Pedagogical Section
at the Goetheanum

Journal

The Journal of the Pedagogical Section

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Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

with the new year the 50th edition of our journal is winging its way to you. We are pleased to be able to present you with a different format and hope that you will gain some enjoyment from reading the journal as well as receive some help with your daily tasks. Wherever possible we try to find suitable photos from different schools for our title page – please do supply us with photos from all around the world. We will be happy to publish your photo if it fits our current topic, and we will of course make a reference to your school. Thank you very much for your help.

There are a number of contributions in this issue concerned with the deepening of Steiner's Waldorf pedagogy. This process includes individual paths, external training paths as well as an in-depth understanding of the core points of both the pedagogy and the curriculum. What are these core points made up of? How do I distinguish between core ideas and school traditions in every day school life? How can I find the right way for me as a teacher to deepen my understanding, to develop myself further? Will I be able to find something in freedom that will nourish and strengthen me for my lessons and my tasks? Christof Wiechert has written a short article introducing the new edition of the book 'Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education' explaining the intention and changes leading up to a revised edition.

Two contributions by Martyn Rawson and Claus-Peter Röh are concerned with the work of a new project group working with questions involving the international curriculum. Which principles of the curriculum apply to all parts of the world and how can these be translated into the different cultures? Two specialist sections follow with their own articles. Edwin Hübner speaks about media competence based on the work of one group on "media and pedagogy", an area which will require increasing attention with regards to the various age groups. A contribution by Christoph Jaffke on early foreign language learning completes the current cycle of articles around the teaching of foreign languages.

The concluding article by Claus-Peter Röh points to a conference in 2015 and constitutes a beginning in the content preparation which will encompass the developmental stages from birth to puberty with a special emphasis on the so-called transitional stages. We hope to attract many colleagues to the theme of accompanying a human being's development from childhood to youth with a great deal of understanding. Young people today require a lot of understanding, sympathy and a generous amount of humour to help them develop their strengths. Let us help them by trying to understand them better.

We hope that our range of contributions will offer some assistance with the deepening work.

Best wishes for all your work and warm greetings from the Pedagogical Section,

Dorothee Prange
translated by Steffi Cook

On the new edition of Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education

Christof Wiechert
Translated from the German by Margot M. Saar

Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education was first published in 1977 after an editorial team had assembled a collection of texts that would facilitate the spiritual-scientific understanding of Waldorf Education. The collection was usually passed on privately and it took some time before the significance of this anthology was discovered in schools. In 1990 a second edition was published under the direction of Heinz Zimmermann that included additional chapters on independent religion teaching.

As many new readers found it difficult to separate the spiritual-scientific foundation from that of the independent religion lessons, it was decided that these chapters should be removed again.

A fourth and a fifth edition followed in the German language and the fifth edition was re-edited unaltered two more times. This shows that the demand is growing continually. In 1990, editions in other languages were published and the book is now available in fourteen languages.

Over time we realized that most teachers and educators wanted *Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education,* because of the teachers' meditations and verses. The fundamental texts, which were mostly taken from Steiner's lectures, seem to be of less interest to the buyers of this book.

We therefore thought at the Pedagogical Section that it would make sense, after more than a generation, to revise the collection, focusing mainly on the teachers' meditations and verses. Because even after 36 years the question as to how one can deepen these meditations inwardly is still prominent. How could they be introduced and what guidelines could be given?

This question is not so easy to answer since the path towards a meditative life is very individual. There are two possibilities: describing the wider context of these professional meditations and guiding those interested towards them in a more objective way.

This much could be provided, while the rest is up to the reader.

People have different reasons for looking at the sources of strength for their work in this profession.

Some have come to the conclusion that the outer responsibility for educating children and adolescents, for teaching them contents and preparing them for life as independent adults needs to go together with an inner responsibility. Others might take the decision simply out of awareness of their situation as teachers or educators.

