

**Some guidelines for developing a global Waldorf
curriculum locally: a generative approach**



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Introduction

One of the most important issues in Waldorf education today is the development of the curriculum. This applies to schools in every country. No curriculum is carved in stone for all time because the social, cultural, economic, political and ecological conditions under which children and young people grow up and develop are changing rapidly. The most obvious reason for this is the process that is referred to as globalisation. Human societies have always been in a dynamic state of change in relation to their changing natural environment (climate change being the most well-known factor) and in relation to other societies, as the tragic and on-going history of colonialism testifies. The digital revolution is well under way and is transforming the life of everyone more rapidly than any other technical innovation in world history. Thus any curriculum has to change and the Waldorf curriculum is no exception.

For many years I have worked with colleagues from around the world exploring many aspects of the Waldorf curriculum from issues of school readiness to exams in the upper school. One of my continuing passions has been the development of culturally local aspects of the curriculum, especially taking a multi-cultural perspective. My students on the International Master Programme in Stuttgart frequently want to research this and frequently ask what literature there is. My answer is that there is very little that they can access.

Another reason the question of curriculum issue is contentious is the role of mentors in many developing Waldorf schools who frequently come from Waldorf schools in Europe, the US or New Zealand and Australia, and who bring experiences from very different Waldorf traditions. Most are doing excellent work in supporting new schools. However, some of these mentors are unaware of the issues I address here in this paper and this can lead to what in my view are inappropriate curriculum transmissions. This paper is an attempt to address some core issues about developing the curriculum in Waldorf schools. It outlines a view of what a Waldorf curriculum can be, what it relates to and how it can be developed locally.

I started teaching in the York Steiner School in the UK in 1979 and have been teaching ever since. Since working on the English language version of the Waldorf curriculum (Rawson and Richter, 2000, now Avison and Rawson, 2013) I have taken a keen interest in curriculum development. I am familiar with schools in many countries in Europe, the United States, South Africa, India and South East Asia but I am aware that even this is a very limited experience. I have mentored schools and am aware of the risks of bringing my vision of Waldorf to people who ask me for help and support. I try to do this in way that is both respectful of them and their situation and self-questioning of the advice I give. This paper distils a lot of experience and is not in any way intended to be definitive or academic (I do not cite all the references). It is a personal view that has not been endorsed by any of the international bodies representing Waldorf education.

Waldorf Curriculum and pedagogy

A Waldorf curriculum is one that describes what is taught in a Waldorf school and how it is taught. It also outlines the reasons for doing this or makes reference to other sources that offer explanations. A curriculum – the word comes from the Latin word *currere* meaning to run, thus *curriculum* which referred to a running course or a career, thus implying the course or pathway that should be followed according to certain agreed rules (first used educationally in 1630 in Scottish universities). In German they speak of a *Lehrplan*- meaning a plan of what is, or should be taught. In fact, the German Waldorf curriculum is titled (translated), *The pedagogical tasks and the teaching aims of the Waldorf curriculum* (which the English

¹ This article appears on my blog at www.learningcommunitypartners.eu .

version kept close to). Pedagogy is the understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning and includes pedagogy as art, pedagogy as craft and pedagogy as science.

Pedagogy as an art focuses our attention on the developing person, on relationships, on intuitive responses to situations and pedagogical tact (the ability to understand in the moment what has to be done or what a student wants to say). It also refers to combining material in a coherent way with a specific purpose. Art moves the person in non-intellectual ways and has an effect primarily on the feeling life and activates the will. An artistic way of teaching means composing the whole in a way that engages the whole human being and is a response to the actual situation. It seeks balance between opposites and differences without neutralizing either. It is aesthetic in that it imbues what we do with meaning and edifies us. Learning in an artistic way means being creative, writing stories and poems and not just using language functionally. Looking at pedagogy of as an art, means we ask about relationships, values and meanings.

Pedagogy as science means understanding what we do and how it works through reflection on practice and systematic inquiry. It means using ideas and evidence to understand all the processes related to teaching and learning. This is also important in terms of accountability. The most important ideas we use to prepare and reflect on our practice are Steiner's ideas about the developing human being based on anthroposophy or spiritual science. He suggested that teachers should work with these ideas, contemplate them and observe how they inspire us to read situations in the classroom. The primary function of the teachers' meetings is sharing such experiences, talking about and understanding children, doing research on our practice together and developing curriculum. In order to monitor and assess what we are doing, we need to use Steiner's ideas as theory. That means using his ideas as possible as possible explanations for phenomena and as guiding ideas. As Steiner suggested, we should assess our practice regularly in terms of these guiding ideas. In this spirit, this paper offers some guiding ideas for reflecting on the curriculum.

Pedagogy as a skilled craft means understanding how to organise the teaching so that it supports learning in an effective way. It is about how I create learning spaces in my lessons for students, how they can immerse in themselves in the language, both verbally and using text. A craftsperson must know her material and tools. An educational craftsperson must know her methods and how they work. I need to know, from an anthroposophical perspective how learning functions so I can craft my lessons to support the process. Curriculum, here understood as content and method, is a set of tools belonging to pedagogy as a craft.

A generative approach

Instead of starting with an outline of what Waldorf schools usually do, which the reader can find in the existing literature, the approach in this paper uses a generative approach. It starts with some basic guiding principles that, if followed, can be used to generate practice.

Theoretically this process should arrive at most of the things that Waldorf schools usually do, such as having class teachers, having collegial school leadership, teaching certain things in certain ways. The difference is that instead of saying; this is what we do, it says these things are important so therefore they shape and inform our pedagogical practice. The fact is many things that were once taken for granted as belonging to Waldorf pedagogy are no longer practiced (such as collegial leadership).

There are doubtless many things that Waldorf schools should do and should NOT do in order to be recognised as *Waldorf*. This paper addresses a different topic. It assumes that a school is already a Waldorf school, which of course really means, striving to become a

Waldorf school - a state of being that applies even to the most well-established and well-known schools. Being Waldorf is a state of *becoming*. It has to be continuously enacted. Once achieved, it is not a permanent state because things and people change and things and people *need to change*, otherwise they are living in the past, relying on their past achievements and past reputations, which do not guarantee that the children and young people are getting the pedagogy they need here and now. A generative approach seeks to prompt teachers to ask what they are actually trying to achieve and how they could go about this.

Jennifer Gidley (2007) questioned in a paper in an academic journal, whether the name *Waldorf*, which recalls a cigarette factory, is really such an appropriate name today because it gives the impression that such schools are looking backwards trying to reproduce a model from a long-gone era. The question is important but I believe the reality is different. Most Waldorf teachers are trying to generate pedagogy in the present under totally different circumstances. Furthermore, many of them no longer feel an obligation to be faithful to a tradition or canon. They find in this education that has developed since 1919, a source of inspiration to do pedagogy today. That is a different matter. Perhaps once we have celebrated *Waldorf 100*, we can quietly drop the name internationally and move on, re-creating an education that takes the human being into account from an anthroposophical perspective enriched by other insights.

Summary

This paper addresses teachers already teaching in Waldorf schools. It assumes that you as reader are already in the process of *ongoing becoming* a Waldorf teacher in a Waldorf school and that you are interested in becoming a better Waldorf school, in the sense that the pedagogy supports the children in the ways that enable a healthy and meaningful outcome.

Some generative principles

Waldorf pedagogy is based on a way of understanding the developing human being based on anthroposophy. Arising out of this understanding are some core pedagogical principles. I formulate these as aims in the following way (other experienced Waldorf colleagues will almost certainly phrase them differently). Firstly I outline some obvious aims, then I formulate some basic preconditions for learning and development.

Waldorf pedagogy aims to:

- Support the healthy development of the person by artfully and skilfully constructing and offering learning situations that enable and support the integration of bodily growth and development, the cultivation of thinking, feeling and willing in ways that acknowledge the emergence of the spiritual dimension of each human being.
- Support and enable children and young people to become socially capable and responsible members of their communities and be able to contribute constructively to the society they are embedded in and also to be capable of living and working peacefully, respectfully and fruitfully with people of different personal, social and cultural backgrounds.
- Support and enable young people to develop the powers of critical judgement, narrative empathy (the ability to tell the story of the Other) and cosmopolitan or global citizenship.
- Support and enable young people to develop robust and durable identities.
- Support and enable people to live in sustainable relationships with the natural environment.
- Provide a school culture that enables and supports the aims outlined above.
- Enable and support teachers to develop professionally in an ongoing way.
- Encourage schools to work together to ensure that their pedagogical approach is recognised and valued publicly and not limited by state regulation. This means

actively engaging with the state education authorities and working to retain the pedagogical principles of the school.

- Encourage parents and carers to engage with and support the pedagogy.
- Enable children from all social backgrounds to attend Waldorf schools, if their parents choose this educational pathway.

When looking at such aims, which of course are ideas to strive towards, it is worth considering what the opposite might be, for example, what is the opposite of healthy learning or global citizenship?

There are preconditions for healthy learning and development that I am sure are widely applicable. These include (these apply not only to children but to all of us);

- the need all people have, to be seen, heard, recognised, accepted, valorised and valued,
- the need for people to feel physically, socially and culturally safe,
- the need for people to feel a sense of coherence based on their regular experience that the tasks they have are fundamentally comprehensible, manageable or can be done with help, and that it is personally meaningful and relevant for them to engage with what they are required to do and learn,
- people need to develop resilient learning dispositions,
- the need to base learning on tangible experience,
- the need for support to scaffold learning and developmental processes,
- the need of all people, whatever their abilities, to learn in inclusive communities with others together,
- the need to have models of learning that are meaningful for healthy human development.

