civil rights movement, the environmentalists, and LGBTQ+ activists did not retreat in the face of opposing forces, so will we not shy away from facing the outer and inner demons that would happily see Waldorf education withdraw back into the spiritual world.

Let's remember that the spiritual world has long since realized the capacities for creation, love, and leaving their children (us) free. According to Steiner's lectures on the Mystery of the Trinity (July 30, 1922), the Father is the creative force, the Son is the capacity to love, and the Holy Spirit was sent for the freedom of the human being. Now we have to realize those capacities on the earth, and that will take time, maybe a lifetime. Or *lifetimes*, actually.

And since we are acknowledging our host city and its illustrious history, it would behoove us to acknowledge that this city is built on land that was once the home of indigenous people. The forced displacement of millions of human beings is as heavy a burden on the conscience of this country as slavery is, and part of our innovation as an American movement will have to include reckoning with these deeds. Pastor Norwood is one of the leaders of the indigenous community in this area, and with his permission I would like to read out to you the following blessing that he composed:

The land upon which we gather is part of the traditional territory of the Lenni-Lenape, called "Lenapehoking." The Lenape people lived in harmony with one another upon this

territory for thousands of years. During the colonial era and the early federal period, many were removed west and north, but some also remained here with the three continuing historical tribal communities of the region: The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation; the Ramapough Lenape Nation; and the Powhatan Lenape Nation. We acknowledge the Lenni-Lenape as the original people of this land and their continuing relationship with their territory. In our acknowledgment of the continued presence of Lenape people in their homeland, we affirm the aspiration of the great 17th century Lenape Chief Tamanend, that there be harmony between the indigenous people of this land and the descendants of the immigrants to this land, “as long as the rivers and creeks flow, and the sun, moon, and stars shine.”

Let us now turn to our theme.

Waldorf teachers have been educating students for 100 years. Now we are facing what I think is an inflection point. In the broadest sense, the first 100 years established a curriculum, and now we have to shift our focus to the pedagogy itself, specifically by adopting a more therapeutic mindset. Many of you know that the Pedagogical Section Council published a set of Core Principles several years ago, as well as a book to aid in studying them. I am happy to report that we recently re-worked that document, and that the revised version, as well as a beautiful card with the Core Principles arrayed along a pentagram, are available. I will strive to show that Rudolf Steiner, already during the early years of Waldorf education, indicated that this shift from curricula to a more therapeutic approach was in order, but that for various reasons the movement’s focus remained on the curriculum.

Now, being teachers and educators, let’s open with a little story that many of you know quite well. Though I have told this story in the past to my fourth graders, I never quite grasped the significance of a certain aspect of it, and I thank my good friend Cornelia Debus for sending it to me as an illustration of what I was trying to promote.

The first 100 years [of Waldorf education] established a curriculum, and now we have to shift our focus to the pedagogy itself, specifically by adopting a more therapeutic mindset.

The Norse gods lived in Asgard, working on world development. These gods included characters like Odin, Thor, Freya, and Vidar, but they also faced forces of evil: the Fenris Wolf and the Midgard Serpent. Vidar, god of the future and Odin’s son, was different from the others. He never spoke; he was always listening and helping wherever needed. With time, the forces of the other gods were fading; they became too weak and couldn’t resist the Fenris Wolf anymore. Only Vidar, the quiet one, didn’t lose his power, and he finally defeated the Fenris Wolf. But Vidar didn’t triumph by his own power alone, either. He took the leather scraps of all the shoes that were ever made and sewed a pair of new shoes. Then he put his foot into the throat of the Fenris Wolf and tore it in half. From that moment on, Vidar was speaking.

Now to the meaning of this picture: Every shoe has leather scraps belonging to it. These scraps are full of unused, future potential. Also, they remain innocent as part of the original material, while all finished shoes with which people walk become old and guilty by destiny. The traces of life are drawn into the soles, and the shoes of the Norse gods lost their energy and finally could not suffice against the Fenris Wolf. Only Vidar’s shoes, made of unused future potential, taken from the past, were strong enough. All leather scraps of all shoes were part of it, not only his own. The future needs a community wearing Vidar’s shoes, made of all leather scraps we didn’t need for our nice, well-shaped and beloved old shoes. Our ears, too, will have to open up to hear Vidar’s words, coming from the future. The Nordic term ‘Vidar’ means “the one who is open.” In German the name is spelled with a “W,” which then reminds us of the English “wide.” Our ears, and hearts, have to be wide, wider than we are comfortable, to hear the future speak.

At the risk of over-explaining, I would say that the shift I suggested earlier, from a focus on “the curriculum” to a focus on the pedagogy, is exactly what the notion of “old leather making new shoes” means in our context. The old, comfortable shoes are no longer equal to the task, and the old language isn’t, either. The intentions that made the old habits into the realities of the Waldorf school, the familiar shoes, are still leather, but the traditions themselves are growing old. It is the principles that should guide us, and we should dare to fashion new shoes and a new language to

meet the challenges of our time. Broadly, this is what I have in mind when thinking of the word “Innovation.” It is the simplest of the four key words in the title of this conference, and we will get to practical ways of bringing about the meaning of this word in the coming lectures. Then there is the word “Responsible.” When I first shared the term “responsible innovation” with a colleague out West, she wryly quipped, “Takes all the fun out of it.” But I would like to ask, hoping my question doesn’t take the fun out: Responsible to *whom* or to *what*? And if our innovation is not responsible, what does that mean?

In reference to the “what,” to which innovation is responsible, I suggest the Core Principles.

In reference to “whom” we are responsible to, I think there are here principally two groups: the spiritual hierarchies and the children in our care. At the very outset of *Study of Man*, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the teachers continuing the work that spiritual beings did with the children before birth. Everything that Waldorf education entails is nothing more than that: here are children that were in the care of spiritual beings, and our job is to do for them what these spiritual beings can no longer do. All of our methods, all of our content, all of our intentions, are, finally, only successful if the spiritual world looks upon our work and approves of it. All the ridicule that some critics heap upon us should not deter us. Every person of significance in the history of the world who tried to bring something worthwhile into the world suffered ridicule, scorn, and much worse. You can be sure that beings of all stripes are deeply interested in what we do, and the good ones are not the only ones trying to do something about it.

So we want to innovate out of a sense of responsibility to the spiritual beings on whose behalf we work, and out of a sense of responsibility to the children that come to us, which means learning to take our cues from their needs, especially their *therapeutic needs*, as I elaborated in my essay on “The New Impulse of the Second Teachers’ Meditation,” rather than from curriculum books. There is nothing wrong with curriculum books, as long as the teachers who use them remember that these books are not authorities. Ultimately, books should serve as inspiration rather than authorities. We will return to this theme in the third lecture. And we will use the Core Principles as shorthand for the key architecture of the quality control process. In other words, the Core Principles can guide us when we assess whether a teacher is doing a good job, since

these principles describe a framework rather than give prescriptions.

Now there is also this interesting word in the conference name’s sub-title: *freedom*. We will look into it in more detail tomorrow, when you are not so tired from your travels. Tonight, I want to stipulate a few things about freedom and education and also to look at some of the hindrances that stand in our way.

There is a famous quote from Marie Steiner’s introduction to “A Modern Art of Education” that says, “Our highest endeavor must be to educate free human beings who are able of themselves to impart direction and meaning to their lives.” It is oft-quoted, but that doesn’t mean that it is easy to understand. I would like to offer three basic thoughts as a foundation for addressing the question of freedom in education:

1. Whereas it is not a requirement that freedom can only be brought into education by those who are already free (or very few would ever be able to do it), it is very much a requirement that those who wish to educate free human beings take on unfolding their own freedom. Otherwise, all that’s present is a phony oration. So we have to ask ourselves: are our actions and forms of institutional life suitable models for our students of a freedom-building community?
2. Striving towards freedom in an institutional setting, when the institution itself stands for freedom, cannot happen without collaboration. Agreements and conversations are not an obstacle on the path towards freedom but rather give an individual striving the necessary context. Regardless of the particular form of leadership in a school, a top-down reality is, ipso-facto, unfree. Whether the top (in the top-down structure) is a principal, a dominant colleague, or any other figure of authority matters less than the outcome, which is that the teacher is not acting out of freedom.
3. By Freedom we mean: action arising out of love (intuitive thinking), unencumbered by the past. Both Rudolf Steiner in his epistemological works and Georg K hlew nd in many of his essays describe the possibility of reaching this level of inner activity. This is the final stage of a long process, cognitive, emotional, and volitional. More on that tomorrow.

I would like to add two other thoughts. The first is that any decision that does not arise out of an intuitive process, in Steiner's sense of the word—meaning not intuitive as in “gut feeling” but as a super-present state of consciousness—is subject to errors of the most varied, dangerous, and occasionally amusing or embarrassing kind. A little more on that in a minute. The second is that in order to unfold freedom in our relationships with others, it is necessary to understand the role of the night and the way it connects us with the cosmos, with the region of existence where we are not separate but rather *are part of a whole*.

Let's explore these two a little bit. My guide in exploring the calamities of the not-intuitive mind is Daniel Kahneman. A psychologist rather than an economist by training, Kahneman won the Nobel Prize in economics for his work, because it was foundational in establishing the field of behavioral economics.

A few years ago he published a book, “Thinking, Fast and Slow.” It is a fascinating exploration of several aspects of the ways in which the mind works. None of them is the intuitive or creative mode that responsible innovation needs, so I offered it as background reading for this conference more as a source for cautionary tales. The experience of reading this book is that our mind plays a constant stream of tricks on us, and knowing that it does makes very little difference. We fool ourselves into seeing coherence where none exists, answer easy questions instead of the ones before us, and anchor perspectives and decisions to lazily chosen but readily available facts.

For example: two groups of people were asked to estimate the height of redwood trees. The first group was asked these two questions:

- *Is the height of the tallest redwood more or less than 1,200 feet?*
- *What is your best guess about the height of the tallest redwood?*

The second group was asked the same questions, only the number in the first question was 180 feet.

Now in theory, the suggested numbers should have no effect on the second. You should be able to estimate the height of the tallest redwood independently. In practice, the first group's mean estimate was 844 feet,

while the second group's was 282 feet. That's a difference of 562 feet based on nothing more than a random number posed before the question the participants were asked to answer.

(For those who would not be able to ease their minds without knowing this: the actual tallest redwood, “the correct answer” according to Google, is 379.7 feet.)

A second example Kahneman gives tells of an environmental education center in which oil spills are discussed before a contribution is solicited for helping sea birds affected by the spills. When the visitors were simply asked if they would make a contribution, the average gift was \$64. When they were asked if they would be willing to contribute \$5, the average gift was \$20. When they were asked about contributing \$400, the average contribution was \$123. On average, raising the anchoring (or suggested) figure by \$100 brought an increase of \$30 in the contribution amount.

Another example of the way in which we are unconsciously influenced is given in an experiment conducted at a British university in the UK. Over a period of 10 weeks, researchers placed two alternating sets of pictures above one of the university's tea and coffee station, which operated on the honor system. During one week these pictures featured flowers while in the following week they featured a pair of eyes looking at the people helping themselves to a hot drink. The difference in contributions from week to week was substantial: on average, eye-banner weeks garnered about three times as much honor-system payments as flower-banner weeks. It is tempting to insert some quip about British honor here, but let's leave it at that. I'm not too sure that an American setting (even a Waldorf conference) would yield different results.

Let's try a little exercise to play with one of our often unacknowledged biases. It is called the availability bias. Please write down which one of the following pairs of causes of death is more frequent and then try to estimate the ratio between them.

- Strokes vs. Accidents (strokes cause about twice as many deaths)
- Tornadoes vs. Asthma (Asthma causes about 20 times as many deaths)

- Lightning vs. Botulism (Lightning causes about 52 times as many deaths)
- Diseases vs. Accidents (Diseases cause 18 times as many deaths)

You can see that accidents, tornadoes, and outbreaks of botulism are “sexy” news stories, so we overestimate their frequency relative to other causes of death by large orders of magnitude. Since we encounter news about such causes of death more often than their actual frequency would indicate (by comparison to less “sexy” news), they take a more prominent place in our mind than more harmful causes.

The effects of such influences are astonishing, as Kahneman’s book demonstrates again and again. We are primed by suggestions and change our behavior and judgment without realizing how influenced we are by them. Kahneman then provides many other examples of the ways in which we skew estimates and make bad choices due to myriad mental habits, most of them completely unconscious and all of them unhelpful. Read his book to give yourself a crash course in the hazards of using your mind habitually, in an unchecked manner. It will make a commitment to wakeful thinking easier to follow. It is clear that without strong efforts our capacity for free activity is a mere seed, a dormant possibility.

That is the part about our day consciousness. Now let’s look for a moment at our night consciousness.

Falling asleep and the experiences we undergo during the night are not only fundamental pedagogical realities without which Waldorf education is incomprehensible, but they are keys to unfolding free relationships. Steiner’s lecture on this issue, which I included in the recommended reading for this conference, was given in London, in 1922 (CW 214). It is titled “The Other Side of Human Existence.” Steiner describes how during sleep there are phases in the separation of the soul and spirit from the body that remains in bed, and how successive organs are activated for perceiving the spiritual realities we encounter during the night, and how successive realms of beings are involved in the process. What is crucial for our efforts to unfold a free activity is that we are reminded yet again that the separate existence we experience during our waking hours is an illusion. In reality, we ourselves are woven into a web of beings and relationships. We come into the earth and forget

our essential self precisely so that freedom may unfold. It is a paradoxical situation that is nevertheless true: our inmost being is a spiritual core, and as such it is intrinsically one with other beings. Spiritual beings are not separate from one another but rather interwoven in the most manifold ways and work through and with one another. At the same time, we live with an earthly body that is indeed separate from other earthly bodies, and we have to transform both our body and, ultimately, the earth itself, back into a spiritual state. Through the gift of the night we are reminded of our spiritual origins.

Remember these two things: we have to make new shoes from old leather, and entering the night with the right questions will coat you in fairy dust.

If you go to sleep prepared with questions, it is possible to bring back from the hours of sleep spiritual substance with which to overcome the separateness of the earth. This separateness is, as you can see, both an illusion and a reality. Merely thinking it an illusion does not change our experience that it is a reality, nor does it convince our students that we are one with them. And the spiritual world

does not respond well to lectures or commands from us. We can’t tell spiritual beings to make the students or our colleagues believe that we are one with them (that is, with the students and the colleagues). But the spiritual world does respond to questions, especially those that honestly seek to understand the other. If we can approach sleep with an attitude that the day has shown us things we do not understand about our students or about colleagues or about ourselves or our subject matter’s suitability, and that we humbly ask for guidance, then we will find, upon waking, that moments of inspiration will trickle into our work as if by magic. We will have, as it were, little bits of fairy dust sprinkled in our bearing.

If you remember nothing else from this evening, remember these two things: we have to make new shoes from old leather, and entering the night with the right questions will coat you in fairy dust.

Now you can tell everybody that what a Waldorf teacher really needs, aside from the Seven Core Principles, is a new pair of shoes and getting ready to go out properly into the night, every night.

Lecture 2: The Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow

I would like to continue by focusing on the notion of freedom. We speak in the Core Principles about the freedom of the teacher; ‘freedom’ is also named in

the subtitle of our conference. Yesterday, my three stipulations were that striving for freedom is essential, that collaboration is essential in an institutional setting, and that by freedom we mean an action taken out of love for the deed. Let's look at these a little more closely.

First, the question of striving for freedom. On the face of it, nobody would say that he or she does not strive to be free. No one would say: 'freedom scares me and I would rather be unfree.' But freedom in Steiner's sense is not some general dislike of being told what to do. It is an experience found fleetingly enough on a path of cognitive and moral development that does not unfold without effort. My experience as a Waldorf teacher who also teaches adults is that Steiner's roadmap towards freedom is studied only when people *have* to study it, usually in a Foundation Studies program, and almost never again. One reason is that *The Philosophy of Freedom* is a dense philosophical text that, as Fred Amrine notes in his new book, *Kicking Away the Ladder*, combines eternal truths together with German philosophical arguments that are no longer relevant (and probably never were relevant to the average reader) in a mixture that can confuse and tire a reader who isn't familiar with the field. Presenting a chapter from *The Philosophy of Freedom* edited especially for his book, Amrine chops away the specialized—dare I say esoteric in the negative sense—sections from Steiner's presentation, in order to leave the essential ideas accessible. Those of you who would like to tackle this fundamental text can do a lot worse than to use Amrine's abbreviated version. *Kicking Away the Ladder* is one gem of a text even without the chapter on the Essential Philosophy of Freedom, but all the more so for its inclusion.

Let me try to capture a few of these essentials. Rudolf Steiner begins his seminal work on the question of freedom with a long and difficult discourse on epistemology, that is with a theory of knowledge. Working as he did within the context of Kantian and post-Kantian German Idealism, Steiner begins with the question of how we can possibly know anything with certainty. Kant was responding to the British philosopher David Hume, who had shown that Empiricism, which claims that all knowledge originates in sensory experience, was fatally flawed. The assumption that the senses can be trusted proves, upon closer scrutiny, to be untenable, and Kant then showed that Rationalism was capable of proving both sides of every major question with equal validity. He threw the intellectual life of Europe into a whirlwind of activity because the implications of his work were immense.

And in his seminal work on ethics, he made Duty, rather than knowledge, the guide to one's moral conduct.

Steiner spent many years and enormous mental efforts trying to show that, whereas Kant's argument had validity for the customary ways of thinking, there was a possible path of knowledge that transcended the limitations of which Kant spoke. As you know, Steiner saw in Goethe a practitioner of science in whose work a new epistemology was hidden in plain sight. Before he could establish the *ethics* of freedom, Steiner had to show that there was a way of knowing the world that could produce a path towards inner freedom. We will return to *The Philosophy of Freedom* shortly, but first I'd like to leap forward in time to 1911 and to a series of lectures published as *The World of the Senses and The World of the Spirit* (CW 134). The discussion there has something essential to tell us about knowing.

Steiner begins with the search for truth, and he articulates four steps on the way to truth:

- The first is *wonder*. He likens knowledge that originates with wonder to a plant that grows out of a seed we place in the earth. In contrast, knowledge that originates with mere acquisition of concepts is like a papier-maché plant (I would imagine that today he would say silk plant): it looks correct, but it is not alive.
- After wonder comes *veneration*. Even a mood of wonder at the outset of an inquiry does not provide sufficient protection against casual arrogance once some content has been gained. The soul must fill itself with reverence for the universe in the truth it encounters.
- The third step requires *feeling oneself in wisdom-filled harmony with the Laws of the Universe*. Say that our plant has grown and we want to know it. After the stage of veneration, we actively feel ourselves at one with it, until its own lawfulness begins to speak to us and reveal itself.
- And the fourth step is that of *surrender*. We live so fully in the reality of the new wisdom that our own 'I' is allowed to rest, so to speak, while we become one with what we have learned.

Steiner then makes a wonderful comment about knowledge acquired along paths that do not include these four steps. He says that such knowledge may very well be *correct*, but it is not *true*! This distinction is very important. Something can be correct, but being

correct does not necessarily make it true. He offers an interesting response to what Kant had done by proving both sides of an argument: Steiner says that as long as we expect thinking to lead us to the truth, we will arrive at the impossibility that Kant demonstrated. Thinking, he says, is only meant to educate us. Truth requires the four steps mentioned above, but thinking only leads to correctness. We can see that for correctness to become truth, *feeling* and *will* are also needed, but it is the feeling of evidence, as in veneration and harmony, not feeling in the sense of emotions, and it is the will in the sense of “soft will,” as K hlewind calls it, the surrendering will, not the will to conquer.

We live in a world in which correctness (political, legal, and other) often overpowers truth. Steiner actually returns to this theme with slightly modified language in the lectures to the teachers of 1923, when he speaks about Gandhi’s trial. The British judge knows that truth is on Gandhi’s side, but he, the judge, is forced by his circumstances to apply the correct legal statutes. We should acknowledge at this point that we very commonly have to accommodate correctness in various shapes, and that is simply our reality. But as Steiner said at the end of the first course for teachers, the teacher must never compromise in heart and mind with what is untrue. The fact that accommodations must be made is true, but we should not confuse them with truth.

There is an old joke about two Jews walking in Russia when a Cossack stops them, and on pain of death forces them to eat pork. After he rides off, laughing, the older Jew says to the younger, “God will punish you for this.” The younger is stupefied and says, “But you ate it, too! It is said that saving a life trumps other mitzvahs.” The older one says, “No one would argue that you had to eat the pork, but why did you have to lick your fingers?”

Our compromises with the truth in the name of correctness may be inevitable. But I repeat: we should not confuse the two within ourselves. We especially should not confuse it in the way that we come to knowledge of our students. Did we pass through these four stages on the way, or did we assign them a temperament, a disability, or a place on the spectrum as a shortcut that makes our assessment of them correct, but not true?

Being ‘one with’ is consciousness of the night; it is correctness elevated to truth.

Some teachers may never feel ready to move from an occasional tinkering with traditions to a full-on innovative idea. This hesitation might very well be completely justified.

Much of what is known as assessment is consciousness of the day: correctness often left bereft of truth.

We have to see, or, better yet, *hear* our students in the manner in which they sing themselves into being. Assigning them into little boxes is not necessarily a step on the way to true hearing, even if it is “anthroposophically correct.”

Back to *The Philosophy of Freedom*. After establishing the possibility of gaining trustworthy confidence in our knowledge of the world, Steiner moves on to ethics, that is, to the question of the potential freedom of the human being. He admits that we are never wholly free, but points to a region of existence in which freedom

could unfold. He describes a kind of dual ladder, like a step ladder, with one side being our personal makeup, referring to the concepts that would activate us, and the other being the concepts themselves, derived from a process of getting to know the world. Each of these two sides needs cultivation, both the inner and the outer. At the highest level, where the two sides of the ladder meet, pure intuition that transcends both my personal past and any moral framework with which I had been familiar becomes the source of my action. Steiner calls this *Moral Intuition*.

For a free deed to come about, Moral Intuition is not enough. The anatomy of a free deed begins there, but then needs the intuition to be followed by Moral Imagination, which means a plan of action, and Moral Technique, which is the realization, the *execution* of the plan. To make this more accessible we can look at a trivial example:

- You have to see and understand something about a child, for example that her limp is caused by a splinter. Then you have to decide what has to be done, for example the splinter needs to be removed. So far, we are dealing with the two sides of Moral Intuition: understanding what the signs (limp) mean and choosing what to do.
- Then you have to plan how to do that which you resolved to do: you happen to have a pair of small tweezers in your pocket, so you will call the child over and take the splinter out: Moral Imagination.
- Finally, you actually have to do it without making matters worse; hopefully: Moral Technique. So, we

need the *discernment*, the *choice of direction*, the *plan*, and the *execution*.

Of course, most of the riddles that our students present to us are not as easily solved as understanding that the limp originated with a splinter. The fourfold path towards knowing why a child is not managing to curtail a tendency towards kleptomania, for example, is much more demanding and time-consuming. The triviality of the example is meant only to make the three basic capacities—Intuition, Imagination, and Technique—easier to see.

As an aside that is not directly related to the theme of innovation, I'd add that happy communities have all three capacities among their members, and those members celebrate each other, realizing that they are all necessary and that they need one another. Unhappy communities often also have all of those capacities, but each one thinks that it is the only one that really matters. The big thinkers that can analyze and direct actions think that they are the only ones who "get it." The planners think that without them nothing would move along. And the doers shake their heads at all the talking and self-importance of those who couldn't figure out how to proceed, or stoop down to set up chairs for a lecture they mean to give.

Back to the theme of freedom. If I may be so bold, I'd like to summarize the idea of freedom: at the stage of free activity, *nothing that comes from the past is allowed to determine the present course of action*. No curriculum, no text, by Steiner or anyone else, no tradition can tell me what to do unless I choose to allow it to tell me. You have seen the child and loved the child, and you understand what your capacities are: now teach!

I can feel the machinations of the minds of those of you that have to answer to the parents and the board at your school cringing at the notion that teachers might be free to disregard the past.

Two things for you to consider:

The first is that everywhere I have introduced this notion of a teacher's freedom, someone always objects that parents complain about a lack of consistency. Well, no one has ever complained about an inconsistent *good* experience that their child had had at school! A lack of consistency is what people might see when they look for the reason that their child is unhappy or isn't

learning. Parents of happy, well-adjusted children don't complain about, and usually celebrate the creativity and inconsistency (in the sense of not following the usual ways) of their "genius" teacher. So, let's worry about quality, rather than about consistency for its own sake, and recognize that, as Emerson says, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." The consistency we should seek is a consistency of *quality*, not of content.

The second point for the worried bunch is that no one should expect a newly-minted teacher to discard norms and traditions; in all but the rarest of cases, a school should probably not allow an inexperienced teacher to go off on her or his own tangent. But there is a model for moving in the direction of creative and free work: the medieval guilds. The first step in the acquisition of a profession was *apprenticeship*. For several years, the young person would sit at the feet of the master, observe, listen, and gradually receive permission to do aspects of the work. Then came the *journeyman* phase: small groups of those who had completed their apprenticeship would leave their towns and travel to other towns, where they could hire themselves out in local workshops. After two or three years, they would return home and then, if their skills proved deserving, receive the *master* designation and could operate their own shops and employ apprentices and journeymen.

While we do not employ apprentices for periods of years anymore, the process is still relevant. To begin with, the teachers are perfectly justified in doing what the training seminars had taught them. As a new class teacher, and later also as a First Class holder, I felt that my first time doing anything is not yet the time to innovate. Occasionally I may have had a novel idea worth trying, but for the most part I did what I had seen done around me. The focus was on building skills and learning to observe and to reflect. But then, with the second class, I began taking more liberties, and by the time I had my third group, I trusted myself to go into unexplored territories, knowing that I would get lost on occasion but that I would find my way back.

The process of moving from apprenticeship through a journeyman stage to mastery takes time, and there is a *right* amount of time, but not a *set* amount of time, for each teacher to make this transition. Some teachers may never feel ready to move from an occasional tinkering with traditions to a full-on innovative idea. This hesitation might very well be completely justified.

The consistency we should seek [in teaching] is a consistency of quality, not of content.

The time these teachers need might have to stretch into another life, and I say this without a shred of criticism. Yet, such a person should not try to prevent others from leaving the confines of the familiar when they are ripe for exploration.

Explorers can bristle at limitations on their freedom to innovate. Ultimately, if our movement does not attract people with the capacity for innovation, and if it does not nurture such people to the point where they can innovate, responsibly, it will ossify and die. I have said on other occasions that Rudolf Steiner was a consummate social innovator. I suspect that he would be deeply disappointed by the orthodoxy that has enveloped so much of what he initiated as revolutionary ideas and practices in his day.

We stand the danger of thinking about our curriculum like off-the-rack suits: you have a twelve-year-old student? We have just the right suit for him! It is the same suit that all twelve-year-olds need. In fact, if you happen to have been a student at this school yourself, you will recognize it immediately as the same suit we gave you back then! Off-the-rack suits are fine for those who cannot afford anything else, but the reality of an independent school is that our parents expect a little custom tailoring, so to speak, and that may not be a bad thing.

By the same token, just like innovation is an existential necessity for our movement, responsibility is as well. We can take an earnest study of anthroposophy as a marker for the responsible pole of *Responsible Innovation*, though I would quickly add that such astudy alone is not sufficient. And just like the pole of innovation should have a wide circle drawn around it so that various conditions of destiny can find accommodation in our schools, so, too, the relationship with anthroposophy is a question of destiny. Patience and encouragement work better than resentment and accusation. Then, too, just like suffocating the freedom to innovate will lead to suffocation of renewal and creativity, active resistance to anthroposophy (even in the form of cynicism or passive-aggressive body language) is poison for a Waldorf school. I don't deny that you can find today some statements by Rudolf Steiner objectionable, or that there are aspects of his work with which you may feel no connection; but to deny anthroposophy's role in the vitality of Waldorf

education, not only historically but for the future, is the spiritual emasculation of Waldorf education, divorcing it from the spiritual world.

Rudolf Steiner was a consummate social innovator. I suspect that he would be deeply disappointed by the orthodoxy that has enveloped so much of what he initiated as revolutionary ideas and practices in his day.

Waldorf has to mean something, and what it means is drawn directly from Rudolf Steiner. Our responsibility to the spiritual world cannot be met without an active anthroposophical striving. People who say that "Waldorf would be great if they only dropped that crazy anthroposophy stuff" may believe themselves supportive of the schools, but their advice would lead to complete dissolution of the essential fabric of the movement. Anthroposophy is

the light that Waldorf schools photo-synthesize into their living organism. The schools obviously do not teach it, but for the teachers to carry out their work in a manner true to their identity as Waldorf teachers, anthroposophy is simply irreplaceable. It is similarly essential for contemplating the relationships between teachers.

And this leads us to the second stipulation: collaboration. Inevitably, each teacher develops a sense for what constitutes responsible teaching, whether innovative or not, and what constitutes anthroposophical striving. If we all ran one-room schoolhouses, each teacher's perspective would be the guiding principle for his or her school, and that would be the end of it. Schools would thrive or struggle or shut down based on how successful the teacher was in establishing credibility in that particular community. But in our schools, the collective effort is not only important: it is potentially our biggest asset. The journey through the stages of knowledge that lead to truth is fraught.

Last night, we looked at some of the obstacles that beset us long before we embark on a spiritual path, and we know that there are many others obstacles beside these: interpersonal and internal. I spoke about interpersonal obstacles in Portland a couple of years ago. Briefly, the interpersonal amounts to the presence of adversarial spiritual forces that most readily wreck a collaborative effort, and the presence of the highest benevolent forces that can fill these efforts with grace. Freedom is a moment of grace, and so is benevolent innovation, too. The presence of our spiritual family, our brothers and sisters, can allow our meetings to become celebrations. Finding the Intuitions, Imaginations, and

Techniques we need is so much easier when we have colleagues who can call on what we have to offer, and provide what we cannot. I have had the good fortune of spending a few years in two separate working groups that found a groove, so to speak, and became productive in service to their constituents in ways that transcended anything that the individual members could have done on their own. On good days, you could feel the feet of the angels in the soft breeze that wafted through the conversation.

