



Journal

Pedagogical Section at
the Goetheanum

46

Christmas 2012

Goetheanum

Index

Introduction <i>Dorothee Prange</i>	3
Foreign Language Teaching and the Art of Educating <i>Christof Wiechert</i>	5
Challenges in Language Teaching <i>Elena Forrer</i>	10
Aims in Teaching Foreign Languages <i>Alec Templeton</i>	13
How can Anthroposophy Enrich our Work <i>Alain Denjean, Andrew Wolpert</i>	14
Which Impulses can be Fruitful for the Teaching of Foreign Languages? <i>Martyn Rawson, Ulrike Sievers</i>	16
The Spoken Word as Co-Educator of the Growing Human Being and as a Source of Strength for the Teacher <i>Helen Lubin</i>	19
Accounts of Developments during the Class Teacher Period <i>Georg Weimer</i>	21
Agenda	23

Introduction

Dear colleagues,

we are pleased to enclose the Christmas issue of our Journal. A busy and active year is coming to a close and we look forward to new ventures. You will find more information on three such ventures in this Journal.

Many colleagues are working with the book “Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education”, seeking to find inspiration for their teaching through self-development. The book contains texts, pupils’ and teachers’ verses and teachers’ meditations by Rudolf Steiner. While some colleagues are working actively with it, others are not sure how to use it. But there are two further possibilities: some teachers own the book but don’t use it while others – and this also happens – don’t even know it exists.

Since the German edition has been reprinted many times, we asked ourselves whether another reprint was necessary. Our general impression was that teachers like to have the book because of the meditations. We have therefore decided to publish an entirely new edition that will include all the texts and verses as well as practical advice, explanatory notes and comments that will make the meditations more accessible for new colleagues. Experienced teachers who already have “Towards the Deepening Waldorf Education”, can use the new edition as a complement to the former. We hope to meet the needs of colleagues with the envisaged change. The revision will be carried out by various authors who will provide indications on how the verses for pupils and the teachers’ verses and meditations can be used in practice by all colleagues, whatever their cultural and religious background. We are looking forward to receiving your orders and expect the volume to be available from summer 2013. We will also provide new suggestions regarding the use of the book as such. An editorial group consisting of the present section leaders, the former section leader, and the director of Goetheanum Publishing, Dr Christiane Haid, will put together the texts we receive.

The second new undertaking concerns the sending out of the Journal. We send a copy to each school and many colleagues receive their own copy on request. We are receiving an increasing number of inquiries from teachers who would prefer to read the Journal electronically. The present issue is therefore the first to be sent out by post as well as electronically (if we have the email addresses). We are not intending to give up the printed issue but would appreciate your feedback. While the digital format saves postage, other costs continue to apply so we would be grateful if you continued to pay the annual fee of 10 Euros/CHF in any case. We would be even happier if schools that have been receiving the Journal for many years made sure it is displayed prominently in the teachers’

room so that all colleagues can see it. And our happiness would be complete if some people actually used the payment slip

The third major enterprise is the first ever *World Foreign Language Teachers Conference* that will take place from 1 to 6 April 2013 in Dornach. We hope that many foreign language teachers will attend, for this first ever specialized World Teachers' Conference will be the barometer that will show us whether or not there is sufficient demand for such conferences.

This Journal contains various contributions on foreign language teaching that can be used by schools for preparation. Christof Wiechert investigates statements by Rudolf Steiner on teaching methods. The article of Claus-Peter Röh is only published in German and will be translated in the near future. Elena Forrer from the USA presents some of the challenges of foreign language teaching, while Alec Templeton, Alain Denjean, Andrew Wolpert, Martyn Rawson and Ulrike Sievers share their thoughts and questions regarding the topics of the afternoon plenary sessions at the conference. These contributions can inspire discussions in teachers' or language teachers' meetings or they can be used in preparation for the conference. Send in your questions with the colleagues who will come to Dornach!

Helen Lubin and Silke Kollewijn have informed us of a project in support of artistic speech that could inspire colleagues to work on or apply the approach.

Georg Weimar has sent in a brief report from a group of class teachers who meet regularly to discuss questions of child development during the class teacher period. We would like to share this report with our readers.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue and that it will inspire lively discussions on the various topics.

With our best wishes for a happy Christmas and New Year,

*Dorothee Prange
on behalf of the Pedagogical Section
translated by Margot Saar*

Foreign Language Teaching and the Art of Educating

*'Each language penetrates us differently
and reveals human nature in a different way,
which is why we must complement the effect
of the mother tongue with other languages'*

R. Steiner, Lecture 11, Ilkley 1923

*'Naturally this does introduce into the
lessons something that makes teaching
somewhat strenuous.'*

R. Steiner, 30.08.1919

Interesting developments have occurred in the almost hundred years since the inception of Waldorf education. One of these developments is that, over the decades, the institution of the class teacher has gained prominence at the expense of the subject teachers. This is particularly true in the case of foreign language teachers who are sometimes treated as if they were an inferior kind of species.