We can use such conditions as criteria for assessing our practice, by for example, asking; how do I know if all students feel seen, heard, safe and valued? Do the children experience the tasks I give them as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful? Do I offer them the support and resources they need? These are questions for pedagogical assessment to take into account.

The function of curriculum

As stated above, the purpose of the curriculum is to support the healthy development of the students. It is not realistic to think that children everywhere in the world, at all times, develop in the same ways within the same timeframe. People are not machines, nor have they been genetically programmed to follow a specific developmental trajectory. It would be a naïve reading of Steiner's ideas on developmental phases and stages to believe that there are any other than very broad developmental phases that can be considered universal, such as second dentition or puberty. There is no way that children in a specific school class align with standard developmental or behavioural patterns. There is no typical class 3 child or class 9 student. We should beware using phrases like: the class 1 student *is* this or that.

According to the Swiss paediatrician Professor Remo Largo (2000, 2017), the normal developmental span at the age of 14, taking all forms of measuring development into account, covers 5 years! A 'typical' class 8 student could therefore have a developmental 'age' considerably above or below her calendar age. There is considerable evidence that human development has changed over historical time and today this varies according to factors such as nutrition, social expectations and cultural differences.

As Michael Zech (2017) put it recently, as long as we educate classes of children in year groups (i.e. whose age falls within a year), we cannot expect the children to all be at the same stage of cognitive, linguistic, emotional or bodily development. Even though they may be developmentally heterogeneous and are certainly very different as personalities, the idea of

a curriculum of developmental tasks provides a normative, coherent and consistent trajectory of learning situations. The curriculum prompts developmental processes. The notion of age-based developmental tasks (Havighurst, 1982) was originally developed to outline the kind of things that young people were expected to be able to succeed in before they could take their place in adult society. The original idea was tied to specific historical circumstances (American middle-class youth in the 1960s and 70s). Nevertheless, the idea remains useful as way of explaining the Waldorf curriculum (Götte, Loebell, & Maurer, 2016).

It is interesting that the basic assumption in Waldorf special education has been that the curriculum offers developmental tasks in the form of content and activities (Luxford 1994), has been that the Waldorf curriculum offers the learner access to a common human heritage and is structured according to a developmental sequence and that individual learners with disabilities, freed from the pressure to attain specific levels of competence, benefit from participating in the themes, narrative material and activities. For teachers in regular Waldorf schools, this may be surprising, given many of the children's disabilities. However, the pedagogical assumption behind this, broadly applies to Waldorf education in any setting. The traditional curriculum assumes a sequence of developmental tasks provided by stories, the pictorial and concrete way of introducing the letters and numbers and manual skills through handwork. Less obvious is a transition from the local environment to distant places and other aspects of nature that can only be mediated through word and image. In a book published some years ago (Clouder & Rawson, 2003), I made the case for a fundamental ecological approach, and the progression from concrete to abstract, from tangible to imaginary. I'm not sure if that is actually true, except in most general way.

Steiner was fairly explicit about the types consciousness typical to different genres of stories (fairy tales, fables, legends, myths and then historical stories) and later literature (though this is much less apparent) as a kind of recapitulation of history, and he described the psychosomatic changes before and during puberty and the need for the curriculum to respond to these changes, for example in the introduction of phenomenological approaches to science in the middle school. However, anyone following a traditional Waldorf curriculum in any given cultural context will in practice require from the children developments across a range of developmental fields, motor, emotional, cognitive, social, and linguistic. Whether these are always deliberate or not is not decisive since each school culture, with variations from teacher to teacher, gives expression to a range of expectations and assumptions.

The core point is that children will have many shared experiences through the learning situations provided by the curriculum, depending of the imagination and skill of the teacher, that offer them a sequence of developmental tasks. All the children in a class experience the same curriculum content, but how the students work with these shared experiences is tailored to individual abilities. The core principle is therefore a normative curriculum but differentiation in what the students do with this. The art and craft of pedagogy is to include them all and enable them all to learn and develop by offering differentiated tasks. The curriculum orientates the learning process and gives it direction; each subject making its own contribution. What all subjects have in common is a focus on a set of developmental challenges that Waldorf pedagogy identifies at a general level and that teachers modify to specific needs of their class in the situation they are in. This means that the curriculum shapes, influences and directs the development of the children and young people and to some extent harmonises their development by providing them with a range of age-appropriate developmental tasks. Age-appropriate means that the activity activates the child in ways that are healthy at that stage. Healthy, in this sense means salutogenic. Salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1996) is a medical principle that has been widely applied to explain the origins of resilience. Educational activities are 'healthy' if they strengthen and support the health-building processes in body and mind. Stress is obviously not a promoter of health, nor is incomprehensibility. I discuss this below.

There are other reasons why children have the same curriculum, which is an important question given that Waldorf schools are supposed to be integrative and include children with a very wide range of abilities and disabilities. It may in fact be beneficial for students of the same age to be taught the same thing at the same time because learning is and should be treated as a social activity; students learn with and from each other. It is a question of providing tasks that address the whole child and not just the intellect. The craft and art of teaching is to offer children appropriate tasks that expand their abilities whatever their level of development is.

The development of the individual, of the person, which is one of our key aims, is best served by enabling individuals to engage with the world through sharing common experiences with others, whilst being able to express their individual interests and potential. The curriculum is an idea that we orientate ourselves towards but certainly not a standard we use to measure children's achievements in terms of success and failure. We assess the process of development in a formative (process orientated) and ipsative (the individual in relation to herself) way. We do not say, this child has failed to achieve the goals of this year in this or that subject and therefore the child has to repeat the year or is labelled as having failed. It is not a ladder we have to climb, rung by rung.

The curriculum provides us with an overall framework that we orientate ourselves towards by taking the actual circumstances and the actual development of children into account. That is why pedagogy is an art, craft and science. We need to be artistic in combining the various factors and elements into a coherent whole; we need to master our teaching craft skills to balance different abilities and needs, for example, by differentiating the tasks we give children and the amount of support we offer individuals and groups- if we didn't do this, integration would be impossible. And of course we need to understand what we are doing. The curriculum is a fine-grained structure that we as Waldorf educators believe is meaningful. It has to be applied in a fine-tuned way that responds to actual settings and situations. It is not a plan that has to be followed

How does this relate to Steiner's distinction between the three seven-year phases of development? Steiner's account of the emergence of the four fundamental aspects of the human being- the physical body, the life processes, the soul and the spiritual development of individuality- provide us with a basic structure of orientation that informs the curriculum in important ways. Likewise, puberty brings about major changes in the body, which influence how young people experience themselves and the world. This changes the way young people need to learn and what they need to learn. Therefore, the curriculum offers appropriate developmental tasks. Thus this basic structure is a loose chronological process that offers broad stroke distinctions because the processes and factors involved are so complex.

Young children need- perhaps today more than ever before in history- time for the maturation of bodily (and neurological) processes upon which the development of the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing and the lifelong health of the person will depend. Therefore, Steiner mentions the important externally visible developmental marker of the change of teeth. We know however, that this is a process that spans several years. What is important is that this observable bodily process shows us something that we can't see. The formative forces at work in the child's organism need time to grow, shape and structure the bodily basis of mental development to mature before they are called upon to be applied to the intellect, which is obviously related to the maturation of the brain. Children can engage with formal learning once they can form mental images at will and when their memories become more conscious. Neither of these processes suddenly occur but are a potential that can gradually be drawn out and schooled. Broadly speaking this process takes six to seven years. Then children need to develop their inner processes of thinking and feeling by learning the important cultural techniques of literacy, numeracy and understanding the world and human

culture. The main focus of the learning process moves from the bodily basis to the soul, which is primarily concerned with making sense of experience.

A time to learn and develop

I differ from many of my colleagues who think that school readiness must be achieved before children go to school. In my view this is a misunderstanding. Developmental processes are shaped and influenced by the cultural and institutional practices we are embedded in, as well as individual factors and life circumstances. The same applies to the transition from the class teacher period to the upper school (where it is uncommon that students are held back because they are not ready for the upper school!). School has markedly different expectations of what children need to do than kindergarten does. Both are necessary.

My view is that two things have to be done; firstly, children need six years time to develop their bodies and brains. Then they have a social need to join their peers of the same age and go to school (whether they are ready or not). Secondly, the school should not assume that children are already *ready* but should help them in class one (and longer if necessary) to become ready for the new learning challenges by offering them appropriate developmental tasks (such as form drawing, learning two other languages orally, doing handwork, learning to count, having tasks that require them to practise forming mental images and to direct their attention to things when this is necessary, as it is in a classroom etc.). Children are generally less ready for school today than they were a generation ago but their social development requires them to go to school (with cultural variations from age 4 to 7). One always has to consider the top end of school, when 19 year olds are still school students, when they should really be dealing with the world as a young adult, not as a school student. Since we live in society with certain expectations of children, we should accept the social suggestion that children need to go to school at the same time as others of the same age, but that does not mean we should treat children as if they were or should be ready- because that only puts them and their teachers under pressure.

Waldorf pedagogy is all about providing time to learn and develop. But that does not mean we simply follow each child and let them learn when they want to. That would be chaotic. If I go to school, I should learn how to be in school. I might need a bit of time to do that and I certainly need a friendly, welcoming and encouraging environment so I don't feel inadequate or incompetent, but I do need to learn quickly how to be at school so that I can get on with learning. I have observed the long-term effects of waiting too long for children to be ready, and then the drama that unfolds when teachers are impatient with certain children who quickly get the feeling that they are inadequate and this feeling accompanies them throughout their school career!