But just as crucially from the point of view of institutional work, collaboration is a message to students that adults are capable of working together. When we abdicate the chalice image in favor of more efficient management structures, we lose something of our moral authority to stand before our students in the name of the new mysteries. The spaces in between grow fallow. We are more efficient, maybe, and we get to go home sooner, but something dies. We leave the development of the new art, the social art, to the future. I understand that sometimes it's all that can be done. Just like not every marriage can be saved, not every collaboration can become fruitful. We are dealing, after all, with destiny questions. Not every question can find an answer yet. But again, we want to become healers, and if we don't work on healing our own wounds, it is much more difficult to bring healing to others. We can bring students content just as easily in a hierarchical structure as in a collaborative one, but an education towards freedom is challenged because we have shut down a whole region of potential knowledge and growth when we discarded collaborative leadership.

Last of the three stipulations is the nature of a free deed, which we have touched on already. We aim to act purely out of love. In the pedagogical sense this will mean directing our love towards the needs of our pupils. We first have to see and understand them, of course; once we have heard within us what they are trying to say, how they sing themselves into being, we sing back. We obviously won't always hear them, and occasionally we will only sing the songs we know already. But the goal, the aim, is improvisational singing.

In an article that my colleague Jennifer Snyder wrote for the book on the Seven Core Principles, Jennifer uses the metaphor of jazz music. In its highest form, jazz is the musical incarnation of responsible innovation:

At the end of the arc that stretches from heaven to earth, the Waldorf impulse in its purity is found in the union of my capacity to love with the need of the other for healing.

it has principles and requires both imagination and technique, but it is always new. And just like innovation, jazz can also be irresponsible. In its debased forms it appeals to base instincts and draws inspiration from them as well.

I would now like to describe how Rudolf Steiner's own relationship with Waldorf education went through an arc of development. In my article on the second teachers' meditation¹ there is a detailed description of this development. I would like to now add to this description the aforementioned three-phase process of the old guilds.

The apprenticeship phase of Waldorf education began with the original two-week, three-part course. We rightly continue to read *Study of Man*, a.k.a. *The Foundations of Human Experience*, and the two companion books – *Practical Advice to Teachers* and *Discussions with Teachers* – because when an impulse descends from the spiritual world, an aspect of apprenticeship remains relevant for hundreds of years. Steiner spent a lot of those two weeks discussing curriculum and methods. In the early years of the first Waldorf school, as the school added a high school and established relationships with the state, the main focus remained

for a while on curriculum and methods, as well as on questions of governance. At the same time, right from the beginning there was also an emphasis on the teacher's inner life and on relationships with both students and the spiritual world. In the first teachers' meditation, the self of the teacher is found at the intersection of the path of knowledge of the world and the path of inner development. There is no question that a meditative path was completely assumed and taken for granted when the first faculty was assembled. So, we can be sure that the expectation that new spiritual substance would flow into the work of the teachers was woven into the fabric of the school right from the beginning. But the lectures and the faculty meetings had, by necessity, to focus on establishing basic practices.

Already in *Balance in Teaching* (1920), there is more emphasis on seeing principles at play: the incarnating and exarnating effects of the various subjects and

1 "The New Impulse of the Second Teacher's Meditation" in Elan Leibner, *See the Child, Love the Child, Know Yourself: Now Teach* (Hudson, NY: Waldorf Publications, 2019).

certain aspects within subjects. Rather than told to teach X or Y, the teachers are told about the *effects* of X or Y and they are left to intuit how to use those options for maximum benefit. It could be considered the journeyman phase: you understand technique, now here is some greater depth, go and use it wisely.

After the first Goetheanum burned on New Year's Eve 1922-23, Steiner showed exasperation with the anthroposophical movement in general and also with the teachers of the first Waldorf school. In my view, he was frustrated with their focus on "the curriculum" and felt that their teaching had grown intellectual and atomistic. If you read the lectures of October 1923, given just before the second teachers' meditation was given, it is completely clear that he did not look very favorably on what the teachers were doing. Those three lectures imply some striking problems at the school, before pointing towards holistic teaching, and particularly towards a focus on the need to heal.

Please forgive me a little personal perspective here: I've spent many years reading these lectures again and again, then working with the second meditation in order to find the answers to three questions:

1. Why did Steiner give the teachers a second meditation?
2. How is this meditation different from the first one?
3. And how is this meditation connected to the lectures that came on the preceding days?

None of these questions had an obvious answer, as far as I could see. My assumption was that Steiner was extremely busy in those years and had to be economic and purposeful; therefore, if he said *these* things at *that* time, it was because he felt that the teachers needed to hear them. Similarly, if he gave them a second meditation it was not because he had nothing to do on the car ride from Dornach, which he then used to doodle something just for heck of it. I felt I had to discover a mystery hidden in plain sight, but it was not revealing itself to me. Still, I had a feeling that local sports fans will recognize immediately: I trusted the process. There was something there, and if I gave it time and earnest effort, it will sing its song to me. But it was mostly silent for many years. Occasionally there were whispers, but nothing that became clear enough. Then, during a Pedagogical Section conference that preceded an AWSNA conference, many different threads suddenly came together for me. The result of that moment is described in my article on the New Impulse of the Second

Teachers' Meditation (see footnote above). I would say that everything I have done since has been profoundly colored by that experience.

I suggest that what Steiner was after at that point was *mastery*. He wanted the teachers to find their task in the needs of their students and went so far as to give a meditation wherein the self of the teacher is found in "Man's inner being." Note: not MY inner being but Man's inner being: the other's inner being. This is radical stuff! My Self, my highest Self, is a task: to love the other by addressing the other's need for healing. At this stage, nothing else matters: no tradition, no standards, no fear of ridicule. If you can see the child, and love the child, and know what it is that you can do: do it. That's all. Whether this thing you do is old, new, or middle-aged.

This is what I mean by the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow: at the end of the arc that stretches from heaven to earth, the Waldorf impulse in its purity is found in the union of my capacity to love with the need of the other for healing. The word 'healing' is used here not in the sense of *fixing* a problem; recognizing and encouraging a talent can be all the healing that one needs, too. The alchemists spoke of gold as metallic sunlight. Healing has this quality that what was imbalanced and therefore dark, finds its balance and is therefore light-filled, sun-like again. My realized Self in the inner being of the other: heart forces as sun forces. Gold!

Lecture 3: The American Scholar

When I went to Emerson College in 2008, I was an Israeli-American working in England with a class of trainees that had only one British student; the others hailed from Japan, Korea, Norway, Russia, Mauritius, and Saudi Arabia. The international flavor of Emerson College was its signature right from the beginning. Francis Edmunds, the college founder, saw it as a meeting point of East and West, right on the 0° meridian, to which people would come, spend a year or two, and then go back to their countries and spread the word. It was something of a riddle to me that Edmunds chose to name an anthroposophical college in the UK after an American philosopher, even though for me Emerson had been a favorite I read since the beginning of my teaching career. But why not "Steiner College" or any other European or English namesake?

Thankfully, one of Edmund's co-workers, John Thompson, was giving a talk about the history of the college. He explained that it was Emerson's essay, *The American Scholar*, that inspired Edmunds and justified

naming the college after its author. Of course, after the talk I went right back to my house to re-read that essay.

Reading Emerson has been, for me, like reading nascent anthroposophy in beautiful, poetic English. His language soars and touches the heart in a way that translated German almost never does. Years before my visit to Emerson college, when I still was a first-year teacher, I used to go on weekends to the cemetery overlooking my little New Jersey town, climb to the top of the hill where the oldest graves are, sit among the gravestones of those I imagined might have even met Emerson in their day, and read his essays. It sounds romantic now, and there was something of that back then, but it was also a real experience of solace at a time when I was incredibly lonely. The loneliness of young, single, class teachers is often difficult for other people to grasp. Emerson was giving me respite with his poetic philosophy.

Then I met my wife, my weekends became family time, and for many years Emerson was more a treasured memory than an active companion. Somehow, I still brought his book of essays to England with me, and how glad I was to return to reading his work now that the hectic life of a class teacher gave way to the measured pace of a college environment.

In *The American Scholar*, Emerson proposes that the education of the scholar comes from three sources: from *Nature*, from *the mind of the Past*, especially as it manifests through books, and from *action*. Francis Edmunds saw in that tripartite proposal a perfect framework for establishing an anthroposophical college. We will look at these three teachers of the scholar in a moment. First, we note that before he begins explicating these sources of education, Emerson paints a picture worth sharing here.

I do not know if there is a way to improve on Emerson's language, but I have to apologize at the outset that he uses the male pronouns throughout. Bear with me if you can, because if you can inwardly substitute the word 'human' for Emerson's 'Man,' you will find that the thought is really beautiful.

Emerson calls it an ancient fable, that in the beginning the gods divided Man into men, the whole into parts, and allowed for specialization of the offices in which

the archetype is made manifest. Thus, like the organs of the body specializing in one aspect of "body-hood," if you will, the various professions manifest specific attributes of archetypal Man, or, as we would say today, the human archetype. But, he says, the whole has been chopped into so many pieces that it can no longer be gathered together again: "The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many monsters—a good finger, a neck, a stomach, but never a man." And so, Man on the farm becomes a mere farmer, the attorney a statute book, the mechanic a machine. Each lives the little life, blind to their potential as an attribute of Man.

Emerson introduces the scholar thus: "In this distribution of functions the scholar is the designated intellect. In the right state he is Man Thinking. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking."

Then, Emerson proposes the three teachers, or sources of education, of the scholar I mentioned earlier:

- First in time and in importance is Nature. In the infinite cycles of nature, in her rhythms, we find an echo of the infinity of the human spirit: without beginning, without end. In the interrelationships of her seemingly disparate systems, the scholar learns to see the hidden threads that bind the world into a whole: what at one time looked an isolated fact becomes, upon further review, a detail in a deeper tapestry. Then comes this remarkable observation: nature's every law has correspondence in the human soul. One is the seal, the other its print. Emerson concludes with what will sound familiar to many of you: "*And, in fine, the ancient precept, 'Know thyself,' and the modern precept, 'Study nature,' become at last one maxim.*" This final convergence of the outer path and inner path is a familiar theme, as we saw yesterday when discussing freedom. So nature is the teacher of contextual learning, the origin of our capacity to grasp a detail in its place within a narrative: ourselves as *singular entities*, membered into the fellowship of mankind; *ourselves collectively*, written large on the canvas of the universe.
- The second teacher is what Emerson calls "the mind of the Past," in which he includes all human

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endeavors and institutions, but especially books. In good books the experience of life has been transmuted into truth, and what makes them worth reading is the opportunity to experience life again through the truth. Karl König once said that every act of writing is a Good Friday deed, killing living meaning into ink, and every act of reading is an Easter deed, resurrecting meaning from the dead ink. But, says Emerson, no transmutation is perfect for all time. What is sacred about the act of translating an experience into language is the act itself, which is a deed of Man Thinking, not its outcome, which are the thoughts written down. So the scholar should read the mind of the Past in idle hours, fallow times, when his own mind is not astir with actual direct experiences of life. Fallow times must come, and books are our companions then, but better yet is the direct translation of life into truth by the scholar, when the spirit would reveal itself to the active mind.

Stepping away from Emerson for a moment, let me editorialize: we, who have been fortunate to come into the treasure trove of recorded experiences once had by Rudolf Steiner, stand both the immeasurable beneficiary of learning from them and the danger of remaining forever in the stage of memorizing, combining, and comparing them rather than seeking our own experiences. Georg Kühlewind once likened anthroposophy to an airport runway: it is meant to help you take off! He then quipped that too many people take magnifying glasses to the runway and study the way in which the pebbles rest next to each other. It might be of interest to a runway engineer, but not the point of having a runway. We are meant, at last, to take flight. If this sounds like an echo of the passage from apprenticeship to mastery, you are hearing well. Just like a concert pianist practices scales and arpeggios daily, so we return to the Bible, Shakespeare, Emerson, and Steiner. But if our Waldorf education is truly the art of education, we must, at last, create our own art, too: write our books, play our concerts, sing our tune. In fallow times we go back to scales, arpeggios, even the Symphony of the Creative Word, but then, however haltingly, we must compose.

If our Waldorf education is truly the art of education, we must, at last, create our own art, too: write our books, play our concerts, sing our tune.

- The third influence of the scholar according to Emerson is Action. While it is, for the scholar, subordinate to nature and to the mind of the Past, it is the matrix out of which future learning is born.

Do today, and tomorrow you will have something on which to reflect and from which to learn. Though Emerson does not go that far, I would say that in his description of Action, of Willing, as the third great influence, there are clear echoes of the notion that the will has a seed nature, and that our current thinking is a reflection of past deeds. Rudolf Steiner went so far as to say that our countenance today bears the imprint of our limb nature in our past life. On a smaller and more modest scale, the Seven Core Principles, in the Methodology section, speak of moving from experience to concept, from doing to learning.

And so Emerson, in his beautiful language, essentially tells us to learn from the present, from the observation of Nature; then from the past, from books in the broadest sense of culture; and then to prepare for future learning by taking Action. Is this far from Spirit beholding, Spirit recalling, Spirit vision? These practices, for those newer to this work, come from Rudolf Steiner's *Foundation Stone Meditation*.

I would like to look specifically at the challenge of working with the past and the future, with *learning*, or reflecting on what is and has been, and with *doing*, which is seeding the future. In the classroom we have to create a rhythm between these two. In our jargon we call it incarnating and exarnating, thinking and willing, and we call the swing towards the past *thinking*, or *inhaling*, or *waking*, and the swing towards the future *willing*, or *exhaling*, or *falling asleep*. At the extremes of human life, it is birth and death: contraction and expansion. Steiner often said that teaching the children to breathe and sleep (not directly, of course) are the two essential tasks of the teacher. The teacher is the mediator of learning and doing, the spiritual midwife that helps the student learn how to live healthfully on earth.

For us, as professionals and as strivers after truth, there is another kind of pendulum. One side is the professional path, and the other a pure spiritual, esoteric path. The first is principally turned outwards, the second principally inwards.

On the one side is our life as Waldorf teachers. Let's use *Study of Pedagogy* as a marker for that. It should be clear from what I said yesterday that we should study, at the very least, the whole arc of Steiner's work with

the teachers, not just *Study of Man*, and we should also study what our contemporaries are doing both inside and outside the Waldorf movement. A difficulty implied in my opening story about getting to read Emerson again when I got to Emerson College is that for the preceding eighteen years I felt like I was often behind a few 8-balls, like I didn't have time to expand my horizons because I was too busy keeping my head above water. Still, I did not yet have children at home, and was at least able to spend time studying anthroposophy. So the reality is that even the study of pedagogy can be challenging, but it is still just one half of the story.

Then there is our life as seekers of truth in an inward sense. I would suggest that the marker for that is the lessons of the *First Class of the School for Spiritual Science*. For those who are new to this term, the School for Spiritual Science was established by Steiner when the Anthroposophical Society was re-founded on Christmas of 1923, a year after the first Goetheanum burned down, and with Steiner as its President. The term First Class means something akin to first grade, not to an aristocratic social tier. It was meant to be the first of three classes, or grades, of esoteric schooling, but Steiner died before he was able to teach the lessons for the second and third classes. There are 19 lessons of the First Class, each centered around a mantra. Three additional mantras were given, making a total of 22. These lessons and mantras describe a path and guide the soul on the journey into the higher worlds. Today, the members of the School for Spiritual Science typically meet about once per month to have Class lessons that are read or freely rendered by local Class holders, as they are called. People who join the First Class are able to team up with others in their professional fields and form sections of the School for Spiritual Science. These sections strive to make the lessons and the mantras of service to their respective fields and also to encourage and coordinate new research.

When I said yesterday that I twice had the experience of working in groups that found a collaborative groove that made the whole substantially greater than the sum of its parts, the North American Section Council of the School for Spiritual Science was one of them. It still is. I can only say to those of you, who wish to make your outer and inner life resonate with one another and with other people, that the Pedagogical Section should,

It is not difficult to tell parents in any town or city how the local Waldorf school is different from the other local schools, but it can be almost impossible to tell how your Waldorf school is meaningfully different from other Waldorf schools.

by all rights, be a home for you. The next step in our work on this continent should be a greater activation of Section members regionally, without needing the Council's initiative. If this sounds like an approach that speaks to your own yearning, then please feel invited to find your brothers and sisters and get to work.

At the end, the outer and inner paths have to meet. It is important and good that, a few years ago, the leadership of the anthroposophical society in Dornach recognized that a gap had opened between those whose focus was the professional paths arising out of anthroposophy (teachers, doctors, farmers, etc.) and those whose focus was esotericism. There were those who worked and those who studied, to put it crudely and one-sidedly. Society members decided to reform the way in which they worked and to encourage all the various sections to work on bridging this gap. So now the executive team and the leaders of the sections work as one circle,

and within the Pedagogical Section there has been a concerted effort to study the lectures of *Study of Man* together with lessons of the First Class. This has been a fascinating study and I am certain that much good will come of it in the coming years.

And now we will take a turn.

Everything I have said to this point was meant to establish the conceptual framework that could undergird the practice of responsible innovation. I hope that I was able to establish the "why" aspect clearly enough.

Now, in the immortal words of the pilots who flew you here, we begin our descent. We will now look at the "how" aspect, and both in what the vignettes and the panel are bringing and in what I plan to bring tomorrow, we will share instances of "what" as examples of attempts at responsible innovation.

How might a school go about establishing a protocol for responsible innovation? I will get into more detail than some might find necessary, because, to me, above and below have to connect. We have found the justification for this work, I hope, and now I would like all of you to be able to go back to your schools with a useful protocol, in case you wish to try one out.

The most basic process has four steps. As a rising 6th grade teacher, I will use the Roman SPQR acronym:

1. Study and establishment of agreements
2. Planning and previewing possible innovative projects
3. Questing, or trying them out
4. Reviewing them

Note: I have also done this work in relation to the transition from early childhood to the grade school and from grade school to high school, and I applied the same principles to working on innovation in the festival life of the school. The process is essentially the same: begin with agreements about what the intention and the underlying principles are, then suggest and refine ideas, then try them out, and finally review them. This is to say, that the example below will focus on innovation in the curriculum, but the process is readily applicable to other aspects of the school life.

Let's go through these steps in more detail:

Study and forming of agreements: The faculty divides by the age group that they teach. Those who teach multiple age groups can choose where they want to go. Steiner speaks of child development in chunks of about $2\frac{1}{3}$ years (or 7 divided by 3). Usually, the Early Childhood folks all work together (although with the proliferation of very early childhood programs it is certainly possible to sub-divide this group as well).

The grade school folks divide into three age groups: 7-9, 9-12, 12-14. Alternatively, groupings can include grades 1-3, 4-5, and 6-8. High school groups sometimes work all together, and sometimes divide into 9-10th grades, and 11-12th.

Each group has four sets of points to consider:

1. Child Development: What do we know and consider important about child development at this age? This should include physiological, emotional, and cognitive aspects.
2. Child Experiences: When we have children of this age in our classroom, what are the age-appropriate experiences we would like them to have? (In other words, not what do I want to teach, but rather what do I want the child to *experience* in my classroom.)

3. Skills and Capacities: What academic, artistic, social and practical skills and capacities should the students develop at this age?

4. Local Flavor (terroir): What in our area is good and deserving of a place in our program, as aspects that will help make us local and organic to our community? What flavors, qualities, arts, crafts, and traditions would we be wise to incorporate? It is not difficult to tell parents in any town or city how the local Waldorf school is different from the other local schools, but it can be almost impossible to tell a Waldorf person how your school is meaningfully different from other Waldorf schools. I think that it will be important to change that going forward, important to grow more local and organic. One point to consider is that the population we serve in most independent schools, and, I imagine, many of the charter schools, does not necessarily live in the communities wherein the schools are located. Parents moved there for work, and most of the extended family is not nearby. Most of the teachers are also not from that community, so there is a sense of being a bit of an alien insertion into the community. The affinities between Waldorf schools and the lack of local flavor and local families are usually a fact of life, and we should strive to grow more rooted in our community by seeking and connecting with its positive attributes.

As a practical matter, I usually have each member of each group write words, phrases, or sentences about each of these four aspects on large post-it sheets, which we put up on the blackboard. Then the group goes from sheet to sheet, looks at each one together, and decides if anything is missing. At that point, each person gets a few votes (five or so per topic) and marks the votes next to the points that seem most important. Any point that gets more than half of the voting faculty's votes is circled and considered an agreement for this school. At the end of this first session, there are four sets of agreements for each age group.

Then each person has to add two more aspects. The first is to identify the particular students for whom that teacher would like to innovate. The reason could be because these students have a problem the teacher would like to address, a gift the teacher would like to nurture, or they are part of a social dynamic in the group that the teacher wants to help remedy or foster. As I mentioned yesterday, we have to sense where our healing attention is needed. Sometimes it can be what we could call "a question of our time," such as

the addiction to electronic devices, or the question of gender identity or sexual orientation that lives in this group in a particular way. The teacher will need to feel what his or her students are asking for. This is where the meditative life really comes into play. In the constant contemplation of individuals and classes, certain questions rise to the surface and beg to be addressed. Sometimes we know what to do out of established practices, but sometimes we can feel that a new practice is needed because our efforts, arising from the familiar, have not addressed the question sufficiently.

The last point is you yourself, the teacher. What do you love? If you could do anything tomorrow morning with your students, what would get you springing out of bed full of eagerness? Listen to that. An eager teacher brings an infectious enthusiasm to the classroom. The healing that the students are asking for can come in different flavors. You are their teacher for a reason. Trust that there is a way to gift them something that comes from your heart of hearts. If you are a musician, maybe you can write a song; if a poet, write poetry; paint a picture with or for them, if an outdoors person, plan an experience in nature.

Planning: Altogether there are four sets of agreements to this project and two more personal aspects. These six elements can be imagined as the six sides of a honeycomb. Now each person goes home and has to “make honey,” which means to come up with an idea or ideas that incorporate as many of these six as possible and that violates none of them.

Preview: On the next day, or the next meeting if the faculty does this over time, the group is divided into smaller groups of three, where each person introduces his or her innovative idea to the other two colleagues. In a workshop, they get about ten minutes to share the idea and ask for suggestions and reflections. The ten minutes are simply a matter of time limitations. If time is available in greater or lesser amounts, the discussion periods can change. It is very important that this phase is conducted with honesty, that each colleague feels responsible to reflect on the new ideas as they map back to the four agreements, and that each colleague says what is on his or her mind, especially if the new idea does not seem to map back to the agreements. While it is not always easy to share or to reflect back

questions, this aspect is a big part of the *responsible* pole of responsible innovation. The innovation has to be responsible, accountable to the agreements of the school. This is part of what the “collaborative” in the sub-title of this conference is about.

It takes about 30 minutes for each of the three subgroup members to review and enhance their idea through conversation, and then the whole group (organized by student-age) can come together and hear short (1-2 minutes) summaries of the new, refined ideas. It is also helpful if each age group chooses one or two new possibilities and prepares a few minutes of a sample lesson delivered to the whole faculty. A workshop can end with a series of experimental innovations from the different age groups.

Two steps remain:

Questioning: Trying the new possibility with students.

Review: Gathering relevant impressions from colleagues, parents, and, as appropriate, students as well. This step is important for several reasons: the first is that we can only see the process from one point of view, our own. Parents, however, hear about it at home; colleagues experience the class during the hours and days surrounding the experiment; and the students themselves, once they are old enough, often have meaningful things to tell us if we are willing to listen. The other reason is that we tend to judge our own efforts favorably. Daniel Kahneman shows several ways in which we tend to over-estimate our knowledge, and after the fact we tend to construct a narrative that affirms our suspicions and that leaves us “looking good.”

In other words, we need a coherent narrative in which we are “the good guys” and we tend to select the observations that will affirm this narrative. If we have honest colleagues who want to help us grow, a bit of honest feedback can help nudge us in the direction of a clear-eyed perspective of what worked well and what might need, at the very least, a bit of tweaking if it were to be repeated. This is

Rudolf Steiner advises that for every step on the spiritual path we should take three steps in the perfection of our character.

another aspect of responsibility and collaboration in the innovative process. If we count the initial process of reaching agreements, the preview, and the review, we have three processes promoting responsibility around the development of innovative practices. This is not an accident. In *How to Know Higher Worlds*, Rudolf Steiner advises that for every step on the spiritual path

we should take three steps in the perfection of our character. Seeking to innovate for children is asking for spiritual substance; it is an attempt to open a little window and allow the spiritual world to inspire and work with us. It is noble and fraught. All manner of weaknesses in our constitution can lead us astray, and leaving room for our colleagues to help us do our work so that it is as healing and nourishing as we would wish it to be is sound practice.

I would like to suggest that once a faculty has created a set of agreements about the curriculum, the festivals, or the transitions between the sections of the school, the people who carry pedagogical leadership roles should gather those sheets, transfer them to computer files, and render them available to the entire faculty. Once or twice a year, the faculty can perform an abbreviated first session, in which it looks at the old agreements, sees if changes are necessary, and then repeats the process of soliciting each other's ideas for new possibilities, offering reflections, and setting out on quests.

A school that can repeatedly make room for collaborative, responsible innovation is a happening place; it will attract creative people with collaborative inclinations and will inspire all who come to visit it with the creative energy of its faculty. It is my experience that nothing attracts the parents we really want to have more than the fire in an inspired teacher's eye. But give me a parent who is strong enough to come visit a school despite these attacks, and if that parent is the kind of open-minded person that, in the end, makes for the partner I wish to have in the education of their child, then the passion of inspiration will let them know that this place will serve their child well.

Elan Leibner has been a Waldorf teacher for thirty years. He directed the Teacher Education Program at Emerson College (UK), was editor of the Research Bulletin, and has been serving as the chairperson of the Pedagogical Section Council of North America since 2012. He wrote and edited numerous publications for the Pedagogical Section and has been lecturing extensively in the US and internationally. A collection of his essays published in the Research Bulletin came out last year from Waldorf Publications under the title See the Child, Love the Child, Know Yourself: Now Teach.



Why Are Parent-Child Classes So Vital to the Health of a Waldorf School?

Diana Marshall Mei¹

Why should Waldorf schools offer parent-child classes? Does it make a difference in the long-term health of the school to have parents learning about Waldorf pedagogy when their children are still young? What long-term benefits do these classes offer to children, parents, and schools? Can we do more as parent-child educators to support the long-term health of the children at this crucial stage of their development? These are some of the questions asked of parent-child educators that I will address in the following pages.

At the San Francisco Waldorf School, we offer several weekly classes for parents and children aged birth to three-years-old. There are two categories of classes: one that includes a formal observation component, the other that includes a less formal observation and is more activity-based. There are two categories of classes: one that includes a formal observation component, the other that includes a less formal observation and is more activity-based. Classes with the quiet observation component are offered separately to three age groups: birth to walking, walking to twenty months, and twenty to thirty months. The activity-based classes offered to mixed-age toddlers are focused on crafts, cooking, or time in nature. The classes meet once a week over two periods of 15 to 18 weeks during the school year. These long periods give parents an opportunity to form a trusted community of like-minded adults at the beginning of their parenting journey. Many long-time Waldorf parents as well as Waldorf teachers began their association with Waldorf education when their children were babies.

So why is it important to start so early? Having worked with parents and their children for the past 35 years, I have heard the biographies of hundreds of children and know that learning issues frequently link back to events in these early years. It is my hypothesis that if those of us working as parent-child teachers intervene gently and effectively before developmental blockages get in the way, we can make a significant difference in the life of the child and of the school. Our task as Waldorf educators is to offer guidance that will foster the resilience

and capacities that children need in order to meet the challenges ahead of them.

Our school, located in tech-saturated Northern California, is facing the challenge—along with many other Waldorf schools around the country—of having to provide educational support services for increasing numbers of children. These support services require us to employ two nearly full-time staff members whose focus is to work with class and subject teachers to identify and ameliorate learning challenges. Our school has also been blessed with steady consultation by Ingun Schneider, Co-Director of Waldorf Learning Support—a three-year part-time training for teachers wishing to specialize in learning support. Ingun has been providing her impeccable diagnostic and prescriptive skills to support the children in our school along with invaluable guidance to our teachers, staff, and parents. Even with such excellent support, these services are absorbing more and more of our school's financial and administrative resources. I believe that the introduction of gentle interventions and clear, respectful guidance during our parent-child classes could mean less need for learning support later, thus leading to significant benefit for our schools in the long term. Below are specific examples of these interventions. (Please note: names and distinguishing details of parents and children mentioned in this article have been changed in order to protect their privacy.)

No Propping

Sara brought her eleven-months old daughter Eliza to an infant parent-child class. While observing Eliza, I noticed that she was not crawling in a regular cross-lateral hands and knees fashion. Instead, she was sitting on her bottom and extending her right leg out in front of her before scooting across the floor, using her hands and left foot in a crab-like motion. After a few classes, Sara approached me and asked if I had any advice as to how to get Eliza to crawl “normally.” She told me that she had brought her concerns to her pediatrician, who had done a thorough examination and found nothing wrong physically. The doctor assured Sara that “some children just don’t crawl.” I arranged to meet privately with mother and child after class the following week.

1. The author is deeply grateful to Ingun Schneider for her contributions to this article. It could not have appeared in this form without her significant advice and detailed editing.