There is no point in trying to work out why this is so.

We will instead look at the great importance that Rudolf Steiner attached to the foreign languages in his concept of Waldorf education. Just before the first school was founded he even identified the new school with the early learning of foreign languages which he saw as one of its particular strengths.

Let us try and trace how Rudolf Steiner envisaged the teaching of foreign languages. He certainly wanted it to be different (in the case of modern languages) from any conventional approach. (We will not consider the classical languages which, from today's point of view, took up too much of the curriculum in the early years). We assume that there is general awareness in the Waldorf movement of the fact that Steiner proposed to teach modern foreign languages from an early age to make use of the abating powers of imitation that enabled the children to learn their mother tongue. (This is the reason why Steiner suggested that under certain conditions a second mother tongue could be started in kindergarten).

For reasons of clarity it should be mentioned that main stream science knows today that the acquisition of the mother tongue is not based on cognition, or intellectual activity, but on quite different faculties.

Steiner envisaged (or explained) that foreign languages must be learned entirely from the human encounter, from the conversation between teacher and pupils, from dialogue: just as it happens with the mother tongue, through verbal interaction: comprehension and the ability to speak must arise out of the activity.

Before the school was founded, during the weeks when Steiner worked on the *Study of Man*, he knew that his intention was extraordinary. He told the teachers – who weren't teachers yet – about the foreign language teaching in the future school:

“Naturally this does introduce into the lessons something that makes teaching somewhat strenuous. But you cannot avoid that particularly in the lessons with the pupils who will enter into the older classes, a certain amount of effort will be needed.”

Steiner did not spend much time explaining the beginnings of foreign language teaching. Conversation should be practised based on imitation, poems learned, as much as possible memorized.

He stressed that foreign language teaching in the lower school was most successful if taught continuously by the same teacher.

If you have experienced the constant changes of English teachers you will know what he was talking about: much of what pupils learn is lost because it is rare that a proper handover takes place. It's like changing one's piano teacher. “You must start from scratch, dear. You can forget what you have learned so far.”

Foreign language teachers who stay with a class over years know what the pupils have learned in terms of vocabulary, poems and verses and what they can build on. If one takes foreign language teaching seriously one must make sure, as far as possible, that the classes keep the same teacher in each foreign language for many years.

Just imagine you can, for three years, spend two lessons a week with a class in a language, without writing or teaching formal grammar! And you can carefully develop the vocabulary, make sure children repeat whole sentences correctly, teach poems, verses, songs, encourage dialogue between the pupils – a three-year crescendo.

Like a juggler who keeps the juggling balls in the air, the foreign language teacher keeps the pupils' knowledge alive; but the balls must rise higher and higher and they don't only consist of songs and poems.

“It is not until the second stage, from age 9 to 12, that we begin to develop conscious awareness of the language. This we do by introducing grammar.”

These simple statements refer to the change that occurs in the children at that time. What has been learned so far is now made conscious through grammar. Thoroughly! Speaking and conversation are now used to draw attention to the grammar. *“Only the rules should be written down in the book that the children use for regular grammar and syntax learning. It will therefore be very economical and good for the children, if you allow them to discover a particular grammatical rule of the language in question based on an example you have invented, and if tomorrow and on the next day you return to that rule and ask children to find their own examples. The educational value of this method must not be underestimated.”*

(...)There is a big difference between just asking children about a grammar rule and letting them read out examples dictated to them and preparing examples in a way that allows the children to forget them and asking them to find their own. The activity that the children carry out in finding their own examples is immensely educational.

(...) But you too must also make up some careful examples and not hesitate to make the children aware of this”

Steiner then continues: “... if you manage to awaken enough interest in the children that they ask their parents over supper: can you make up an example for this rule? – then you will have been really successful. You achieve this if you throw yourself heart and soul into your teaching.”

The above passages are taken from Steiner’s considerations regarding foreign language teaching in “Practical Advice for Teachers”¹.

The question is: do they reflect Steiner’s enthusiasm for this kind of teaching or are they archetypal instructions for Waldorf teaching?

We will keep this question at the back of our minds while we look at some more passages:

“It would be particularly good with regard to foreign languages if the lessons could be organized in a way that would allow the different languages the children have to learn for one reason or another to stand side by side.” (...) Much would be gained if one and the same thought developed by a teacher with a pupil in one language could be developed by another pupil in another language and a third in a third language, so that one language would abundantly support the other. Of course such things can only be done if one has the necessary means, in this case the teachers. (...) He learns a thing far better if he has in this soul the method of applying it in a number of directions.”