Landscapes of learning

Growing up includes being socialised into the community we live in. Each community has sets of developmental spaces, or as I call them, lifescapes or landscapes of learning. The first developmental space is the body. Each child has to learn to be at home in her body, to explore and master the landscape of the body and its interactions with the world. The second is family, in which children learn the languages spoken in their family and how to form relationships in that group of people as well as a lot of practical habits such as when to sleep and when to wake, what to eat and how to do practical domestic everyday things. We have no choice in this; they are necessary things to learn. I call this the childscape.

Then the next space, in modern societies, is the institutional spaces provided by education- the learning landscape. This is obviously differentiated into early years, primary and secondary school and further and higher education. The degree of choice the individual has in terms of learning expands the higher up the institutional ladder we climb because it relates to the emergent individuality and its ability to make choices. In Waldorf early years' pedagogy,

children learn to be with others in a community of meaningful social and cultural practices. School extends the learning space into the realm of cultural learning (literacy, numeracy, art, science, crafts etc.). The learning sphere opens up into the taskscape in the upper school, in which young people get to know the world in a more practical way through experience and in the process, discover their strengths and weaknesses and make choices about what their tasks in life will be. Finally, (often after a quarter of a century or more!) education ends and the workscape starts, in which adults contribute to the economy and create childscapes for their own children.

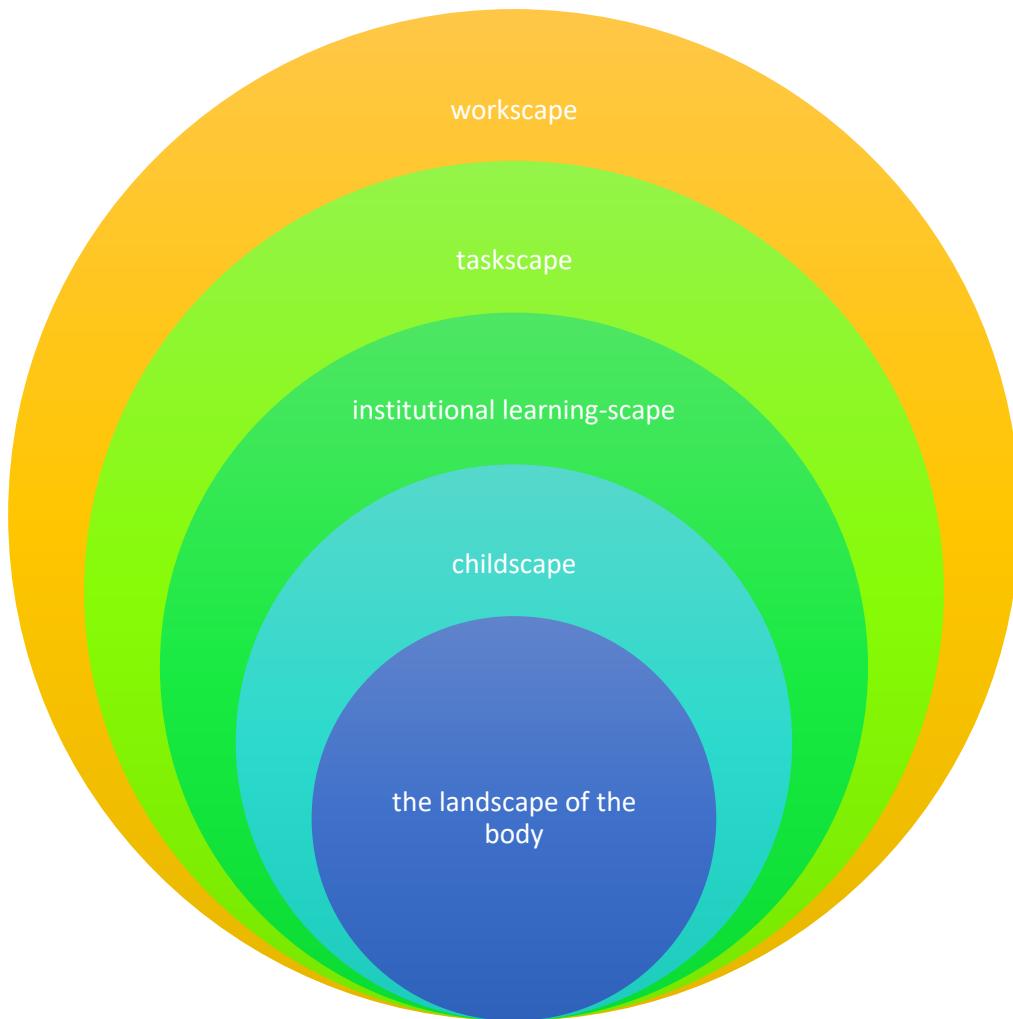


Figure 1. the sequence of lifescapes

It is good for children if the adults around them create and shape these landscapes of life and guide them until they themselves can take responsibility for their own development. The aim of education is to enable children to develop the skills and abilities they need to determine their own contribution to society. It is not our task to specify what they should become. Indeed, Steiner's radical idea was this process should be open, not prescribed and specified in detail. If that were the case, society would only reproduce itself. We do not want that because we are not satisfied that everything is as it could be. The world could be safer, more socially just, more equitable, more ecologically sustainable. We, the older generation, have obviously not achieved this, so we are dependent on the next generation to manage things in a better way. We need to trust that if young people are allowed to develop

themselves, they will develop the energy, ideas and skills needed to improve the world. That is Steiner's idea of education towards freedom. We need to trust that the young people will do what is right, if we enable them to develop. The only thing we can't do is determine what they should be becoming. Gert Biesta, the educational philosopher, talks about this as the beautiful risk of education. He points out that most education systems treat young people as if they were infants, who need everything planned and safely done for them, in a controlled and secure way. Education policies of governments increasingly seek to control everything about education from input to output- they say, in order to ensure an adequately educated workforce. Yet in many countries the learning outcomes inevitably privilege certain kinds of testable knowledge and people from certain social backgrounds and makes education into a competition with a few winners and many losers. One can ask, which is the bigger risk- good education for all without specifying outcomes, or a few people with lots of educational capital in the bank?

Learning processes that enable development

A Waldorf curriculum is one that orientates itself on an ideal-typical idea of development. An ideal-type is a diagnostic tool, a heuristic construct designed to provide orientation. It is an imaginary position that enables us to judge how actual situations relate. It is a form of pure case, in which no complicating factors make things messy. Thus it does not exist in reality but only as an idea. As such the idea can also be modified. It is not an eternal truth, but a construct that serves a specific purpose. It shows us to what extent reality deviates from the ideal. It enables us to understand the specific real case in relation to an ideal.

There are always special circumstances that make things messy, rather than ideal. Some schools have to teach a wide span of ages in a single class; all schools have a wide range of abilities in any given class; schools have to integrate children with special educational needs; children join classes later and lack many of the skills the others have learned, and so on. These are all factors that mean we have to modify our approach yet at the same time orientating ourselves to the idea of a certain ideal development. This principle has successfully been applied in Waldorf curative or special education over many years in situations in which children are limited in one way or another in their development. The basic assumption we make in Waldorf, is that every human being is capable of and wants to develop herself and just needs the right help. For some people learning and development come easily, for others it calls for massive will power for modest results (measured against what is common).

The pedagogical task of the teachers is to provide learning situations and opportunities in which all children can learn and develop. If children in a class share a common experience- and it requires skill and insight to do this- they will respond in individual ways. The way we structure learning in a Waldorf school takes this into account. Briefly, the stages in the learning process can be summarised as follows:

1. experiencing: learning starts with rich experience based on participation in social practices embedded in a learning culture (e.g. a Waldorf class),
2. forgetting: forming an inner relationship to experience akin the process of digestion involving a mental assimilation with implicit personal meaning,
3. recalling: individual recall, sharing what has been re-called and re-constructing the experience (including reflection and clarification of the original experience),
4. forming concepts: co-constructing shared meanings concepts (rules), construction of explicit and shared meaning,

5. practising: repetition and practice through application in context with the help of scaffolding within the zone of proximal development and by providing learners with different tasks, which reflect their ability and experience,
6. becoming able: leading to fuller participation, greater expertise, the learning of dispositions and skills, embodied knowing-in-practice,
7. transforming: sustainable change in the person through becoming.

I have written about this process in more detail in my blog (www.learningcommunitypartners.eu) and on the elewa programme (www.elearningwaldorf.de).

Summary

- The curriculum influences and shapes the development of the children by providing them with developmental tasks.
- The curriculum is not a plan that has to be implemented nor does it set norms for children to be assessed against.
- It is a very useful idea we use to orientate ourselves.

Who determines what curriculum is used?

The short answer to this question is, the people who do it, namely the teachers. Of course, they would be wise to inform themselves what others do and take advice. It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel or the main lesson or everything in the curriculum. However, the principle is clear: the teachers are responsible and accountable for what they do. In order to be responsible and accountable they need to continuously reflect on what they are doing and affirming that they are doing what they say they are doing, that it is having the desired effects, that the children are learning and developing in a healthy way, which obviously means knowing what that means.

Steiner established the practice of continuing collegial professional development- he actually spoke of the teachers' meetings as a living university or academy in which the teachers bring the fruits of their work in the classroom and their deliberations about that and the students, into the 'pool' of teachers so that they can all critically reflect and learn (Steiner, 2004, see lecture 12). This is the central task of the teachers' meetings- reflecting on and evaluating practice (practice is always what you do *and* why you do it), deepening understanding of practice, learning processes and individual children, planning, taking action and reviewing action leading to ongoing change and adjustment. Steiner (1996, p. 78) told the parents in the first Waldorf school, "in the time since we began our work, we have carefully reviewed from month to month how our principles are working with the children. In years to come, some things will be carried out in line with different or more complete points of view than in previous years". In order to review, understand and evaluate their practice, the teachers need skills and techniques, which also have to be learned and this requires a culture of professional learning. It also requires teachers to willing and able to learn with and from each other, as well as from mentors and advisors. Curriculum has to emerge in the situation. The following two quotations from Steiner make this clear.