Being a teacher or educator means that one 'gives' and 'devotes' much to one's work. This can result in a one-sided lifestyle and lead to 'burn-outs'. In the interest of a better 'life hygiene' or in order to develop an

'art of life' it can then seem appropriate to foster one's inner life through meditation. Most people who decide in favour of a meditative life do this for a number of different reasons.

The new edition wants to offer something to colleagues that can help them with making a decision in this neutral matter.

Two very pertinent texts by Rudolf Steiner, which are taken from his written work and could also stand for themselves, will provide the introduction.

We also asked colleagues from different parts of the world to describe how they found their way to the verses and teachers' meditations.

This might give the impression that some contents appear twice but we found it important to offer a presentation that was as diverse and colourful as possible, in the hope that the one or other presentation might awaken in the reader a longing for actively turning towards this source of power in education.

Nobody will deny that our education can only grow and open itself to the world if the inside, the source of power of this education, is fostered as carefully as its growing in the world.

A small team of colleagues around the Section Leaders and the director of the *Verlag am Goetheanum,* Dr Christiane Haid, are working on putting together the new edition of *Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education.*

It goes without saying that with the new edition the existing ones will remain equally valuable. Our intention is to pass on these spiritual-scientific foundations in a form that is appropriate for our time and that can give guidance to colleagues who seek it.

We hope to be able to present the result to the school and kindergarten movements as soon as possible.

Pedagogical Section working group on 'Waldorf essentials'

Martyn Rawson

Waldorf education is growing apace in a rapidly changing world. That brings a number of major issues to deal with simultaneously. Schools are being established in many new cultural contexts, the greatest growth being in India and China. At the same time we are seeing the rise of Waldorf education in the public sector, especially in the US. Globally education is being increasingly shaped by neo-liberal policies of standardisation, performance testing, often driven by concerns for national competitiveness in global markets and dominated by a commercial culture of consultancy and private enterprise, what Professor Stephen Ball of the Institute of Education in London calls *Global Education Plc.*

At time the same time, the conditions that influence child and adolescent development are changing faster than at any time in world history. The present generation of high school students are the first generation ever to grow up with the computer as a normal household tool. The smart phone has put almost every child into contact with the whole Internet and this is changing people's social behaviour and the way they relate to the world in radical ways, not fully understood.

All this means that Waldorf education has to be continuously adapted. It is no longer appropriate to simply transfer any existing model of either the curriculum or any given school forms to another context. The Waldorf educational approach has changed and will go on changing as teachers modify their teaching to meet the circumstances. Indeed

Steiner said as much to parents in 1921, noting that:

"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 the years to come, some things will be done here in the school in line with different or more complete points of view." [1]

Perhaps, from the perspective of Waldorf education, there is another significant change, perhaps a paradigm shift. It is now being broadly recognised that if Waldorf education is to continue being able to respond to the real needs of developing human beings it cannot stand still, be introspective and merely cherish the precious heritage Rudolf Steiner and the subsequent generations of Waldorf teachers have bequeathed us. It has to regenerate itself out of its original sources.

It is in the nature of anthroposophy today that these sources are both contained within a body of knowledge and practice (Steiner's ideas and what people have done with them) but it also draws on the source that lies within us in the process of knowledge generation. This is based on human experience and insights drawn from the spiritual dimension by way of living human thinking. Professor Bo Dahlin recently summed this up with the formula: experience + concept = reality. In Waldorf education we could expand this to: pedagogical experience of the whole human

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1   This is taken from Steiner's address to a parents' meeting on 13th January 1921 (1996, p. 78).

being developing bodily, mentally and spiritually in her social context + general ideas about human development from an anthroposophical perspective (allgemeine Menschenkunde) = pedagogical knowing.

One of the primary collegial tasks of Waldorf teachers is generating pedagogical knowledge of, for and in practice. This activity is what needs to take priority today over the preservation of traditions, however meaningful they have been.

The Waldorf Curriculum that was published in 2000 by Rawson and Richter has been translated into many languages, the latest being Mandarin in 2013 and Polish in 2012. The editors of that book made it clear that it was provisional and should be revised within a few years. That didn't happen, primarily because of lack of funding but also because few people saw the need to question it.