All the quotations given above are taken from Lecture 9 of “Practical Advice for Teachers.” The lecture was given just weeks before lessons at the Waldorf School began. In Lecture 10 Steiner goes a step further when he says: “If you read something aloud to your class while the pupils follow the text in their books you do nothing but waste their time. It is the worst you could possibly do. The right way is for teachers to relate freely whatever they wants to put across to the children or, if they wants to present a passage or poem verbatim, to speak it by heart without using a book ... ‘ Or, if this is not expecting too much of children, they can be given for homework the task of reading what has been dealt with during the lesson. In foreign languages, too, homework should be restricted mainly to reading tasks.”

These considerations are followed by comments regarding essays in the foreign language (and in the mother tongue: “free composition really has no place

1 Rudolf Steiner, Practical Advice for Teachers, 1988, Lecture 9, tr. J. Collis. (translator’s note: the translation of the quotations have here partly been adapted to give consistency of style and terminology)

in school before the age of fourteen, fifteen” (!)) Steiner concludes this chapter by pointing out that the method he described would allow teachers to *‘always bring together will and intellect in the right way’*.

Is this Steiner speaking as an idealist or as a realist? If we understand him rightly he says that ideas and their implementation always go together. How far are we away from this ideal with our teaching? Or do we teach in this way? There is excellent foreign language teaching going on in upper schools where one can really say that teachers *“throw themselves heart and soul into the teaching.”*

How is it in the lower and middle school? Are the instructions given above being put into practice there? We will not go into the crisis that occurred when the teachers didn’t want to implement Steiner’s recommendation for pupils who joined the school later (introducing streaming across classes).

The next question we want to address, using the example of foreign language teaching, is whether these indications by Rudolf Steiner determine ‘the art of educating’ at the exclusion of other approaches?

This is an inconvenient, if not dangerous question, but – just before the hundredth anniversary of the art of educating and its primary application in Waldorf schools – this question needs to be asked.

There is secondary literature on foreign language teaching that does not consider this question. It offers its own proposals which are not based on Steiner’s indications.

We must ask ourselves whether the teaching of foreign languages up to the upper school, that is, in the lower and middle school, really observes Steiner’s indications.

For the sake of clarity I will try and extract the quintessence of these indications. According to Rudolf Steiner, the aims of foreign language teaching include:

- Establishing a learning process based on intense interaction between teacher and pupils from class one
- Oral teaching only in the first years
- Vocabulary and conversation are conveyed through dialogue, complemented by verses, poems and songs which are not, in themselves, the aim of the lesson. The aim of the lesson is to learn to speak and understand the language by using it.
- The main purpose of the lessons is the learning of the language, so there needs to be continuous progress from class 1 to enable the children to gain the confidence to continue.
- According to Rudolf Steiner, reading books together in class makes no sense for language acquisition. He suggests a separation of listening and reading: the teacher should narrate the content of the book by heart while the children just listen, and the pupils read the same passage afterwards in the book.

- Foreign language learning is enhanced if the same topics are dealt with in different languages at the same time (which is also possible if the teachers are different as long as they work together).
- The energy of the grammar lessons lies in the simultaneous finding of examples for the application of grammar rules by pupils and teacher. Examples must not be written down.
- Understanding does not grow from literal translation but from rephrasing what has been read.

In summary we could say – to use a term from biochemistry – that foreign teaching is energy-rich in the highest degree!

Main lesson blocks, in contrast, are elegiac-phlegmatic: they stretch over a long period of time, allowing pupils to deeply enter into the matter, expand, brood, write, draw, and even digest what has been taken in. Foreign language teaching, as Rudolf Steiner envisages it, is quite different: it is all concentration, intense dialogue between pupil and teacher and between pupil and pupil. The whole lesson is intense and energy-rich. Or, as Steiner says in this context: *‘Up to the age of 9 foreign language learning consists in learning to speak.’*

If we look at the art of educating today we frequently come across unintended inversions which have somehow emerged. People tend to think, for instance, that lessons in the lower classes are all about imagination and that from class five one must come “to the point”. Steiner explains that it is exactly the other way round and that between the ages of 10 and 15, imagination is the highest principle.

The idea that the class teacher has superiority over his foreign language teaching colleagues could be another such unintended inversion. Foreign language teaching might provide the wake-up energy that can warm and permeate the entire school day. Maybe a hygienic-pedagogical mystery lies hidden somewhere here. It might well be that, due to their strong contrast, main lesson and foreign language lessons can mutually enhance each other, because of the stimulating effect that polar opposites have. Shortly after the first Waldorf school had started, Rudolf Steiner noted with regret: *“Language teaching is seen as secondary here; the teachers are already tired.”*

During the Christmas course of 1921/22 he said to an eager audience in Basel: *“Next to the main lessons the foreign languages are the most important subjects”.*

As soon as the school had started Rudolf Steiner realized that it was extremely difficult to apply the Waldorf method to foreign language teaching. The teachers did not achieve what was expected of them and their reaction was to resort to “conventional” foreign language teaching methods for which they were then criticized by Steiner.