In educating, what the teacher does can depend only slightly on anything he gets from a general, abstract pedagogy: it must rather be newly born every moment from a live understanding of the young human being he or she is teaching (Steiner, 1985).

We then have to approach the curriculum in quite a different way. Our approach to it in fact has been such that we must put ourselves in the position of being able to create it

ourselves at any moment (Steiner, 2000, p.189).

The organisation of the school has to enable the pedagogy to take place as best it can within the restraints of the available resources and it has to generate access to more resources. But school leadership (which is about the vision and direction of the school) and school management (which is about implementing that vision in practical and accountable ways) also has to ensure that professional development occurs in effective ways, however restricted the resources and opportunities are. Apart from teaching, the main thing that Waldorf teachers have to be able to do, is to learn professionally. Professional learning also means developing personal skills and awareness through contemplative work. The goal of spiritual development for Waldorf teachers is being better teachers by becoming more capable of understanding the students and the situation and being able to act meaningfully. The ideal we are striving towards is knowledge in doing- or skilful artistry in teaching- knowing in the moment what to do.

The process of developing curriculum is embedded in this collegial process of reflection on and reflection for practice (i.e. learning from what has been done and learning in order to do something). Novices- I prefer the term novice to beginners because it implies that you already part of the community you are working in- have to start by doing what the others are already doing. That means doing what the other teachers do but it also means being aware of what other Waldorf teachers in other schools are doing, either through direct contact (e.g. through visits or conferences) or through reading the literature (Waldorf curriculum literature). You learn a practice by participating in it, by observing closely, joining in and observing what happens. There is really no other way to learn a complex practice such as being a Waldorf teacher. Of course, understanding the theory and developing skills are important too, but both of these belong to practice. In curriculum terms this means starting by doing what others do but at the same time observing how children respond and reflecting on what could be done differently.

The following criteria are designed to help teachers question their practice, or the practice that they see others doing. Think of these criteria as prompts for collegial reflection.

Criteria for curriculum development

Starting from the latest Waldorf curriculum we have access to, we should look at whether its suggested contents offer developmental tasks to meet the developmental and cultural needs of our students. I start with some important categories relating to language and story material, then continue with arts and crafts, history and geography. The other subjects do not require as much modification as these, at least from my experience.

Mother tongues and other languages

Each Waldorf school is embedded in a linguistic tradition. For some this might be the language of the country that everyone speaks, like Latvian or Japanese but things are not always as simple. In some countries there are a variety of languages; a vernacular language or dialect and an official language used in education. Sometimes the children come to school in class one with different mother tongues and a variety of other languages. Perhaps the teachers speak a different language to most of the children. Children from migrant or Indigenous backgrounds may speak another language at home, or their parents and grandparents are not skilled in the language their children learn in at school. Language is often not as straightforward as people in monolingual cultures think.

The classic Waldorf curriculum assumes that the children already speak and embody the language of instruction and the introduction of the letters of the alphabet is based on this assumption. Quite apart from the fact that the language may not use a European alphabet with

its phonetic consonants and vowels, the Waldorf approach to literacy has to be modified. Having experienced classrooms in India in which the language of instruction is English though most of the children in class one are not English speakers and the teachers are not always native English speakers, this has to be taken into account. Just as we do not start teaching reading and writing in the second language straight away but spend three years immersing the children in the target language so that they can learn to embody the sounds, sentence structures and meanings of the words and phrases, so children in class 1 should have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the language of instruction before tackling learning to read and write. If I was starting to teach students another language in class seven, I would do what I do in classes one to three, that is, immerse them orally in the language before introducing reading and writing. Of course, I would use age appropriate material.

The question as to how reading and writing are introduced depends of the nature of the script in each country. Steiner's basic principle assumes an intrinsic link between the shape of the letters, the sounds and the meaning of words. Secondly he recommends an artistic rather than an abstract approach, since the symbols that make up writing are generally not obviously linked to meaning. They are no longer pictograms. Let us assume that words originally expressed what people in a particular culture at a particular time actually experienced. The problem is that children learn language so fast that they don't have time to have this original experience, they simply do what other more competent speakers do. Steiner's approach is an attempt to regain something of the original pictorial, experiential aspect of language. By slowing the whole process of learning down, breaking it into manageable parts, the child can form a meaningful relationship to the letters, symbols, characters, words and concepts.

The vital thing is that literacy grows out of orality. There has to be orality first. Orality includes the whole body. Therefore, using movement and tactile exercises (e.g. modelling letters or characters) is an important aspect. That is why most class 1 teachers begin with form drawing. Later, it is important that the act of writing is cultivated aesthetically through hand-made, self-written main lesson books, using calligraphy and handdrawn illustrations. Books are important cultural artefacts and today more than ever, this needs to be cultivated.

Language carries historical meanings and influences the way we experience the world. It also expresses the spirit of the language which is related to the character of the people who speak it, which means how they relate to the world and other people. Words reflect unconsciously how people experience the world, or at least how they used to. When children learn a language they embody all these unconscious meanings. At the same time the pronunciation shapes their vocal organs and thus their feeling of being in their body. It feels different speaking a Kung! click language or Japanese. Speaking, hearing, understanding, reading, writing and analysing language is such a major part of our education that we need to be clear firstly about what this means and secondly which languages we are using and why.

Because language is so much a part of us, it shapes our identity. Even if I have to learn a new language to be able to participate in the activities at school, I would like my home language to be noticed and valued because it means the teachers and fellow students see the authentic me who is woven into the language I speak and feel. As teachers we need to ensure that all the languages spoken in a class are recognised and valued, even if we don't speak them ourselves. Let children recite a poem, sing a song in their language or simply talk to us and we and the rest of the class try to learn a few words. The objection that we have no time, overlooks the primary need for human beings to be seen, heard, recognised and accepted as preconditions of healthy development.

Once children can read, they should be encouraged to practice extensive reading, which means that children choose what they would like to read, do so independently and report on their experiences.

The question of other languages languages is also an important aspect to consider, not least in relation to the mother tongue and the official school languages. The original idea was

two other languages from class one onwards. Steiner was quite pragmatic about this and the choice of second languages is mainly based on practical aspects. We must ask ourselves, what second language will children need in their lives in future? English, Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and French suggest themselves as global languages- but local cultural factors might mean it makes sense to learn Indigenous languages e.g. Māori, too. Secondly, what continuity of teaching in these languages can be assured? It is no good introducing Mandarin and you are uncertain if the teacher will stay or that you can find another who can teach using the Waldorf approach. These are the primary questions that need to be answered.

All the schools that teach two languages from class one onwards find that the children are perfectly capable of learning them, assuming that the teachers know what they are doing. The argument that it is too much for children or that it takes up too many lessons simply doesn't stand up. We teach two other languages because a single second language is always seen in contrast to the mother tongue. Two other languages enable the languages to complement each other, broaden linguistic skills and enable the development of a linguistic consciousness that enables people to learn further languages and the 'languages' of movement and gesture, nature and art.

Space does not permit a full description of Waldorf foreign language teaching (there is adequate literature and excellent online professional development courses at www-e-learningwaldorf.de) but in essence it can be summarised as:

- the first three years entirely involve oral immersion in the language through classroom activities that children enjoy and can participate in using the language,
- children learn to read and write what they already know orally,
- speaking and hearing the target language (at all times in the lessons, except complex grammatical explanations) remains the core of language learning,
- use of authentic literature, songs and poems,
- from grade 4 to 8 the children learn the basic language structures and usage,
- in the upper school the language is the medium for learning about important and relevant topics using authentic literature and material.

Summary

- Literacy is built on a sound basis of orality- that means children must be able to speak the language they learn to read and write in.
- Whatever the main language of school learning is, value other languages that are spoken by the children.
- Writing should be introduced artistically in ways appropriate to the kind of script used- languages that do not use the alphabet should find other ways of introducing the characters out of pictures.
- 2 other languages are important to develop linguistic consciousness.
- second languages should be taught orally for three years first.

Research tasks

- What is the actual language situation of the children and teachers in the school and how does this relate to the official educational expectations?
- Literacy- i.e. reading and writing grow out of orality, out of the spoken language, so the spoken language has to be well established.
- How artistic and 'bodily' is the process of learning writing?
- Are we doing enough to value the languages spoken by the children at home?

- What foreign languages need to be learned and can reliable teachers be found who are willing to use the Waldorf approach?

Stories

The traditional Waldorf curriculum has an interesting sequences of story material from the first to the eighth class. Though it is anchored in a Middle European tradition, the assumption is that it represents a certain development of consciousness that moves from orality to literacy and then through history to biography. The idea that narrative material reflects stages of consciousness is not exclusive to Steiner and this sequence of stories does bear some relation to the philosopher Jean Gebser's notion of five structures of consciousness, the archaic, the magical, the mythical, the mental and the integral. The cultural historian and philosopher Walter Ong argued that literature reflects an evolution of consciousness and coined the term orality and contrasted this with literacy as two forms of consciousness, the former having a more concrete, experiential, participatory quality, whereas literacy enables abstraction, conceptualization and self-reflection (as Josie Alwyn and I describe in the introduction to English in the Rawson & Richter curriculum, published in 2000). Jennifer Gidley (2007) has compared Steiner's views with those of Ken Wilber, and shown that there is long tradition of philosophers who have posited a cultural evolution of consciousness. The idea of choosing types of stories that form kind of evolution of consciousness, however, is fairly unique to Steiner.