Today we see matters somewhat differently. Rather than adding to the existing body of work describing possible curriculum content in different countries, the Pedagogical Section is taking a different approach. The small group around the leadership of Claus-Peter Röh and Florian Osswald are trying to formulate 'Waldorf essentials'. In other words we are trying to characterise the core aspects that make Waldorf education distinctive and without which, educational practice cannot be considered 'Waldorf'.

These 'essentials' are being formulated in the form of short statements of principle, that can be used to ask: "In what ways does our approach reflect these principles?" The idea is not to list what Waldorf curriculum content should be, but rather to characterise the principles and invite schools, teachers' education centres and Waldorf associations to engage in practice-based research to explore how these principles can be applied in their own local context. We want to encourage the development of curriculum appropriate to the nature of the developing human being in context rather than reproducing traditions or existing practices.

Each of these statements of "essentials" will be accompanied by short examples of practice to make it clearer and less abstract (reducing complexity to basic principles runs the risk of making the text seem quite abstract). Each point will be linked to literature that provides the context and background.

The work is being formed by the following considerations:
– Focussing on questions of child and adolescent development, identifying developmental tasks of each developmental stage;
– Questioning key notions such as the transitions between the seven-year cycles;
– Emphasizing priorities, such as ensuring that young children have an appropriate environment in which they can grow healthy foundations for future learning or ensuring that exam syllabi don't get in the way of real education;
– Identifying the context within which child development occurs and the biological, social and cultural factors that influence this process;
– Highlighting what the preconditions for healthy development and learning are;
– Characterising what learning means from an anthroposophical perspective;
– Emphasizing the awakening and growth of capacities rather than defining competences that have to be attained;
– Showing the importance of social learning in multicultural, socially diverse and mixed ability communities of practice;
– Showing how curriculum can be developed locally using inquiry, observation,

reflection, meditation, contemplation and dialogue;

– Stressing the need for discourse both within the Waldorf movement and in the public sector.

Some of the issues we have already addressed include core values of Waldorf early years education, an outline of the aims of foreign language teaching and learning in Waldorf education, the role of social learning in Waldorf education (the following article), school governance and the learning through science. These topics have provided the group with the opportunity to experiment with the form that such texts can have so that they say enough to be unam-biguous yet leave enough space for the complexity of the issues to be addressed. It is hoped to have the first texts available on the Pedagogical Section website in the course of 2014.

The members of the research group currently include Florian Osswald, Peter Lutzker, Martyn Rawson, Claus-Peter Röh, Ulrike Sievers, Franziska Spalinger and Michael Zech. This group have worked on clarifying the key issues involved, identifying what is needed and what forms "Waldorf Essentials" can take. Once this has been established the wider community of experienced Waldorf educators will be called in to write texts covering all the main subject areas.

Community as an Educational Task

Martyn Rawson, Claus-Peter Röh

Basic principles / the formative ideas

Forming community and social learning in community are important education goals of Steiner education in Waldorf schools. This is school as life and school as preparation for life in complex contemporary societies.

The social ethic of Waldorf schools is based on the reality that the individual comes to full selfhood through recognition of the other human beings and that a healthy society is one in which each person is able to carry a vision of the social good in their hearts, and when the people who make up a community and the institutions they create, strive to serve the needs of all the people.

The processes of social learning

Steiner education assumes that human beings bring to life sets of specific dispositions, intentions and biographical tasks. The individual unconsciously seeks developmental spaces and challenges in which these can be realised. Waldorf educational institutions (e.g. schools) provide the child with a heterogeneous group of peers that grow together and become a class community for 12 years. This group becomes a developmental and social field for learning, in which the developing human being can develop her identity in encounter with and in recognition of others within this group through sharing many common experiences (activities, stories, celebrations, class plays, outings and daily learning in school). Furthermore these classes are embedded in a school community, which positions itself in active engagement with the social, cultural and natural worlds around it

in time and space. Each Waldorf school is a community of learners in a particular cultural and social context over time. All aspects of the Waldorf curriculum offer opportunities for the individuals to learn about themselves and their relations to the natural and social and cultural worlds. Thus learning is always about identity, meaning-making as well as knowledge and these processes are always social in nature.