The problem largely persists to this day. If we look at foreign language teaching up to and including class eight we find considerable deficits in Waldorf-specific teaching and therefore also in pupil performance.

Steiner said in the faculty meetings: “*What is fertile in our method must first be developed*”. Elsewhere he said: “*If the Waldorf method is really applied the results will also come.*” Or: “... *it is difficult to achieve progress in the foreign languages if one does not master the necessary method.*” [...] “*The general impression is that the children know too little*”.

The Waldorf school movement is approaching its one-hundredth anniversary and it is time to look at the gains and losses. What does the balance look like? Much will depend on a serious retrospective and on whether school will continue to develop the Waldorf method. The first step: ‘*You can achieve such successes if you throw yourself heart and soul into your teaching.*’

Christof Wiechert
translated by Margot Saar

Challenges in Language Teaching

One of the greatest challenges facing Waldorf education in America is the scarcity of language teachers with knowledge of the pedagogy. Recognizing the need to increase the number of trained colleagues, experienced language teachers have been clamoring recently for more than the sporadic language conferences currently offered in North American training centers. Now that Spanish is taught in all Waldorf schools in the U.S.A., the problem has become critical for Spanish teachers, but it has also begun for Chinese and Japanese language teachers. And it may well be that this problem is not only specific to North America, but likely extends to other countries as well.

Many schools in our present time are facing drastic changes in their Waldorf-Steiner classrooms with their students and programs. New means of communication, as well as the changes brought about by our increasingly global society, have permeated our schools, adding the need for a new vision of our language programs to our other challenges. As the world becomes smaller, many schools have felt an urgency around the question of language fluency, and the hope that their students will acquire better command of a foreign language has led them to implement an elective system in the language programs from grade six or seven onwards. At the same time, other schools in the U.S.A. have experienced that offering only two lessons a week is ineffective, often leaving the students with a sense that language lessons are not very important, and the teachers with the feeling that their work is not sufficiently valued.

Untrained teachers, even those truly interested in anthroposophy, feel helpless in the face of this situation and sometimes resolve to abandon teaching altogether. No doubt weak salary structures and the necessity to keep language teachers at part-time status are additional factors in some schools. At the same time, the teacher training institutions have been unwilling to face the growing needs, maintaining a passive attitude, instead of creating positive strategies towards language training and for supporting their language teachers. Some new teachers have taken the initiative to do research and to visit more experienced teachers in order to complete their training. In some cases, they have joined together to create an association, forging an opportunity to gain information and support. These are positive efforts and are certainly to be encouraged. But, the need is too great for the few teachers to meet it on their own. It is urgent that the training centers, particularly in this new millennium, confront this state of affairs by taking responsibility and establishing the necessary steps towards the creation of a training that responds to the needs of Spanish and Asian language programs. Moreover, all the schools must view languages as an essential subject in the Waldorf curriculum as was intended by Rudolf Steiner.

The Waldorf language teacher has a great deal of freedom in developing curricular components, selecting appropriate materials and creating artistic lessons. The children in the language lesson, from the earliest grades, listen to (and later read) and recall stories. The stories are told and then retold from previous days, together with the children's input. Retelling a story allows the children to sequence mental pictures imaginatively, and then to express these images in the foreign language. The images from the stories are not taught but are allowed to be "forgotten" and then "remembered." The rhythm of "forgetting-remembering" creates a healthy balance wherein the children's egos are called upon through developing an inner movement with the story, "participating" in the speech, and thus awakening their wills. However, in today's world, the early self-consciousness of many of the children manifests as a desire for incessant speaking, and that unbridled will interference overcomes the children's listening and hinders their capacity to maintain the necessary focus. Can we blame this effect on the media, particularly the new texting media, where immediate and short answers are promptly exchanged, and where the language becomes more abstract so that images are barely created? Further, we can ask: How has our technological world affected the development of our children in their capacity to perceive the other?

Rudolf Steiner sees in language formation the necessity of bringing mental images to our speech so that speech becomes a living reality. He also warns of the danger of speech becoming abstract and materialistic, losing its pictorial aspect as a result of an unconscious element of will. If this happens, he explains, we will no longer be able to feel the living soul qualities in our spoken words. It seems that Dr. Steiner's predictions are becoming reality now as we remain abstract not

only in our way of understanding, but also in our speaking. This problem faces all aspects of Waldorf education, but in particular the language programs, and it is critical that we address it.