The sequence starts with fairy tales leading on to fables and legends before moving on to myth, which then transforms into history and biography. There seems no reason why this sequence cannot be considered of general value within any Waldorf curriculum. The problem starts if one attempts to find exact parallels to the Middle European tradition of Grimm's Fairy Tales and Aesop or La Fontaine's Fables. These wonderful collections of tales do have their counterparts across cultures. Idris Shah's classic collection *World Tales* shows how themes occur in stories in cultures around the world. However, probably no culture has exact equivalents in all the relevant genres.

My position on this has shifted over the years. I have had to reluctantly admit that good stories are enjoyed by children and other people around the world, whatever their cultural origin. Indeed, their very archetypal character seems more important than their cultural authenticity. If we look at great literature, the cultural location of the story is not decisive. My view is that intercultural understanding is more likely to be fostered by encountering humanity in multiple costumes in story form and later as literature. What we must avoid is cultural stereotypes. This particularly happens when people in one culture write about another, but this is less likely to happen when we draw stories from the other cultures themselves.

There is of course a virtue in anchoring children in their Indigenous cultural traditions. An anchor is a good metaphor because it implies a fixed but flexible connection. A boat that has a single anchor can drift around it with the wind and tide. This question of cultural identities is complex in a post-colonial and globalised world. English speakers around the world not only carry the heritage of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Dickens, they are obviously also embedded in different versions of English- American, Jamaican, Ghanaian, South African, Indian, Australian and so on. They also live in countries with Indigenous languages. These voices must also be heard and valued. That applies in all countries that have multiple language traditions, in which some languages are privileged and others neglected or suppressed. We should also acknowledge that many children are not seriously anchored in a traditional culture anyway, and are surrounded by images and stories from all kinds of sources. The reality is that most children in the world today live in multiple cultures, though they may interact in different ways. It is essential that children be anchored in their

Indigenous cultures and that these cultures be valorised and promoted to counter the centuries of colonial dominance, social injustice and oppression.

My advice would therefore be to start with traditional fairy tales and fables in the dominant linguistic culture the school is embedded in, then add to these, stories from other cultures. In many countries, colonial cultures have been imposed on Indigenous cultures and the educational tradition of the country is embedded in the historical process of colonisation (e.g. the dominance of English in the Indian education system). It is often the case that a country privileges a particular European language (e.g. English) and marginalizes other languages and cultures that colonists brought with them. The melting-pot metaphor denies the rich variety of cultural sources that live on within a society. Obviously American schools with a European heritage should start with American stories (i.e. stories in the post-Columbian tradition) but also draw on Native American tales, then European and World Tales. Similarly, Canadian, South American, Australian or New Zealand schools have several heritages to draw on. In Asian countries something similar applies. Each country has its educational and cultural histories that have determined which literature and cultural resources are privileged and which neglected. One of the most interesting research tasks for Waldorf teachers in these countries is to reflect on this issue and start making collections of suitable story material, being careful to check authenticity.

What makes a story suitable, or rather what makes a story pedagogically suitable? That is a very difficult question to answer, which is why Steiner's model of story material can be used as an orientation- not as a canon- but as an idea to start with. We need to explore what makes a fairy tale suitable for class 1- after all some fairy tales are told in Kindergarten. What characterises fairy tales at all? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a fairy tale as being marked by unreal beauty, perfection, luck or happiness, which I find an evocative description. J.R.R. Tolkien's book *On Fairy Tales* defines the essence of fairy tales as a genre- which he said, shows the deep interdependence of language and human consciousness- as imaginative story-telling that presents a world that is different from the empirical world but is wholly consistent and credible within its own terms and logic. The authentic fairy story is true in itself. It is not self-consciously symbolic or representing anything other than itself. A fairy tale deals in marvels that should not be questioned. In contrast to fables, in which recognisable human traits are represented by animals or fabulous beings, the fairy tale has no pedagogical intention. It is because fairy tales are consistent and rational within their own logic that they are 'true'. Words and images in fairy tales have a potency of their own, such as stone, fire, wood, tree, house, fire, bread, mother, father, son and daughter. Above all, fairy tales speak an archetypal language of relationships and consequences; of journeys that have a purpose, of crises that have a logical resolution (not always a happy end), of challenges that have a higher meaning and ultimately they are about transformation and happiness as a state of harmony and balance, when order is restored.

The distinction between an oral wonder tale and a literary fairy tale is interesting. After all any fairy tale that is written down becomes a literary fairy, unless you are reading the literal transcription of a story-teller. One of the leading authorities on fairy tale, Jack Zipes (Zipes, 2000) points out that oral wonder tales are hugely varied (Russian tales have been analysed using 31 basic functions of paradigmatic wonder tales, beyond those of protagonist, setting, plot etc. that are common features of all stories). The one thing all such tales have in common is transformation, "usually miraculous transformation... everybody and everything can be transformed in a wonder tale... in particular there is generally a change in the social status of the protagonists" (Zipes, 2000, p. xvii). They rarely end unhappily since they have a strong element of wish, wonder and surprise. Ultimately the meaning of fairy tales lies in the narrator's aesthetic, ideological or pedagogical intentions.

The distinction between fairy tales in kindergarten and in class one is one of complexity. The journeys are longer, the twists and turns of plot are more unpredictable and

dramatic. They involve multiple scenes and characters. Alongside traditional fairy tale material, we have literary tales. I feel we can also draw on such literary fairy tales as those written by Tolstoy, Hans-Christian Andersen, Tolkien, and appropriate modern literature (e.g. tales by Ben Okri, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Jack Zipes, Peter Sís, Susan Bobby, A.S. Byatt, Neil Gaiman, to name just a few I know of). There is an extensive literature on tales from around the world.

Fables are moral tales in which the stories are populated by animals and beings that are clearly meant to be anthropomorphic and are characterised by their brevity and sometimes semi-historical context, such as the stories of saints and holy men and women. Not all fables are short. The wonderful Native American tale of Jumping Mouse is long and complex. My sense is that we don't need to stop telling fairy tales when we start fables because they have different functions and involve a different consciousness, though they overlap and need not be sequential. Legends are meant to be about a historical reality but are really constructions of what history is supposed to be from a certain perspective. This is what makes legends difficult. They were (and sometimes still are) often created for the purposes of propaganda or have been modified as foundational cultural or even nationalistic stories that support a particular cultural identity (the story of King Alfred burning the cakes, or Robert the Bruce watching the spider patiently rebuilding her web). The question is, whose tales are told and whose are marginalised, neglected or censored.

Legends usually set out to explain some cultural event or character, particularly the life of a hero. As Joseph Campbell classically showed in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the hero goes through a sequence of key stages in his or her life; miraculous birth, the call to adventure, the journey of trials, the gift or reward, the return of the hero to his home and the application of the gift to improve the world in some way.

In the original curriculum tradition, the Hebrew Old Testament often belongs in the story telling material in class 3. This, of course, is not for religious reasons but as a body of legends (with elements of fairy tale and myth), just as the Norse Myths are told in class 4. Within these collections there are various elements; myths of origins and creation, legends recalling the history of a people (the Hebrews) or of the gods and later heroes and their relationship to a particular people (the Norse people and the Vikings). Human psychology plays an important role in both collections, in that various archetypes or characters enact tales of human relationships to the god(s), human tales of love, jealousy, deceit, naivety, father-son/daughter, mother son/daughter relationships. Such tales embody intuitive and imaginative understandings of the relationship of human beings to the spiritual world and to the forces of nature. They are rich in symbolism and metaphor as well as being entertaining stories.

It seems remarkable that a relatively small culture- the Nordic peoples (and an even smaller body of Icelandic literature) should produce such a vast body of stories. But of course, other peoples also had such wealth of tales; we know that the Baltic countries Finland and Estonia have equally comprehensive collections of myths. Colonial conquest has limited the scope for collecting such bodies of stories, by re-interpreting or simple inaccurately recording Indigenous tales and deny Indigenous people a voice. There is no doubt that all Indigenous cultures have a wealth of stories, only some of which is accessible, even though the folktale literature and the Internet offers us unprecedented access to this material. Therefore, we can draw on a vast global resource if we look carefully.

The traditional Waldorf curriculum is the dominant Eurocentric model. It offers a range of myths and stories from a range of cultures, Ancient India, Mesopotamia, Egypt and of course Ancient Greece, whilst admittedly ignoring other cultures). The transition from orality to literature starts with Gilgamesh, proceeds through the legends mediated through ancient texts and culminates in Homer's Odyssey (and later literary works such as Beowulf or St Gawain and the Green Knight). This sequence of myths has a particular significance given Steiner's many accounts of the cultural evolution of humanity and his 'post-Atlantean'

cultural epochs. This sequence has a particularly European perspective and reflects the kind of cultural perspectives of Steiner's historical, Middle European times, when European culture was widely thought to have been the culmination of a particular cultural evolution from savages to civilisation and was influenced particularly by the notion that European civilization was built on Greco-Roman foundations (though largely ignoring the Arabic influence). Since Edward Said's classic work *Orientalism* (1978), and its cultural critique of how the West has constructed false notions of the Orient, we have become aware to what extent intellectuals in the West have invented romanticised and incorrect versions of the Orient and shaped the way we see non-European traditions. This perspective has been historically discredited and should not be a tenet of the Waldorf curriculum. We are still waiting for a Waldorf version of post-colonial studies.