The way children and young people meet and interact is formative for their whole lives. Self-formation (in German-*Bildung*) of the individual occurs with and through interaction with the others within social structures that are created by the caring adults and teachers, but which children can increasingly contribute to in active ways. No two classes are the same and even school traditions and rituals change over time and through the people who enact them (e.g. the way the annual festivals are celebrated – since it has to be taken hold of anew each time). Since a co-educational Waldorf class is constituted out of children from different cultural and social backgrounds, different abilities and dispositions, it mirrors to an extent the social and cultural background of the wider community and is thus a significant learning field for intercultural relationships. Within this heterogeneous group, mutual interest, social commitments and responsibilities are practiced.

Questions:
– *How is our school engaged with the surrounding environment, culture and society?*

– *Are there any occasional or regular activities connected to the cultural or social environment?*
– *In which ways do we experience the fact that there are social aspects in every form of meaningful, profound learning?*
– *Which intercultural aspects and encounters are part of our school / class?*

The task of the teachers is to guide and shape these processes of social formation in ways that enable the pupils step by step to undertake responsibility for social processes. The challenge is to find a dynamic balance between leading and allowing space for development. This includes establishing habits, practices, rhythms, rituals, boundaries, and ways of relating. It also requires the teachers responsible for a class to develop awareness of social and developmental processes. This requires them to have pedagogical tact, so that they can accompany these processes in an active way, intervening where necessary, when developmental crises in the group or individual occur.

In the primary classes (1 to 3) the children are generally less aware of the differences of ability and background. Gradually, with the dawning of greater self-consciousness (often referred to as the "Rubicon") children become aware of differences. In response to this the curriculum offers many examples of human sharing and mutual dependence. From class 3 to 6 the children experience stories reflecting the ethnic and cultural solidarity of communities with laws and social traditions that help create social structures, in the mutually supportive work of craftspeople building houses or on the farm, by identifying what all human beings are in comparison with animals; these ideas are illustrated in a living way and reinforced. At the same time the fundamental dependence of human societies today and in former times on the natural world for life, energy and resources is explored.

Through phenomenological science and the history of discovery that characterises modern times, young people at puberty learn through the middle school years to engage with and understand the living world around them and thus develop their powers of observation and thinking, the basis for the subsequent emergence of independent thinking and judgement later. They experience the history of the struggles for emancipation of human societies in the age of industrialisation and modernity. So they come to understand the meaning of human rights and responsibilities, of individualism and social and democratic action.

In the upper school, the students engage artistically, intellectually and practically with the social world in a range of projects and practical work experience internships, in social projects and they learn to take increasing social responsibility within their class community. Towards the end of formal schooling young people begin to formulate biographical questions of identity and the roles they want to play in society, what they want to study, what profession they want to learn and what they can contribute to society.

The balance between the individual and the social group is exercised in many ways in the everyday life of school, including speaking report verses before the class, helping each other, working for others, being patient, learning to listen to others, celebrating birthdays, festivals, working together, making music together, performing plays together, going on excursions and carrying out projects. Each of these activities supports the processes of self-formation in the community. The dynamics of this process becomes particularly apparent when a new pupil joins

the existing class as a so-called lateral entrant and thus initiates a metamorphosis of the class community.

The class teacher, as leader of the team of teachers with responsibility for the class, accompanies these processes with interest and care, structuring when necessary, leaving open space where possible. The teacher also mediates between the child and the home and works closely with the parents in a pastoral professional capacity. Though the class teacher is an important role, it is one that is both professional and shared with other teachers, not least to ensure real continuity after the class teacher period and to ensure that unhealthy dependencies don't occur. The Waldorf class teacher is often burdened by a role – either assumed or imposed by others – of being all things to all people in a society with few recognised moral authorities. This burden has to be shared and restricted to the educational field.