When I entered the room where they were waiting after class, Sara was changing Eliza's diaper. When she was done, Sara sat Eliza on her bottom, using the familiar gesture of scooping the child's legs out from under her. Once seated, Eliza began to scoot around again. Sara recalled that as an infant, Eliza had a very low tolerance for lying on her back and that she had been sitting up since about five months old. Eliza had not followed the natural infant movement progression of lying on her back, rolling over to her belly, rocking on her knees, crawling, and sitting. She never learned to sit of her own volition and instead would be propped up to sitting position surrounded by pillows. With Sara's permission and after letting Eliza know what I was about to do, I picked her up and placed her on her hands and knees. She immediately flopped onto her belly. She did not have the muscle tone necessary to hold up her torso. I turned Eliza onto her back and began to play "pat-a-cake" with my hands on her ankles and moving her legs and feet, doing all the traditional movements that normally one would do with the hands. Eliza was happy to play along and offered very little muscle resistance, even allowing me to stretch her feet up to touch her cheeks. When I stopped, she immediately signed "more" and we played five or six more times. I suggested to Sara that Eliza had not learned to incorporate her lower body into her movement and encouraged Sara to place Eliza on her back instead of her bottom when putting her down, so she could fill in the developmental steps to sitting and crawling that she had missed. (I warned Sara that Eliza might not like this!) I also suggested that Sara play games with Eliza's feet at each diaper change, giving Eliza an opportunity to enjoy leg movements without the stress of having to support herself. And I urged Sara to ask her pediatrician for a referral to a pediatric physical or occupational therapist to rule out any more serious issues and to work together to strengthen Eliza's lower body. My intuition told me that there was no underlying pathology other than the fact that Eliza didn't have much awareness of her lower body. I was confident that once she became more aware of her lower body, she would start to move her legs in a normal way.

Eliza was referred to an occupational therapist who saw her once a week for a couple of months and prescribed similar games and activities to the ones I had suggested.

Although Eliza complained vehemently every time she was placed on her back and had to figure out how to roll over, crawl, and sit on her own, her parents persisted.

Sara reported that before long, Eliza was enjoying her freedom; she mastered rolling over and began to crawl and sit up unassisted. At twenty-two months of age, Eliza began to walk. Although this age is a bit late compared to the average twelve-to-sixteen months onset of walking, it is still within normal range when there are no other developmental issues. And, since this delay in walking afforded Eliza several more months of crawling, it was worth it. Unfortunately, Eliza's family had since moved away and we lost touch; otherwise, I would have liked to have followed her progress as she entered Nursery and the grades. However, the case described next gave me the opportunity to see how Eliza's educational path could have evolved without these interventions.

What long-term benefits do parent-child classes offer to children, parents, and schools?

At a grade school child study, the studied child was described by his class teacher as "walking as if his legs were being pulled along behind his torso." Those of us who had observed his walk knew just what she was describing. It was as if the boy was unaware of the lower half of his body. And when the teacher reported on the boy's early years, she confirmed my suspicion that he had not crawled on hands and knees but had scooted around on his bottom, just like Eliza used to do. As a fifth grader, this boy was receiving several hours per week of educational support, both within and outside school. I could not help but wonder how different this student's learning support needs might have been if his parents had been aware of how important it was for him to crawl.

Unconscious vs. Conscious Balance

As parents, grandparents, and educators, we know how important it is to guide and nurture the developing children in our care, especially during the first three years of life. In the parent-child program, the first classes of every session begin with an explanation of why the children thrive when left free to move and develop into their uprightness completely on their own. I explain to the adults in the classes that when we allow the children to move from lying on their backs to rolling over, crawling, sitting, standing, and finally to walking—all on their own—they not only have a delightful sense of mastery over their own bodies; they also have developed a strong core of musculature. This core strength allows them to maintain their balance in an unconscious way, thus leaving consciousness free for other types of learning.

When we prop up a child into a sitting position or hold her fingers while she tries to walk, the child is using her

surface muscles to try to balance. To be engaged, surface muscles require consciousness. When we use consciousness to maintain our balance and to remember where our body is in space (proprioception), then our consciousness is not available for other types of learning. We see this consciousness-dependent balance manifest in the later years, when children sitting at their desks fidget, tap fingers and toes, or rock in their chairs, all in service of reminding themselves where their bodies are, so that they can feel balanced and safe. When looking across a sea of children in a grades classroom, you can pick out those who were allowed to come to uprightness on their own without adult interference. They are, for the most part, the children who can sit still.

No Assisted Walking

Dorothy and her children's nanny, Isabel, brought Dorothy's twenty-months old twins, Emily and Elliot, to an open-classroom event. Open classroom events are for families interested in enrolling in the parent-child program. They are held during non-class hours and allow for posing questions, meeting the teacher, and exploring the classroom with only one or two families present. They came early and stayed late so we had lots of time to visit, chat, and observe the twins in the safe environment of the parent-child classroom. Emily's right leg was in a full leg cast. Elliot was busily zooming around the classroom exploring everything. At one point he walked up a wooden ramp to a platform about six inches off the floor. Both Dorothy and Isabel panicked and rushed to him just as he stepped off the platform into the air, apparently having no sense of a need to navigate the gap from the platform to the ground.

It appeared that both twins never attempted to break their falls with their hand and would regularly land on their head or shoulders. Observing this, I understood why both women were quick to move any toy or playing-block out of the children's way to prevent their tripping. In addition, each time one of the children fell to their knees or on their bottoms, the adults were there to catch them mid-fall, or pick them up and put them back on their feet. Dorothy was proud of the fact that the twins learned to walk early; they were barely ten months old when they began to take their first steps while holding the hands of an adult. Unfortunately, learning to walk in this way had them

relying on abdominal surface muscles rather than on a strong core to remain upright.

When infants pull themselves up into standing and attempt to take their first steps, they will often lose their balance and either squat straight down or bend over to support their weight with their hands. These natural opportunities to catch themselves against gravity's pull develop healthy postural reflexes. These reflexes later on make their hands quickly move forward or toward a nearby support in order to slow a coming fall. In the case of the twins, assisted walking impaired their awareness of their surroundings and the innate knowledge of their own limitations. Instead of developing depth perception and awareness of obstacles in their paths, they were blithely moving about, dependent on adults to provide the safeguards. In addition to these obstacles they also did not develop independent balance and had a false sense of security in their environment. Just a week earlier, Emily had walked off the edge of a playground structure and broken her leg.

Much of my work with this family involved having them create a safe environment for the children to explore without adult interference. The children needed to

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learn to see the edge of the platform and to negotiate their own balance. They needed to become more aware of the stumbling blocks (literally!) in their path and not to rely on adult "help" in supporting their uprightness, catching their every tumble, and setting them upright again. With lots of regular encouragement and the weekly visits to our parent-child classroom, Emily and Elliot switched from walking to mostly crawling. They understood that they could move more quickly and fall less often when crawling, especially once

the adults around them stopped helping them walk. By the end of our time together, everyone was much more relaxed around them and the twins ended up walking with confidence. They stepped over and around objects and navigated steps on their own. Dorothy and Isabel were also more relaxed and able to participate in adult conversations without the constant fear that the children might injure themselves. In the safe environment of the parent-child classroom, we had allowed them to stumble, fall, and pick themselves up again as part of their natural sensory-motor development.

Walking and Thinking

With independent, self-generated movement during the transition from crawling to walking, children learn to stand and fall safely. If we step back and allow them to drop onto their bottoms when toddling, or to fall forward onto their hands and knees, children develop depth perception and a greater awareness of their surroundings. As Waldorf educators, we know that movement and thinking are directly related. To think logically from one point to another requires many smaller “thought steps” in between. When we allow babies to develop and practice these falling and standing micro-movements on their own, at their own pace, we are supporting development of essential neurological pathways for later learning. Imagine the brain development necessary to grow from a helpless baby to a four-year-old who can talk to you about almost anything!

Palmar Reflex

Among other early movement patterns innate to the infant, one essential development that parent-child teachers can help with is the dissipation of the Palmar Reflex. This reflex allows babies to grasp a finger from the moment they are born. This grasping reflex, which is so important to a baby’s sense of security and comfort, needs to be integrated into the nervous system in order for more mature hand gestures to evolve such as eating with utensils, drawing, painting, and writing with ease. The tendency to tense the fingers when something touches the palm needs to have dissipated into a relaxed grip on their utensils, brushes, pens, and pencils. This reflex is naturally integrated as the baby puts pressure on the open palm while crawling, climbing, and all the activities of a baby that eventually lead to uprightness. In parent-child classes, we encourage parents to offer their babies a period of crawling as long as possible. Once they’ve learned to walk, many children still like to crawl; it’s often faster, more efficient, and more fun for them than the toddling they do as new walkers. As parent-child educators we have the potential of making a significant reduction in the number of children needing later pedagogical support to remedy tense grips from retained Palmar Reflexes.

Sometimes, while observing babies in my classes, I see little ones who want to crawl or climb while holding onto an object; they usually have a strong, sustained Palmar Reflex. I demonstrate for parents how to gently remove the object and encourage the baby to crawl

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with unencumbered hands. When a baby is trying to climb the climbing tower with a block in hand, I gently remove the block and place it under the tower, reassuring the baby that it will be there when she climbs back down, and that climbing is an activity for two hands. After repeated exposure to this guidance, and with the parents following-up with similar guidance at home, most babies enjoy the sense of comfort and security while climbing with two hands; they are also willing to let go of an object so they can use their hands to support themselves.

Carriers

Many parents arrive at parent-child class with their baby hanging from a front-facing carrier strapped to the parent’s chest; often the baby has not yet learned to sit up from the horizontal position on her own. In preparation for addressing this topic at the start of each period, I share Ingun Schneider’s informative article, “Our Hands Belong to Levity.”² After that we are ready to have a conversation about how babies are carried and held. I’ll suggest to parents that they observe a baby being held or carried, looking to see if the baby’s head and neck can be still and supported in several different positions: held in arms, in a forward/back facing carrier, lying horizontal in a wrap facing the parent’s chest, in a front-facing stroller, or in an old-fashioned pram that allows the baby to lie flat on her back and play with hands and/or feet while looking up at her parent/care-giver. Through these observations, parents can recognize that their babies aren’t ready to be hanging unsupported and facing out into the world with gravity taking hold of their limbs (especially the legs).

Through his research with very young infants, Joseph Chilton Pearce³ discovered that the myelination of the brain of a baby, especially the areas connected to vision, is dependent on the child viewing the face of a person from the distance of the crook of an arm. Far from offering the proper stimulation for an infant’s development, these forward/back facing carriers can do long-term damage to the delicate nervous system of the developing child. Our role is to protect the immature senses of the young child from a “too soon” onslaught of the world. Having babies lie horizontal and

2 Ingun Schneider, *Our Hands Belong to Levity* (<https://www.waldorftoday.com/2012/10/our-hands-belong-to-levity/>).

3 Joseph Chilton Pearce, *Evolution’s End: Claiming the Potential of our Intelligence* (HarperOne, 1992).

facing us, instead of the world, is one of the ways we can do this. As Ingun Schneider states:

Even back-facing carriers can position the young infant in such a way that she is not able to find the parent's face and eyes without craning the neck and head backwards in an awkward and tense position. Once a baby can sit herself up from lying down or crawling and stay seated without support, she is ready to be carried in the upright carrier while facing toward the parent. By then, she is muscularly able to tilt her head back far enough to see the parent's face without straining the tender shoulder/neck area.

Parent-child educators can be helpful in conveying this information to families. Parents are eager for this type of information so they can do what's best for their infants.

Unassisted Standing, Walking, and Stair Climbing

Some infants love to be in a standing position on their parent's lap well before they've learned to sit up. If they've grown used to adults supporting them in this way, they don't want to give it up. But, as in supporting other types of movement, holding a child in a standing position before he has developed the core strength to stand on his own will lead to later issues with balance and proprioception. Instead, I encourage parents to hold the child in their arms in a well-supported, reclining position until the child can sit up and stand on his own. We also encourage delaying the use of highchairs for babies until they have demonstrated an ability to independently sit up from the horizontal and remain so when unsupported.

During our circle time on the floor with parents, if their babies want to be held upright, I encourage the parents to place their hands behind their own backs and allow their baby to climb up on them using its own balance. After a few times doing this and plopping down again, baby will usually crawl off to play. With the best intentions, parents have been encouraging baby's early standing without realizing that the natural, innate steps from horizontal to upright postures contribute to a reliable sensory-motor system that allows a child to sit still comfortably on a chair while paying attention to the teacher in first grade and beyond.

Climbing stairs is another activity with which adults enjoy assisting children. My classroom is on the second floor and offers a wonderful teaching opportunity. The

stairs are carpeted and consist of three short runs with two large landings, so even if a baby tumbles, there's only a short distance before a soft landing! And there's a lovely wooden banister with spindles. Many babies are used to their parents holding their fingers while they climb stairs. This position with arms stretched above the baby's head does not offer the baby the opportunity to develop her own balance. Instead, she is depending on the balance of the adult and uses her surface muscles to maintain a wobbly stance.

I encourage parents to stay just a few steps below the baby on the stairs while watching the baby climb up or down on her belly. Walking toddlers are able to hold the spindles and eventually walk down the stairs on their own. Holding a spindle is quite different from holding a hand. When the children hold onto us while climbing the stairs, we are continually compensating for their immature balance. The spindle is stationary and doesn't offer this subtle compensation. If in a hurry, it's better for babies' healthy development if they are carried rather than assisted. It's a wonderful joy to watch a baby climb on her own for the first time; she is so delighted with herself for having accomplished so much in this effort! Imagine the lift in self-confidence that comes with this experience of effort leading to satisfactory results. If you aren't lucky enough to have a flight of stairs to climb to get to your classroom, parent-child teachers can have inverted rocking boats that offer a few steps up and down for little ones to practice their stair climbing skills.

No Screens

Seven years ago, while sitting in a busy restaurant, I noticed a couple sitting at a nearby table with a baby in a high chair. The baby's back was toward me so I could not see his face, but what I did notice was that the baby was very still. Strangely, the parents barely looked at the baby during the entire meal. There was no dropping of toys or squawking, which you would expect from a one-year-old. I was intrigued and wondered what could be wrong with this baby! When leaving the restaurant, I passed their table and looked back to at the baby.

There in front of him was an iPhone with some sort of cartoon playing. I was shocked! This was the first time I had seen a baby with an iPhone.

Today, this ubiquitous device can be found in the hands of children everywhere. While on a recent hike to the beach in Marin County, I observed family after family pushing strollers with toddlers and young children looking at iPhones, adults walking while texting as their

Being in movement
is the natural state
of the young child.

children ran ahead, and, in one instance, a mother walking with an open laptop with her iPhone resting against the screen! So much has changed in such a very short time. Others have spoken and written about the need for caution when placing screens in front of young children. What I noticed most in the restaurant at my first encounter with this practice was the baby's utter stillness. Some studies suggest that by the time many children are seven years old, they will have spent one full year of their waking life in front of a screen.

Imagine a child sitting still for a solid year during this profoundly important phase of brain and body development! Being in movement is the natural state of the young child. When we place babies and young children in front of a screen, they become unnaturally still, and we rob them of the vital time they need to develop healthy movement. We often resort to screens when we need a bit of time to do our own work and our children seem unable to be content to play on their own. When parents have created a space in their homes for free independent movement, starting from the time of infancy, children learn to develop an inner life and an independence that makes screen-time unnecessary, as well as undesirable. These young children can be free to develop capacities to self-soothe and become resilient. Many parents employed in the tech industry see the importance of screen-free early years and can become some of the strongest advocates for Waldorf education.

Preparing a safe and interesting space in your home for your baby to explore will also help baby to develop a rich inner life that is not dependent on the intervention of an adult. By stepping back from constantly entertaining our babies and providing this safe space, parents can convey a sense of confidence in their child's own capacities. Parents' expressing confidence in their child's capabilities (instead of anxiety about possible set-backs) will allow their child the freedom to become whoever the child is meant to be, with a deep-seated self-confidence that enriches all aspects of his or her engagement. An article by Susan Johnson, M.D., "Strangers In Our Home," speaks more about this topic.⁴

Since we are born with many more nerve cells than we need in our lifetime, many areas of the brain that are not stimulated enough through repetitive sensory and movement experiences in the early years are "pruned" from age one and periodically throughout childhood. What we don't use, we lose. If we are able to trust the natural development of the child and recognize and

respect the individual child's progress through the innate sensory-movement developmental stages, we can eliminate many potential roadblocks and their resulting loss of skills and confidence. We need the confidence to trust in the wisdom of the developing child and provide the necessary guidance and love for the true nature of the child to emerge. As Adam Blanning, M.D., writes: "the ability to fully meet and sense another human being depends on how at home we are in the body."⁵

If we, as parents, grandparents, and educators support the developing child in this way, we may be able to lessen or even eliminate many of the educational support interventions otherwise required in later years. These helpful and necessary interventions during the school years need to avoid giving the child a sense of failure. Instead, they can re-ignite the child's self-confidence as she becomes able to perform many school tasks with greater ease. Changing the cultural norms of how we allow babies to develop will go far in helping to support a healthy classroom for all children. Supporting birth-to-three parent-child classes in our schools can be a very effective way to convey this knowledge to our communities.

Diana Marshall Mei is director of the San Francisco Waldorf School's Parent-Child Program.

4 Susan R. Johnson, *TV Article: Strangers in Our Homes* (<http://www.youandyourchildshealth.org/articles.html>).

5 Adam Blanning, *Understanding Deeper Developmental Needs: Holistic Approaches for Challenging Behaviors in Children* (Lindisfarne Books, 2017).



Where Are the Families of Diversity?

A Canadian Perspective

Jennifer Deathe

The study presented here is based on my master's thesis and its leading question: Why do families of diverse backgrounds choose to enroll their children in a Waldorf school despite viewing it as a homogeneous environment lacking in diversity? Dimensions of diversity specifically explored in this research include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, creed, religion, and sexual orientation (as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission or OHRC, 2017). To explore the issue, I will focus on a philosophy-based school located in the heart of one of the largest multicultural cities in Ontario; the school is real, but I will be referring to it here with the fictitious name "Waldorf Heights"; similarly, all personal names have been changed in this article to protect the privacy of all community members. The school is facing socioeconomic challenges due to its dependence on tuition revenue, high student attrition, and low enrollment. Despite attempts to increase enrollment to build a more multiracial student population, it has remained a predominantly white, heteronormative community. While the educational philosophy is based on the principle of social renewal, the reality of running a sustainable business is pulling the school in a very different direction (see also AWSNA, 2015-2019).

The research questions posed in this study are:

1. Why is an independent school based on social justice and democracy and located in the heart of one of Ontario's most multicultural cities not attracting and retaining families of diversity?
2. Why do families of diversity choose Waldorf education despite the school's lack of diversity?

Guided by Fullan's (2014) Professional Capital framework for implementing deep change in a school, and informed by Otto Scharmer's Theory U, an action research methodology that focuses on developing knowledge for societal transformation (Scharmer, 2016), I leveraged discourse analysis, a literature review, and interview methods to explore why the school was struggling to shift its demographics. The different levels of my study included examining the interdependent factors of the school's messaging on its website, an evaluation of the biases and assumptions of the practitioner as researcher (i.e., myself), and an analysis of the stories

of the school's families and faculty of various races, ethnicities, creeds, religions, and sexual orientations. These examinations allowed me to uncover patterns of relationships at a systemic level that appear to be working to *disconnect* rather than connect the school with marginalized families.

Background

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America describes the aims of a Waldorf education as developing young people who are independent thinkers, problem-solvers, and capable of creatively meeting the challenges of their time (AWSNA, 2015-2019). An inclusive and forward-thinking spirit of idealism, commitment, and engagement with the world, writes one researcher, underlies Waldorf education at every level (Zepeda, 2018). On the surface, the Waldorf messaging aligns with many 21st century models of education focused on social justice. However, Waldorf's spiritual relationship to knowledge and to the way humans learn is fundamentally different from most other educational models. In addition, Waldorf education is set up as an *action research framework*, wherein educators keep on learning their trade through practice. As one Waldorf educator and scholar explains:

In this holistic model, knowledge evolves according to how the child develops spiritually and perceives the world. In mainstream education the formulation of curriculum knowledge is based on a linear view of the child's intellectual development. In this view of knowledge, the child is de-centered and marginalized in the knowledge process effectively undermining the most personal element of knowledge production – imagination.

(Wright, 2013, p. 57)

In this context, social justice is viewed from a different paradigm that begins with what Wright describes as the child's personal relationship to knowledge and his or her role as an epistemic agent (p. 56). While working within the philosophical framework of the Waldorf curriculum, many Waldorf educators agree there is a need to consider the incorporation of new methods of learning to better reflect the complexity of change in the world that surrounds children today and the one

that will surround them in the future (Rawson, 2011 & Wright, 2013).

Change Theory

Waldorf schools have been operating on a self-administrative model for decades, but they often seem to struggle with finding the right balance of freedom and accountability (Schaefer, 2015). Collaboration can be an exhausting endeavor unless there is a strategy that connects to a vision that ties it all together purposefully and transparently. Fullan's (2014) Professional Capital framework, summarized below, supports learning organizations by helping the leadership of a school identify their human, social, and decisional capital and by developing the levers that will build a collaborative culture to ensure that the pedagogy is connected to the school's vision:

Human Capital: The human resources or personnel dimension of the quality of the teachers in the school—their basic teaching talents.

Social Capital: The quality and quantity of interactions and relationships among people. In a school, such interactions affect teachers' access to knowledge and information; their sense of expectation, obligation, and trust; and their commitment to work together for a common cause.

Decisional Capital: The resources of knowledge, intelligence, and energy that are required to put human and social capital to effective use. The capacity to choose well and make good decisions.

Professional Capital: Cultivating human and social capital over time, deliberating, identifying, and spreading instructional practices that are the most effective for meeting the learning goals of the school.

(Fullan, 2014)

While many individual Waldorf teachers do cultivate culturally-responsive teaching practices, this kind of fragmented strategies and individualistic solutions will never change established patterns of oppression (Fullan, 2014). Building the professional capital of a school can ensure that diversity issues are a school-wide priority and not relegated to a marketing campaign, to the isolated efforts of individual teachers, or to the model of a one time-project such as a field trip. In this context, the school studied in this research has many strengths. The

school prioritizes human capital with strong mentoring and professional development resources, and because the faculty is committed to work for a common cause, the social capital has been strong. If there is a missing link in the organizational structure, it could be the absence of a strategic plan centered on student learning and ensuring that all stakeholders are working together towards the same goals.

It is common for many educational institutions to focus on what Fullan calls the “wrong levers” for transformative changes: accountability, individualistic solutions, and fragmented strategies, rather than on the “right levers”: capacity-building, collaborative effort, pedagogy and systemness (2014). School capacity, Fullan writes, refers to a school's efforts to build professional capital by its members continuously learning and working together to raise the whole and not just individuals within the whole. A key challenge in my own study involved acknowledging the different voices within the school community and understanding the organization's blind spots, including my own individual blind spots, as I was pursuing the research questions. The methodology of Theory U provided me with a variety of tools to detect such blind spots and explore their root causes.

Methodology

Otto Scharmer, the author of Theory U, describes the methodology as the Iceberg Model (Presencing Institute, n.d.-a). He writes, “Under the landscape of social pathology lies a structure that supports existing patterns. If we want to transform how our society responds to challenges, we need to understand the deeper structures that we continue to collectively reenact” (Presencing, nd.-a). A structure, according to Scharmer, is a pattern of relationships. The structures of a school include a division of labour, the student-teacher relationship, the admin-teacher relationship, the parent-teacher relationship, and so on. The first step to understand a pattern of relationships is to begin with oneself through critical reflection (Hattie, 2013). Such processes, in the form of meditation and teacher evaluations, are built into the expectations of all Waldorf teachers, although methods of self-reflection vary greatly and often might end in mere reflection without the next step of exploration, specifically the exploration of how knowledge shapes the experience of being human (McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2017; Rawson, 2011). The pedagogical scholar Stephen Brookfield (1995) writes that critical reflection in teaching “must always be linked to how the world can be changed, otherwise it is contained within the one room school-house, remaining hidden and analysis fixated. Moral, ethical and political issues that may be cause for alarm

often remain invisible” (p. 217). Theory U works out of two guiding questions for critical reflection to develop transformational leadership: What is my self? and What is my work? (Scharmer, 2016).

Following these leading questions, I utilized document collection for critical discourse analysis, interviews, and reflective journaling as methods to critically evaluate my own position in studying this topic while also working as the school’s admissions director. This role places me in a position of power and privilege, so it was essential to incorporate a critical self-reflection methodology into my research and to employ diverse methods to acquire varying perspectives to bypass my plausible biases as a member of the school community. By doing so, this research also provided me an opportunity at personal exploration of my own biases and privilege. In addition, the framework of action research provided me with the flexibility to adjust and work with what emerged from the participants when their voices were heard and to reflect on how their subjectivities may have impacted my research (McNiff, 2019).

Journaling. As a researcher practitioner, I engaged in a self-reflective journaling practice using the Theory U model of triple looping, so that I would develop skills to *listen, observe, and communicate* in a manner that is informed by the higher ideals of the school (Scharmer, 2016). Triple looping is transformational learning results from critical reflection (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow describes the process as “subjective reframing,” referring to “the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning making perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets etc.) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they can generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 7-8). Developing a mindful practice is an important process of action research and is a part of the daily teaching routines at the Waldorf school, but it is not an administrative requirement.

My journal entries were guided by a series of Theory U questions such as: What are the deeper systemic forces that keep you, and the stakeholders in this system, re-enacting results that ultimately nobody wants? (Presencing Institute, n.d.-b) Theory U also provides a guide to exploring how individuals download habitual ways of thinking from the past rather than keeping themselves open to something new during the process of research and data interpretation (Brookfield, 1995; Schaefer, 2016). Diversity is a complex and sensitive topic for practitioner action research, because

it is impossible to be objective. Disadvantages of my positionality as a research practitioner included the limitations of being able to see outside of my own assumptions, groupthink, social identity, and conflicts of interest. “An outsider ‘expert’ may not have the ‘right’ answer,” Denscombe (2014) warns, “but can possibly offer an alternative perspective which can help the practitioner to gain new insights into the nature of the practical problem” (p. 128). The inclusion of diverse parent and faculty participant interviews and the recording of their experiences and insights offered a validity measure to challenge my subjectivity in a way that a clinical, academic study would not have allowed for.

Interviews. Based on the overview provided by Theory U, eight semi-structured interviews were held with four currently enrolled families and four faculty. Parent interviews were framed by first stating the problem the research was seeking to understand more deeply: Why are so few diverse families enrolled in the school?

1. Is this a problem? If so, why is it a problem?
2. Why do you think more families of diversity are not enrolling?
3. When and why did you enroll when you did?
4. Do you think diversity and inclusion are a priority at the school?
5. Are your families reflected in the learning material?
6. Is it a safe place to discuss diversity?
7. What could the school be doing to attract more diverse families?

The faculty interviews were framed by the Waldorf principle of fostering social renewal followed by the following questions:

1. Do you think our family population is diverse?
2. Is diversity important to the Waldorf mission of social renewal?
3. Is it the role of the school to educate students on diversity and inclusivity?
4. What in the practice of working and teaching in a tuition-based school supports and/or obstructs achieving diversity?

5. What are some examples of ways that you have incorporated diverse or underrepresented populations into your lesson planning?
6. Why are there few diverse families in the school and how can we change that?

The Theory U interview method and tools are designed to encourage deep listening practices that include: suspending one's voice of judgment, appreciative listening, generative listening, openness, and learning to be fully present, leveraging the power of presence and silence (Presencing Institute, n.d.-a). Semi-structured interviews were selected because they build the organization's capacity for co-creating solutions and ensure community members are the primary beneficiaries of the research (MacDonald, 2012; Presencing Institute, n.d.-a).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). School websites are a source of information for current students, parents, and teachers and are also a recruitment tool for schools. Comparing the results of the interviews with the language found on the website provided another layer to understanding the social constructs from which I was potentially operating unconsciously. CDA analyses are meant to transcend the interpretation of language with the understanding that the researcher's biases are embedded and are never neutral (Breeze, 2011).

Analysis. The interviews, journaling, and documents collected were coded, categorized, and classified into themes and attributes for statistical analysis supported by a software called NVivo that stores and organizes data in one platform. After reviewing the transcripts, journals, and documents, I identified preliminary codes that I subsequently distilled into themes across the three data sources (Bernard & Ryan, 2009). The codes were arranged to find patterns, and as a result, two separate charts were developed to better reflect the voices of the parents and the faculty, thereby aiming to limit my own subconscious bias and subjectivity as a practitioner researcher. McNiff (2019) wrote that the aim in creating spaces for the voices of the research participants is to allow for their voices to emerge freely and on their own terms.

Background and Context

In the following section I offer the research background informing my own study of diversity in the Waldorf school in which I work. It is presented according to the topics and issues that guided my observations and analysis.

Diversity as an organizational strategy

From an organizational perspective, Johns and Saks (2017) write that valuing diversity – rather than *tolerating* diversity – could yield strategic and competitive advantages beyond increased enrollment. Managing diversity extends to the entire organization and can include diversity metrics, recruitment strategies, creating and communicating anti-discriminatory policies, and raising awareness externally, internally, and within the curriculum (Johns & Saks, 2017). Research has shown that getting in the door can be a problem for marginalized families when the admissions person is white and can be equally challenging for multiracial and LGBT teachers (Wolfe & Freeman, 2013). Simply hiring teachers on the basis of their ethnicity, however, is a fragmented strategy without an overall strategic plan. An LGBT-identified teacher will be more aware of the gender segregation in schools that can escape notice; but if there is no framework for collaboration, that teacher may end up working in isolation and may eventually leave the organization, draining the decisional capital of the school and further deterring the recruitment of multiracial faculty (Fullan, 2014). The research provided a lens for understanding the limitations of a strategy focused only on the human capital, and particularly within the context of solving the diversity problem.