One of my students on the International Masters Programme in Stuttgart, Shuchan Zhang investigated what Chinese mythology would be suitable for grade three. She began by analysing the developmental tasks of grade three students and then looked for the key elements in the tradition story material (Old Testament) and then she studied the available material in Chinese. She drew mainly on the ancient *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, but also on material recently discovered and published, such as the *Darkness Legend* (黑暗传) from Hubei Province Shennongjia Forestry District (神农架). I can warmly recommend her work to anyone interested in Chinese Mythology. Another student, Serene Fong produced a massively documented analysis of a range of Asian countries, exploring the many possible curriculum developments. She gathered her data by conducting interviews with Waldorf practitioners from many countries. Other students have looked at comparisons of Chinese traditional Confucian education and Waldorf, another developed possible craft and handwork activities for the Philippines using local materials and traditional artefacts. Another explored Indonesian children's street games in Waldorf contexts. What this work needs is a critical frame of reference.

So was Steiner wrong to map out his model of cultural epochs? The answer is not straightforward. He was partly dependent on the literature available to him about ancient civilisations, and this tended to focus on Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. But my feeling is that he was seeking to illustrate a more general notion of evolution of consciousness leading from archaic, through mythic, to modern individual and scientific consciousness because his aim was to make the case for collective spiritual descent of human societies and an ascent of individuality and its corresponding possibilities of emancipation at the price of materialism. Steiner taught a spiritual path of individual development leading to the possible emancipation of individuals from collective, social and cultural forms of being, so that they can achieve spiritual consciousness in a new form.

Stories of ancient cultures and religions offer imaginative pictures of human beings' changing relationship to the spiritual and to the natural worlds. Likewise, stories from contemporary Indigenous cultures offer alternative pictures of 'reality'. Interestingly, the history curriculum in the upper school goes back to this question. Ancient cultures should be studied scientifically in order to understand the relationship between human societies and their natural environment and later, the emergence of forms of citizenship and statehood from early times up modern, industrial times. Today we have to learn to understand post-industrial, post-colonial, post-modern and globalised societies and the risks and benefits for humanity. The cultural historian Aleida Assmann (2011) says that the last quarter of the 20th Century marked a shift of focus in cultural memory and the stories we tell to make sense of who we are, from stories of emancipation to stories of identity. This is an important message. We need not only to tell the stories of emancipation of peoples, cultures and individuals from oppression and totalitarianism, but we also need to tell tales of identity, that is, from the perspective of biography.

Traditionally story telling in the Waldorf curriculum moves from myth to history with Alexander the Great and from Roman myths and legends to Roman history. The British Waldorf tradition which goes back to 1924 has always incorporated the legends/myths of Beowulf and King Arthur and Irish Celtic Myths. The transition to historical stories and biographies goes hand in hand with the teaching of history and literature. Local equivalents can undoubtedly be found. As the archaeologist Chris Gosden put it, the Stone Age ended for some tribes in Papua New Guinea in 1954 when an aeroplane flew over their mountain. The historical moments when the worldview of people changed have different chronologies but the process is comparable. Major shifts of consciousness occurred in the transition from hunter-gatherer communities to sedentary farming communities, when people became urban, when societies became theocratic, republican, imperial or feudal and when revolutions occurred, when world wars occurred and when the balance of nature became tilted by human activity. The task is to illustrate these moments in narrative and visual form. In the upper school the task is to understand these scientifically. Given that human cultural history includes genocide and cultural iconoclasm (and not just since the European Middle Ages), it must also be the task of Waldorf pedagogy to enable those lost voices to resonate in contemporary souls.

If the first task is to anchor the child in her cultural heritage, which after all, in modern, urban family life, may be barely visible and if it plays a role at all, it is almost certainly not based on detailed narratives, then we must do that as best we can. Many people in the world have a plural cultural heritages (including the 50 million refugees currently dislocated from their ‘home’ cultures), nor all of which have the same status. We carry our history and prehistory embodied within us like archaeological sediments of the soul (because the language and artefacts we use have a history we participate in when we use them), most of which is unconscious. Making this conscious is important in helping the child to incarnate (which means spirit engaging with spirit in material things) into her time and cultural space. Stories locate us into a relationship with cultural streams.

The second task of story-telling is to locate us in a global evolution of consciousness from mythic to historical, from magical to scientific, from intuitive to rational, from collective to individual and to prepare for a new form of conscious intuitive knowledge- what the philosopher Owen Barfield calls the shift from original to final participation. This has to be done in such a way that each expression of cultural consciousness is equally valid. If we assume that every child born anywhere in the world has the potential to achieve the highest, most conscious forms of consciousness- what Steiner calls the consciousness soul- then we need not make any value judgements about forms of cultural consciousness or privilege modern scientific thinking!

We now need to add the journey from individualism to social responsibility alongside tales of the Other and tolerance, difference and complexity. Not only do heroes need to be girls and women, but some of them need to gay, disabled and other ways of being different. As a young class teacher with a powerful group of feminists among the parents of my class, I soon learned to modify the tales I told. I firmly believe that the versions of stories we read in collections also reflect the values of their collectors and these reflect the times they lived in. When we tell stories as Waldorf teachers, we also have the license to modify stories in ways that reflect our values. We don’t need to translate King Arthur into Queen Audrey (meaning noble strength), but Celtic Mythology does offer us other heroines. If the point is the journey and the trials of the hero, does he have to be male? Today’s heroes can be *and are* female, transgender or disabled or whatever.

The third task of story-telling is to exercise human beings’ most powerful and rich means of making and communicating meaning, namely narrative. By telling and hearing stories we learn to structure complex human experience in meaningful ways. The unmentioned source of stories in the curriculum, are the ones we make up ourselves, perhaps

in the form of pedagogical stories tailored to a specific situation, or simply tales that children can identify with. Let children also make up stories and tell them and later write them. So one could say, it is more important that we tell stories; the stories we tell are secondary.

Guiding principles

- Telling stories orally is very important, just as reading stories later is important.
- Take the sequence fairy tale, fable, legend, myth- including creation myths, the relationships between gods, the heroes and human beings, then tell history as story and arrive at biography.
- Locate your material in the linguistic and cultural contexts you are in, acknowledging that this will inevitably be complex and draw on what I call, world tales.
- Create your own stories or modify existing ones.
- Collect and share ‘good’ stories that have worked for you.

Research questions

- Which stories are told in your school and why (and which are not told)?
- What local story material is available and how could it be integrated?
- What world tales might be told?
- Explore which groups and cultures within the school’s community are missing from the story curriculum. (The St. Michael School in London has about 130 children and children from 31 different languages and cultural backgrounds- that’s a wealth of story material).

Crafts and work

The function of crafts in the curriculum is to educate the will through meaningful, skilled practices involving the transformation of natural materials into useful artefacts. Traditional crafts embody an intelligence as old as culture itself, that is not located in the head but in the intimate relationship between the embodied mind and the environment. This aspect of the relationship to the environment is often overlooked in some curriculum traditions. Steiner’s insight is remarkable, because he recognised not only the educational benefits of handwork as others such as Pestalozzi had done, by recognizing the effects of dexterity, the moral virtue of making simple things- Steiner also recognised that the human will is not separated from the world, but is embedded in it. When we take a material and shape it, we combine its natural properties with human ingenuity to bring about a higher form of practical applied knowledge. It is knowledge in doing, in action. Doing crafts is about being in the world and transforming it, whilst at the same transforming ourselves.

What industrialisation did was to separate people from the natural origins of materials and fragmented the processes of production into meaningless units through specialisation, until the worker is wholly alienated from the process and fruits of her work. Digitalisation takes this alienation to a new level. I only need a few clicks of the mouse to ensure that all kinds of products arrive at my door in hours or days. I don’t even need to go to shop, meet people who can advise me and experience the options directly. This has detached me from meaningful activity and deprives me of rich experience.

It therefore makes sense to embed craft work in the local environment and engage in the whole cycle of activities involved in producing artefacts. If one lives in a cultural and natural environment that has sheep and uses wool as a material to keep us warm, then the craft involves hands on experience of sheep, sheep shearing, washing, carding, spinning and dyeing wool even before I get to knitting a garment that I or someone else actually needs. I can integrate all these activities into a meaningful cycle across the school and with partners in the community (e.g. farmers). A number of Waldorf schools in the UK (there may be others that I am not aware of) have developed an integrated curriculum along these lines. If baskets are

made, local material such as willow is grown, harvested and prepared to make baskets. Clay is dug, cleaned and prepared for making pots. Hides are bought at the slaughterhouse, taken to the tanners and then cut to make belts and shoes. Charcoal can be made for the forge and so on. The combination of gardening and crafts (woodwork, basket making) and gardening and making and marketing produce is another obvious pedagogical opportunity.

What doesn't make such sense is importing expensive wool from Europe to knit things in a hot country where people don't actually use wool and the local material is cotton. Nor does it make sense to import processed rattan from Indonesia to make baskets, when willow grows in the vicinity in Europe. The same applies to using wood or stone. Each country in the world has local traditions of craft materials. It may be that these have been forgotten or replaced by manufactured commodities and it may be that none of the educated, city-dwelling teachers know how to make things out of palm fronds, local wood, bamboo and so on. It may be that neither teachers, nor children nor parents have been socialised to value such work, which is often done by poor, Indigenous people from the rural areas.

If we value these activities, then we can learn them or find people who know how to do them and know the traditional stories that accompany these activities. One can visit traditional craftspeople to get a feeling for the context and the work, but actually doing such work is far more important. The environmental consciousness that comes with sourcing materials locally is immeasurable. The idea of ecology is merely intellectual until one has to make recycled paper, or compost. The idea of economics is theoretical unless the students have made products and tried to market them. Nutrition is just a bad conscience unless you have grown and harvested and cooked your own produce. Sustainability is what others do until you have made your own clothes, food and furniture. Social justice is only an idea unless you know what work really is and how little we value what people do for us.