Parents and teachers have a different relationship within the school community, in which they share joint responsibility for many practical aspects of school life, a relationship in which they are equal partners. Most Waldorf schools have some form of council of management involving parents and teachers with responsibility for the financial and legal status of the school as a public institution. This requires mutual respect, a strong sense of democratic principles and organisational and communication skills. If this work is to be a source of strength for the school, it needs to be based on a clear common understanding of the educational aims and principles of the schools.

Questions to the situation of our school:
– *Do we experience how pedagogical tact changes from "leading" to "allowing space for individual development" based on the*

teacher's perception of the pupils? In which educational situations and age groups did / does this occur?

– *In which main lesson blocks and events did / do we experience how children in the lower school develop an awareness for social processes through the unconscious will inherent in practical and music activities and in the practice of good habits?*

– *In which main lesson blocks and literatures of grade 4 to 6 did / do we experience how pupils discover the social issues that correspond with their own concerns and lead them to new questions?*

– *In which events and main lesson blocks of the middle school could / can we observe how the experience and discussion of incidents and issues spark a new quality of social awareness?*

– *Which areas of the upper school show how a growing awareness of identity within community and society, leads the students towards a new understanding of social responsibility?*

Situations that exemplify practice

Example 1. T*he stream of the tenses
– playing scenes in the fourth grade*

Following their joyful encounter with the craftspeople, the harvest of their corn and the stories from Norse mythology, the grade four pupils have become noticeably stronger in their demeanour and how they present themselves. As joyful as they are in the way they actively engage in learning, they can also engage just as strongly in conflict with each

other, each in her or his various individual ways. That can happen abruptly, for example during a grammar block. Asked to choose one of the tenses between the various forms between remote past and distant future, it only takes a few proud words by the representatives of the simple present tense to bring the cup to overflowing: "We are the most important! Without us nothing happens in the world! Everything would come to a standstill!" That generates anger among the representatives of the future tense and this is followed shortly by loud protest from the past. The pedagogical challenge is how the importance and identity of each tense can be recognised and valued in the context of the whole.

By the next morning the beginning of the scene has been written und the first tenses introduce themselves joyfully: the archivist of the town as past perfect (in blue-violet), the experienced captain as simple past (in blue), the customs officer of the past in the present, or present perfect (in green). Excitement grew over the next few days as the next tenses joined the scene one after another. How would the present suddenly appear (in yellow), how would the future appear (in red perhaps)? The question as to where all the tenses can meet in the town is resolved quickly to everyones satisfaction; down by the harbour in the "Time Café." Even in the scene the self-presentations lead to conflict that is resolved by the appearance of a special guest "The Lord of Time," who brings the conjunction words with him, *"after, if, and, or, as soon as possible"*, which lead all the tenses into flow and who are united in their common responsibility for the town.

Example 2. *Transformation*

Following a dynamic period of preparation, a new Waldorf school is founded in the North

that starts immediately with a sixth grade. The pupils in this class come from different schools and educational systems, as well as varied social backgrounds so that all in all, the group is a very heterogeneous community. While some of the pupils discover the joys of painting and find this a source of creativity, others enjoy singing. Others on the other hand come to school in the morning with stock exchange stories from the press and proceed to discuss these. It is decided that a trip to the World Heritage Site of *Haitabu,* a Viking village, will help bring the class together through a common experience. On the bus trip there, the class reveals itself as fully polarised. The stock market guys sit at the back and make jokes about the *Waldorf-woolly-hats troupe sitting* at the front. The march by foot across the Viking moor begins and thus the students delve into their stream of willing. With great joy of discovery, they decipher the runes on the standing stones and discover a 'probably genuine' Viking stone on the shoreline. Without the accompanying teachers being able to do anything, a water fight breaks out in the shallows in which the two factions of stock-market guys and woolly-hats completely dissolves (and never reforms) and in the end no one has dry clothes any more.