Canadian Identity and the Role of Data

Transformative changes within organizations commonly fail; one of the obstacles to deep change, writes Keene (2000), is the belief in a collective mythology. The scholarship I reviewed focuses on an aspect of Canadian identity that may also be having an impact on the school's position: as Canadians, we believe that we are colour blind (Sykes, 2015). All of the participants interviewed felt that Canada did not share the same intensity of discussions around issues of diversity as Americans do. Research on Canadian elite schools revealed that students of colour strive to achieve "the somatic norm of Whiteness (e.g., being white in a black body) rather than developing their voice to disrupt entrenched privilege" (Angod, 2015a, p. 112). Angod's interviews with students of colour also revealed that far from moving freely within the dominant group's social sphere, assimilating was a source of anxiety for them, and a tension existed between the dominant group of the institution and the rhetoric of its "global citizen" mission. Angod (2015b) writes, "Paradoxically, the elite schools depend on students of colour to secure the moral distinction of multicultural status, revealing that the leveraging of white supremacy works in both directions" (p. 430). Angod (2015a) also connects the rise in social justice education with the Canadian national

identity of “humanitarianism abroad,” as an essential aspect of how Canadians of European descent come to see themselves as racially superior. Angod suggests that multiculturalism and humanitarianism, as practiced in social pedagogy through student volunteer trips at elite schools, were linked to a racial logic of white dominance.

A colour-blind Canadian identity also impacts the curriculum content of schools, including Waldorf schools. Generally, there is a lack of content highlighting Canada’s history of slavery and segregation and the positive history of black institutions and black resilience (Maynard, 2017). Not only are black students not seeing themselves reflected and celebrated in the curriculum, but the lack of racial representation in school staff and leadership roles also impacts students (Maynard, 2017).

While parents at my school complained about the request for demographic and identity information in anonymous school satisfaction surveys, we should note Allan Johnson’s observation in his important book, *Power, Privilege, and Difference* (2018). Johnson notes that data helps raise awareness around patterns of oppression that may otherwise go undetected or silenced by those in power, and that by not collecting identity data schools are circumventing the issue of diversity. On a macro level, the Ontario Human Rights Code (2017) has stated that it will continue to call for the collection of race-based data, as well as data on other Code grounds, to better understand whether racial disparities exist in sectors such as policing, child welfare, and education. This research helped me to understand how data plays a key role in naming race issues and other issues of marginalization and the systemic challenge in Ontario as noted by the OHRC (2017).

Social Justice Education in Elite Schools

In his doctoral research project, Brian Herrmann studied private schools’ offering of social justice education in the context of two trends: (a) increased price/exclusivity of tuition, on one side, and (b) an increased egalitarianism and a focus on social values, on the other (Herrmann, 2015). As most elite schools promise to form the leaders of tomorrow and to attract a growing number of diverse students, Herrmann’s research explores to what extent a social justice pedagogy in an elite school is acting out of “a sociocultural consciousness to develop

a student’s critical consciousness so they can see the world not as a static reality but a reality in transformation” (p. 43). Applying CDA to the literature and public documents of three elite schools that advance social justice in their curriculum, Herrmann demonstrates how the sample schools combined social justice theory (i.e., developing skills for democratic participation and social action) with individual learning theory (i.e., increasing knowledge and leadership skills).

Herrmann’s research suggests that high tuition fees and an increased focus on egalitarianism and social issues did not provide marginalized students with a voice, nor did it help develop an ally within the dominant group; instead it ensured compliance with the concepts of the elite in society. Many elite schools in Canada, including Waldorf schools, claim they offer a social justice pedagogy, deploying such phrases as “global citizens,”

but Herrmann’s research links this kind of rhetoric to a form of neoliberalism rather than to an ethical pursuit geared towards disrupting oppression.

The Growing Diversity in Elite Schools

It was important to explore two common but polarizing myths around diversity in Waldorf schools: (1) that diverse families can’t afford an independent education, and (2) that there is a growing number of diverse students attending elite schools. In research regarding the globalization of the education market, Ayling (2015) explored the phenomenon of Nigerian parents sending their children to British boarding schools and found that the parents wanted to achieve two things for their children: first, to have them belong to the global elite even if it meant shedding part of their black identity in order to move with ease among the wealthy, and, second, that their children would return to become elites within their own society. In the case of the Nigerian families, they have to adapt to white culture since whites control jobs, schools, and other sources of power; at the same time, whites do not appear to pay much attention to the needs, history, and perspectives of Nigerians, African Americans, the LGBT, or class differences (Johnson, 2018). Chances are that if the school is in a predominantly white community, the school is unaware of its lack of attention to marginalized families (Brookfield, 1995). This research demonstrates that some diverse families can afford and desire an independent education, but that they could be motivated by a subconscious bias that may be directing the solution to the problem down the wrong path.

Why is an independent school based on social justice and democracy and located in the heart of one of Ontario’s most multicultural cities not attracting and retaining families of diversity?

It also demonstrates that a strategy focused simply on increasing the number of diverse students will not address oppression but, in fact, can ensure compliance with entrenched concepts of privilege.

The Waldorf Body of Knowledge

Chris Schaefer (2015) identifies the challenge of moving from the theory of a holistic democratic society to the practice in a Waldorf school and the evolving adaptations that have taken place over the past 100 years. Rawson's (2011) and Wright's (2013) research on Waldorf education offers a rigorous academic analysis of the education's blind spots. According to Martyn Rawson, Waldorf practitioners draw on what he names *the Waldorf body of knowledge* and, as a result, they relinquish their professional autonomy with regard to the educational needs of their students (Rawson, 2011). Recent research has identified that when white teachers are working with a diverse student population, they cannot assume to know what is best for individual children or how they experience microaggressions, but, as Johnson (2018) suggests, they could learn more from their students. Multiracial teachers are said to be uniquely situated to reflect the experiences of and to support mixed race students (Sykes, 2015). This presents a unique challenge for Waldorf schools, as there is a shortage of trained teachers across the continent (Soule & Stewart, 2016). Recruiting Waldorf teachers of various backgrounds was cited by one faculty participant as the single most important step to achieving the social mission and attracting a greater range of students that better reflect society. Kanya, a faculty participant that identified as East Indian, wrote, "When I attended a conference in Sacramento for a class intensive, there were all these people from North America, and one Indian, one Asian, and one Black out of 200 people taking the course – the rest were all Caucasian."

Two areas of inquiry that arose in Wright's research (2013) is the role of the class teacher as a knowledge authority and the historical yearly themes that marginalize the socio-political dimensions of knowledge. Wright observes:

The position of the class teacher as knowledge authority determines the way knowledge is constructed, transmitted and developed. In the domain of teacher narrative and classroom talk, with nuances of voice, emotion and meaning[,] a subject such as geography poorly handled can carry racial overtones of natural determinism and evolutionism.

(Wright, 2013, p. 63)

Similarly, Wright describes how the Waldorf historical yearly themes can lead to a form of knowledge that is out of sync with the students' emerging faculties of comprehension, self-reflection, and world awareness (p. 63).

Clearly, there is a need to learn more about the experiences of marginalized students as well as to identify the right levers for change outlined in the Professional Capital framework, such as a pedagogical audit that could empower marginalized groups. To rely solely on the wisdom of a curriculum that has been passed down without engaging in a process of action research can result in a lack of discourse on very important issues impacting student learning (Johnson, 2018; Rawson, 2011). It is hard for members of dominant groups to realize how mistrusted they are by subordinate groups; it might even be harder not to see such mistrust, when identified in the classroom, as a personal criticism directed at the teacher (Johnson, 2013).

Analysis of Data and Findings

The Critical Discourse Analysis of the school website showed its language as conveying a child-focused and inclusive approach to learning: "Walk into 'Waldorf Heights', or any Waldorf school, and you will find yourself in a world of art-visual, musical, theatrical, you name it. Making art unleashes the imagination, lets creativity take over and frees a child to learn the most 'un-art like' subjects in a powerful and lasting way" (School Website, 2019).

The most significant finding of the analysis, however, was the absence of language addressing directly or indirectly the issues of diversity and of anti-discrimination policies. The website did not include a diversity statement, nor did the word 'diversity' show up in the full text query. On the school Mission and Values webpage, there was no mention of social justice, equality, or democracy. In the context of transformation to bring change, diversity, as a value, is not mentioned.

Experts state that anti-discriminatory statements and policies need to be a part of an integrated or systemic strategy (Fullan, 2014) and recommend that organizations create and enforce anti-discriminatory policies publicly and internally to build awareness (Johns and Saks, 2017).

In developing a comprehensive strategy to address the lack of diversity information, it will be important for the school leadership not to simply add a statement or diversity policy, but to include the greater community in a conversation and form a diversity committee. This will

serve to build the professional capital of the school and to have a greater impact on student outcomes aligned with the school’s mission.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In Figure 1, “Reasons for enrolling: Decision-making path of parent-participants,” the boxed themes located above ‘Entry Point’ and ‘Retention’ offer positive reasons for parents to enroll their children at the school and keep them at the school. The lower boxes in black describe barriers to enrolling at the school or to attrition factors that would cause families to leave the school. The experience of a diverse child is placed here at the centre because it can change the path from a negative school experience to a positive one, or from a positive path to a negative outcome regardless of the parents’ experience. Kanya, a male faculty participant said, “When you watch the whole journey of a family coming here, anthroposophy can attract or repel. If they practice a non-religious existence, it is not what they want but what they see as a good fit for their child. They want their child to be healthy, loved, curious and imaginative. The repulsion then becomes not acceptance but tolerance. Many are coming polarized but if the child keeps hitting all the milestones of development in a healthy way, we will see the family engage with the philosophy.”

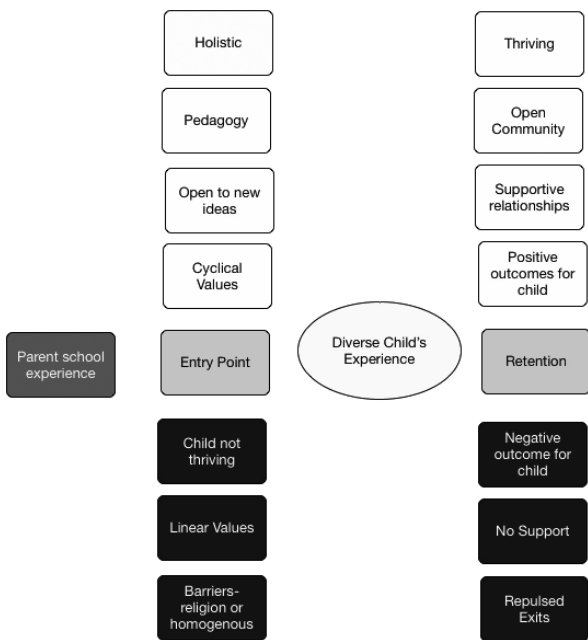


Figure 1. Reasons for enrolling: Decision-making path of parent-participants in interviews

The Waldorf developmental approach to learning and the focus on relationships with the teachers and within the community emerged as essential factors in diverse student enrollment and retention. Both factors took

priority over the lack of diversity in the school. Lily, a black parent of a bi-racial child, explained,

I was a touch hesitant. I wanted [my child] to identify with black and in an all-white school environment that was less likely to happen. Even though I loved the Waldorf philosophy – the faces he would see every day – that was concerning. There would not be many friends of colour whereas a public school setting [would be] more diverse. For me, the issue was his identity. So I decided I will supplement his education on issues of race and diversity – what the school may not be able to provide. The school gets all these other things right, so I will have to work extra hard to provide that missing piece. His class actually turned out to be quite diverse so that really helped.

All four parents interviewed admitted to supplementing the school’s curriculum with their own to support a positive identity of diversity for their child. Two parents said they brought this issue to their child’s teacher who empathized, but they also felt that at no point did the school, as an institution, reach out to discuss the content of the curriculum or provide a clear and enforced diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy.

Interviewed parents said that an open and progressive community was preferable over a diverse community that may not be open. In addition, these parents suggested that there was a greater chance of bullying and racism in the public-school system. Lily recalls,

When I first read about Waldorf I was in California, pregnant, and had this book that had all of the alternative philosophies for school. I was already looking for alternative school rather than public school. I grew up in a New York public school with 40 kids in a class and it was survival of the fittest—it’s a jungle and teachers don’t have resources.

The fact that Lily was pregnant and already looking for a fitting school is also an important factor in outreach and marketing strategies. She continued:

I was looking at all the alternatives. Reggio Emilia and Waldorf was what I wanted. They were a fit for me. Some see Waldorf as kooky and airy fairy but I found all that other stuff outweighed by the emphasis on cooperation, nature, and the kind of back to basics, such as

the setting aside of technology and to really get back in touch with the earth.

The internet, although a source of outreach, can also act as a barrier in determining whether a parent will even come to see the school. Without skipping a beat, Mary, a white parent of a bi-racial child, stated, “The barrier to join Waldorf is the digging people are doing on the internet—into the religion/cult side. When you are here, in the school, you don’t experience that or think that they are secretly teaching a moral code.”

A hidden religious agenda can also be a major obstacle for LGBT parents. Rita, an LGBT parent, learned about Waldorf through a ‘queer spawn’ group, but in doing her internet research was not comfortable with the spiritual esoteric nature of Waldorf education and pursued a local Montessori school. But she found the environment at that school cold and her child was not happy, so she hesitantly tried Waldorf. When the family did finally enter the building, the parents fell instantly in love with the school, as did their child, who did not want to leave. Through the child’s experience, particularly with the teacher relationships and the warmth of a progressive community, the parents overcame their discomfort with the so-perceived religious aspect of Waldorf:

I have five friends who won’t come here because they are atheist or agnostic. They don’t want to come here because [they say] it is too Christian. It is not Christian, but it reads that way. Trust me, it’s not! My daughter believes in Mother Earth as a Goddess. We had an argument two years ago, because what does she mean she does not believe in God? And she said she believes in Mother Earth. [It was] a deep, great conversation because of what they’re being taught here and [what they] open [up], but people don’t really see that on the outside.

All eight participants in these interviews perceived a need for better marketing to and recruitment of diverse communities from birth to preschool that also focused on the philosophical ideas in Waldorf education. Mary said, “I am an educator, so I knew the realities. Public school kindergarten was horrifying. I studied and learned about alternative options and took a parent and tot program at this Waldorf school. I felt a sigh of relief. I had found a nurturing and safe place for my child.”

For David, a parent participant who is Asian, the first encounter offered a very different experience. Through

an event listing describing nature crafts, he came to the school with his wife and daughter:

I recall our first experience at the Winter Fair; our child was 3 years old and we felt like ‘should we be here?’ Going into the café, I felt like I was in high school again. The environment was new and we didn’t see anyone similar to us. I remember someone collecting tickets who was Asian and thought we should be fine. Although Asian is a lot of different cultures: having the same skin colour does not mean you have the same background. We are from Japan, a unique and distinct culture with 1,000-years of a proper etiquette for everything including walking in the door.

The Winter Fair was a tipping point for them:

We were floored and awed by the experience [and by] the transformation of the school. We asked ourselves if every day is like this? It was full of kids and they were so nice and polite. Age differences didn’t seem to matter. Everyone is so well accepted and that’s what we want, and what we want is for our child to feel accepted.

It shocks him that he grew up close to ‘Waldorf Heights’ and “no one knew about the school, no one!” Since then, David and his wife have brought in other families who also joined a Waldorf school. Despite the financial stress on the family, the positive impact on their daughter has been the key factor in the decision to remain in the school.

The participants were also concerned that there was a lack of discussion within the school on issues of diversity. Parent participant Mary felt there was a silence around issue of diversity because of Waldorf’s Germanic roots. “When you sign on, you accept it is white-centred and don’t question the curriculum. I assume there is diversity but because we don’t talk about it, I am not sure.” Rita said that she compensates for the lack of LGBT content in the curriculum with her own purchases of books and connections with the LGBT community network. Lily felt that although she was ensuring her son was reading books about race, disabilities, and children that are gay, “it would be much better if the school did it, because they can deconstruct it, contextualize it, and that is important for non-mainstream classics.” Mary noted that:

The older my daughter gets, the more she can express her lack of inclusion at the Waldorf [community]. My daughter clearly sees her identity represented in other schools that she visits, with posters on the bulletin boards and the walls and through the diversity of the teachers. She feels seen there. I understand the Waldorf aesthetic, it attracted me in the first place, but I also see my daughter's reaction. We rely on the teacher, but it is her experience that I have to listen to and wonder—she is the one that is of colour.

Eventually, Mary and her daughter did leave the school.

The reaction of the participants indicates that the school's unconscious silence on diversity ultimately weakened the integrity of the school's mission for social renewal and transformation, further supporting the need to address diversity as a social issue. It also provides a very important window into the values that attracts parents to Waldorf education, a theme that also emerged with faculty participants and that could be helpful for outreach. Parent participant Rita stated, "I did not choose a private school for the academic challenge, [or] to get into the best university but from a place of child development that was holistic and [that guides the child] to become a good human being." David, who admits that he does not understand the creative arts aspects of the education, said, "I am very much on the other train – academics and science," and he found himself wondering,

Who's Steiner? That was my question. We went to an open house to learn more after the Winter Fair. What is the idea? The process? It appealed to me as I hire 60 university students to help with my workload and I have to explore the process of their thinking because they are all incredibly smart. I didn't think there was a school for that young of an age that was interested in the process of thinking: putting it in front of you and not telling you what the answer is. It made sense to me.

Faculty participants were specifically asked to reflect on social justice pedagogy within the Waldorf context and on the value of a diverse student population. Faculty participants also shared their own biographies and how they discovered Waldorf education. Their responses showed that there was a shared belief among the faculty that diversity is intrinsically important to the social mission of the school. Predominant themes emerging from these conversations include: recruitment of

diverse teachers, building capacities for questioning the body of knowledge (e.g., Waldorf curriculum content) given to teachers, a cohesive exploration of diversity with the community, and improving outreach to spread the ideas of Waldorf education and the fundamental differences from other educational models.

"Most Europeans believe life is linear and then you die and are at the gate of heaven or hell. I grew up in a cyclical view of life," says Kanya, a male faculty member who is of East Indian descent and who immigrated to Canada as a young boy.

I found Steiner when I was 26 years old; I was looking. When I read up on Waldorf, the ideas were similar to what I grew up with in India, even with the religious ideas. We need to go to those new immigrant communities. They are looking, trying to stay as a collective but also want to bond with Western culture. Waldorf is a wonderful way to bridge the gap to their culture and to Western society. I actually found that it helps you maintain your cultural identity.

For another faculty participant, Cindy, it was not until she left her native country that she could reflect on the impact of her education and her attraction to Waldorf:

In Taiwan, I grew up in a system where since kindergarten I was in school from 8am until 5pm, a one-hour break and then more study until 9pm, and on Saturdays too. I never liked it, there was so much pressure and study. All memorization. After University I travelled to Australia. It was there that I realized I had to leave my country to escape the pressure. Eventually I made my way to Canada and I went to college to earn my degree in Early Childhood Education. We spent one class talking about different pedagogies and I heard about Waldorf, but before that I never heard of it growing up. My teacher had visited a Waldorf school and was showing us photos. And what got me was the connection to nature, back to nature. That is how I got interested. I never grew up with nature.

Two of the faculty shared a similar image of Waldorf as a caravan traveling from Eastern culture to the West. Faculty member Ruth offers:

When a parent begins to look outside their catchment area and consider paying out for

their education, what they really are looking for is what is this school about and how will my child be most advantaged by going to this school? Parents choose a private school because they are perpetuating a status quo and everybody wants a piece of that pie. We are selling a very different pie and we don't have the same version of success. This is a holistic education and we want well-rounded students. They are not looking for good citizenship or a well-rounded education. They want to know that their children are going to get high scores on the SSAT's. We don't compete in that world. It's really like how the Eastern philosophy slowly insinuates itself into the Western world. It is a shift in values.

Her efforts, however, demonstrate an individual's solution rather than a collaborative effort orchestrated by the school. Barriers to addressing diversity ranged from a fear of tokenism to a need for a larger discussion regarding the framework of Waldorf pedagogy and its epistemological differences with mainstream approaches. Faculty member Ruth reflected:

They're really, really big questions, and I think that one can't jump too soon to how one speaks to the students until one has resolved in themselves and then also in the collective what we think, what practices we'll adopt, what is our positionality, because you can't but take a certain position on these issues because they are loaded.

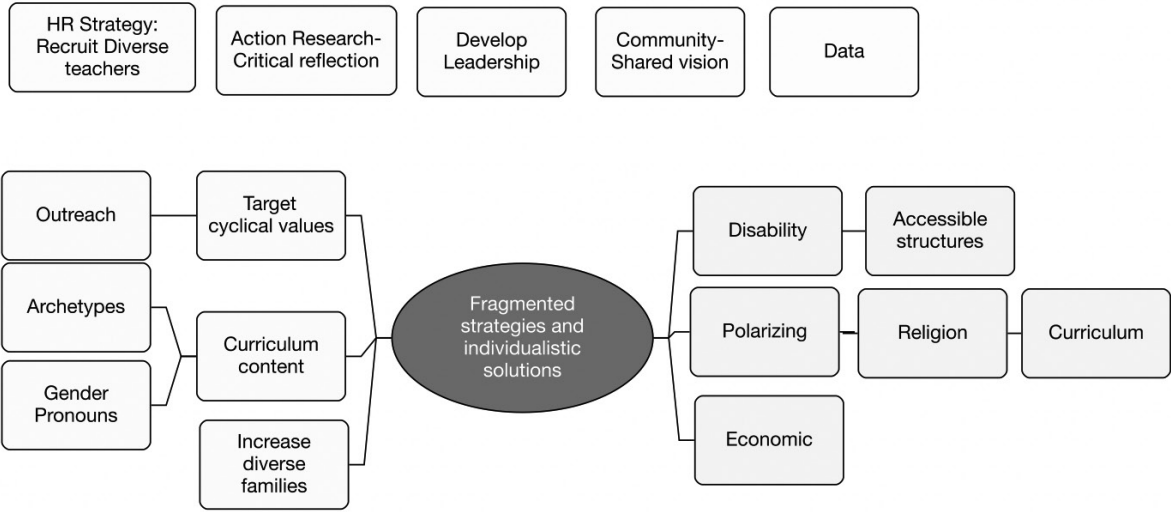


Figure 2. Faculty participant themes: Identifying multiple barriers and solutions

Seeking Strategies and Solutions

In Figure 2, the flow chart from left to right represents the varied issues associated with diversity raised by faculty participants. These demonstrate that the human capital of the organization is currently operating at a level of fragmented strategies and individual solutions. Some faculty were ready for action, while others were more contemplative. Elizabeth, a faculty participant, provided examples of how she incorporates diversity in her lesson planning: multicultural stories (being mindful of cultural appropriation), non-binary nature stories and created tales (no specific gender assignment), puppet shows representing different family constellations (one parent, same-sex couples, extended family, older parents). Elizabeth has actively sought out methods of teaching to be more inclusive.

The top row of Figure 2 offers strategic drivers based on the Professional Capital Framework to implement deep and sustainable change, including, most importantly, a shared vision with the community. Funneling each of the themes that emerged into the appropriate driver could act as a starting point for developing an overall strategic plan. Kanya believes that the best way to improve diversity is to hire and attract teachers who come from diverse backgrounds, who bring various perspectives. If faculty are diverse, what it is going to do is attract families and create a very diverse community. But it has to start at the front line with teachers. I am fortunate to have a different background from a European because it is evident that the teacher's material is Eurocentric. I would say to students: I am East Indian, and this is what the Europeans thought but not what I grew up with. The most intriguing aspect is

to have a teacher give them a relationship to what is taught and be open.

Linking a diversity statement to hiring practices is a strategic plan that directly impacts the students by increasing student exposure to diverse teachers. On a higher level, Waldorf teacher-training institutions also need to support the school by addressing the lack of diversity among those interested in Waldorf training and by developing a recruitment strategy for such candidates. If there is no comprehensive diversity strategy, the school will continue to operate from the traditional model of professional learning, in which individual teachers learn in isolation from the greater school community and attend external conferences whose impact is not expected to contribute to the professional learning of other colleagues or affect all students and teachers. Policy drivers that are based on old practices can end up impeding change. Including as many stakeholders and partners as possible, such as Waldorf teacher training centres, will help to achieve the goals of diversity and ensure the inclusion of traditionally marginalized voices.

Conclusion

My study was guided by practitioner research, which offered a transformative approach to deepening my understanding of the challenging and subjective problem of diversity within the school. Theory U methods and the Professional Capital Framework ensured that moral, ethical, and sensitive political issues did not remain invisible or hidden within my own limited fixed analysis. Both faculty and parent participants offered invaluable insights that will help create targeted marketing and retention strategies aiming to attract and retain diverse families. An unexpected and exciting insight gained during the interview process came through the different faculty stories about their journeys to become a Waldorf teacher. Further research in this area could support a comprehensive outreach and recruitment strategy for attracting and retaining diverse faculty. A major conclusion of this study is that although there have been many wonderful teacher innovations to support students of diversity, it will take a *collaborative effort* to ensure that children learn about racism, social identity, and microaggressions, so that these topics are not left to the parents to supplement their children's education. The Waldorf commitment to lifelong learning means that every aspect of Waldorf education must be open to continual reflection and to building the capacity to challenge biases within the Waldorf body of knowledge, within the field of social justice education in an elite school environment, and within one's own society (in my case, Canadian society). When an initiative or project becomes institutionalized, it can lose control

of its original purpose and become standardized. It is, however, the words of action researcher, Jean McNiff, that I feel offer the most value of this process: "action research should be a process of helping other people to think for themselves and to realize their humanity in doing so" (McNiff, 2019).

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Jennifer Deathe, MEd LL, has been involved for the past eleven years in the admissions and marketing of a Waldorf school in Canada. She recently completed her master's in education, leadership in learning, at Yorkville University while working fulltime and raising two teenagers. Jennifer's studies focused on educational initiatives geared towards workplace diversity and attentive to questions of equity; the article presented here is adapted from her graduating thesis. She is deeply grateful to her colleagues and community for their willingness to collaborate and support her during her studies and for the opportunity to share with her graduate school classmates the genius of Waldorf education.

The Image Problem II

Stream or Snapshots?

Arthur Auer



This article is a sequel to “The Image Problem: Debate and Mystery” (*Research Bulletin* XXIV, no.1, Spring 2019). It explores further what noted neuroscientist Stephen Kosslyn calls the “fleeting, ethereal” nature of mental images and focuses on their apparent “flow” in our consciousness and thinking life. I sample and survey representative perspectives of various psychologists, neuroscientists, and anthroposophical researchers, most of whom testify to the inherent fluidity of our mental process. This includes an exploration of some of the ways in which the mind’s activities leave fascinating footprints in neural physiology. At the article’s conclusion, I address recent research that reductively proposes the opposite, namely that our “conscious awareness ... is a series of static snapshots, with motion ‘painted’ on them.”¹ Although I bring a preponderance of advocacy for the flowing nature of mental imaging rather than snapshot-movie frame propositions, I offer some thoughts on how to take into account both the reductionist, “quantized” and the more wholistic theories.

1890: The River of Thought and Consciousness

The American psychologist William James characterized human consciousness as a ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ but most often used the expression, which he apparently coined himself, ‘stream of thought’:

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as ‘chain’ or ‘train’ do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter let us call it the *stream of thought*, of consciousness, or of subjective life.²

1893/1919: Movement of Images

In 1893, Rudolf Steiner uses the expression “river of thoughts” (*Gedankenfluss*) in a literary magazine article

in reference to Nietzsche’s mental process³ and later in other contexts.⁴ In 1919, Steiner stressed to teachers the importance of “having a clear conception of what thinking (*Vorstellen*) is” and how it is an activity in which there is “movement of images” (*Bewegung von Bildern*).⁵

On many other occasions, Steiner pointed to the origin of thinking in the *streaming* life-forces of the life-etheric body:

In thinking we continue what we receive as sense impressions. *Thinking is ... the activity of the etheric form-forces body (Tätigkeit des Äther- oder Bildekräfteleibes) ...* In so far as the sensing human being thinks, she is directing the etheric body outward... Seen from the other side, our thinking, which makes up the forces of our etheric-form-forces-body (*Bildekräfteleib*), transforms itself into creative forces that build up our physical organism.⁶

The same flowing life-forces that mold our physical body metamorphose into the flow of our varied mental formations, images, and processes. The etheric body as a *form-forces body* (*Bildekräfteleib*) can also be translated as *image-forming body*. The sensory part of the soul (the sentient soul) conveys the impressions of our perceptual experiences as living image-creating (*Bildschaffende*) forces to the etheric body (*Bildekräfte*) and “makes them present” as images in the mind (*seelisches Bilder*).⁷

Steiner also describes the etheric in the human being as a *body of streaming light* that permeates our fluid body as its conveyor. Hence the *light of consciousness* that we experience in the processes of our mind is supported by both *life* and *light*:

The thought element, looked at objectively, is experienced as light. We live as thinking

1 F. Crick and C. Koch, “A Framework for Consciousness”, *Nature Neuroscience*, Feb. 2003, vol. 6, no. 2: pp. 119-26.

2 William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (NY: Henry Holt, 1890), p. 239. Emphasis added.

3 CW 31, *Literarischer Merkur*, XII: 4, 28 Jan. 1893, p.468.

4 For example, see CW 217, *Jugendkurs* XI, 10.13.22. (Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1988), p.162.

5 CW 293, *Study of Man*, Lecture 2. Emphasis added.

6 CW 225, *Drei Perspektiven der Anthroposophie* (Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1990), p.171. Translated by the author. Emphasis added.