Our programs are in need of language teachers of initiative and creativity, who have a desire to learn how to relate their ideas on teaching to the human being, to create artistic and rhythmic threefold language lessons of doing, thinking, and feeling, and to guide the children to intention, clarity and morality, the inner powers through which the child grows into a fully human adult. Every language teacher when entering Waldorf-Steiner education begins a journey of pedagogical discovery. This discovery brings the teacher to wholeness when planning a language lesson that includes beauty in the choice of images presented and the execution of ideas, practice before understanding a topic, and rhythm of in- and out-breathing in the lesson. The teacher strives to cultivate her imagination as a source of inspiration in teaching through artistic work; she offers beauty and order so the children will strive to do their work with sensitivity, thus acquiring a feeling for organization and clarity. She brings joy and humor to her lessons, even when she encounters hardships, striving to remember that a teacher is not a teacher only, but also a guide.

Many teachers look at the coming International Language Conference as an opportunity to deepen their work in the pedagogy, and they also seek an occasion to discuss new impulses in language programs. The urgency to address the impact of globalization in our lessons, changes in the students' ways of learning as a result of new technologies, and the obstacles in language training are all major concerns for many language teachers, who wish to grow as individuals so that they can better serve their students and also feel valued as professionals who are necessary to the fulfillment of the Waldorf curriculum.

Learning modern languages constitutes a core aspect in the curriculum of Waldorf-Steiner Schools, and it is our responsibility as language teachers not only to deepen our work, but also to address the many emerging questions outlined here so that the right social and spiritual impulses become not just a wish, but also a deed for the future.

*Elena Forrer
Spanish Teacher, San Francisco Waldorf School*

What are we aiming for in teaching foreign languages?

Two lead questions derived from the general conference theme *Transforming Habits: Creative Approaches to Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages* are to be the backdrop to our discussion of the plenary session topic: *What are we aiming for in foreign language teaching?*

- What habits might be in need of transformation? (Traditional Waldorf methods? Habits wrought in us by our own teachers?)
- To what extent can creative approaches enhance language teaching? How compatible are they with the increasing pressure on us to prepare for state exams?

If there is such a thing as the Waldorf Way of language teaching this might be characterized in terms of three broad fields of activity: We begin with a three-year period of aural-oral teaching before writing and reading is introduced; in every lesson recitation, singing and speech exercises developing into performance of play scenes; the centrality of connected texts (readers that are of increasingly literary quality) and the connected dialogue that follows from this in both in oral and written form.

Here follow some maybe provocative examples of basic aims of language teachers may opt for:

- Avoiding word-by-word translation (but giving first-language inputs to be retold freely in the target language?)
- Getting pupils to speak up, to articulate clearly
- Speaking only in the target language (except when discussing points of structure?)
- Allowing pupils to make mistakes (so as not to discourage, but to return to less directly later?)
- Avoiding the introduction of course materials and photocopied material in class (but to develop equivalent classroom activities and homework?)
- Silent reading for content (maybe different readers for different pupils simultaneously)
- Only to have classroom chorus recitation of dramatic and epic poetry (and of lyrical with more intimate means of expression?)
- Avoiding the teaching and explanation of too grammar; boredom may result in poor language competence! (how about getting the class to explore and discover rules?)
- Avoiding bi-lingual vocabulary booklets (but building vocabulary through other means?)

- The filling in of gap-texts is a kind of drill that has been proven to fail in its aim of strengthening the use of structures (but what about getting our pupils to *make* gap-texts and questions for each other?)

Interestingly enough, the German version of the conference theme the word Können (competence) is added as a complement to the teaching of foreign languages *Aufbrechen aus Gewohnheiten: Kreative Wege zum Können im Fremdsprachenunterricht*. The question here is: Is it our basic aim to promote (competent) communicative performance? But then where does the knowledge of the language come from to achieve this goal? Or is it our aim to acquire knowledge of the language by means of communicative activity?

Alec Templeton

Spiritual Impulses and Language Teaching How can Anthroposophy Enrich our Work?

How easily we fall into the trap of utilitarianism! Let us teach what will be useful so that the children will be able later in life to function well academically, socially and in their careers. This illusion is particularly powerful in language teaching, but haunts many other subjects as well.

The other specter that tyrannizes us is the obsession with content and the jealous protection of our hours because we have so much that we must make sure we can cover.

As Waldorf teachers we are not immune to these disorders, but the image of the human being at the heart of Waldorf education does not lead to such aims.

Foreign language teaching awakens the children to the wonder that there is another way of describing and expressing the world they already know in their mother tongue. Learning a foreign language is one of the first steps in overcoming the inevitably one-sided view of the world that the mother tongue and the native culture provide. This is the first reason for teaching foreign languages. If it also later enables them to get better jobs and be happy tourists, so much the better, but those are not the pedagogical objectives.