Example 3. *Friendships*

My school has a Martins market in November – a festival of sharing and celebrating the entry into winter. This is a big event in the schools calendar and is prepared by parents and teachers throughout the year. One of the highlights is the former pupils' café. Here, former pupils of the school meet each other and their former teachers informally. This year as a teacher I was responsible for the class serving the food and drink. I fell into conversation with two young men, Markus

and Daniel. They were in kindergarten together and in the same class through to the 12th grade. Markus is an eye surgeon in a well-known teaching hospital in the capital. Daniel is a joiner, specialising in building carports, garden sheds and decking. Daniel and Markus meet at least twice a year and more frequently if the opportunity arises. They are in regular mail and phone contact. Until recently they went on holiday together (Daniel now has two young children with his partner) and spent a year after school doing work and travel in Australia and Thailand. Daniel made the point in our conversation that their relationship is different to family because it is an entirely voluntary relationship. They stay in touch because they want to, out of mutual interest. They couldnt think of many common hobbies or interests they have, in fact the acknowledged how different they have always been – except for the fact that they did many things together and spent time together.

Conclusion

It was Steiners intention that people from different social classes, different professions and backgrounds share school experiences. It was a way that education could try to balance and redress and ultimately transcend the inequalities of social segregation the class and social status that often characterise society. The more a Waldorf class genuinely represents a cross-section of society, the better it can fulfil this role. In a class of Waldorf pupils – in my school that means around 35 people, there is a rich social mix of personalities, ideally of mixed social and cultural backgrounds. These people grow and mature together over 12 years. A Waldorf class has some aspects of an extended family but there are important differences to family – the togetherness comes from shared experience not shared genes. It is a field full of tensions and rivalries, cliques and factions, loyalties and solidarity and as such a preparation for social life.

The above examples of grade 4 and 6 show that existing tensions within a class can change. One of the educational means making this kind of change possible, is to enable forms of social encounters which differ from the usual conversations. These can be common activities, excursions, drama projects or playing instruments in the class orchestra. The emergence of new societal qualities becomes possible wherever the individual will connects to the will of others. Common artistic activities are important helpers in implementing various possibilities of shared experience.

Interestingly, young people often choose their love partners from outside this group – probably because they know each other too well for that kind of idealising relationship. Every day in small and large ways this community has to deal with the problems that arise because there is a long term commitment from all concerned – teachers and pupils (and ideally parents) – to living and working together co-operatively and collaboratively. This is no easy task but it is perhaps the most important one. It is not simply a means to serving the ends of optimising qualifications but rather seeks to 'qualify' people, that is, to make them ready for peaceful co-existence with others, especially others who are different. And whilst participation is not entirely voluntary, the learning community has a primarily social function as preparation for the task of living in the wider multicultural and socially fluid post-modern society.

Media Education – Fundamentals of the Waldorf Educational Concept

Dr. Edwin Hübner
Translated by Karin Smith

The explicit educational objective at Waldorf Schools is that every pupil, at the end of formal schooling, is able to employ all media competently for his or her own ongoing education. Furthermore, every pupil should understand the technical construction and function of media. Pupils study the theoretical background and practical applications of media and thus become competent media users. With these educational objectives, Waldorf schools answer a contemporary demand.

The decisive difference to many current educational theories lies **alone** in the methodology, that is, in the technique of **how** the objectives are to be achieved.

The children's developmental steps between birth and adulthood form the basis of Waldorf education. Three distinct phases, called the "Seven Year Cycle", can be observed by anyone who deeply studies child development.[1] Each phase presents the child with a particular developmental task.

The Foundation of Media Competence
Media competence includes the use of all forms of media:

- Literacy competence
- competence in all areas of production and critical understanding of images
- competence in all areas of production and critical understanding of music

Once they have been mastered, the competencies become independent of the actual medium. An adult's literacy skills do not depend on the actual medium, they are the same whether paper or digital media are used. A child's mind cannot cognitively grasp computer technology, but the average schoolchild has the ability to understand the technology behind paper production.