Summary

- The craft curriculum is about educating the will and needs to be embedded in the local ecology and cultural traditions.
- Crafts are not isolated from their context.

Research questions

- What crafts and handwork are done in your school and why?
- What craft cycles could be built up within the school?
- What local materials and tools could be used?
- Who is going to learn these skills and teach them?

The Arts

The reader should by now see where this text is going. The same principles apply to all subjects. We ask, what do the arts contribute to our educational aims and how do they actually effect the children and young people? Which arts help embed children in their communities and which help them develop? What is the balance of local traditional, cultural artistic traditions and those, mainly Western forms that dominate?

The arts are used in a wide range of ways within Waldorf pedagogy, which itself should be an art. Collective singing and the recitation of poems near the beginning of the main lesson help to bring the learning group together in a shared activity that address the children through their feelings, through the melodies, rhythms, sounds and images the songs and poems express. Drawing, and especially form drawing, focusses attention and helps inner control through the direction 'flow' of the hand and eye. Such activities help children calm down and focus, which are important preconditions for learning. Steiner (2007) speaks about the different effects of the musical and linguistic forces and the sculptural-architectonic spiritual forces working both from within and from outside the human organism shaping and forming the interaction between the bodily and soul processes of thinking, feeling and willing.

He also speaks of the effects of tonal qualities in speech and music in contrast to pictorial element and how both of these, in different ways, assist the 'I' to incarnate into the body. The sculptural forces that have been active in the child's organism up until the change of teeth now become emancipated from that role and can be channelled into the activities of drawing, painting and writing through which feeling experience is given outer form in line, shape, colour and script. What in the early years has manifest as imitation, now emerges out of the child as shaped, deliberate expressions of what has been experienced. In imitation the activity that has been observed flows into the child's bodily activity, now it is enriched through thoughts and feelings. The sculptural processes come from within, whilst the musical and vocal forces come to the child as a resonance of the world outside. The English poet William Blake wrote, *I sing the creation*, which expresses this process beautifully. The sculptural and the musical/vocal forces work up to puberty in a harmonious way. Later, after puberty the young person translates what she experiences in the world, particularly in nature (Steiner, 2007, p.18, specifically refers to its regularities and irregularities) into experiences that are at odds with what comes from within. This resistance manifests in the experience of puberty.

The central point in such descriptions by Steiner is that we come to a better understanding of how specific activities work on the processes of balancing the forces within the developing human being and the balance between inner and outer experience and how the child and young person relates to the world. Let us assume that a similar archetypal sequence of qualities to those in the story-telling curriculum apply to music, drawing, painting and sculpting. The research challenge is to identify and characterise how these activities actually work on children. We do this both by empathically observing the children doing them, trying to feel what they are feeling and of course by imitating their movements and gestures.

I stress this point because some colleagues of mine firmly believe on the basis of experience that playing descant recorders in groups is not a healthy musical experience for young children (or the adults who have to bear it). They say this is a musical misunderstanding even in countries in which the recorder is a common instrument. They prefer the much gentler wooden Choroi flute and stringed instruments such as the lyre. I am not a musician and cannot judge this. My point is that teachers should observe and sense what children actually experience and judge for themselves rather than simply following what some mentors say or even what is written in some curriculum texts. My feeling is that Indigenous instruments and music are more likely to resonate with children's souls, because these embed the child in a living, albeit often forgotten or marginalised cultural stream. I recall experiencing a performance by Korean Waldorf students of Korean music outdoors at the welcoming ceremony for the participants to a conference. My immediate experience of loud trumpet-like horns, clashing percussion and high-pitched song was not of harmony- but then my musical soul is embedded in a totally different experience of harmony. What the music- and I can still recall it over six years later- did to me was to transport me into a different cultural space in the same way that Korean food and traditional architecture does. Of course every city child has Western style music on her smart phone and Western classical music has reached amazing heights of perfection in Asia, nevertheless just as we start with simple crafts before trying to master more complex technologies, young children need simpler but authentic music to start with.

Those of us lucky enough to travel the Waldorf world are always amazed at the quality of both traditional music and world music in schools. Such experiences suggest that the balance is being found. What follows is a text on the music curriculum written by Michael Rose, Waldorf teacher and musician.

Keys to the teaching of music in relation to child development

Two golden keys in age-appropriate teaching of music are: move from the whole to the parts, and from above to below.

Whole to parts -

Singing should begin as an experience of simply joining in, in unison, with simple melodies being sung by members of the child's community. Only gradually should the separation of different voices - the basis for harmony - develop out of this. Call and response songs are a natural first step here. Then perhaps songs with a repeated chant or refrain that accompanies the main melody, such as the Canadian canoe song *Dip Dip and Swing*. Rounds and canons are often introduced at this point, but they can be tricky and often unmusical experiences for the children if not introduced carefully. (It is relevant to note that many cultures do not include this musical form in their repertoire.) The way a round works is that the same song is sung by different voices starting at different times, creating an overlapping of the melody that produces (in appropriately structured examples) pleasing harmonies. But while the genre does preserve the original unity of the song in all but its timing, there is an initial tendency for the children to get 'phased' by the echo-chamber effect and lose their musical bearings. They may actually find it easier to learn two separate songs that happen to sound harmonious when sung together - a 'mix and match' genre known as a quolibet, of which the pairing of *Three Blind Mice* and *Frère Jacques* is an example. When beginning rounds proper, the teacher may wish to begin by giving one group of children the first section of the round which they simply sing over and over again; the second group sings the second section repeatedly over the top of this; and so on with however many sections the song has. Single children from each group may then move across to the next group as the song is being sung, and there learn to join in the new part. In due course the children should naturally develop the confidence and competence to sing the round in the 'normal' way, and then move on to independent two-part and, as the pitch range of voices increases, three- or even four-part harmonies.

From above to below -

Physically, a child grows out of its head, through its trunk and down into its feet. There is an appropriate musical accompaniment to this 'incarnation' process that focuses respectively on the elements of pitch and melody, harmony and rhythm, and structure and beat.

Pitch and melody:

Little children are natural sopranos, and we attune ourselves best to them when we use our 'head' voices for singing - pitched generally above middle c and resonating more in the skull than the chest cavity. The tunes we choose to sing with the young ones may also remain somewhat 'up in the air', in the particular sense that they avoid a strong feeling of a key note - the ground note or tonic of any specific scale. Much of the world's pentatonic music (which uses only the notes doh, re, mi, sol, la from a given scale) has this quality. And much has been composed especially for Waldorf schools. However, exclusive use of pentatonic songs would be to deny children access to much of their own folk culture as this is expressed through nursery and folk songs, and a balanced diet is surely the order of the day here. As well as the five note pentatonic scales there is a range of seven note scales, collectively known as modes and each having a Greek name to identify it, which for the most part are neither clearly major nor minor in mood - in which 'sorrow and joy are woven fine' - as they are in the younger child. These then can be appropriately incorporated into the musical experience of children as they approach and leave their 9th year, when duality is being thrust from the womb of unity.

With the 12th year the experience of the octave comes into its own, through which duality may be experienced as a new kind of unity.

Harmony and rhythm:

Musical harmony - whether concord or discord - arises when two or more notes are sounded at the same time. It can be experienced as an interplay of melodies, or as a sequence of chords. The former is both historically and pedagogically the earlier experience - and lives most purely in the realm of unaccompanied singing. A piano or guitar can certainly add something to the singing experience, but they may also take something away, both melodically and rhythmically.

Rhythm arises when notes of different duration are sounded sequentially. It is not the same as beat, which is the regular pulse that forms the 'time signature' in a piece of music. In song, rhythm links the melody to the lyrics - either more or less naturally! For the little child it feels right that the rhythms of their songs should babble along as the children themselves do - lightly, sometimes erratically, always communicatively. Keeping strictly to a metronome beat, or indeed to a consistent time signature, may actually be clipping the child's musical - and linguistic - wings. Only around a child's tenth or eleventh year does the rhythm of the heart and lungs settle into a more or less predictable pattern of four heart beats to each full breath - the basis for the so-called common time signature of four beats to a bar. Before this time - take liberties!

Beat and structure:

The adolescent is drawn powerfully into the realm of beat, bass and breakdowns. This is the realm of our human metabolism. At the same time there arises a soaring idealism born of an awakened capacity for thinking. Music is par excellence a medium through which such a polarity may be recognised, embraced and expressed. What matters now is that music is not simply experienced, not simply enjoyed, but also studied, comprehended - and created. In as many forms as possible, as deeply as possible.

Other arts

In terms of the other arts, much the same applies- local forms can be blended with classic Waldorf forms. Form drawing is a fairly unique Waldorf art form and therefore has no particular cultural context, though of course many cultures have their own ornamental styles that can be incorporated into form drawing. Water colour painting, drawing and modelling are not culturally specific as techniques, so all the preliminary colour, shading and form exercises need not be modified. Later when children start illustrating, they will inevitably be influenced by the art in their environment, but that I believe is pedagogically unproblematical.