7 See CW 13, *Esoteric Science* (Hudson: Anthroposophic Press, 1990), p. 44.

*human beings in light.*⁸ *The thought that we capture inwardly is present as light in us.*⁹

1965: A Sensitive Chaos

Building on Steiner's insights, Theodor Schwenk, renowned water researcher and colleague of oceanographer Jacques Cousteau, sees in water's streaming more than just the metaphor (offered by William James). Calling this element a "*sensitive chaos*," he correlates its properties not only with mental flow but also with its functions of analyzing (dissolving) and synthesizing (binding):

The activity of thinking is essentially an expression of *flowing movement*... Every mental image (Vorstellung)—like every organic form—arises in a process of flow, until the movement congeals into form... With this ability to enter thoughtfully into everything and to imagine all things in the form of mental images (Vorstellungen), the process of thinking partakes in the laws of formative processes of the universe. These are the same laws as are at work in the fluid element, which renounces a form of its own and is prepared to enter into all things, to unite all things, to absorb all things... Like water, thought can create forms, can unite and relate the forms to one another as mental images (Vorstellungen); it can unite but also separate and analyze. The capacity of water in the realm of substance to dissolve and bind together reappears in thinking as spiritual activity... In thinking there prevails the etheric life of water forces; through water flows the wisdom of the universe.¹⁰

Rhythmically streaming water includes all manner of complicated wave forms, spirals, eddies, surges, and internal and external surface planes. Similarly, the flow of thinking creates its own forms: mental images (Bilder, Vorstellungen), percepts, concepts, and ideas. Might these formations be imagined as thinking's counterparts to external nature's flow forms?

Pulsing water is then not just a metaphor but, as Schwenk experiences, also a key element supporting the working of the mind. After all, the brain is 73%

water and floats in and is soaked with a fluid that permeates our entire nervous system including the spine. The cerebro-spinal fluid imparts buoyancy and "*lightness*" to our ponderous, clay-like, embryo-like brain. It is the magical medium in which lives the streaming sculptural activity of formative life forces, rhythmically shaping both physical body and mental images. The "*undulating*" forms of the brain's convolutions reflect its pulsing functions. As Schwenk describes, these folds of tissue

are the movements of the etheric element of 'water' that have become an organ; they have been laid down in waving, flowing lines. We have here, in a play of repetition, the basic form of the meander. Is it surprising then that this *formative force*, once freed from actually shaping the organ, should reappear in the undulating flow of thought? Does not the etheric force, forever multiplying, reappear again in thinking's ability to repeat what has been thought? Constant repetition is characteristic of water and of the etheric and of our thinking. Inherent in memory is the capacity of being able to rethink any number of times what has been thought before.¹¹

1996: Images as Life-Laden Cells of the Soul

Also extending Steiner's research on the role of the body of formative life forces (Bildekräfte) in the thinking process, psychologist Rudolf Treichler describes how the body's inherent flowing nature *em-bodies* itself in a living ever-renewing "cell" principle. This principle metamorphoses and expresses itself in the soul as the mind's own generation of non-physical "cells" called images or thoughts (Vorstellungen):

[Like the body], the life of the soul [and mind are] also *in constant flux*; [they yield] end products that combine to form 'organs.' These are mental images (Vorstellungen). Just as the body is made up of cells, so the life of soul is made up of mental images. Like cells, they have a life of their own and also help us to understand anything new. Steiner speaks of 'mass or body of mental images' (Vorstellungsmassen) formed in the past that makes comprehension possible... [M]ental images combine in the soul to form organs that serve to assimilate contents derived from the world of soul and spirit. Individual mental images ... combine to form mental image

8 CW 202, *Die Brücke zwischen der Weltgeistigkeit und dem Physischen des Menschen* (Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1993), p.74. Translated by the author.

9 CW 270a, *Esoterische Unterweisungen* (Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1992), p. 88.

10 Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2001), pp.96-97. Emphases added.

11 *Sensitive Chaos*, pp. 95-96.

complexes (*Vorstellungskomplexen*). Things we have learned and that have become mental image complexes 'go to sleep' when we forget and 'wake up' when we remember them...

As Goethe said, every new object that we look at carefully, brings out a new organ in us... To sum up: The creative powers that initially induced cells to grow and integrated them into physical organs are transformed and induce mental images to grow and finally develop into organs of soul and spirit. In the metamorphosis of those creative powers the life-etheric body acted as a mediator between the sphere of the body and that of the soul. The developmental stage reached by the seventh year may be called 'mental image maturity' (*Vorstellungsreife*).¹²

Surplus growth forces (etheric), no longer needed for the physical body, are *lifted up* and transformed into mental-soul forces for shaping, retaining and re-mem-bering images in a new way (school readiness age).

The stream of life-forces in the human body continues to give birth to and maintain many kinds of physical cells but now has extra forces to also produce a variety of new mental configurations. With the body's unified complex of living forces as its full instrument, our mind's potential for *generating* and regenerating its own com-mensurate non-physical *mental "cells"* and "*cellular combinations*" in the *form of images, concepts, and ideas* is immense.

Organs in the mind/soul have their neural correlates of consciousness (NCCs) in the body. Goethe's "new organs," generated by new observations of objects, fall into this dual area of mental/physical.

1999/2010: A Continuous Flow of Images

Noted neuroscientist Antonio Damasio sees the "process we come to know as mind ... [as] a *continuous flow* of images... Thought is an acceptable word to denote such a *flow of images*."¹³

"Minds," Damasio writes, "are a *subtle flowing* combination of actual images and recalled images, in *ever-changing* proportions... Sometimes, the sequences are

concurrent, running in parallel; sometimes they intersect and become *superimposed*."¹⁴

Damasio's use not only of the terms "*continuous flow*" but also of "*concurrent*," "*running in parallel*," "*combining, intersecting*" and "*superimposed*" remind one of the characteristic qualities and behavior of water that Schwenk characterizes in his research. Superimposition is characteristic not only of water motions but also of other wave phenomena such as sound and electricity, both related to mental phenomena.

2003: Images Like Standing Waves

Electroencephalography (EEG) has been tracking and recording the electrophysiological patterns of brain waves for almost a century. The ultimate quest of this technology and more recently of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) has been to find a conclusive *neural correlate of consciousness* (NCC). Thus far, solving the perennial mind-body problem has proven neuroscien-tifically elusive. Interestingly, however, a new avenue is being pursued in which *standing wave phenomena* are applied to cognition and consciousness.¹⁵

A standing wave occurs when two waves (of water, sound, electricity or other mediums) traveling in oppo-site directions *combine, superimpose on* and *interfere* with each other, thereby producing a third wave. This last formation, called a *standing wave*, does not travel but is "stationary" although it still pulsates while "stay-ing" in place.¹⁶

Scans of the cortex have revealed the directions of brain waves. The "front" or higher/ "executive" part of the cortex monitors the wave activity of the "back" or sensory part. There are two modes or directional routes of processing sense experiences:

1. An unconscious mode responds with "rapid, tran-sient, stereotyped and unconscious ... cortical re-flexes." Physically, it can be "considered a *forward traveling* net-wave"; a net-wave is defined as "a propagating wave of neural activity."¹⁷
2. The other system is conscious and "deals more slowly with broader, less stereotyped aspects of sensory inputs (or a reflection in imagery) and

12 Rudolf Treichler, *Soulways: The Developing Soul-Life Phases, Thresholds and Biography* (U.K.: Hawthorne Press, 1996), pp. 11-12. Emphasis added.

13 Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens* (NY: Harcourt, 1999), p. 318. Emphasis added.

14 *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 71.

15 P.L. Nunez & R. Srinivasan, *A theoretical basis for standing and traveling brain waves measured with human EEG with implications for an integrated consciousness*, Clin Neurophysiol. 2006 Nov; 117(11):2424-35. Epub 2006 Sep 22. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16996303.

16 See a moving illustration at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_wave.

17 Crick and Koch, "A Framework for Consciousness" *Nature Neuroscience*, Feb. 2003, vol. 6, no. 2, p.120. Emphasis added.

takes time to decide on appropriate thoughts and responses” and to “plan for more complex behavior.” Interestingly, “in the conscious mode, it seems likely that the *flow is in both directions... so that it resembles more of a standing net-wave*.”¹⁸

This indicates that the standing net-wave may be a significant neural correlate of consciousness (NCC). In this phenomenon, we glimpse the dynamic, oscillating physical formations supporting the mind in bringing reflective concepts and sense percepts together into non-physical mental images, representations, or thoughts (*Vorstellungen*). When we consciously think of something, our attention “holds” (Latin: *tenere*) and makes it “stand” mentally in place and be “stationary” for a time. We have something “in mind.” Our mind activates and makes use of the brain’s two modes of processing—forward and backward wave motions—to form a *third* wave in the middle. This third wave may be the electrical “footprint”—the NCC—of a formation in the mind, i.e., an image. This process must involve a complex multitude of such standing net-waves to make a thought or “train” of thoughts conscious. Though, should we say “river” of thoughts?

2015: Rhythms of Thought Waves Resonate with the Environment

Gregory Hickok, a professor of cognitive science at the University of California, Irvine, is exploring the possibility that our perceptions, consciousness, and thinking occur in *rhythms of waves and oscillations* that resonate and synchronize with phenomena in our environment.¹⁹

In a summary of this area of research, Hickok writes:

While there is no disputing the aptness of [William James’] metaphor [of the ‘river of thought or consciousness’] in capturing our subjective experience of the world, recent research has shown that the “stream” of consciousness is, in fact, an illusion. We actually perceive the world in rhythmic pulses rather than as a continuous flow ... Recently... scientists have flipped this thinking on its head. We are exploring the possibility that... the brain samples the world in rhythmic pulses, perhaps even discrete time chunks, much like the individual frames of a movie. From the brain’s perspective, experience is not continuous but

quantized... [It] is not to say that the brain dances to its own beat, dragging perception along for the ride. In fact, it seems to work the other way around: Rhythms in the environment, such as those in music or speech, can draw neural oscillations into their tempo, effectively synchronizing the brain’s rhythms with those of the world around us. [...]

Picture a noisy café filled with voices, clanging dishes and background music. As you attend to one particular acoustic stream—say, your lunch mate’s voice—your brain synchronizes its rhythm to the rhythm of the voice and enhances the perceptibility of that stream, while suppressing other *streams*, which have their own, different rhythms. (More broadly, this kind of synchronization has been proposed as a mechanism for communication between neural networks within the brain.)

All of this points to the need for a new metaphor. We should talk of the ‘rhythm’ of thought, of perception, of consciousness. Conceptualizing our mental experience this way is not only more accurate, but it also situates our mind within the broader context of the daily, monthly and yearly rhythms that dominate our lives.²⁰

Hickok, however, seems to contradict himself when, in classifying “the river of consciousness” as an “illusion” he resorts in his own descriptions to streams.

2018: Biophoton Waves Carried by Myelin Guides in the Brain

Cutting edge research is being done on how the generation of conscious awareness is related to *light* both in our en-*light*-ened mental experience and in its neural correlates (NCC) in brain physiology. When we wake up in the morning and open our eyes, we experience both outer and inner mental “light.” (The blind have an inner light.) Much research has focused on how our mind is supported by an energized, *electrochemical*-based nervous system. Recently, however, scientists have been exploring *light phenomena* in the brain and how very rapid communication between neurons may be facilitated by the *streaming* of *biophotons* guided in myelinated channels called *wave guides*.²¹

18 *Ibid*. Emphasis added.

19 Gregory Hickok, Haleh Farahbod, Kourosh Saberi, “The Rhythm of Perception: Entrainment to Acoustic Rhythms Induces Subsequent Perceptual Oscillation,” *Psychological Science*, Vol 26, issue 7, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615576533>

20 *New York Times*, May 8, 2015. www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/opinion/sunday/its-not-a-stream-of-consciousness.html. Emphasis added.

21 Parisa Zarkeshian et al., Are there optical communication channels in the brain? *Frontiers in Bioscience*, Landmark, 23, 1407-1421, March 1, 2018. www.bioscience.org/2018/v23/af/4652/2.htm

Myelin sheaths around nerves have specialized refractive properties and lend themselves to the conveyance of traveling light.²²

2017: River of Consciousness Revisited: Seamless Flow or Mechanical Snapshots?

Shortly before his death in 2015, the neuroscientist Oliver Sacks assembled a collection of essays with the overall theme and title, *The River of Consciousness* (published posthumously 2017). In its central chapter of the same title, Sacks specifically grapples with the perennial question *whether images flow seamlessly in a stream of consciousness and thinking or are they actually mechanically discreet snapshots* that our film editing mind puts together. Sacks had been “startled” by the proposition of the 2003 Crick and Koch study, that “conscious awareness [for vision] is a series of static snapshots, with motion ‘painted’ on them ... [and] that perception occurs in discreet epochs.”²³ Finding this snapshot hypothesis counterintuitive, Sacks asks, How then would “the various [static] snapshots [be] ‘assembled’ to achieve apparent continuity”? For him, some experiments and neurological disorders *may* point in this direction:

“The flickering, perserverative, time-blurred images experienced in certain intoxications or severe migraine lend credence to the idea that consciousness is composed of discrete moments.”²⁴

In the final analysis, however, Sacks, having kept abreast of the wide range of research on the subject, remains not completely convinced because of his experience of the continuity of his own personal “dynamic, flowing, mobile consciousness.” He again refers to William James and his imagery:

Each of our passing thoughts do not wander around like wild cattle. Each one is owned and bears the brand of this ownership... It is not just perceptual moments, simple physiological moments—though these underlie everything else—but moments of an essentially personal kind that seem to constitute our true being.²⁵

Sacks ends the main essay in this collection in his characteristic way by leaving the matter open for further research. At the same time, however, he points markedly to the personal human “I” as the “true being” that “owns” and integrates the disparate sense data which continually stream to and into us from the world. He refers to the artist Marcel Proust who, although describing reality as a “collection of moments,” is nevertheless master of portraying “the stream of consciousness” in his writing.

Frames of a Motion Picture?

What I find most interesting in the study of Crick and Koch (2003), who state “conscious awareness ... is a series of static snapshots, with motion ‘painted’ on them,” is how they describe the mind/brain as the work of an *artist* (or painter) assembling image-elements into a composition. However, classifying these elements as “static” and treating “motion” as if it were a secondary addition overlooks the mind’s living, integrated dynamics. Motion permeates and defines sensory and brain/nerve activity from the “get-go.”²⁶

Similarly, Hickok, cited earlier, also seems to overlook the full implications of *movement* as a key element in his own analogy of the “brain sampling the world in rhythmic pulses ... discrete time chunks, much like the [quantized] individual frames of a movie.”²⁷

Rhythm is derived from the Greek *rhein* “to flow, to stream.” Hickok’s “rhythmic” pulses have to be *flowing* pulses by definition. In attempting to refute the “illusion” of a moving “river of consciousness” he repeatedly refers to “streams” to make his point. For example, Hickok describes how the brain focuses on the “perceptibility of [one acoustic] *stream*, while suppressing other *streams*” (emphases added). Hickok’s thesis that the rhythms resonate and synchronize with the surrounding world reminds us of water’s highly resonant quality of “preparedness to enter into all things, to unite all things, to absorb all things” (Schwenk). Water is full of discrete pulsations and forms which are at the same time inseparable parts of water’s whole *streaming* movement.

22 Steiner described “how the substance of the nerves is a very special substance. It is as transparent glass to light [and] lets spirit through.” CW 293, *Foundations*, p. 198.

23 Quoted in Oliver Sacks, *The Rivers of Consciousness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), p. 177.

24 *The River of Consciousness*, p. 181.

25 *The River of Consciousness*, pp. 183-4.

26 Harvard professor of psychiatry John Ratey points to the evidence “that movement is crucial to every other brain function, including memory, emotion, language and learning...Our ‘higher’ brain functions have evolved from movement and still depend on it.” *A User’s Guide to the Brain* (NY: Vintage Books/Random House, 2002), p. 148.

27 See above, Gregory Hickok et al, “The Rhythm of Perception.”

Panta Rhei: Everything Flows

It is hard to escape Heraclitus' observation, made 2,500 years ago, that *everything flows*. That includes our consciousness and the thoughts that form and *light up* in it. The universe appears to be an immense organization of rhythmic movement and change that unceasingly permeates us as human micro-universe continuums. We are part of it.

The "snapshot" and "movie frame" theories are interesting but only one side of a deeper, richer story. They reductively focus on "conscious" awareness and overlook how it is organically interwoven and carried in the *full streaming* of our minds that also encompasses the vast, moving undercurrents of the *unconscious*. Conscious awareness is only one current of a greater stream, from which it cannot be one-sidedly separated. When, for example, we look out at a forest scene before us, we may consciously focus on certain objects, but just think of the whole scenes we are taking in unconsciously with our peripheral vision, hearing, touching, smelling, etc. All these impressions and the unconscious images generated by them are also environmentally affecting and shaping us and are part of our *whole* experience. Neuroscientist Damasio points out that the

images [i.e. thoughts], the currency of our minds ... continue to be formed, perceptually and in recall, even when we are not conscious of them. Many images never get the favors of consciousness and are not heard from, or seen directly, in the conscious mind. And yet, in many instances, such images are capable of influencing our thinking and our actions. A rich mental process related to reasoning and creative thinking can proceed while we are conscious of something else.²⁸

When we take this multi-layered reality into account, we see that mental phenomena are hardly ever "static." We begin to get a sense of the *actual*, big, deep river of thoughts and consciousness that is *living* in us, both as an experience of water-like *flowing* and of a *lighting up*. Into *certain parts* of our fluid consciousness, light beams and reveals *particular* mental forms. Percepts

play on its surfaces as mirror-images. Memory-images and imagination-images rise from its deeper currents.

These focal areas or "snapshots," if you will, are the conscious images and thoughts *en-lightened* by the specific attention of our "I." We direct our attention to outside objects and to inner thoughts or our attention can be drawn to or be "captured" by them. Our evolutionary make-up is wisely selective and "wakefully" high-*lights* and processes only part of the myriad impressions and images we absorb every day. We take "ownership of" (James) and "personalize" (Sacks) our experiences and memories.

Streaming Waves and Particles: Life is Light

The mind and its footprints in our physiology are indeed wonderfully complex, "ethereal" appearances.²⁹

I have found it helpful and valuable to consider multiple ways of looking at these phenomena, whether they tend toward the 'quantized' or the wholistic. Crick & Koch's "static snapshots," Hickok's "rhythmic pulsations," Nunez's "standing waves," Kumar's "guided biophoton waves," Steiner's "etheric light of thinking," Schwenk's "etheric life of water forces in thinking," Damasio's and Treichler's "move-

ment and flux of mental images," and James' original "river of thoughts," all, even when seeming one-sided or even contradictory at first, help us to *imagine* what is an intricately integrated *life-based* mental-physical organism—not a *system* or *assembly-line* mechanism. Both life and mind are equally complicated and remain mysteries to science, especially when considered together. Interestingly, both appear to be inherently not only water-based but also *light*-based. And much like light to which our thinking and consciousness are related, the human mind and its interconnected physical processes behave with the characteristics of both wave and particle.³⁰

As a final note, it should be pointed out that Steiner's picture of the nature of the mind comprehensively includes many of the different elements considered in the studies of the others discussed in this article: a *river of thoughts*, *thinking as movement of mental images (Bilder)*, the *light of consciousness* and *streaming*

28 See the review of the work of Stephen Kosslyn in Part I of this article, "The Image Problem: Mystery and Debate," *Research Bulletin* XXIV, No. 1.

29 See the review of the work of Stephen Kosslyn in the Part I of this article, "The Image Problem: Mystery and Debate."

30 Modern physics proposes that light—once thought to be only a wave—is also a stream of *particles* (*quanta*).

etheric life-forces. In fact, he *unites* these into a living mental/neurophysiological continuum. As cited earlier, for Steiner, thinking is seated in the *light*-filled streaming of the *life*-etheric body of *form*-giving forces. These formative-forces—*Bilde-kräfte*—that *build* up and *sculpt* the body *metamorphose* into the mind's *image-sculpting*-forces—also called *Bilde-kräfte*—that in turn generate thinking-forms, memory-forms, etc. To experience and understand these non-physical forces, Steiner provocatively advocates that we develop a new kind of commensurate *sculptural-metamorphic* thinking (*morphologisches-metamorphisches Denken*). This enhanced state of cognition is what is required to perceive and comprehend the dynamic form-giving forces of life and how they transform into psychological-mental faculties, *neuro-plasticity*, and mental image formation.³¹

Practically, this new thinking entails *simultaneously* picturing the *flow* and its *particular interior forms* as they continuously emerge, change and disappear. It experiences *forms* arising out of *movement* and it can be applied introspectively to mental phenomena as well to processes in outer nature.

Arthur Auer is the former director of the Waldorf Teacher Education Program at Antioch University New England. For many years he taught a graduate seminar on Steiner's Study of Man. This article and others have arisen out of that dialogic context. Auer is also a former Waldorf class teacher and author of *Learning about the World through Modeling: Sculptural Ideas for School and Home* and *Exploring Shapes Creatively through Pure Form Modeling*.

31 Sculptural plasticity is now considered a main characteristic of both brain re-modeling and mind flexibility.

The Evolution of Meaning

Robert Kegan's Psychology and the Three Stages of Development in Childhood



Peter Lawton

The goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover, to create [humans] capable of doing new things.

Jean Piaget

Were all instructors to realize that the quality of mental process, not the production of correct answers, is the measure of educative growth something hardly less than a revolution in teaching would be worked.

John Dewey

Pychologist Robert Kegan believes the way humans make meaning is the fundamental force underlying not only our thinking, but our identity, personality, consciousness, essence, and entire sense of self. Like Rudolf Steiner, Kegan properly places the activities of thinking and cognition within a larger context. This framing has major pedagogical implications. Exploring Kegan's work may or may not add to anthroposophical or "Waldorf" understandings of the stages of development in childhood and the consequent pedagogy, but it certainly provides additional psychological and linguistic frameworks within which to explore and discuss the work of Waldorf teachers. Kegan's analysis of the processes involved in concrete and abstract thinking, for example, and his relation of these processes to emotion and volition, have been invaluable to me in my own work as a Waldorf class teacher. In a sense, what follows represents some of the results of my own quest to understand the nature of both concrete and abstract thinking, and to explore what that understanding means for my teaching.

Waldorf teachers working with younger children are admonished not to treat material abstractly, and Waldorf teachers working with older children and even adults still endeavor to introduce abstract concepts in a living, non-abstract manner. And yet, if you observe many Waldorf classrooms, mine included, you will surely conclude that working with academic material meaningfully *and* non-abstractly remains an ongoing challenge for many teachers.

Teachers, students, parents, and administrators each make their own unique, artistic contributions to an educational mosaic. Treating academic material in a living, non-abstract manner represents a central and integral aspect of the teacher's individual, creative, and artistic contribution to an overall art of education. If bringing material in a living manner represents the "art of teaching," this article and its forthcoming second part explore an important tray in the artist's paintbox, specifically the one containing the palette of cognitive colors (i.e., thinking skills) a teacher can use to paint her lesson. To be sure, Waldorf lessons are not organized around cognitive activities, but *soul*—experiential and imaginative—activities. However, if Kegan explains anything we didn't already know, it's that the *way* we think is not only inextricably bound with how we act and feel, but also with our sense of self. Recognizing the way a child thinks (and doesn't think) is, therefore, of critical importance when planning lesson activities.

This article, the first of two exploring Robert Kegan's psychology and its relevance for Waldorf education, draws on his two major works, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (1982) and *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (1994). Following a brief overview of Kegan's overarching psychological claims and the tradition out of which they proceed, the article investigates Kegan's three main stages of child development and offers comparisons to the three stages identified by Rudolf Steiner. (The correspondences will be obvious to anyone familiar with Waldorf education.) A second article will explore the development of thinking in Waldorf schools and other pedagogical implications stemming from Kegan's psychology and its animating principle—the evolution of meaning.

Robert Kegan's Psychological Propositions

Kegan (1982) asks: What if the evolution of the way humans make meaning is taken as the fundamental force underlying personality, identity, and conception of self? He asks, What if thinking is part of a larger process? Making meaning in Kegan's understanding is not solely a cognitive activity; meaning is the larger movement out of which cognition flows, encompassing physical activity (sensing, grasping), psychological activity (feeling), and social activity (or relating) (Kegan, 1982). In

the context of Steiner's *Education of the Child* (1996), cognition is a consequence of the greater activity of the human soul, concomitant with affect (feeling) and volition (willing). In both views, cognition is subject to larger processes.

In an evolutionary context—that is, in the context of meaning, development, transformation, consciousness, karma, etc.—thinking may be differentiated from thoughts, knowing from knowledge. The processes of thinking and knowing may be distinguished from the static thoughts, knowledge, and facts that form the *content* of our thinking and knowing. For example, four- and nine-year-olds both “know” not to take a cookie from the cookie jar. But the dynamic cognitive processes by which they make meaning from that knowledge, including the way they experience emotions or act upon them (or hopefully, in this case, don't act), are not just quantitatively, but *qualitatively* different. Kegan's work concerns the evolution of the dynamic process of making meaning.

Kegan continues in the tradition of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1950), who described the stage-like changes children experience in their thinking over the course of childhood. Whereas other neo-Piagetians sought to operationalize Piaget's findings into other domains (for example, Kohlberg's (1984) theory of moral development), Kegan seeks to identify a fundamental or unifying activity linking cognition, affect, and volition. Rogers (1951) called this activity *self-actualization*, Erikson (1950) called it *ego*. Albeit with a different meaning, Steiner (1996) also called it *Ego*. For Kegan, the activity that gives rise to the self is *meaning-making*. Identifying meaning as the larger motion out of which cognition flows does not preclude other, even broader contexts encompassing meaning itself—such as karma, destiny, eternal spark, etc. It does, however, provide a powerfully descriptive and practical framework for understanding how children learn.

Piaget's and his followers' psychological approaches are said to be *constructive-developmental*. *Constructivism* is the theory that humans actively construct their own understanding of reality, that reality is not passively received. And *developmentalism* is the theory that humans evolve through normative stages of growth. Steiner and Piaget, it may be argued, are the two greatest developmentalists of the twentieth century

(Sagarin, 2005). Although Steiner's approach is not what is normally meant by “constructivist”¹ (the view that cognition is a purely subjective act), both mainstream constructivists and Steiner viewed cognition as requiring active participation on the part of the knower (Schieren, 2012). Both constructive and developmental approaches take dynamic rather than static views of human activity. Viewed through constructivist and developmental lenses, humans do not passively receive circumstances (Steiner, 2013); they actively, we might

say, *creatively*, organize those circumstances into *meaning*. The organizing, creative act is dynamic and productive (Schieren, 2012); it's a process, a verb. For Steiner (1996), the creative act of knowing is artistic, sculptural in nature. Development is likewise a process; it is never static, even during so-called stages or periods of seeming stability (Kegan, 1982).

Development is a constant process of forming and reforming (Steiner, 1996). Each successive stage in the course of development does not simply replace the former stage. Nor is the process merely additive or cumulative. Rather, the changes are transformational, metamorphic, qualitative yet incorporative. Each older, organizing principle becomes an element of the new, higher-order, organizing principle. In other words, the growth is not mechanical, but, again, sculptural. Kegan (1994) describes developmental growth as geometric, and compared it to the relationship among point, line, and plane.

Piaget viewed cognition from the “outside,” we might say, as if the children with whom he conducted his elegant experiments were machines-in-boxes, and his job was to test the boxes to see what the machines inside did. He only, but stunningly, described how children of different ages think. However, cognition in its meaning-making context concerns not only how we think, but how we relate to the world, to others, and to ourselves. What Piaget *didn't* do was investigate the same cognitive processes from the “inside” (or, we might say from a Waldorf perspective, from “above”), in terms of how the act of knowing is experienced by the self, the ego, the meaning-maker. Investigating knowing and meaning-making from the “inside” represents Kegan's larger psychological project. He attempted to broaden and extend Piaget's formulations beyond the merely cognitive and into the world of identity and subjective experience, into realms of feeling and will. In doing so, Kegan came to an obvious but powerful conclusion:

If Kegan explains anything we didn't already know, it's that the *way we think* is not only inextricably bound with how we act and feel, but also with our sense of self.

we *experience* our knowing, and this experience may be the very source of our emotions. Knowing is not only epistemological, it's ontological; knowing not only relates to thinking, but to *being*. Kegan (1982) writes:

Loss and recovery, separation and attachment, anxiety and play, depression and transformation, disintegration and coherence—all may owe their origins to the felt experience of this activity, this [meaning-making] motion to which the word "emotion" refers. I use the word "meaning" to refer to this simultaneously epistemological and ontological activity; it is about knowing and being, about the remaking and investments and commitments of the self. (p. 45)

A simple example of the relationship between cognition and emotion is the fear and stress the infant feels upon separation from her mother. This stress is perhaps in large part the emotional consequence of her lack of object permanence—her cognitive experience that when Mother goes around the corner, she ceases to exist. Similarly, depression and dysfunction in many adult relationships may be due in large part to the cognitive inability in a surprising number of adults to subordinate their own and their partner's needs to some third, governing principle. A simple example (that will be further explored below) of the relationship between knowing and being is the qualitatively different manner in which nine- and 16-year-olds relate to their selves; the quality of the nine-year-old's thinking leads her to experience herself as a *what*, while the 16-year-old experiences herself more as a *who*.