If we recognize also that our education is to awaken and strengthen the children's self confidence and trust in their innate, intuitive capacities to determine their own lives, then in language teaching the goals of confidence and fluency come before accuracy. Being able to express exactly what you mean in conventional grammatical structures at a certain point is vital, but the initial criteria are the joy of feeling at home in another idiom; living in the new sounds and intonation patterns; being allowed to explore, experiment and make mistakes; and managing even though you don't always understand everything ("tolerance of ambiguity" is itself too restricted a concept).

Achieving these goals does not depend on how much of the syllabus we cover, but on how convinced we are of their merits, on how enthusiastically we mediate the language and how artistically we create the processes and the materials for the children. Don't we sometimes sacrifice a healthy process for the sake of more content ?

All these considerations flow from the image of the human being who comes to earth to find and realize his destiny. Children need parents and teachers who will of course acquaint them with the accumulated wisdom and experience of the past, but that is not enough. Conventional education is based on the assumption that essentially the future should be a continuation of the past. That idea is flawed and the practice is a manifest failure. Our children need teachers who know that the future depends on the children's capacity later as adults to wake up to their tasks and destiny. Destiny arising from the future. With such an (apparently paradoxical) understanding of the human being, foreign language teaching, and all the other subjects no less, serve to support the children later as adults to trust their capacity to realize an unknown but entirely reliable future. If the language learning takes the children beyond the confines of their immediate experiences, gives pleasure in the meeting of "the other", strengthens their self-confidence, and affirms the value of accurately articulating their doubts, questions, wishes, ideas, and visions also in the idiom of another culture, then it serves in the becoming human.

Alain Denjean and Andrew Wolpert

Which impulses can be fruitful for the teaching of foreign languages?

The field of foreign language teaching is a lively one, with the teaching of English being a global industry. Like much of education since the emergence of national standards and curricula reinforced by the technologies of performativity, language teaching is a field in which huge commercial interests are involved. Such interests are continuously driving on the creation of ever more methods and programmes with their tools in the form of text-books, course books, software, teaching material and resources. Faced with this mass of information, it is sometimes quite difficult to identify genuinely new ideas that contribute new dimensions to the actual activity of teaching children and young people foreign languages. Together with Professor Allan Maley, we would like to mention a few of the issues that might be helpful for teachers of foreign languages in Waldorf schools to engage with.

Critical Cosmopolitanism

Martha Nussbaum (2011), who with Nobel-prize winner Amartya Sen, is most closely associated with the human development and capabilities approach has argued that the key aims of education today need to be the ability to critically examine yourself, the capacity for democratic citizenship and thirdly, the ability of narrative imagination, which means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have (Nussbaum, 2006, 390).

These aims are the core of what she calls an education for freedom. Clearly learning a foreign language makes a contribution to the last point about empathy and it could enhance the first two as well. However, even though cosmopolitanism is a key new capacity in today's globalised world, this needs to be a critical cosmopolitanism. The naïve assumption that learning another language allows us somehow to gain insight into the other person's mentality, or even the character of a culture is not only simplistic but dangerous. As Professor Hans Hunfeld (1998) noted in his book *The Normality of the Strange: Twenty-four letters to foreign language teacher*, we need to beware the 'foreign-ness' of foreign languages. To assume we can understand the Other in our terms is a form of colonialism. We can never understand the Other completely. Hunfeld pleads for a careful reflexion of the normality of the strange by allowing it to be, by accepting and celebrating it in its 'strangeness'. Only then can we develop the necessary respect for the inexplicability of the Other, and thus come to true cosmopolitanism. In this sense we need to question the stereotypes we facilitate in reducing the complexity of other cultures.

Hunfeld also counsels us not to treat language merely as a medium for the communication of information. The best medium for avoiding both stereotypes and mere transmission of information is real literature. Most conventional text books reduce language to its basic units in order to make it learnable. We need to meet the complexity of language in its holistic character. So we need a critical cosmopolitanism.

Reflexivity

We live in what sociologists call late-modernity. Late modernity is characterised by heightened need for reflexivity. Professor Margaret Archer (2012) speaks of the imperative of reflexivity in our times. There was never a greater need for us to reflect on our assumptions, dispositions, habits of thought and attitudes, to say nothing of questioning the powers that shape society. This is not just a requirement for sociologists but is actually the modern human condition, whether people know about it or not. We live in an age of vulnerability. Nothing is certain any more. Even sustainability is uncertain. At the personal, social, economic and ecological dimensions of our lives, everything is uncertain. It makes no sense to educate to particular sets of competences aimed at preparing young people for the world of employment when this is unpredictable.

Rather we need to educate to enable young people to develop what is within them. One thing everyone needs is to be able to exercise their freedom and for this they need to understand how to learn from their experiences and form judgements for themselves. This means enabling children and young people to take responsibility for their learning by showing them how to understand and learn from mistakes, reflect on what they want to say, understand how language and especially grammar defines relationships. Learning today needs to be both participatory and reflexive. This means, among other things, reading pupils' learning needs and addressing them in specific ways.