The development of the human being is the basic guiding principle of Waldorf education. The child wants to explore the world mainly through physical activity. Abstract, cognitive activity is not within the child's nature, not even at the start of primary education. The methodology of Waldorf education connects to the child's nature and bases all learning on practical and artistic activities. The children start exploring literacy through the activity of painting as the basis of the first letters; this artistic painting of letters eventually leads to the writing of complete words. The children write on paper and then practice the abstract skill of reading on the words they themselves have written. This method speaks to the whole human being: Artistic painting strengthens the willing and feeling aspect of the human being; transforming images into abstract symbols calls on conceptual thinking.

Computers and the Ability to Pass Judgement
Anyone who observes their own use of computers will notice that computers mainly call

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1   See for example Dieter Baacke's three volumes on child development.

on our conceptual thinking while neglecting the physical body.[2] The physical body, the basis for all human activity, is immobilised.[3] There is hardly any need for the will. However, any device which mainly appeals to conceptual thinking and neglects the active will is diametrically opposed to the methodology of Waldorf education in the early years of schooling.

Worldwide we don't find any computers for pupils under the age of 12 in schools which practice Waldorf education. Even though Waldorf education regards the use of computers as important, just as any other educational theory, it is convinced that the central question is the *age* at which a child can reasonably be expected to use computers *independently and meaningfully*. The ability to pass autonomous judgements is the basis for the meaningful, self-directed use of computers, but the child cannot develop this ability before the age of twelve. The maturation of the physical body, particularly the brain, is the basis for the development of autonomous judgement; this maturation does not happen before the age of twelve and it is from this age onwards that it can make educational sense, and becomes indeed necessary to start using computers with children.[4]

Serious Effects of Early Computer Usage

It might be argued that such an approach is out of date and remote from real life because nowadays computers are a crucial part of our daily routine and social life. This is indeed so, but the same can be said about cars. The fact that a particular technology is an essential part of society does not legitimize using it as early as possible in the educational setting of a school. If we seriously consider children's development and contemplate the factors which enhance their individual physical, emotional and spiritual maturation, then we understand the counterproductive educational consequences of premature computer usage.

These are some of the reasons why Waldorf Education considers the use of computers in the early years of school not only as inappropriate but even as pedagogically harmful.[5]

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2   Based on the observations of two authors: Capurro, R. (1999). *Die Welt – ein Traum?* http://www.capurro.de/luzern.html (25.05.2013). For English translations of some of Capurro's work see: http://www.capurro.de/home-eng.html (Ed.)
    Böhme, H. (1996). Die technische Form Gottes. Über die theologischen Implikationen von Cyberspace. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung.* 13.04.1996.
3   Schachtner, C. (1993) Geistmaschine. Faszination und Provokation am Computer. Suhrkamp. Frankfurt. 1993
4   LEBER, Stefan: Die Menschenkunde der Waldorfpädagogik, Anthropologische Grundlagen der Erziehung des Kindes und Jugendlichen, Stuttgart 1993, S. 443ff.
    STRAUCH, Barbara: Warum sie so seltsam sind, Gehirnentwicklung bei Teenagern, Berlin 2003
5   BUDDEMEIER, Heinz: Illusion und Manipulation, Die Wirkung von Film und Fernsehen auf Individuum und Gesellschaft; Stuttgart 1987
    SCHUBERTH, Ernst: Erziehung in einer Computergesellschaft, Datentechnik und die werdende Intelligenz des Menschen; Stuttgart 1990
    PATZLAFF, Rainer: Kindheit verstummt, Sprachverlust und Sprachpflege im Zeitalter der Medien, in: Erziehungskunst, 7/8 1999
    PATZLAFF, Rainer: Der gefrorene Blick, Die physiologische Wirkung des Fernsehens und die Entwicklung des Kindes; Stuttgart 2000
    HÜBNER, Edwin: Mit Computern leben, Kinder erziehen, Zukunft gestalten; Stuttgart 2001
    HÜBNER, Edwin: Anthropologische Medienerziehung, Grundlagen und Gesichtspunkte; Frankfurt am Main 2005