As we develop, we transform our former ways of knowing, "birthing ourselves" out of realities in which we were previously embedded, realities with which we were in complete sympathy, realities we couldn't "see." Our former subjectivity/self—the way we previously made meaning—is brought "inside" our minds, where it becomes the new object of a reborn subjectivity/self, a more complex system of meaning-making. Each stage in our development represents a unique subject-object relationship with the world, an "evolutionary truce" in the way we relate to the world and out of which we construct reality and meaning (Kegan, 1982). The overall

motion of development is one of separation from and objectification of the outer world in order to have a better "guarantee" of its and our own distinctiveness (Kegan, 1982). This motion can be compared to the process of *incarnation*, the gradual animation and transformation of the material body by spiritual forces. For Kegan, we transform subject to object so we can "have it" instead of being "had by it" (Kegan, 1994). This is the evolution of meaning referred to in the title of this article, and this theory of the development and growth of the mind is similar to what both Western psychology and Eastern religious traditions mean by consciousness.

Kegan's Three Stages of Development in Childhood

Kegan named his three stages of child development *independent elements*, *durable categories*, and *cross-categories* (1994). They are so named for the meaning-organizing principle animating each stage. Kegan's stages of development correspond to Piaget's (1969) *pre-operational*, *concrete operational*, and *formal operational* stages, and to Steiner's (1996) *willing*, *feeling*, and *thinking* stages. All three formulations roughly correspond to the ages of two to six (nursery/kindergarten), six to teens (elementary school), and teens and beyond (middle/high school). In his 1982 book, Kegan first referred to the three stages as *impulsive*, *imperial*, and *interpersonal*. Later, he

replaced the somewhat confusing and charged 1982-adjectives with the more neutral 1994-principles.

The first, *independent-elements* stage begins around the age of two. Previous to that, in what Kegan (1982) called a zero or *incorporative* stage, there is no object, no world separate from the infant with which he can subjectively relate. Infants are *subject* to the outer world, to their sensory-motor activity, to sights, sounds, sensations, to the activity of their mouths and hands. The result of their sensory-motor activities—that is, reality itself—is

subjective, not objective. Realities are not experienced by the infant as separate from self, as there is not yet anything experienced as a self. Of course, the infant has a self, but that self may be said to be "outside." The infant's self is *one with the world*, not yet differentiated. The eventual differentiation of self is usually accompanied by the child's first use of the word "I" (Lievegoed, 2005). The object—a world separate from

Constructivism is the theory that humans actively construct their own understanding of reality, that reality is not passively received.

Developmentalism is the theory that humans evolve through normative stages of growth.

a now-constituted self—appears with the dawn of the first, *independent-elements* stage somewhere around the second year. The “*pièce de résistance*” marking the end of the zero stage and the beginning of the first, the *independent-elements* stage is the creation of a self, an “I” that can distinguish itself from the rest of the physical world. The two-year-old is already well on her way in a lifelong process of development commencing at the physical birth, whereby what was previously subject—in this case, *external reality itself*—is brought “inside” to become the object of a new structure of meaning-making—in this case, a differentiated self. The first, *independent-elements* stage continues the lifelong process by which “what was structure becomes content on behalf of a new structure” (Kegan, 1982, p. 85).

Kegan provides a stunning example of how qualitatively different meaning-making structures operate across the three stages of child development. He tells the story of how children of different ages were presented with a situation and were asked the same question: “All purple snakes have four legs. I am hiding a purple snake. How many legs does it have?” The stage-one preschooler answers, “My brother has a snake.” The stage-two second-grader responds, “Snakes don’t have legs” or, “There’s no such thing as a purple snake.” The stage-three adolescent squints her eyes and says, “Umm, it has four legs.”

In the descriptions that follow, these answers may be helpful in illustrating the organizing principles underlying each stage. In the companion article to the present one, they may be further helpful in imagining developmentally appropriate classroom activities that take into account not only where children are in their development, but where they are going.

Stage One: The Principle of Independent Elements

In the first, *independent-elements* stage (ages two to six), the child is subject to his perceptions and impulses. Young children think with their perceptions and impulses—they *are* their perceptions and impulses. *Thinking, sense of self, subjectivity*—these are all just different words for describing structures of meaning-making. Perceptions of physical reality largely “appear” from the outside, impulses from within. The objects of the young child’s meaning-making structures are the results of his own sensorimotor activities, of his reflexes and actions. Earlier in the infant’s zero-stage, children *were* sensation; now in stage one, they *have* sensation. Making sense as they do through their immediate and constantly changing perceptions and impulses, their thinking is magical and illogical, their feelings

are capricious and fluid, and their relationships with others are egocentric (Kegan, 1994). In his 1982 book, Kegan called this the *impulsive* stage, and the reasons for the name should be obvious. Given the magical and illogical nature of their thinking, we might say that children of this age do not yet possess intellects, that they do not actually *think*. Or, we might say a first-stage child possesses the precursor or seed of an intellect. It’s all just semantics; young children think in a qualitatively unique manner.

Steiner (2004) describes the sleeping or unconscious nature of stage-one thinking. Subject as they are to outer perceptions and inner impulses, stage-one children may be said to think with their bodies. There is no “awake” or conscious mental activity standing between the physical (perceptive) or emotional (impulsive) sensation and the construction of meaning. *The sensation itself is the meaning*. Although the nature of stage-one thinking is unconscious, young children recognize themselves as distinct from the world and others. They have distinct selves. They say, “This is a horse. That is water. That is Sally. This is me.” Of course they also understand that objects continue to exist even if they can’t sense them (object permanence).

The transition between stages often involves a transitional object or fetish, or, as the child gets older, a transitional person or concept. Classic examples of objects marking the transition between an undifferentiated and differentiated sense of self, between the zero and first stages, are blankets, teddy bears, and dolls. The toddler shares an undifferentiated state with the fetish; child and Teddy are *one* and *one with the world*. But as the child begins to differentiate her self from the world and transition into stage one, so she begins to differentiate and objectify Teddy, which is essentially a trial run of the ultimate objectification of the self (Kegan, 1982). In a pattern that will be repeated again and again, an outer, physical motion or process is transformed and brought “inside” to become a mental- or *e*-motion.

While the stage-one child experiences his self as separate from the world, he is still subject to his perception of objects, of others, even of his self. Readers are no doubt familiar with Piaget’s (1965) classic liquid/container experiment, in which young children observe liquid being poured between shorter/wider and taller/narrower containers. The stage-one child perceives the volume of a liquid to grow when poured into a taller/narrower glass. For the young child, subject to his perception, the liquid actually, magically grows! When poured back, the liquid magically shrinks!

Stage-one children experience their inner impulses in a manner similar to the way they experience outer perceptions. With regard to the affective realm, the first-stage child can distinguish the difference between an outer stimulus and an inner feeling. They understand that the joy or anger they feel is a sensation generated on their “insides,” and they can distinguish between two emotions. However, they are, again, subject to or embedded in the immediate feeling or impulse. If the young, stage-one child is frustrated by a baking project gone wrong, he screams, “I hate cookies!” He has no enduring sense of self apart from his impulse in that moment to help mediate the immediate feeling (e.g., “I tend to like cookies; I just don’t like *these* cookies”). The classic expression of a stage-one child in the throes of a negative impulse is the temper tantrum. The tantrum is the outer manifestation of cognition hitting a brick wall. There is no larger, enduring sense of self the child can appeal to for help in ameliorating the immediate, negative emotions. We might more truthfully say, the tantrum is having the child! In between the outer physical world and an inner psychological space is the social, interpersonal realm of self and others. With regard to the social realm, stage-one children *can* recognize that others exist separate from themselves, but they *cannot* recognize that other people have their own, unique purposes, nor can they take another person’s point of view (Kegan, 1994).

The independent *elements* in the name given to first stage refer to components of the child’s experience and include physical (spatial and temporal), psychological (emotional), and social (relational) elements. *The elements are independent because, for the stage-one child, they don’t belong to larger sets or classes having properties or rules, which regulate membership in the respective sets.* In other words, the stage-one child cannot see the relation between two or more elements. For instance, *the stage-one child cannot distinguish between the part and the group to which the part belongs* (Kegan, 1982). In the liquid example given above, each liquid appears to the stage-one child as an independent liquid possessing qualities unique unto itself. For the stage-one child, a particular liquid does not belong to a class of liquids that are subject to laws and share properties (what in stage two will be called *durable categories*). Young, stage-one children cannot dis-embed their perception of that one liquid in that one moment and appeal to a larger category of liquids which, among other things, possesses a volume independent of perception. The independent elements relate not only to space, as with liquid, but to time. For example, *the stage-one child cannot construct a*

relationship between cause and effect; nor can they produce a sequence of events.

Similarly, in the affective or social realms, the child cannot ascribe to herself or others a class or category possessing enduring characteristics. While they can imitate, pretend, and role-play (e.g., play “Mommy”), they cannot take on a formal *role* (e.g., daughter, student, peer). They have a sense of self, but that self is constantly changing based on physical and emotional conditions. Self for the young child represents something distinguished from the rest of the world more than something possessing enduring qualities (Kegan, 1994).

In the example shown, young children were asked, “How many legs does the purple snake have?” Each word in the sentence that reveals itself to our adult thinking as a class or set appears to the stage-one child as an independent element. For the stage-one child, “leg,” “purple,” “snake,” are all independent elements possessing no properties that regulate membership in some larger class. The stage-one child can compare one snake to another, but not one snake to a class or category of snakes. The most striking element of the sentence to the child’s *independent-elements* consciousness is “snake.” In a stream of consciousness response that would make Jack Kerouac or Bob Dylan blush, the child is understandably excited to report that her brother has a snake.



A Developmental-Stage-Theory Disclaimer

And here, as the article begins to more explicitly explore the qualities of different stages and provides more descriptions of what children of different ages *can* and *cannot* do, some readers may begin to feel certain statements are too emphatic, or the characteristics defining each stage are too rigid. For instance, the picture of a five-year-old who *can* take on the formal role of “daughter” may spring to mind. So, here I would like to offer several caveats to consider when viewing human development through a stage-theory lens. Developmental stages represent an archetypal progression of qualitatively different ways of thinking, feeling, and relating socially, of qualitatively different ways of relating to the world and to the self. Humans, in the normal course of development, progress through universal stages of growth true for most humans. These stages are sequential and incorporative. For example, most humans develop the ability to think concretely (explored in the next section), and the ability to think concretely precedes the development of abstract thinking capabilities. However, the first boilerplate developmental caveat goes something like this: *while new capacities tend to develop sequentially and incorporate earlier abilities, development follows different timetables for each individual*. Some first-stage five-year-olds are fairly secure concrete thinkers, while some nine-year-olds may just be beginning to find their stage-two, concrete foothold. The second boilerplate caveat goes like this: *stages are dynamic, not static*. In the first, *independent-elements* stage considered above, for example, *the defining quality that gives the stage its name represents not a seven-year period of time in which the child can never distinguish the element from the class or category in which it is a member, but a period of time in which the capacity to classify and categorize is developing*. Similarly, the second, *durable-categories* stage considered next is not a seven-year period of time in which the child is completely incapable of thinking abstractly, but in which the ability to think abstractly is being incubated, as the physical body incubates in utero. Although the physical body may be said to be born at birth, it has, in fact, been developing all along. Issues that require further exploration include how, for instance, an educational environment can protect and incubate the ability to think abstractly during the second stage of development much in the same way the womb protects and incubates the growing fetus.

We do not have dreams so much as they have us. This is similar to the way reality is experienced by second-stage children.

The type of description and analysis offered here takes on a style that might be uncomfortable to some, as it proceeds mainly through nominalization. Describing a developmental phenomenon tends to freeze time in order to capture and name qualities that are actually in a state of constant movement and change. For example, there really is no *point* at which a child is a concrete thinker. Children are either *in the process* of developing a more sophisticated sense of concrete reality, or they are *already using* their newfound, concrete cognitive abilities to achieve even more expanded, abstract forms of consciousness. Pinpointing where a child is developmentally in a particular moment is like calculating the speed of a falling object under the acceleration of gravity.

Stage Two: The Principle of Durable Categories

In the second, *durable-categories* stage (roughly six years to teens), perceptions and impulses move “inside” to become the new objects of cognition. Second-stage children can now “see” or think about their own perceptions. They can recognize the difference between a perception of reality and reality itself. Whereas the first-stage child peers down from the tall building and says, “Look, the people are tiny!” his older, second-stage sister says, “The people *look* tiny.” The new subjects of the stage-two child—that is the new, second-stage, meaning-making structures—are enduring needs and dispositions. The nine-year-old self *is* her needs and dispositions. Needs—the objects of the child’s desire—are felt by the child to exist outside her self; dispositions are felt to exist within. In the previous, *independent-elements* stage, perceptions and impulses were immediate and fleeting. Stage-two, *durable-categories* needs and dispositions now endure over time—a stage-two child’s sense of self is enduring! The self in stage two is no longer felt to be a that-which-is-not-everything-else, as it did in the earlier, first-stage. The self is now felt to be personal. The second-stage child has a personality!

Steiner (2004) described the sleeping or unconscious quality of earlier, first-stage thinking. Does this mean that stage-two thinking is now awake? No, because in order for thinking to be awake and conscious, one’s own thinking itself must be the object of thinking (a third-stage capability). In this second, *durable-categories* stage, the child can observe their own perceptions, not their own thinking. This gives second-stage thinking a dream-like or semi-conscious quality (Steiner, 2004).

A fully-awakened intellect is something completely untethered to the physical world, a purely mental (one might say, spiritual) activity. A “dreaming” intellect is *half* an inner, mental activity, and *half* an outer activity embedded in the physical world. I like to think of the stage-two consciousness as similar to the way our unconscious and/or semi-conscious drives play out in our dreams. We can “see” them, but we are simultaneously captured by them. We are incapable of directing some other course of action or “waking up.” We do not have dreams so much as they have us. This is similar to the way reality is experienced by second-stage children. While the stage-two child continues to possess a rich and fluid imagination, concrete reality captures the conceptual aspects of the second-stage child’s thinking; the stage-two intellect needs concrete examples! The world of the stage-two child has lost some of its magic, but a portion of his magical wonder is transferred to the activities of exploring and marveling at the limits of the physical world. Children of this age love to collect, keep records, and memorize facts. Another portion of the child’s wonder is transferred to the exploration of allegorical, mythical, and fantastical stories, which offer concrete examples of abstract concepts.



Using Piaget's (1950) language, the second-stage child thinks *concretely* for the first time. No longer embedded in his perceptions, the second-stage child now grants the physical world its concrete and durable properties and laws. An aspect of the stage-two child's newfound concreteness is what Piaget (as cited in Kegan, 1982) calls *reversibility*. One form of reversibility is *inversion*—the ability to recognize that objects can be changed and then returned to their original condition. When the liquid is poured into the taller/narrower glass, it appears to grow. It appears to return to its original state when poured back into the shorter/wider glass. For a younger, first-stage child, the liquid magically grows and shrinks. For the second-stage child, appearing to grow and shrink is a *property* of liquid. Stage-two children think, “Liquids do that.” Another form of reversibility is *reciprocity*—the ability to recognize that different factors or operations balance each other out. The liquid appears taller in the second glass, but the glass is narrower; the two factors—taller and narrower—*balance* each other out. (This ability to balance concrete factors in the mind is nothing less than the concrete precursor or seed of the future abstract ability to apply independent judgment!³) The first-stage child wonders at the magic liquid again and again. The more worldly, stage-two child shrugs her shoulders and says, “No biggie.” A world that was previously magical and labile now begins to sit still (Kegan, 1982).

Like the *independent elements* of the previous stage, *durable categories* may refer to outer reality, inner psychology, or outer-and-inner sociology. Elements in stage two are no longer independent, but *categorical*. The categories in the stage's name refer to classes or sets that have properties and are subject to laws. And what is a category but a *relation* between elements? That relation is a mental construct, if you will. Steiner said *understanding*, itself, constitutes the recognition of relationships (as cited in Schieren, 2010). The stage-two child thinks in a formal sense for the first time, or, in Piaget's (1950) language, she *operates* in the world for the first time. She is, we say in Waldorf schools, first-grade-ready! A classic Piagetian-style experiment illustrating the stage-two child's newfound cognitive ability to categorize involved beads (Langer, 1969). Stage-one and stage-two children were shown various white and black beads. Some of the white beads were plastic and some wooden, and the same for the black beads. Asked to separate the beads into black and white, each group of children quickly accomplished the task. Asked to separate the white from the wooden beads, younger, stage-one participants simply repeated the process of separating the beads into black and white. Up against the limits of their cognition, they unwittingly and blithely redefined the task. Stage-two, *durable-categories* participants, on the other hand, quickly folded their arms, said the request was ridiculous, and disparaged the experimenters. The stage-two group understood all

white, wooden beads belong to the class or category of white, wooden beads. As members of that class, they are subject to the laws of bead-ness, whiteness, and woodenness. White and wood were inseparable elements of the category. Wanting it to be otherwise did not make it so.

Durable-categories children can categorize not only spatial, but temporal elements. *They can think consequentially (ascribe cause and effect), sequence events, and relate one point in time to another.* Essentially, according to Kegan, whether regarding time or space, or outer or inner realities, the main cognitive achievement of the stage-two child is the ability to categorize, to recognize and understand the relationships connecting independent elements. *While stage-two children can think concretely, they cannot think abstractly. They cannot theorize, generalize, idealize, hypothesize, or discern overall patterns* (Kegan, 1994). They cannot perform any of these mental feats because each requires next-stage, *cross-categories* thinking. *Stage-two children can relate independent elements together into a category. What they cannot do is relate two categories,* which is an operation that will define the next stage of development. In simple terms, stage-two children cannot relate relations!

As they grant concrete qualities to the physical world, so *durable-categories* children apply similar concreteness to the social and affective domains. Just as the bead belongs to a class, so the self and others are members of classes with durable properties. In his 1982 book, Kegan called this second stage *imperial*. The child is imperial, in Kegan's definition, because he is subject to his needs—needs constitute his sense of self. Although a stage-two, school-aged child can now ascribe properties (such as points of view) to others, he does not yet possess the cognitive ability to hold his own and another's needs in relation to each other. In other words, his own and another's needs form two distinct categories, but as yet he cannot simultaneously hold or relate the two categories. To do that would require the ability to submit the two categories to a third, superordinate, governing category—a category holding the categories. Because, in a cognitive sense, the stage-two child *is* his needs, not having them met constitutes an existential threat. As such, he can plan, strategize, negotiate, and manipulate others on behalf

of his needs, and in this sense, a second-stage child may be said to imperialize others (Kegan, 1994). The second-stage child can and does maintain relationships; however, he does not do this by forming abstract obligations and expectations (Kegan, 1982). Obligations and expectations would, again, constitute third-stage, cross-categorical categories.

The *durable-categories* child's ability to take another's point of view is a milestone in the evolution of meaning-making, and it gives birth to a *role*, that of child, student, peer, friend, etc. In the cognitive equivalent of granting the liquid its own properties in the experiment described above, the second-stage child grants enduring qualities and points-of-view to others and in turn to the role itself. The literal nature of the stage-two child's concreteness makes him an ideal role-taker and rule-follower. My former fourth grade students didn't really play football so much as they argued about the rules of football!

The second-stage child has made not only her perceptions but her impulses the object of her cognitive and meaning-making activities. In a sense, she *has* her impulses. The second-stage

child can therefore control and regulate her impulses in order to realize short-term goals—she can delay immediate gratification. A stage-two child can further *categorize* her *self*, which in stage two is still contained by her needs and dispositions. The younger, stage-one child, with all his “me's” and “mines” is telling the world *that* he is. The stage-two child now tells the world *what* she is (Kegan, 1982). The *durable-categories* child is a self-contained category, and she can describe many of the independent needs and dispositional elements that belong to her set or class that make up her self. For example, stage-two children can describe their abilities (e.g., “I'm a fast runner”), likes and dislikes (e.g., “I hate math”), or habits (e.g., “I go to bed late”) (Kegan, 1994). One of the transitional objects bridging the zero and first stages is the teddy bear. The late-stage-zero, early-stage-one child's newfound sense of a differentiated self is rehearsed first through Teddy. Similarly, a transitional object bridging the first and second stages is the imaginary friend (Kegan, 1982). If the need or disposition is scary or negative, it can be first attributed to the imaginary friend: “Janey did it. Janey said it. Janey wanted it.”

The main cognitive achievement of the stage-two child is the ability to categorize, to recognize and understand the relationships connecting independent elements. While [they] can think concretely, they cannot think abstractly.

The second-stage child can ascribe concrete (physical and nonphysical), independent elements to the larger category of his self. What second-stage children *cannot* do is identify relationships between the independent elements. They cannot organize inner elements into larger groupings or themes. For instance, they cannot correlate their inner elements to describe inner motivations (e.g., “It’s all about trying to get my father’s attention”), biography (e.g., “My sister’s anxiety has really affected me”), and other more complex self-attributions (e.g., “I’m compulsive”) (Kegan, 1994). The stage-two, concrete meaning-maker cannot recognize, for instance, her inner motivations because she can only hold one level of categorization in her consciousness at a time. After all, she is already categorizing her self. The category of self already represents a relationship, albeit one tethered to the concrete world. To relate the elements of self to each other is to relate relationships, categorize categories, conceptualize a relationship independent from concrete examples of that relationship, which are all examples of next-stage, *cross-category* thinking.

When a stage-one kindergartner says, “I don’t have any friends,” trapped as she is in her impulses, she means that in that exact moment she doesn’t have someone to play with. However, when a stage-two fourth-grader says, “I don’t have any friends,” he means “friendless” is an enduring element of the category of his *self*. Even worse, he may believe another element is, “Other kids don’t like me.” And here it may be worthwhile to pause and consider the possibility that the so-called nine-year-change,² at least from a cognitive perspective, may be understood to be the result of the stage-two child’s newfound concreteness. This does not negate the interpretation of the psychological crisis many nine- and ten-year-olds face as the result of the influence of encroaching forces of individuation (Steiner, 1988). In fact, the move in stage two from a sense of *thatness* to a sense of *whatness* does represent a higher level of consciousness, of individuation. A cognitive analysis simply represents a different layer of interpretation. The second-stage child’s ability to think concretely—to ascribe to things, other people, and themselves enduring qualities—inevitably will involve triumphs and challenges, as does every new stage or evolutionary truce. Each stage is an opportunity *and* a limitation (Kegan, 1982). One obvious limitation in any stage of development concerns the lateral accumulation of knowledge, namely the lack

of a knowledge-base at the outset of the stage. In this example, nine-year-olds just don’t know much about friendships and having friends. A much more significant limitation, however, is developmental, and concerns not *what* nine-year-olds know, but *how* they know.

The triumph of stage-two meaning-making is the ability to categorize: to ascribe to the world, to others, and to the self, enduring qualities. The stage-two child’s sense of self is categorical, a *what*. The nine-year-old self is, in a sense, closed off from the world, trapped in its category, its concrete realities. The nine-year-old categorizes his self... and that’s that. He does not have a sense of self apart from the elements that constitute his *category*. He does not have a sense of self independent of his strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, triumphs and challenges, etc. as an adult does. An adult thinks, “I have challenges, but those challenges are not *me*.” Neither is the nine-year-old able to “share” or co-inhabit troubling feelings with others, as we will see a third-stage adolescent can. Second-stage concrete thinkers are closed off. This is their great cognitive achievement! However, in their categorical isolation, feelings of loneliness must be excruciating. I mentioned above that not getting their needs met poses an existential threat to stage-two, *imperial* thinkers. Negative and isolating emotions must cause a similar threat. In terms of the evolution of meaning, the nine-year-change represents the child’s struggle with *whatness*.

Similar to the way in which outer physical movements are brought “inside” to become inner movements of feeling and thought, new cognitive abilities are first applied to the outer, physical world, before being applied inwardly, psychologically (Lievegoed, 2005). The reason the same negative, nine- or ten-year-old emotions are not experienced by six- and seven-year-old concrete thinkers may be because, in the outside-in motion just described, the new cognitive abilities are still in transit or “out for delivery”; they just haven’t arrived “inside” yet.

The younger, stage-one child, with all his “me’s” and “mines” is telling the world that he is. The stage-two child now tells the world what she is.

Returning to the four-legged, purple snake conundrum for the second time, the second-stage, *durable-categories* child understands the snake is a member of the category “snakes,” containing any number of concrete properties true of all snakes. Embedded as they are in the concrete characteristics of snakes, stage-two children cannot mentally subordinate the concrete category “snakes” to some theoretical, hypothetical, or

ideal class of snakes. When asked how many legs a four-legged, purple snake has, second-stage thinkers must point out the interlocutor's mistakes: (1) Snakes don't have legs; (2) Snakes aren't purple. Older, stage-two children may additionally suck their teeth and/or roll their eyes for effect.

Stage 3: The Principle of Cross Categories

In the third, *cross-categories* stage (roughly teenage years and beyond), enduring needs and dispositions are now taken to be the objects of a new meaning-making system. The third-stage child now makes her own needs and dispositions the objects of her thinking. (It may be a stretch to imagine a fourteen-year-old looking at anything objectively! Objectivity in this sense means to make something an *object* of thinking; it doesn't necessarily mean the resulting thinking is what we as adults might describe as objective.) The new subjects or meaning-making structures of the stage-three consciousness are other people, ideas, and the emerging self. The new subjectivity—the new self—is one *co-inhabited* or shared with other people (intersubjectivity) and big ideas (idealism). The “reborn” self also forges a new relationship with *itself*, which is often called *identity* (Kegan, 1982). In other words, the stage-three self *is* its relationships with others and with itself and its big ideas. The younger, stage-two child worked from a plan, subordinating momentary impulses in service to some enduring need. The stage-three child now works from an even bigger plan, subordinating his own needs and dispositions to relationships and ideals, and to the coherence of an identity (Kegan, 1982). The self, which was previously “closed up” in stage-two, a fixed category, now becomes a more dynamic process, defined by a more reciprocal, mutually-constructed relationship with the world. Previously in stage two, the child tells the world *what* he is; the stage-three child tells the world *who* he is (Kegan, 1994). Whereas the stage-two child “liked to play soccer or paint,” the stage three child becomes a “jock” or “goth,” and represents membership in a friend group or in an ethos larger than themselves. The new cognitive, meaning-making triumph of stage-three children is the ability to think abstractly, to be self-reflexive not only about their thinking, but their emotions. Stage-three, *cross-categories* thinkers dis-embed from the world that *is* into a world of *what might be* (Kegan, 1994). The stage-three child can think propositionally, hypothetically, inferentially, and ideally. They can think about thinking, reason about reasoning, and have feelings about feelings (feelings squared!).

In stage two, the child tells the world what he is; the stage-three child tells the world who he is.

In their ability to perceive or examine their own thinking, stage-three adolescents may be said to be more awake and conscious in their thinking (Steiner, 1967). (Although, as we will see, this ability is not guaranteed, and it doesn't occur immediately upon reaching adolescence.) There is a burgeoning mental space in the young adolescent between the activity itself—the observation, the desire, the experience, and increasingly the *explanation*—and the act of making meaning.

There is the opening of a mental space, often called an intellect, that parents and educators may appeal to directly. However, there are several important caveats regarding the emerging intellect that will need further exploration in regards their pedagogical implications. First, according to Kegan's (1982) model, the mental space that opens is a *shared* space. Stage three thinking may be said

to be awake, but because it is shared or co-constructed, it is not independent. Steiner (1967) said the possibility of independent judgment³ isn't born until age 18 or 19, possibly even later. Second, as Steiner (1994) observed again and again, the young intellect only works properly when operating on material already explored through sensory-motor and imaginative activities (think: knowing “in your bones,” or “in your heart”). This view is confirmed by research showing that reasoning skills are enhanced when applied to an existing and familiar knowledge base (Byrnes, 2005). An abstract concept, we might say, is only properly understood and applied when the learner is familiar with many *concrete instances* of the concept, both experientially in their bodies and imaginatively in their minds. Put another way, a *definition* is only properly understood when the learner is familiar with many *examples* of the definition.

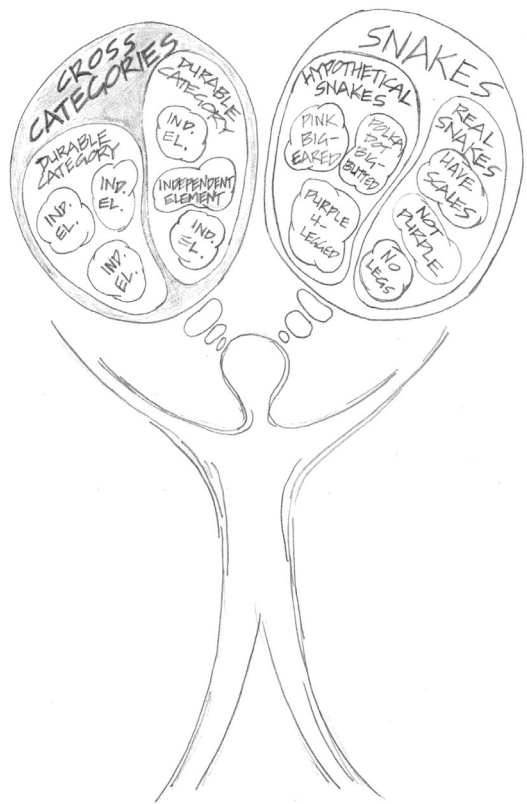
In their ability to think, adolescents may be said to be intellectually open to the world for the first time. They are, in a sense, laid bare. Opening themselves to others and to ideas, they are vulnerable to threats from the outside. The intellect is just as capable, for example, of opening itself to healthy ideologies as to harmful ones. The ability to think abstractly allows individuals to bypass other forms of knowing, to bypass what their intuition and their feelings may be telling them. One doesn't necessarily have to have any actual, corroborative experience to believe in a concept. The ability to think abstractly is the triumph of third-stage, *cross-categorical* thinking. It is also its inherent limitation.