A key aspect of this approach to language learning is biography, including the pupils' biographies, the teachers' and biographies of other people. This is a hugely important sphere of language learning.

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)

Another field of language learning we can learn from is using the foreign language as a medium for learning about other things that matter to young people. We use English as a foreign language to teach about film, newspapers, media generally, globalisation, growing up, as well learning how to write short stories and poetry. The foreign language curriculum is one of the most open in the whole Waldorf curriculum.

Enthusiasm

Learning a language requires many skills and methods. Language teaching research highlights many things like stressing communicative skills rather than identifying mistakes, the importance of vocabulary, real literature and situational learning, the use of TL (the teacher using the target language), interactive learning, narrative, making the language learning environment at school as natural as possible, creating a cooperative ethos of joint learning. The most important thing though, is enthusiasm and real motivation (as opposed to learning for the test).

The key factor in generating enthusiasm in learners is enthusiastic teaching that fosters the self-activity of the students. Learning how to teach learners to become self-motivated and self-directed learners is a key to learning languages. This requires teachers to become conscious learners themselves. We can learn much about this from current research in teacher learning.

Martyn Rawson and Ulrike Sievers

References

- Margaret Archer (2012) *The Reflexive Imperative in late Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hans Hunfeld (1998) *Die Normalität des Fremden: Vierundzwanzig Briefe an eine Sprachlehrerin*. Waldsteinberg: Heidrun Popp Verlag.
- Martha Nussbaum (2012) *Creating Capabilities: The human development approach*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Martha Nussbaum (2006) Education and democratic citizenship: capabilities and quality education. *Journal of Human Development*, 7 (3), 385-395).

The Spoken Word as Co-Educator of the Growing Human Being and as a Source of Strength for the Teacher

2013-14

“We need a new relationship to language if we want to progress in the evolution of humanity.” – Rudolf Steiner

It is a signature of Waldorf education that it is infused with the presence of the spoken word in many ways throughout the day. In addition to conveying content, the spoken word also has sense-perceptible sculptural-musical expression, and conveys imagery and gestural expression. The way in which the teacher engages these to support the developing human being changes throughout the school years. The art of the spoken word (also called creative speech or speech formation) supports the overall pedagogical intentions at each developmental stage. For the teacher, too, the extensive speaking requirements in the classroom become a source of strength rather than a source of exhaustion.

Purpose and Scope: Regular speech visits to schools allow teachers to build upon the speech capacities acquired during teacher training. Teachers who have not yet completed teacher training are also supported. These speech weeks make it possible – in schools that are not (yet) able to commit to an ongoing full- or part-time speech position – for the speech work to nevertheless take root and be cultivated with a certain continuity.

Speech visits further the teacher’s cultivation of his/her own relationship to living language as a component of self-education as well as the development of speech competence for the classroom. The following areas are addressed, whereby the school’s usual schedule remains unchanged:

- **Speech practice in main lesson:** to support the teacher’s daily speech practice with the class throughout the year by demonstrating how exercises, poems and prose can be introduced and developed over time, in support of the teacher’s overall pedagogical gesture with the particular age/class.
- **Sessions with class teachers:** to elaborate on what has been demonstrated in the classroom on the basis of its pedagogical purpose; develop harmonious speech; develop artistic competence for storytelling and for the daily speech practice; prepare additional pieces (exercises, poetry, prose) for use later in the school year; address questions about children’s speech development, delays and challenges.

- **Sessions with subject teachers and high school teachers**
- **Assistance with class plays** (lower school) **and direction of dramatic productions** (high school)
- **Work with individual children** (depending on length of the speech visit)
- **Events for parents and the wider community:** lectures, workshops
- **Sessions with office staff**
- **Faculty meetings:** artistic activity, study, pedagogical considerations
- **Class parent evenings**
- **Faculty development workshops / in-service days**

Speech visits may be of varying length, such as 1-4 weeks twice per semester or per year; 2-3 days a week for 10-12 weeks a year; and/or various combinations throughout the year.

Schools and speech artists are now scheduling speech visits for 2013-14. For assistance in finding a speech artist for your school, please contact:

For Germany: Wolfgang Nefzger: wolfgang.nefzger@yahoo.de

For North America: Helen Lubin: helenlubin@gmail.com

For all other countries: Silke Kollewijn: srmk@goetheanum.org

“Of quite particular importance for the educator today is the rhetorical element, in the most noble sense of the word. No educator, whatever his field of activity in education may be – no educator should neglect to see to it that his speaking approaches the ideal of artistic speaking. One should actually continuously be mindful of cultivating speech as such.” – Rudolf Steiner, *Deeper Insights in Education*, October 15, 1923.