Art history, which is taught in the upper school has a strong European tradition, similar to the idea of cultural epochs. However, if we ask ourselves, what is the pedagogical aim of art history, then it is important to emphasise that it is not about mediating a particular canon of great artists. Actually the *history* part of art history is a misnomer, if it suggests the aim is to comprehensively cover all periods of art history. This is anyway not possible and if attempted, would lead to a very superficial level of understanding. The aim of working with works of art is learning to read and interpret art in its context using examples of interesting art from different times and places. At least that is my practice and I believe it makes sense. Learning to read art is interesting in itself, but it enables students to learn to read and interpret any

complex experience that involves other views than our everyday ones. Looking at different works of art, different artists at different times and in different cultures always means trying to understand the context. It also means trying to observe, understand and articulate what art does to us at different stages of the process. These are two different horizons that need to meet; the horizon of the artist and her times and our horizon today.

My sense is that we can do this best when we have the time to delve into the foreground, middle ground and background of each work of art, listen to its language and try to imagine what it would have meant to its contemporaries. Looking at art in this way is a wonderful subject that levels us all. No student is marginalised because they can't or don't get it. If they have eyes they can see and as I teacher, I help them find words to describe what they see and experience. If it's possible, we should offer art works from very different cultures and times and from art forms that interest the students. I usually start such lessons by getting the students to identify what they think art is, what kinds of art there are (categorizing them into arts of time, movement, and space) and what is not art. I have learned a lot from them. But I don't define art for them. At the end of a main lesson block, we might review our starting ideas and sort out a few things that are perhaps artistic crafts or are ornamental, but what they have learned is to distinguish art as a means of creating meaning and value (sometimes financial).

History

The traditional history curriculum is undeniably Eurocentric and obviously has to be modified. This also applies to European schools. In a fascinating workshop each year for the past six years at the International Upper School Upper School Conference in Kassel in Germany under the guidance of Michael Zech and Markus Osterrieder, we have been carrying out a multi-cultural perspective view of history with history teachers from over 20 countries. Each year we choose a topic (such as, the year 1000 AD, the end of the First World War, nationalism etc.) and teachers from different backgrounds offer their accounts. These are all university trained history teachers. Yet it is remarkable how many different and even contradictory views they bring on the historical topics. The question, what is history? is one thing, another thing is what is the 'right' history? One thing we have learned is that history, even done by (Waldorf) historians can often be coloured in nationalistic ways.

The aim of the history curriculum is to develop historical consciousness, not to learn all the important historical facts. Like all subjects the aim of history teaching is to support the individuation process of individuals, to enable them to become adults capable of taking responsibility for their actions and forming socially responsible judgements and thus be the basis for social transformation. This was one of Steiner's most important ideas. Social renewal can only come about, not through ideologies or the reproduction of the status quo but through allowing what is in young people to develop.

The history of societies shows that cultures are shaped by certain preoccupations, beliefs and forms of consciousness. One aim of history lessons is to exemplify this by exploring themes in which such qualities come to expression as symptoms of processes evolving. This means that transitions are important because they reveal change and its complexity. One general pattern that is important is the changing relationship between the individual and the collective, with a trend towards individualism. However, this is not a teleology but a retrospective historical trend, which can be and often is, reversed by reactionary forces.

Like all subjects, history contributes to the process of individuation. Therefore, it is necessary to enable strong identification of the students through lively and imaginative presentations- above all through narrative. This enables the students make an inner connection to historical figures and situations. This enriches their experience but also later provides an

opportunity to position themselves in reflection and strengthen their identity, by recognizing difference. The first process is empathic, the second is dialogic (e.g. through comparison) and the third step is transactional, in that the individual is given the opportunity to position herself in relation to the Other (one can be inspired by a Martin Luther King but also become determined to resist all forms of racism).

Historical consciousness means being able to form judgements about complex historical information from the perspective of the emergence of human societies and within them the changing relationship of the individual to society and the natural world. As Michael Zech put it, “in order to meet the challenges of the contemporary lifeworld into which the students are growing, the various histories (MR: different groups may have different versions of their local history) of one’s local region or country always has to be dealt with within the context of world history and that both need to be integrated. History should provide opportunities for young people to engage with earlier and different ways of being and acting, different social forms, different ways of life and sets of values as well as the development of one’s own identity and as an orientation on global developments” (2017, p.68).

If we follow Michael - and I would recommend we do- we need to start with our local cultures and locate it in a global historical context. Broadly speaking we need to cover the different forms of human societies from the earliest cultures to current ones. The traditional curriculum does not take an entirely chronological approach because it starts with pastoral and farming cultures and then urban civilizations (in the legends of the Hebrews, Ancient India, Mesopotamia, Egypt etc.), thereby missing out the longest period of human history or prehistory, hunter-gatherer societies. Generally speaking, the class teacher period is characterised by narratives of people’s experiences in archetypal- and therefore historically simplified settings. In the upper school, students learn how history is made and the ideas that have influenced people in their quest for emancipation and identity.

I think one can make the case that many creation myths offer a frame for understanding the transition from archaic consciousness to early human societies. This is done through the transition from stories to history in class four when the class teachers explore the history and geography of their local surroundings. Legends and myths contain a lot of information about the way people lived, their economies and social structures, though not in systematic way. In class four stories based on historical situations are told in relation to the past in the place where the children live. This is followed by accounts of early civilisations in which myth and religion, as well as pictures of how people actually lived blend story and history. Wherever the school is in the world, I would recommend a global range of early urban cultures from Eurasia (from China in the East to Rome in the West). This theme can span class 5 and into class 6. In class 6 and 7, I think the main theme of history should be the developments in the home region and the encounters between those people and other peoples, most of which were hostile yet also sometimes culturally enriching for the victorious group, who not only colonised the people and land but also took what they wanted from their culture (e.g. Arabic science and philosophy adopted by late medieval Europe, the copying of Chinese and Indian arts and crafts by European industry in the 18th Century, or the exploitation of contemporary Aborigine art on the world art market). Conflicts and contacts between peoples – be they Asian and European, African and European, European and American, Asian and Polynesian and so on- need to show the power relationships and cultural exchange and the different nature of the societies involved.

Understanding history always benefits from contrast and seeing the virtues and vices in each society. People may be cruel and murderous and yet produce beautiful art, others may be peaceful yet culturally static. What we have to avoid at all costs is propagating constructions of the past that valorise a particular people or social system (leading to nationalism and cultural imperialism) and denigrating others (through stereotypes or unfounded value judgements). One core aspect of historical consciousness is understanding

that people construct history to explain the present and that this frequently serves power interests and reflects the values of those writing the history. This is a topic for the upper school, but the experiential seeds are sown in portrayals of human societies in the past that try to characterise the culture as it was (as far as we know) and appreciates the ingenuity, skills, tenacity, beliefs and values of other cultures, without romanticizing.

By class 8 the students should be learning about the modern world and in particular how their country has been affected by the global changes of industrialisation, colonialism and post-colonialism, focussing on the biographical experience of people rather than nations. In class 9 the origins of contemporary history need to be explored from the perspective of ideas, ideologies and totalitarianism. In class 10 the theme is origins and the relationships between human societies and the natural environment, going back to the last Ice Age and emergence of different forms of human societies after the Ice Age. Whilst taking a regional perspective, it is always helpful to look at contrasts between regions. In classes 11 and 12 the aim is to understand the origins of modern states, and the emergence of the key ideas of modern times, human and civil rights, struggles for emancipation, capitalism and globalisation, science and technology, the relationship of the individual to society, international trade and international and transnational organisations. It is also important to offer alternative models of economies and social and political structures (including Steiner's ideas of the three-fold social organism, notions of direct and deliberative democracy, socialism and social democracy).

The biggest challenge we face is including the history of the past 100 years, which comprises the 'biggest' content we have to deal with because it is most recent and because of its vast complexity. That means leaving many things out, that were in the traditional curriculum. My advice is to ask the question, what do the students need to know to understand the world today?

Summary

- History grows out of stories.
- In the class teacher period history is treated as narrative, later focusing on biographies in class 7 and 8.
- A dominant theme is how human societies respond to their natural environment, another is how societies are organised and what the relationship of the individual to the collective is.
- The aim is to develop historical consciousness, not learn facts and dates without an overall guiding context (e.g. a theme such as the individual and society).
- History starts with local history and seeks to relate the region to global events at each stage.
- By the upper school, students should learn how history is constructed.

Research questions

- What national or cultural stereotypes exist in popular culture and how can these be balanced by more realistic and representative examples?
- How to counter history written by the victors?
- What opportunities are there to show how cultures influence each other?
- What aspects of contemporary life show the influence of the past?
- What examples from history can be used to show human virtues?
-

The sciences

In principle the sciences may be considered in relation to the curriculum as being general. In the biological sciences and geography, it seems reasonable to start with the plants, animals

and geography (including astronomy) of the region and expand outwards from there. Maths, physics and chemistry may use local examples but can generally follow the traditional curriculum.

Games and Sports

The general structure of the traditional curriculum relates to physical and social developmental factors, and therefore provide an ideal-typical frame. Games and sports will no doubt reflect local cultural preferences.

Subjects not in the traditional curriculum

Obviously much has happened in the world since 1919 that now need to be part of a Waldorf curriculum. Here we have considerable leeway to develop curriculum to meet the students' needs in fields such as information technology, media studies (film, newspapers, Internet) contemporary art and literature, ecology, renewable resources, sustainability and global warming, globalisation, peace studies, genetic engineering and many other topics. Most of these belong in the upper school, which raises the question of setting priorities and leaving something out. As I have suggested in the history curriculum, we need to leave things out and set new priorities based around the question; what do we have to know to understand the world today?

Conclusion

This paper is the start of a conversation and reveals the limits of my experience and knowledge. Young teachers need to ask critical questions and (respectfully) challenge their elders along the lines of the generative principles I have mapped out above. There are without doubt many other views and other questions that need to be posed. There is certainly a need for an international internet platform.

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