Piaget (1950) called this third stage *formal operational*. It is *operational* because it involves thinking, and it is

formal because the operation is abstract. Younger, concrete operational children display different forms of reversibility in their thinking. For instance, they understood that an object can undergo changes and return to its original state—inversion. They further understand that an object is subject to factors that can balance each other out—reciprocity. The advancement of reversibility in the stage-three child is what Piaget (as cited in Kegan, 1982) called *inverse reciprocity*. Earlier, stage-two inversion and reciprocity could be understood as elements of concrete categories. For instance, a property of liquid is that it can appear shorter, then taller. In the new, stage-three formulation, the new category is *reversibility itself*, a relationship that exists independently of concrete entities such as “liquids.” Once untethered from concrete examples, reversibility can be applied hypothetically or theoretically. Every conceivable relation or operation suddenly has a hypothetical inverse! This is an example of how newfound cognitive abilities allow for hypothetical, theoretical, and idealistic thinking—for truly abstract thinking. *Formal operational or abstract thinking is the ability to think about relationships or processes independent of concrete examples of the relationship or process.* In a classic experiment demonstrating this ability, Piaget (as cited in Duchesne & McMaugh, 2003) asked children of various ages where they would place a third eye. Stage-two children consistently answered: the middle of their foreheads. Stage-three children answered with a variety of creative answers, such as on the back of the head (to see what’s behind them) or on the palm of their hand (to see around corners). For younger, stage-two children, after all, the category of “eyes” contains the concrete, independent element of being on the face. For stage-three children, the process of seeing is a category in and of itself, independent of foreheads, and contained wholly in the child’s mind.

What the third-stage child *cannot* do, however, is “systematically produce all possible combinations of relations” or “systematically isolate variables to test hypotheses” (Kegan, 1994, p. 30). This is an important distinction that is often misunderstood and misreported. In many of Piaget’s—or Piaget inspired—experiments, stage-three thinkers have been shown to try different combinations and isolate variables, but they *cannot* do this systematically (Kegan, 1982). The activities of trying different combinations and isolating variables both involve the higher-order, hypothesizing capability of stage-three thinking. However, third-stage thinkers cannot systematize these activities according to some even higher-order, more generalized organization. This would be tantamount to asking a stage-three child to perform thinking cubed!

In the first stage of *independent elements*, each individual element constituted its own category. In the second stage of *durable categories*, each category contained many independent elements, and the category itself was an idea constructed by the stage-two knower that related all the independent elements together. The name *cross categories* refers to a category that contains categories, that is, a concept that describes the relationship between relationships. *Cross-categorical thinking subordinates durable categories to higher-order principles; it subordinates the categories to the interaction between them* (Kegan, 1994). *This is a very simple, mechanical definition of what it means to think abstractly. Concrete thinking involves concepts that represent the relationship between real (physical, non-physical) elements. Abstract thinking involves concepts that describe the relationship between relationships. It is thinking completely unbound from concrete objects or examples—a purely mental activity.* The kindergartner looks down from the tall building and says, “The people are tiny!” The second-grader says, “The people look tiny.” The high-school junior says, “Size is relative.”



In his 1982 book, Kegan called this third stage *interpersonal*. The third-stage child’s ability to share an inter-subjectivity with best friends, members of his clique, romantic partners, and others gives the stage

its name. Unlike the younger, stage-two child, the stage-three child is now able to simultaneously hold in consciousness the two categories of self and other, while at the same time subordinate self and other to a third category—the relationship itself. Kegan's 1982 term, however, left out two other important areas of co-subjectivity (Lewis, 2007). Not only do third-stage children “become” their interpersonal relationships, they also become their ideas. We've all experienced the enthusiastic and inflexible idealism of adolescents. This fervor and intractability is the result of the adolescent *inhabiting* or *becoming* a thought or system of thought. The stage-three child does not yet have a generalized worldview or overarching set of principles that mediates or governs new concepts. Therefore, they are subject to the ideal “du jour.” The lack of a generalized or systematic worldview in the adolescent anticipates further stages of development in adulthood. In fact, Kegan described two more stages after the three of childhood.

In addition to forming new relationships with others and with ideas, stage-three children forge a new relationship with their self, which for the first time might be called *identity*. Erikson (1950) believed that beginning the long-term task of trying to establish a coherent identity was the main psychological and social task of adolescence. Earlier in the second, *independent-elements* stage, the self was a category of elements. In the third, *cross-categories* stage, the self is more of an ongoing and complex *process*, the humble beginnings of a generalization that subordinates the stage-two durable categories to a larger motion. However, similar to the way in which stage-three children do not yet have a generalized or systematic worldview that can regulate multiple big ideas, so they do not yet have a generalized or holistic sense of their self (Kegan, 1982). Stage-three children therefore try on identities as one tries on different clothing styles (the two often go hand-in-hand). Stage-one children develop the ability to differentiate themselves from the world—a *that*. Stage-two children develop a sense of self—a *what*. Stage-three children begin to develop an identity—a *who*—and they do this by first co-inhabiting other selves, ideas, and identities. Earlier, stage-two, generalized feelings of “like” and “dislike,” of dispositional preference, transform in stage-three into individualized emotions. In stage two, generalized feelings, such as “likes,” represent elements in the category “self.” In stage three, individualized

emotions such as shame or pride represent categories that contain categories, relations that relate relations (again, feelings squared!). Stage-three children begin to sense their own individuality and destiny (Steiner, 1997). Contrary to playing a discrete role like a stage-two child, stage-three children play a role of one. While the stage-two child's role is defined from without, the stage-three role is co-defined with the world and with others.

In the social realm, younger, stage-two children cannot hold their own and another's needs while simultaneously organizing them in accordance with a higher principle. Stage-three children can now subordinate their own and another's needs to shared feelings, agreements, and expectations (Kegan, 1994).

In the affective and interpersonal realms of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations, the stage-three self internalizes another's point of view in what becomes the construction of a shared self.

They *cannot*, though, construct a generalized system of thought governing all relationships. The *cross-categories* children do not have relationships so much as they *are* their relationships. In the affective and interpersonal realms of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations, the stage-three self internalizes another's point of view in what becomes the construction of a

shared self. The resulting emotions are experienced as shared rather than transactional. *This co-construction initiates a new pathway for developing empathy and sharing at a more intimate level.* The relationship, however, is not intimate in the way we understand intimacy as adults, because, as Kegan (1982) points out, “there is no self to share with another; instead the other is required to bring the self into being” (p. 97). In other words, the third-stage child cannot distinguish her self from her relationships. In a sense, the besties and BFFs of adolescence, and even some romantic relationships, are transitional objects in the grand tradition of teddies and imaginary friends. The bestie with whom the third-stage child shares a subjectivity is a practice run. The bestie provides the training ground for the stage-three child to develop the future ability to inhabit a shared space while maintaining his own subjectivity and the sense of a coherent, independent identity (Kegan, 1994), which is a hallmark of stage-four thinking! In the same way that he cannot generalize a system governing all relationships, the *cross-categories* thinker does not experience himself as the writer of the drama of his life so much as the theater in which the drama is acted out (Kegan, 1994).

Every new stage of development involves a new cognitive opportunity and limitation. And each stage entails its own inner crisis, the result of the expression of the new opportunity hitting the brick wall of limitation. The stage-two, *durable-categories* crisis described above was the nine-year-change. Interpreted through the lens of the evolution of meaning, the crisis was not brought about by a new way of thinking (that happened more around the age of six). It was a result of the new ability to think concretely being turned inwardly and being aimed at the self, where the cognitive limitation was felt most acutely.

What we typically describe as some of the more negative aspects of adolescent behavior—insecurity, moodiness, impulsivity, even dangerous behavior—can certainly be interpreted as facets of a bigger, messier, nine-year-change: *the teenager-change*! That is to say, negative adolescent behaviors may be the result of a new, stage-three cognitive crisis. On the contrary, the classic cocktail party or parking lot explanation for all manner of negative adolescent behaviors is *raging hormones*. However, research and common sense has shown this explanation to be highly overblown (Dahl, 2003). Moreover, the “raging hormone” theory has little predictive, prescriptive, or practical utility. I mean, what are we supposed to do with a “hormonal” teenager? Lock the door and throw away the key? Give them old-person hormones?

Adolescent cognitive changes go much further than raging hormones in explaining teenage emotions and behaviors. Interpreting adolescent behavior through the lens of cognitive changes also has greater prescriptive power. It is probably the case that many adolescents are having some manner of *teenager-change*, the inevitable result of cognitive changes, of the newfound ability to lose themselves in others or in big ideas, or to try on and discard different identities. However, it may be equally true and descriptive that the same adolescent behaviors—moodiness, impulsivity, etc.—can be explained by the realization that *many adolescents are still thinking in stage-two, durable categories. Many, especially younger, adolescents, are as yet incapable of third-stage, abstract thinking.* And the crisis for these adolescents is not an inner, psychological battle fought between their new ability and its own, inherent limitation, but a societal or educational battle fought between the child and the outer world. The challenges faced by many, especially younger, adolescents, may, in fact, be the result of

The cross-categories thinker does not experience himself as the writer of the drama of his life so much as the theater in which the drama is acted out.

inappropriate challenges and expectations placed upon them by families, schools, and society at large, in addition to the simultaneous granting of freedoms and access to resources that they can't handle. For instance, adolescent feelings of invulnerability and the resulting delusional behaviors are usually attributed to bad stage-three thinking, that is to say, to the idea that stage-three thinkers *can* simultaneously think about their future and the stupid things they want to do in the moment; they're just not that good at it. This may be the case for some. Certainly, stage-three thinkers might not make the best decisions precisely

because of their intersubjectivity, their sense of a shared self, which leaves them particularly susceptible to peer pressure. An equally possible explanation, however, is that these adolescents are still cognitively at stage two, and are incapable of submitting their needs in the moment and in some future time to a governing principle that defines a relationship between the two, to a principle that makes sense of the need to drink A LOT with friends tonight, and the need to do well on the English exam tomorrow morning.

I allude to stage-four capabilities above. Studies in the adult population have shown that a majority of adults do not consistently demonstrate stage-three thinking (Crain, 2005). Certainly not all of them are able to fully realize stage-three capabilities the instant they reach puberty, but many never do. If a number of Piagetian-style experiments, including Kegan's own (1994), are to be believed, *we should view the third, cross-categories stage as a ten-year phase of gradual, gentle transformation from second- to third-stage thinking.* Steiner (1967) said powers of judgment³ are not born until the eighteenth or nineteenth year. In fact, Steiner (1994) claimed that adolescents are not really able to think independently until around age twenty-one.

To return to the purple, four-legged snake conundrum for the last time, to the stage-one preschooler, every snake was a category unto itself, an independent element. Two snakes may be compared to each other, but not to a class of snakes. A purple, four-legged snake, therefore, may be compared to “my brother's snake.” To the stage-two grade-schooler, snakes belong to a larger category of all snakes, and legs are not elements of the class. Therefore, “There's no such thing as a snake with legs.” To the stage-three high-schooler, classes or categories are not limited to concrete (physical or nonphysical) objects. A category may represent

a relationship independent of any concrete examples of the relationship, including hypothetical, theoretical, and complete-BS categories. Ergo, “A four-legged, purple snake has four legs. No duh.”

Summary

In this first of two articles exploring Robert Kegan’s psychology and its relevance for Waldorf education, the emphasis was placed on Kegan’s (1982) three stages of development in childhood. Particular attention was paid to the differences between concrete and abstract thinking. Kegan’s three stages were compared to and interpreted through Piaget’s (1950) and Steiner’s (1996)

three stages of child development. Following Kegan and Steiner, each stage was interpreted from the “inside,” in terms of how cognitive changes in childhood relate to the affective and social domains and to the child’s very sense of self. The following table, adapted from Kegan’s *In Over Our Heads* (1994), summarizes Kegan’s three stages of development in childhood:

Kegan extended Piaget’s formulations beyond the merely cognitive and into the domains of identity and subjective experience, into realms of feeling and will. In his earlier work, Kegan (1982) asked the question: What if meaning-making is not interpreted solely as a cognitive activity but as one encompassing physical, psychological, and social activities? Meaning-making in a developmental sense is as much about “waking up” as it is about growing up, and as such, it is similar to what both Western psychology and Eastern religious traditions mean by the development of higher consciousness. As we evolve in our ability to make meaning, as we expand our consciousness, we “birth” ourselves again and again out of our former selves. As we *incarnate* in childhood, we separate from and objectify the outer world in order to have a better “guarantee” of its and our own distinctiveness.

The next installment of this article will investigate pedagogical implications stemming from Kegan’s (1982) three stages of development in childhood,

STAGE	COGNITIVE (THINKING)	AFFECTIVE (FEELING)	SOCIAL
1. Independent Elements (ages two to six)	Can: differentiate themselves from an objective world; recognize that objects exist independent of their sensing of them (object permanence)	Can: distinguish between outer and inner sensation	Can: recognize that other people exist separate from their self
	Cannot: distinguish their perception of an object from its actual properties; construct a logical relation between cause and effect	Cannot: distinguish one’s impulses from oneself	Cannot: recognize that other people have purposes independent of their own; take another’s point of view
2. Durable Categories (ages six to teens)	Can: grant to objects qualities independent of perception; relate cause and effect (reason consequentially); relate one point in time to another; relate elements into a fixed category	Can: organize impulses in service of needs and goals; delay gratification; ascribe to self enduring, concrete qualities (e.g., abilities, likes and dislikes)	Can: construct own point of view and grant to others distinct points of view; take the role of another person; have goals; make plans; strategize
	Cannot: reason abstractly; make generalizations, form hypotheses, construct possibles or ideals	Cannot: distinguish one’s needs from self; coordinate or organize more than one need; ascribe to self more abstract or thematic qualities (e.g., motivations)	Cannot: take own view and another’s simultaneously; construct obligations and expectations between self and other
3. Cross-Categorical (teens and beyond)	Can: reason abstractly; think about thinking, reason about reasoning; think hypothetically; relate relations	Can: internalize another’s point of view in what becomes a co-constructed POV; coordinate more than one point of view internally	Can: be aware of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations; have these shared elements take precedence over individual interests
	Cannot: reason with governing principles (systematically relate all relations); produce all possible combinations; systematically isolate variables	Cannot: organize own self into a systematic whole; distinguish self from relationships; see one’s self as the author of own psychology (as opposed to the theater)	Cannot: construct an overarching system governing all relationships

(Kegan , 1994, pp. 30-31)

with a specific focus on the development of thinking in Waldorf schools. *Thinking* is interpreted through the lenses of Kegan's (1982) and Steiner's (1996) three stages of child development, as well as their descriptions of developmentally sound pedagogy. Our leading question will be: What does the evolution of meaning *mean* for the classroom?

ENDNOTES

- 1 Steiner believed that thinking is the process by which thoughts, which are animate in the structure of reality, are discovered, re-*cognized* by the knower (see Schieren, 2010). In simple terms, Steiner believed concepts correspond to objective reality. However, the joining of what we might call the *thought-in-the-thing* with the knower's own thinking requires a subjective, constructive act on the part of the knower. Although one might argue that the thought is not "constructed," as it already existed, the bringing together of the thought-in-the-thing with the knower's thinking still requires an act of volition. Schieren (2010) explains that this activity is not an act of construction but of concurrence.
- 2 The nine-year-change is recognized in Waldorf schools as a psychological/spiritual crisis occurring in some children around the ages of nine or ten. The nine-year-change is brought on by increasing faculties of self-awareness and is often accompanied by anxiety and moodiness. See Koepke's book *Encountering the Self* (1989) for a more exhaustive and nuanced description of the nine-year-change.
- 3 *Judgment* in Steiner's formulation comprises the subjective, individual attributions the knower applies to perceptions and/or concepts (Steiner, 1979). Attributions of judgment are contextual, analytical, evaluative, and also highly personal; they explore both inner and outer relationships and processes. Waldorf schools recognize that before adolescence and the emergence of abstract, third-stage, *cross-categorical* thinking, the learner is not yet capable of forming reliable independent judgments. In more simple terms, the learner is not yet capable of forming reliable judgments free of many concrete examples or experiences. The formation of judgments in stage-two—that is the subjective and contextual attributions the knower applies to perceptions and conceptual categories—is not independent because it requires

the concrete examples to bring the judgments into existence. Later, in adolescence, the child begins to develop the ability to form judgments between two or more abstract concepts, and independent of concrete examples (Steiner, 1979).

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- Peter Lawton, Ed.D.** For the past nineteen years, Peter Lawton has been a class teacher at City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis, MN, where he has taken two classes from first through eighth grade. Peter's animated, three-part video series Waldorf Education: An Introduction can be viewed here: <https://www.clws.org/waldorf-education/waldorf-education-video-series/>

Computer Education in Waldorf Schools¹

Charles Weems

When and how should we teach our children about computers, so that they are prepared for the future?

Over the past decade, parents, educators, politicians, and others have been asking this question more frequently, with a growing sense of anxiety and urgency. Organizations such as the National Science Foundation and the Computer Science Teachers Association answer by proposing a program of computer education beginning in kindergarten. Their recommendations are based more on a philosophy that earlier is better, than on research into the effectiveness and developmental appropriateness of teaching computational thinking starting at age five.²

Because Waldorf education waits until adolescence to focus on technology,³ it can seem by comparison to leave children less prepared. But precisely the opposite is true. Success in a time of social upheaval and rapid change depends more on capacities for imagination, creativity, flexibility, artistry, and a love of learning than on early development of abstract, logical, and analytical approaches to thinking or of specific technical skills.

In a world where technology fosters frequent interaction between disparate cultures, people need social and multilingual communication skills. The apparent anonymity of the internet, combined with how

it enables governments and corporations to track our activities, demands a strong sense of morality and good judgment. And the passivity that can arise from meeting the world increasingly through a screen must be countered by a passion for real experiences and the courage to take action.

In Waldorf kindergartens, play builds imagination, creativity, and empathy for others. Art, languages, drama, and practical work in the elementary grades develop not only those skills but also moral and aesthetic senses. High school weaves judgment and volition into college or vocational preparation. Waldorf education is already working to prepare children to have the resilience and resourcefulness necessary to prosper in a culture that is growing more intertwined with technology.

Consider instead a question that is rarely asked: What is the harm in introducing computational thinking before adolescence? Education research typically works by testing a new technique on a group of children and measuring for improvement in performance. It is much harder to determine what might have been lost in exchange for this gain.

One obvious loss occurs when new material displaces existing activities. We know children are more flexible for acquiring skills in music, art, movement, and languages prior to adolescence. Diminishing these activities reduces the opportunity to make the most of the pre-adolescent period of development.

Some will argue that learning the use of technology is more important. For example, the Common Core State Standards recommend that handwriting be replaced with keyboarding after first grade. But we do not know the broader effects of reducing the time spent developing those fine motor skills. And what happens when we replace the individuation that a child experiences in creating a personal writing style with the uniformity of always seeing his or her words appear in a standard computer font?

A question even more difficult to assess asks whether training children to think rationally at an early age introduces other deficits to their development. What

1. Portions of this article have been previously published by *Renewal*; we are grateful to *Renewal's* editor and to the author for allowing us to publish a combined version of these previous publications.

2. Computational thinking is a problem-solving process that includes (but is not limited to) the following characteristics:

- Formulating problems in a way that enables us to use a computer and other tools to help solve them
- Logically organizing and analyzing data
- Representing data through abstractions such as models and simulations
- Automating solutions through algorithmic thinking (a series of ordered steps)
- Identifying, analyzing, and implementing possible solutions with the goal of achieving the most efficient and effective combination of steps and resources
- Generalizing and transferring this problem-solving process to a wide variety of problems

3. In this article, when the word "technology" is used by itself, it refers to technology in a broad sense, such as cars, TVs, drones, phones, refrigerators, energy production, genetic engineering, etc.; the term "digital technology" is used to refer to computers, tablets, phones, the internet, or anything else that manipulates digitized information.

subtle changes in psychology might result? In the collection of lectures titled *A Modern Art of Education*, Rudolf Steiner offers an example:

When we train children intellectually before the age of four or five, they take something terrible into life: materialism. The more we raise children intellectually at such an early age, the more we create materialists for later life.⁴

By this, he means that they become less inclined to place a high value on immaterial aspects of life, such as ideals or the human spirit.

Steiner also claims that waiting to introduce intellectual thinking until a later stage of development is actually more effective:

Although it is necessary, especially today, for people to be completely awake in later life, it is equally necessary to let children live in their gentle dreamy experiences as long as possible ... if you allow the organism to be strengthened without intellectualism, children will move into the necessary intellectualism in the proper way.⁵

Steiner goes on to say that forcing young children to use intellectual thought too soon is like giving them an inner beating. It can engender resistance to taking it up in later studies. No student should arrive in high school with a preformed self-image that “I’m bad in math and science.” But that is often what we see resulting from well-intentioned efforts to teach those subjects to young children in an intellectual manner.

Regarding children in ages nine through twelve, Steiner says:

Nothing is more harmful to children than definitions and sharply contoured ideas, because they lack the quality of growth. ... A child must be given flexible concepts—ideas whose form constantly changes as they mature.⁶

The problem Steiner identifies in teaching elementary age students in terms of facts, data, and set processes is that they learn rigidity in their thinking and come to desire simple answers, rather than gain confidence in working flexibly with living and evolving concepts.

Expressing a view similar to what the well-known pioneer in the field of child development, Jean Piaget (1896–1980), described in his formal operational stage, Steiner says that, “before the age of twelve, children do not understand cause and effect” but that “through coercion,” they can be forced to “take it in.” He says that the effect of such premature instruction is like “swallowing a stone.”⁷ Needless to say, computational (algorithmic) thinking is largely based on cause and effect.

Empirical evaluation of the pros and cons of early vs. delayed instruction in computational thinking is nearly impossible. It would require a long-term study on a large population of students with a carefully designed assessment. Parents and teachers do not want to wait the decades such a study would take. There is a sense of crisis that demands immediate action. The easy fix that was opted for is to start requiring computer use in kindergarten, as recommended by the Common Core.

However, Waldorf education has nearly a century of experience with teaching children in a manner that accounts for their development. That’s a long-term experiment we can analyze in retrospect. The most recent survey undertaken by the Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE) of Waldorf high school graduates is documented in the survey’s report, *Into the World: How Waldorf Graduates Fare After High School*, written by Ilan Safit and Douglas Gerwin (Waldorf Publications, 2020). Although the full pool of graduates surveyed includes graduates from 1990 to 2017, it separately reports statistics related to college for graduates from 2011 to 2017. The survey compared the majors studied in college by Waldorf high school graduates to those reported by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and found that Waldorf graduates are just as likely to study science and engineering (STEM) subjects as graduates of other independent schools.⁸

In the following table, taken from *Into the World*, we can further compare these findings to the majors for all college graduates in 2011 to 2017 as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES),⁹ where we see that Waldorf and NAIS students go into STEM fields at more than an eleven percent higher rate than the national average. Clearly, a curriculum that delays rigorous, intellectual science education until high school has not deterred graduates from pursuing such careers. Indeed, it seems to have had just the opposite effect.

4 Rudolf Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2004), 103.

5 Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education*, 131.

6 Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education*, 151.

7 Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education*, 158.

8 Ilan Safit and Douglas Gerwin, *Into the World: How Waldorf Graduates Fare After High School* (Hudson, NY: Waldorf Publications at the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, 2020), 32.

College Majors 2011 – 2017	RIWE Report		NCES
	Waldorf	NAIS	All Graduates
Arts and Humanities	28.0%	19.2%	17.8%
Social and Behavioral Sciences	23.5%	22.6%	16.5%
STEM: Natural Science, Engineering, Math	22.2%	23.0%	18.1%
Total Sciences (above two rows)	45.7%	45.6%	34.6%
Business and Accounting	4.6%	10.3%	21.3%
Health Related	6.8%	5.2%	10.9%
Education	3.3%	2.3%	5.1%
Other	8.0%	14.7%	10.4%

My personal experience with teaching computer science in a Waldorf high school since 2002 tells me that our students are more than able to learn binary arithmetic, digital logic, and programming. Although many of these students later major in college subjects other than computer science, a surprising number pick up software and web development skills along the way and are quite fluent with technology. This anecdotal experience is further supported by the RIWE study, which found that 5% of Waldorf graduates are working in computer science related jobs,⁹ and compares favorably with the NCES statistic of 3.1% for graduates in general.¹⁰

Because many Waldorf schools end in eighth grade, however, it is easy to perceive Waldorf education as being opposed to computers. Again, that is far from the truth. Steiner was very insistent that, once children enter adolescence, Waldorf curricula should focus on technology:

People are surrounded by inventions of the human mind, but have no contact at all with them. It is the beginning of an antisocial life simply to accept inventions of the human mind without at least understanding them in a general way... When children are fourteen or

fifteen years of age, we must focus our energy on connecting children with the inventions of the human mind. This helps them understand and find their place in society.¹¹

Prior to that age, students should be working on developing their other capacities so they can approach technology from a strong foundation. Steiner explains, “The main thing is to enable young adults to find their place in the world with real confidence in their own powers of discernment. Thus, they will sense their real humanity, because their education has been completely human.”¹²

If students enter adolescence with a strong sense of self, they are better prepared to study digital technology objectively. It can then be approached as a tool, like any other, with capabilities and limitations that can be understood. With discernment, it is possible to see through the hyperbole that often surrounds new technologies to grasp the reality of their effects.

Does this mean that children should be kept in a bubble with respect to computer technology until they are teens? Of course not. Waldorf education at all ages must work with the real world, and computers are a significant part of modern reality. High school is merely the stage in which it is most effective to focus directly on what computers are, how they work, why they behave as they do, and their effects on humanity.

9 Safit and Gerwin, *Into the World*, Table 4.12, p. 48.
10 National Center for Education Statistics, 2018 Tables and Figures, Table 322.10: *Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by field of study: Selected years, 1970- 71 through 2016-17 (2011 - 2017 subset)*. Online: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_322.10.asp (retrieved 2/23/2020).

11 Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education*, 158.
12 Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education*, 190.

In a lecture about children in the first four grades Steiner writes:¹³

There is no desire on our part to deride technical innovations, but we should be able to keep our eyes open to what they do to us, and we should find ways to compensate for any harmful effects. Such matters are especially important to teachers, because they have to relate education to ordinary life. What we do at school and with children is not the only thing that matters. The most important thing is that school and everything related to education must relate to life in the fullest sense. This implies that those who choose to be educators must be familiar with events in the larger world; they must know and recognize life in its widest context.

Thus, Steiner calls upon elementary school teachers to be completely familiar with the technology of their times. But notice that he doesn't say they must bring technology into the classroom. Later in that same lecture, he says:

With the change of teeth children enter a new relationship to the world. As the life of their own soul gradually emerges, which they now experience in its own right, they must first meet the world supported through an experience of authority. At this stage, educators represent the larger world, and children have to meet it through the eyes of their teachers.

It is not that the children should be immersed in technology, but that the teachers should be, so they can bring it to the children with appropriate compensation for their stage of development. But what does that mean? Steiner tells us that the teachers must understand the technology of their time so they can give the children the necessary strength of will and moral clarity to work with it in freedom, rather than becoming enslaved or addicted to it.

For the Waldorf movement, then, it is imperative in each era to ensure that teachers are fully cognizant

of the challenges that the dominant technologies will present to the children as they grow up. Out of that knowledge, the faculty must reflect on the curriculum and change it as needed so it ensures that children can meet those challenges while remaining fully human. For example, with respect to digital technology, teachers should understand what it is at a fundamental level, the essentials of how it works, why it manifests as it does in our lives, and how it can affect us psychologically and as a society.

In the elementary years, children look to the teacher as an authority who brings the world into the classroom. Many parents also look to the teacher for guidance with respect to computer use. For these reasons, teachers should be as knowledgeable regarding digital technology and social media as they are about other subjects.

Today's children will face modern challenges such as cyberbullying, internet addiction, violations of privacy, online fraud, and many others. Awareness of how personal interactions and experiences of the world are shifting to virtual forms can shape a teacher's efforts to guide social situations and create community.

In the early grades, the choices of fairy tales and fables may shift to offer examples of characters who are faced with moral choices more akin to what arises from online communication, where one's words can take on a life of their own beyond what was intended, and where people may not be who they seem. Recognizing

the sensory bias that may arise from using flat screens with a limited color palette that is always luminous, teachers may have to make a conscious decision to incorporate more experiences with sculpture, a richer range of color work, and more encounters with color and form in the world of nature.

In upper grades, teachers may rethink their choices of class

plays to let children explore feelings of isolation, or having lies spread about them in social networks. In the study of modern history, students may research biographies of people who influenced the rise of technology and the moral arcs of these historical figures. Or they may look at social changes that have happened since the development of the internet.

Faculty may also want to explore appropriate ways of introducing technology in the upper grades. For example,

Clearly, a curriculum that delays rigorous, intellectual science education until high school has not deterred graduates from pursuing such careers. Indeed, it seems to have had just the opposite effect.

13 Rudolf Steiner, "Children From the Seventh to the Tenth Year," GA 303, S-4708, appears as Chapter 9, in *Soul Economy: Body, Soul, and Spirit in Waldorf Education* (Anthroposophic Press, 2003).

using cell phone cameras to intensively explore the qualities and creation of beautifully composed, artistic images, as an antidote to the egotism of selfies and compulsive posting on social media. Another possibility calls for putting more emphasis on learning to dress a loom to weave an intricate pattern, because it involves the kind of problem solving used in programming. If no programming is taught at the school, a course offering may include a class for programming robots using one of the graphical blocks languages, since the concrete actions of a robot in three-dimension space are more directly relatable to such a program than the screen displays produced by a textual program. Team projects may grow in importance to foster greater collaborative social skills.

These examples should not be taken as recommendations. They are merely meant to illustrate what could result from faculty in the elementary grades taking up the study of technology of our era and working out of an anthroposophical understanding of the human being to develop their work in response. It should be remembered that Steiner was well aware of how technology would shape civilization, and thus the Waldorf curriculum was designed to support children toward freedom in that context. Therefore, much of the study may simply serve to bring existing curricular wisdom into awareness with respect to the modern context, enabling teachers to hold it more appropriately. Waldorf teachers know that it is not the content of a fable, but how the teacher imagines it within, that most deeply affects the second grader. Such study also enables teachers to explain the relevance of the curriculum to parents and visitors.