*Helen Lubin
In collaboration with the Pedagogical Section and
the Performing Arts Section
(Section for Eurythmy, Speech, Music, Puppetry and Drama)*

Report on the Research Project "Accounts of Developments during the Class Teacher Period"

The project began in 2009. Goethe's method is taken as its point of departure; this he described in his essay "The Experiment as Mediator between Subject and Object"¹. In the meantime it has been possible to take the first steps towards extending the method described for scientific experiments in that accounts of children's development in classes 1-4 were drawn up and worked upon using the 'comparative method'.

At present descriptions of situations in lessons are being drawn up by class teachers from the R. Steiner School in Birseck in Aesch, CH, from the R. Steiner School in Hamburg-Harburg and other German Waldorf schools in Heidelberg and Lüneburg ; these are gathered, ordered and worked upon in regular sessions.

The research group would like to gain knowledge of the development of pupils of classes 1-8. It traces how any kind of interaction in daily lessons can be extended and renewed and how in a consciously directed process of education health-giving forces of renewal come about that have an effect on the teachers and pupils.

A child² drawing a picture bends its head over time and again almost down to the paper. Its left arm is resting on the paper right up to the elbow. It interrupts its drawing, laughs and points to its drawing with both hands. It scratches its neck, draws again, its head bends over. Now it walks around the class and talks to children, sits down again, scratches its neck with the crayon in its hand, its head droops while it is drawing, it looks around, talks briefly to the child on the bench behind, now it talks to its neighbours, draws once more and reads something in the text; at the same time its head goes backwards and forwards slightly drooping, its mouth is a little open. It glances this way and that. Now it goes over to another child, leaning on its desk with both elbows, discusses with other children, makes gestures, fetches a pencil and in a flash sits down again and draws; no, it speaks with a lot of gesturing, now its head bends over and it draws again. It looks at its drawing and speaks with a forceful facial expression, once more its glance goes to and fro. (25.08.2012)

The teacher who is teaching the lesson perceives the pupils in countless ways. He or she is the one teaching, observing, judging and being aware of him- or herself. The teacher writes on the board, helps a child, resolves a social conflict, explains and talks in pictures, asks the children questions, listens to them; he or she gets them to solve questions and develop tasks, to move, jump, speak, dance etc.

1 The Experiment as Mediator between Object and Subject (1793); in this case Ed. Gerhard Ott, Heinrich Proskauer Farbenlehre, Stuttgart 1979 Verlag Freies Geistesleben, here the second edition 1980 Volume 2.

2 Here a situation is described of a child from class 5.

Now out of the flood of events, now and again, suddenly and immediately, something special and unexpected, but also completely matter of course, seeming to follow logically from the lesson, something comes up, which for him or her alone gets a new emphasis or a special significance.

For very short moments of time the teacher is, so to speak, wrenched out from the general flow of the lesson, his (or her) attention is focused for this moment on the special phenomenon, he or she opens themselves to the process or occurrence with all their senses and takes it in more intensively and more existentially.

The teacher, however, experiences a small but remarkable new development, he is astonished, impressed, he is amazed, something stirs, a feeling, he forms a judgement. In any case he endeavours to pick up the general ductus of the lesson and to carry on.

These events which have touched him or her in such a way, are lodged in his (or her) memory, he (or she) writes these living realities of the lesson down immediately after and the way they occurred.

These descriptions, which we in the research group call descriptions of situations, are gathered together chronologically according to the day of the event. In the common college meetings, progress meetings, these are presented to our colleagues, read by the author concerned, while the others listen, trying to take in the fine emotional nuances of feeling of the person reading, including the facial expression. They ask questions and comment on the contributions.

Categories emerge directly from the descriptions and phenomena and help us to order and arrange them.

Various descriptions are related to one another, they form a series. They stimulate us to think imaginatively. The individual results are presented and compared in the college of researchers and are processed further.

In free cognitive discourse, which can be characterised as the core of the entire set of stages of work, the research group has the experience of being a 'socially effective body', in which each person acquires knowledge and acts on an equal footing. With this thought is linked to thought, these are drawn together inwardly by the respective participants to create, as it were, a 'qualitative picture formation'. This process with the internalisation and the words expressed is carried out so slowly that the picture formation can come about.

The 'active participation' is to be compared with a meditative process, in which collectively and individually contents are thought through, internalised and expressed. Thereby a flow of thinking comes about, which is perceptible to the members of the group and which is directed more and more consciously. These new perceptions are the basis of further phases of work, which are developed by the research group.

*For the research group
Georg Weimer
translated by John Weedon*

Agenda

Forthcoming Pedagogical Section Conferences and Events at the Goetheanum, 2013

2013

January 18 – 19, 2013

Conference for Swiss Teachers
(in German and French)

February 15 – 17, 2013

Meditative Practice (in German)

April 1 – 6, 2013

International Conference for Foreign
Language

May 24 – 26, 2013

Conference for Religion Teachers
(in German)