With respect to younger children, in the same lecture series cited above,¹⁴ Steiner tells us:

Children take in all that we do, such as the ways that we act or move. They are equally susceptible to our feelings and thoughts. They imitate us, and even if this is not outwardly noticeable, they nevertheless do this by developing tendencies for imitation that, through their organic soul forces, they press down into the physical organism. Therefore, education during these first two and a half years should be confined to the self-education of the adults

in charge, who should think, feel, and act in a way that, when perceived by children, will cause them no harm. Fundamentally, the stage of imitation continues until the change of teeth, and thus children will be strongly influenced by their environment later on as well.

Combined with the need for Waldorf teachers to fully embrace the real world, Steiner is implying that young children know how an early childhood teacher feels with respect to the technologies that surround them. A child will take in those feelings at a deep level that has ramifications for later life.

It is thus important for the teacher to be able to stand before the child as an example of a human being who masters technology. That does not mean just being a competent user. Again, the teacher should grasp the underlying nature of the technology to have clarity regarding its effects. Of greater importance, however, is contemplative work that enables the teachers to meet the technology on a daily basis in a manner that actually reinforces their inner humanity.

As early childhood teachers know, in kindergarten, children are naturally imitative of the adults around them. They learn fundamental lessons about computers from observing how we interact with them. Children know that adults sometimes need to

use cell phones or computers. They should see how we decide when that is appropriate and understand what we use them for.

For example, they might be aware that the kindergarten teacher always turns off her phone before the students arrive because she wants to be wholly attentive to them. But one day, she might say, "Children, I need to keep my phone on because my daughter is about to have a baby, and I don't want to miss that call." The children will then understand that the teacher has consciously made this choice for an important reason.

On the other hand, seeing people spending large amounts of time interacting silently with a screen while ignoring others around them tells young children that this is a socially acceptable behavior. Hearing adults express a lack of understanding of technology also makes it seem impossible to grasp. However, if teachers and parents model mastery and understanding of these devices, then children will develop a sense that human beings control the technological devices rather than

Waldorf education
at all ages must work
with the real world,
and computers are
a significant part of
modern reality.

14 Rudolf Steiner, "Children Before the Seventh Year," GA 303, S-4706, appears as Chapter 7, in *Soul Economy: Body, Soul, and Spirit in Waldorf Education* (Anthroposophic Press, 2003).

being controlled by them. Helping parents to develop awareness of how they use technology around their young children, and sharing contemplative practices for coping with technology becomes another aspect of the work of the teacher.

When a Waldorf school extends into the high school years, technology education can, of course, be more direct. Even then, it is still essential that elementary and early childhood teachers, and high school teachers in other disciplines, understand how their role in preparing young human beings for life in a technological world was set out by Steiner as an essential aspect of Waldorf education. Teachers should appreciate how there are necessary deeds in this regard, at every stage of development.

There is so much to be done in the preschool, elementary, and middle school years to help children prepare to enter a world of ubiquitous digital technology. Learning computational thinking can wait for the developmental stage in which abstraction and symbolic reasoning come naturally.

Does Waldorf education really need to change? Absolutely. A living form of education must continually evolve. But as Steiner so often indicated, the approach begins with inner work. Teachers owe it to the children to educate themselves about this aspect of the world, take it into their meditative lives, discuss it with colleagues and parents, and then bring it intentionally to their teaching in the context of each developmental stage. For Waldorf education to be relevant to the 21st century in a spiritual sense, we need to work together, help each other to gain the necessary knowledge and find the intuitive insights to guide our work.

Parents can join in this effort by deepening their understanding and reflecting on their own relationships to technology, and by engaging each other and the teachers in conversations about what they hope their children will come to value most as they grow up and become computer users.

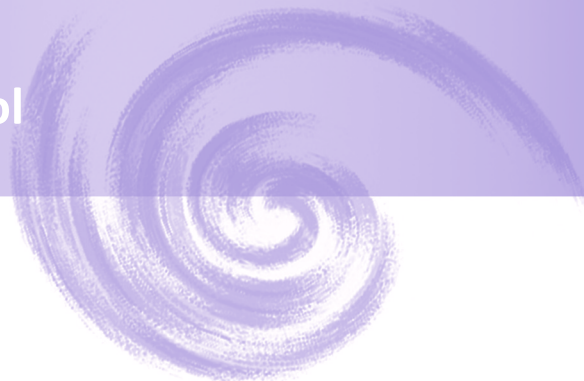
Steiner identifies the deeper goal of this education, saying, “The real aim of Waldorf schools is to raise free human beings who can direct their own lives.”¹⁵

The question is not when computer education should happen. It already begins shortly after birth, and will inevitably occur as children encounter the world. The question is how we will shape their education to enable them to work with technology in freedom.

Charles Weems, PhD. *Charles (Chip) Weems holds a PhD in computer science. He is a founding teacher at Hartsbrook High School, where he has taught earth science, computer science, and photography for 18 years. During that time, he created a developmentally-based, four-year high school computer science curriculum, which was published in *Renewal and the Research Bulletin*. He is currently advising multiple schools on its implementation. At the AWSNA national conference, he has given workshops on teaching computer science, overcoming genius in the internet age, and the spirit of photography. He is a member of the Association for Computing Machinery, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Anthroposophical Society, and the Pedagogical Section. He has co-authored 28 introductory computer science textbooks, has over 40 years of university teaching experience, and is a professor of computer science at U. Mass Amherst, where he also received the University Distinguished Teaching Award.*

¹⁵ Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education*, 191.

Technology and Middle School



Betty Staley

The following chapter is taken from Betty Staley's recent book, Tending the Spark: Lighting the Future for the Middle School Student, published by Waldorf Publications (2019). We are grateful to the author for her permission to reprint this chapter.

Technology has always been present in people's lives. Whenever knowledge is put into practical use to solve problems or invent useful tools, we rely on technology. With the industrial revolution, technology incorporated machines, while in the digital age technology includes devices which connect to the internet and can be used to access information to solve problems. While technology has always been used by adults, digital technology has now been exerting a powerful force in children's and adolescents' lives.

Everywhere one goes the scene is the same. Children, teenagers, and adults are looking down at their phones. One person commented that it looks as if they are playing cards in which each is looking at his own deck. But, no, no one is looking at another. Each young person is in an isolated world connected through the device. Children's recreational use of screens and smartphones is now the dominant activity in their lives. Each of us has our own experience with the smart phone and can cite examples of its use for good as well as for its dangers. As we consider the use by middle-school children, it becomes necessary to realize that this is a habit that, once developed, is difficult to break.

There are no rules for middle schoolers on how to behave in this new social media landscape, no guides for how to respond to the way others are behaving. "They were social media pioneers, but it was as if they were commanding their covered wagons without any maps or sextants."¹

Every writer considers certain questions essential for communication — who, what, where, when, how, and why. What is the impact of technology on middle-schoolers? In previous decades, movies and television were our concern both as parents and teachers. Who was in control, what was the content, where was it

being experienced, at what or how many hours? How was it affecting neurological development? Why was it being used in the first place? Parents were in control since they usually controlled what movies were seen or there was one television in the house and it was where parents could control its use. Over time that changed, additional televisions were added in other rooms, the ability to record programs for later use, the advent of VHS copies of movies all gave parents more freedom and more control. However, the bottom line was that it depended on where the machine was located.

In the past, I characterized television as a stranger who enters the house and competes with parents, bringing in different values and influences. When children were young, they imitated those around them unconsciously, but middle-schoolers imitate teenagers and chosen adults. The impact of television is mild compared to what the computer has brought into the home.

The questions shifted. Who is in control? Parents no longer have complete control over content although they can put limits on it. Middle-schoolers have more freedom in deciding what they want to access, as well as when and where. The smart phone, tablet or laptop can be carried to other places outside the home, and the smart phones can be used anywhere there is a *WIFI* connection. When middle-schoolers have their smart phones or computers in their bedrooms, they have control of their use away from their parents. They can justify its use for communication, information, and entertainment, but they do not have the capacity to understand how much is enough. Most of all, they do not consider the effects on their neurological development when the dangerous tendency of addiction set in.

Television was mostly passive viewing. What the computer and smart phone offer which television did not is interaction with others. Being able to connect with others either near or far away in a video game is very exciting, it stimulates competition and collaboration. Some video games provide what games have always

¹ Nancy Jo Sales, *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenager*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016), p. 371.

provided – working in teams or solo to reach a goal which can be used for social or anti-social purposes or to compete or win over others. The process includes strategizing the steps in the game and experiencing anticipation and excitement. The problem with video games for middle-schoolers is how we answer the key questions – What is the content? What is the purpose? Who is in control? When is it being played? How is it affecting neurological development?

While children have always been tempted to do what parents forbade, from hiding sexy magazines in their rooms, hiding them under the mattresses, to imitating the beauty, bodily gestures, and sexy poses of movie stars or body builders, parents today have little or no access to what is flooding the minds of their eleven and twelve-year-olds through digital devices. In addition, the world of *YouTube* opens up a secret candy store of information streaming into the mind of the child without any adult guidance, pouring in distorted images of pornography, violence, and commercialization. It also offers access to information on how to build, create, and make things in an accessible and timely way.

While middle-school boys tend to use technology for video gaming to enjoy the competitive and aggressive experience of power over others, girls tend to use technology for social media to connect with others, to satisfy their desire to be included, liked, appreciated, admired, become famous, or look like a celebrity.

The monster in the media is the prevalence of pornography, which has become a shadow overlaying the understanding and experience of sexuality. It has colored many boys' images of sexual relations, infused their comments in texting and the way they speak about girls and speak to them, and is influencing how they act with girls. Under the influence of these images and messages, boys consider their own and others' bodies as objects purely for their own satisfaction. Pornography has snuck in to the images of how girls regard their own bodies, how they dress and portray themselves on social media by modeling themselves after celebrities who are actually porn stars.

Kaiser Family Foundation research indicates that children 8-18 years old spend an astounding 5 ½ hours every day indulging in various entertainment screen technologies including video games, social networks, online videos, and TV. High school aged students spend an additional 2 ½ hours each day texting and talking on their phone – more time than attending school. We need to be concerned and attentive.

Middle-school children are likely targets of overuse of all this entertainment technology. At this crucial time in their development, they are affected in four areas: family life; social life; school; and their brain development. I will deal with technology in school in a separate chapter.

Family Life

Face-to-face communication and relationships are essential for healthy development.

Much of what is conveyed between parent and teen is nonverbal – through facial expressions, eye contact, hugs, and tone of voice. The human mind is specially attuned to these unspoken cues. They trigger dopamine, oxytocin, and other 'feel-good' brain chemicals that foster and maintain attachment, including the one between parents and teens.²

Attachment to parents is one of the most significant experiences in child development. Playing online games decreases total time with family. Using technology for homework and research is not the big issue. The issue is that children need parental involvement to develop executive function.

Kids with healthy parent attachment regulate their emotions better, score higher intellectually and academically, and have higher self-esteem than kids without a healthy bond. Attachment remains vital into the teen years.³

Parents are very busy and have less time to supervise their children. They are overwhelmed by companies persistently advertising that all the use of digital technology is normal and poses little risk of addiction. The reality is that children are wired, and parents themselves are caught up in constant use of the smartphone or internet. Science is beginning to describe the problems that the overuse of technology is causing in children's development.

On average, parents are on screens 6 ½ hours a day between television, computer, mobile phones, and other screen time. The result is that individuals in the family are going their own way with little time for communicating, problem solving, planning, or enjoying doing things together. They may be in the same room, but their minds are elsewhere.

2 Richard Freed, *Wired Child: Reclaiming Childhood in a Digital Age* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2015), p.170.

3 Freed, *Wired Child*, p. 20.

Lynn & Johnson in *Breaking the Trance*⁴ claim that parents are also in a trance which includes all the ideas and beliefs they have swallowed about what it means to be a good parent, including such thoughts as “This is the way it is now.” “My kids should like me.” “I can’t make my kids do anything they don’t want to.” Parents are now called to create a new set of “beliefs,” including their own commitment to relationships with people rather than with virtual ones. Facing the challenges technology presents, recognizing that strict parents can also be loving parents, and changing children’s behavior through clear boundaries and expectations, is the task of good parenting.

However, regular video game use works like a drug, causing dopamine, a powerful reward-based neurotransmitter, into the brain. Each time a boy plays an electronic game, he feels pleasure and wants to play it more. As time goes on he needs to play more often to get the same amount of pleasure. Meanwhile, nothing else he could do will give him that rush of pleasure, so why even try? He will defend the use of the video game with all of his middle-school self-righteousness.

Dr. Sax quotes Prof. Anderson’s recommendation that the parent play the video game or watch it being played.⁵ He suggests questions for the parent to ask, such as

1. Does the game involve some characters trying to harm others?
2. Does this happen frequently, more than once or twice in 30 minutes?
3. Is the harm done in a game rewarded in any way?
4. Is the harm portrayed as humorous?
5. Are nonviolent solutions absent or less “fun” than the violent ones?
6. Are realistic consequences of violence absent from the game?

A common family situation is finding the middle-schooler closed up in his or her room, lost in the haze of the screen. Parents don’t know what is being experienced, who the contacts are, how much time

should be allowed for this, or what this isolation is doing to family life.

What can parents do?

1. Know what your children are watching. Look at some of it with them. Put limits on what they can connect with.
2. Set times in the family when no one is on a screen. This includes family meals and family discussions.
3. Limit access to computers by having them in a common area where parents can see what is being accessed. Keep the smart phone out of the bedroom during sleep.
4. Work together with other parents in your school or neighborhood. Join parent action groups such as the “Wait Until 8th pledge” before letting children have smart phones. If parents need to have immediate contact with their children for safety reasons or other serious concerns, they can have a basic phone that calls and texts.
5. Guide middle-schoolers to participate in outdoor activities, reading, participating in family activities, following a hobby or particular interest that does not rely on screen use. Don’t wait until the children are in middle-school, begin earlier to support these interests.
6. Look at your own use of technology. Are you present with your child or are you also constantly distracted by the phone or screen?

Freed quotes Sherry Turkle who found in her research that, “Children often named the same three examples of being emotionally hurt and not wanting to show it when their parent was using a device rather than paying attention to them: at meals, during pickup either after school or after an extracurricular activity, or during sporting events.”⁶

Because texting makes it possible for children to contact their parents quickly and often, middle-schoolers may put off solving their problems by themselves. Instead, there is a constant flow between parent and child so that middle-schoolers can immediately share problems and get a quick fix. Parents often regard this constant interaction as a proof that their child loves

4 George T. Lynn and Cynthia C. Johnson, *Breaking the Trance: A Practical Guide for Parenting the Screen-Dependent Child* (Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery Press, 2016).

5 Leonard Sax, *The Collapse of Parenting* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

6 Quoted by Freed, *Wired Child*, p. 25. Sherry Turkle, *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), p. 267.

and relies on them. But this poses the question, how much should the middle-schooler face issues and try to figure out what to do without relying on their parents for solutions? How much help is too much? Middle-schoolers need time to reflect on what is happening, time to discuss situations, and opportunities to experience support. Reacting immediately often short-circuits conversations in which the youngster can figure out ways to reply to a situation. Is there something being lost here?

Melinda Gates, who has spent her career in technology, writes:

Still, as a mother who wants to make sure her children are safe and happy, I worry. And I think back to how I might have done things differently. Parents should decide for themselves what works for their family, but I probably would have waited longer before putting a computer in my children's pockets. Phones and apps aren't good or bad by themselves, but for adolescents who don't yet have the emotional tools to navigate life's complications and confusions, they can exacerbate the difficulties of growing up: learning how to be kind, coping with feelings of exclusion, taking advantage of freedom while exercising self-control. It's more important than ever to teach empathy from the very beginning, because our kids are going to need it.⁷

Family life forms the foundation of a child's life. What is missing cannot easily be made up.

Friends and Social Life

*"The social world of middle-school is incredibly important to a child's development and should be treated with respect."*⁸

The way the middle-schoolers think about themselves sets the foundation for what they will think in high school. Their views can be fixed and even stuck.

Peers are everything – what do they say, wear, listen to, watch, and eat? Because middle-schoolers are separating from their parents as a way to develop their own identity, the authority of their friends takes the place of their parents, at least for a while.

Middle-school students are developing their social networks. As they become aware of themselves within a social group, they are extremely vulnerable to what people say or think about them. They do not yet have the self-confidence to recognize that you can't please everyone. When a friend comments about them on social media, they take it literally and hard.

Part of the vulnerability of this age group is that they are all affected by what comes at them. They take comments which are casually or thoughtlessly made to be the truth. So much of what they are awakening to is the complexity of group behavior. They struggle to know what it takes to be liked, to be popular, to be accepted. If they hear that you have to do certain things to be popular, they will believe that and do their best to conform. Their sense of self is frail, just beginning to come to birth, and they need time, support, and human connections as they make their way along the path of development.

Networking or texting is the primary use of smart phones. Middle-school students are vulnerable to social connections, both longing to be accepted and feeling left out. The ways in which smartphones affect social popularity places a heavy burden on early adolescents. They use internet platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, etc. as a way of measuring how others see them. How many "likes" does their picture receive? Are they seeing photos of a party they were not invited to attend? They don't understand the consequences of what they say publicly, even though they are saying something hurtful about a classmate. They lack judgment about the consequences of their actions. Because their emotions are leading them, they respond erratically in social situations.

Betty Staley, MA, director of Waldorf High School Teacher Education and founding member of Rudolf Steiner College, has been a Waldorf teacher for over 40 years, ranging from early childhood through elementary to the high school grades. She is founder of the Sacramento Waldorf High School, where she has taught English and history for over 25 years. A specialist in adolescent development, her publications include *Between Form and Freedom: A Practical Guide to the Teenage Years*; *Tapestries: Weaving Life's Journey*; *Soul Weaving*; *Hear the Voice of the Griot: A Celebration of African Geography, History, and Culture*; *Adolescence: The Sacred Passage*, and most recently, *Splinters of the Sun: Teaching Russian Literature to High School Students*. She is a member of the Pedagogical Section Council.

⁷ On Parenting Perspective, Melinda Gates, August 24, Courtesy of the Gates Archive.

⁸ Michelle Icard, *Middle School Makeover: Improving the Way You and Your Child Experience the Middle School Years* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

Report from the Online Waldorf Library

Marianne Alsop

OWL site Administrator
www.waldorflibrary.org

The Online Waldorf Library continues to be a positive and effective resource for those interested in Waldorf Education in countries all over the world. With the outbreak of Covid-19, and with many school communities experiencing self-isolation, the OWL has become a sought-after resource for Waldorf elementary and high school home school curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact us through the “Contact Us” page with your questions.

We are fortunate to be able to offer an ever-expanding number of eBooks, available in pdf format and easily read on Adobe Reader, a software available for free online.

eBooks added since the Fall of 2019, in English, include:

- *The Four Temperaments* by Hellmut Eller
- *Painting at School* by Dick Bruin and Attie Lichthart
- *A Phenomena Based Physics, Volume 3 for Grade 8* by Manfred von Mackensen
- *A Phenomena Based Physics, Volume 2 for Grade 7* by Manfred von Mackensen
- *The Invisible Boat and the Molten Dragon* by Eric G. Muller
- *Helping Children on Their Way: Educational Support for the Classroom* compiled by Elizabeth Auer
- *Flor and Blanchefleur, a Play* by Michael Hedley Burton
- *Cassandra, a Play* by Michael Hedley Burton
- *King Oedipus Had a Daughter, a Play* by Michael Hedley Burton
- *Three Plays for Twelfth Grade* by Michael Hedley Burton

eBooks added in Spanish include:

- *Aprendizaje cinestésico para adolescentes: Aprendiendo a través del movimiento y la eurytmia* by Leonore Russell
- *Crisis en el Kinder: Porqué los niños necesitan jugar en la escuela*, Alliance for Childhood
- *Ante el dilema de la pantalla: Los niños pequeños, la tecnología y la educación temprana*, Alliance for Childhood
- *Lecciones de Matemáticas Para Primaria* by Dorothy Harrer
- *Introducción al Estudio de los Astros* by C.R. Mirbt
- *Una Exploración Acerca del Destino del Movimiento Waldorf* by Frans Lutters
- *Rectitud, Peso Y Equilibrio La Biología Humana en el Octavo Grado* by Manfred von Mackensen, Claudia Allgöwer and Andreas Bielfeld-Ackermann
- *Formación de centros educativos: La renovación del Organismo Social* by Matthias Karutz

New articles in Spanish and English are posted every month and can be accessed from the Waldorf Library homepage and clicking on *Artículos en Español* and on *Articles*.

In 2019 the OWL received over 190,000 site visits from 195 different countries. Visitors from the United States, the United Kingdom, India, and Canada predominate followed by Mexico, Spain, Argentina, Chile, and New Zealand. Samoa, Lesotho, Equatorial Guinea, and Djibouti each had just one site visit!

As always, back issues of the *Research Bulletin*, *Gateways* (Waldorf Early Childhood Assn.), *Pedagogical Section/Rundbrief* and a number of other international publications are available online in our *Journals* section. The Online Waldorf Library welcomes your questions and we are happy to help with you with your research projects.

Report from the Research Institute for Waldorf Education and Waldorf Publications

Patrice Maynard

Director of Publications and Development

With the book *Into the World: How Waldorf Graduates Fare After High School* printed and out into the world itself, the Research Institute (RIWE) is well on its way toward its next project – namely a survey of Waldorf parents. This new study seeks to go deeper than standard parent questionnaires that ask, “How pleased are you with the education of your child?” Beyond this legitimate yet somewhat self-serving question, we also want to investigate how the principles underlying Waldorf education alter actual parenting practices in the home and in the general community.

Over the decades of Waldorf education, parents have expressed relief that, through participation in a Waldorf school’s environment, they have learned ways of parenting not readily available in mainstream culture. Our hope is to identify this deeper transformation in parenting that may be the unintended consequence of parents enrolling their children in Waldorf schools. Other information on the wider impact of Waldorf education from the perspective of parents will also be gleaned, of course. Our research will follow the good path laid down by the work of RIWE’s latest survey of Waldorf high school graduates.

Ultimately, the possibility exists that with the data included in the book *Into the World* and the responses from parents in this upcoming survey, RIWE will be able to paint a broad picture of a remarkable view of rearing children—parenting as an inner path of personal development—and inspire a transformation of the way human development, human capacities, and education altogether can be practiced. What a balm to childhood this would be!

The light that the Waldorf approach throws on how to welcome children into the world is becoming visible to an increasing number of people. Celebrating the mighty cycle of the seasons, carefully calling young people to a love of learning, and getting them to participate in daily artistic work, to feel necessary to the world, and to discern truths beyond the obvious — all of these considerations speak to a radically different way of looking at children, education, teaching, and parenting. This approach holds the potential of health, enthusiasm,

and enhanced human capacities for the young people who experience a Waldorf education.

Beyond overseeing our research projects and co-authoring *Into the World*, RIWE’s Executive Director Douglas Gerwin continues to travel, lecture, teach students, train teachers, and participate in the work of the Teacher Education Delegates Circle and Leadership Council of AWSNA, the International Forum for Waldorf/Steiner Education, the Pedagogical Section Council, the Center for Anthroposophy, as well as the Research Institute for Waldorf Education. As RIWE’s Director of Publications and Development, Patrice Maynard curtailed her travel by a small margin this year, even before the current worldwide pandemic would have accomplished this for her. From her offices in Hudson, NY, she has overseen the publication of many remarkable books during this year of Waldorf100, including:

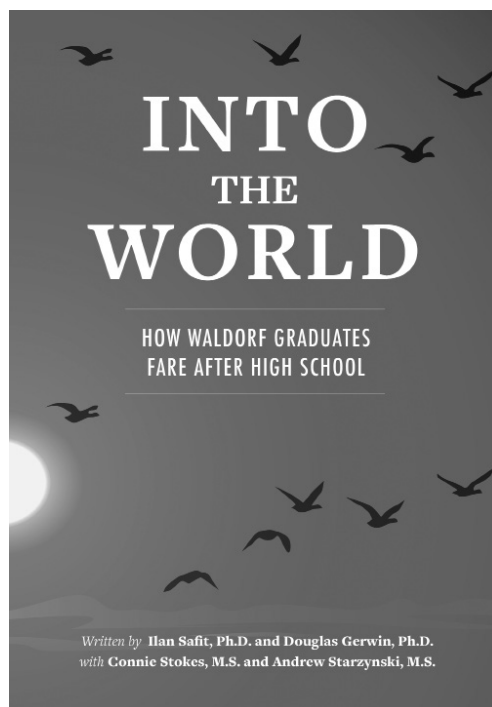
- *Growing Up Healthy in World of Digital Media*, a new collection of essays by Michaela Glöckler
- *Emil & Berta: The Origins of the Waldorf School Movement* by Sophia Christine Murphy, Emil & Berta Molt’s granddaughter
- *Bare Hand Knitting: Tool Free Knitting at its Finest* by Aleshanee Akin
- *Exploring Shapes Creatively through Pure Form Modeling* by Arthur Auer
- *The First Waldorf Teachers*, a collection of biographical vignettes by Tomáš Zdražil
- *Voyage in Song and Story* by Jeannette Resnick
- *The History of the Waldorf Movement Worldwide*, a monumental chronicle by Nana Göbel
- *Tapestry of a Waldorf Curriculum: A Teacher’s Guide to the Waldorf School by Grades (1-12) and by Subjects* by Tobias Richter, on behalf of the International Forum for Waldorf/Steiner Education

- *Immersion Learning: A Travelogue* by Frans Lutters
- *Xavier Sings the Alphabet* by Marylynn Channer

These titles illustrate the limitless variety of aspects of Waldorf education available to the general public through RIWE's Waldorf Publications.

As RIWE goes to press with this issue of the *Research Bulletin*, restrictions necessary for coping with the global pandemic are being put into effect. Never was there a more stunning way to demonstrate how we are all united as human beings. Heightened awareness is a gift, however disturbing the way in which it is bestowed.

The goal of the Research Institute and Waldorf Publications is to ground the work of Waldorf communities in realities based on living experiences and sound research of Waldorf practices. This makes resources reliable and, especially in the current situation, potentially reassuring. While extreme measures of separation are enacted in our work—as in yours—to assist the prevention of contagion, all at RIWE are holding readers and all those in Waldorf communities in mind and heart with good wishes. Strongly connected hearts cannot be separated.



The most recent title from Waldorf Publications, an in-depth study of the lives and careers of Waldorf alumni.

About the Research Institute for Waldorf Education

The Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE), founded in 1996 in order to deepen and enhance the quality of Waldorf education, engages in sustained dialogue with the wider educational-cultural community and supports research to serve a wide range of educators in their work with children and adolescents.

The Research Institute supports projects dealing with essential contemporary educational issues such as computers and the effects of media on children, alternatives to standardized testing, physical health and psychological well-being of students, science teaching with a phenomenological approach, the role of the arts in education, and the philosophical underpinnings of Waldorf education.

As a sponsor of colloquia and conferences, the Research Institute brings together educators, psychologists, physicians, and social scientists for discussions on current issues related to education. RIWE publishes a *Research Bulletin* twice a year and

prepares educational resources, including collections of eBooks and articles (a growing number of them newly translated into Spanish). Many of these publications are available without charge on the website of the Online Waldorf Library (OWL), a virtual library created and managed by the Research Institute: www.waldorflibrary.org.

In 2013 the Research Institute took over the publications arm of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and re-branded it as Waldorf Publications. It includes resources for teachers and administrators, readers and children's books, collections of plays and poetry, science materials and kits, science and math newsletters, inspirational essays, proceedings of colloquia, and a range of publicity materials about Waldorf education. It also carries books published by the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN) and the Pedagogical Section Council (PSC) of the School for Spiritual Science, as well as AWSNA's twice-yearly magazine *Renewal*.

Activities Supported by the Research Institute

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A think tank for questions of freedom in education

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC COLLOQUIA

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- Chemistry
 - Computer and Information Technology
 - English
 - Life Sciences and Environmental Studies
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Sciences
 - U.S. History
 - World History: Symptomatology

RECENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

- ActionWave Study
- Alternatives to Standardized Assessment
- Computer Technology in Waldorf Schools
- Human Sexuality Curriculum
- Survey of Waldorf Graduates
- Waldorf High School Curriculum Research Projects

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Over 2500 articles and 850 book titles

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Two issues per year of essays, articles, reviews, and commentaries on educational themes

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Presentations and discussions exploring contemporary questions related to education

RIWE WEBSITE

Collections of articles and news features on current educational issues

TEACHING SENSIBLE SCIENCE

Three one-week courses on teaching science in elementary grades using a phenomenological approach

WALDORF PUBLICATIONS

Over 400 book titles, plus science kits, publicity materials on Waldorf education

Research Bulletin

Ilan Safit, Editor
theresearchbulletin@gmail.com

David Mitchell, Cover design

Alice Brown, Proofreading

Maris Van de Roer, Production/layout

Research Institute for Waldorf Education

Douglas Gerwin, Executive Director

Milan Daler, Administrator
P.O. Box 307, Wilton, NH 03086
researchinstitute@earthlink.net

Patrice Maynard,
Director of Publications
and Development
351 Fairview Avenue, Suite 625,
Hudson, NY 12534
patrice@waldorf-research.org

Marianne Alsop, Librarian, Online
Waldorf Library (OWL)
www.waldorflibrary.org
mariannenalsop@gmail.com

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WALDORF PUBLICATIONS at the
RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR WALDORF EDUCATION
351 Fairview Avenue, Suite 625
Hudson, NY 12534