There is a significant number of international studies and educational experience which confirm our view.[6]

Furthermore, contemporary brain research is seriously critical of early computer usage because of its grave effects on the physical development of children's brains which can have negative consequences on future learning.[7]

German high school teachers complained in summer 2012 about the fact that although students are proficient with computers and internet, their literacy skills are seriously flawed.[8]

For Waldorf teachers and other educationalists, this as a worrying sociological trend caused by allowing children the use of highly complex gadgets before they have mastered the necessary primary skills which are the basis for a competent usage of computers and internet.[9] The Waldorf curriculum, therefore, emphasizes the acquisition of literacy, visual skills and music competence as the basis for a sensible use of computers and internet.

Ever since the founding of the first school, Waldorf education has taken a positive and constructive stance on technology.

Media Education and Computer Literacy

Even before the opening of the first Waldorf school in 1919, Rudolf Steiner stressed the

HÜBNER, Edwin: Medien und Gesundheit, Was Kinder brauchen und wovor man sie schützen muss, Stuttgart 2006

HÜBNER, Edwin: Individualität und Bildungskunst, Menschwerdung in technischen Räumen, Heidelberg 2010

BLECKMANN, Paula: Medienmündig. Wie unsere Kinder selbstbestimmt mit dem Bildschirm umgehen lernen, Stuttgart 2012

6   For example:
BRADY, Karen: Dropout rise a net result of computers, in: The Buffalo News vom 21.04.1997
OPPENHEIMER, Todd: The Computer Delusion, 1997, http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97jul/computer.htm (Stand 25.05.2013)
KIRKPATRICK, Heather; CUBAN, Larry: Computers Make Kids Smarter – Right?, in: Technos Quarterly, Summer 1998, Vol.7, No. 2 http://www.ait.net/technos/tq_07/2cuban.php (Stand 25.05.2013)
STOLL, Clifort: Logout, Warum Computer nichts im Klassenzimmer zu suchen haben und andere High-Tech-Ketzereien, Frankfurt/M 2001
ANGRIST, Joshua, LAVY, Victor: New Evidence on Classroom Computers and Pupil Learning, in: The Economic Journal No. 112 (October), pp. 735-765, 2002 http://economics.mit.edu/files/22 (Stand 25.05.2013)
LEUVEN, Edwin et al: The effect of extra funding for disadvantaged students on achievement, 2004 http://ftp.iza.org/dp1122.pdf (Stand 25.05.2013)

7   SPITZER, Manfred: Digitale Demenz, Wie wir uns und unsere Kinder um den Verstand bringen, 2012

8   PANY, Thomas: Studierende mit alarmierenden Lese- und Schreibschwächen, in:
http://www.heise.de/tp/blogs/6/152450 (Stand 25.05.2013)
Medienkompetenz sehr gut, deutsche Sprache mangelhaft, Studie fördert bestürzende Lücken bei Studienanfängern zutage, in: http://www.dradio.de/dkultur/sendungen/thema/1818985/ (Stand 25.05.2013)
LEHN, Birgitta vom; Wolf, Gerhard: Gute Selbstdarstellung, schlechte Sprachbeherrschung, 15.07.2012 http://www.faz.net/aktuell/beruf-chance/kenntnisse-von-studienanfaengern-gute-selbstdarstellung-schlechte-sprachbeherrschung-11811473.html (Stand 25.05.2013)

9   Beispielsweise: HENTIG, Hartmut von: Die Schule neu denken, Eine Übung in praktischer Vernunft, Eine zornige, aber nicht eifernde, eine radikale, aber nicht utopische Antwort auf Hoyerswerda und Mölln, Rostock und Solingen; München, Wien 1993, S. 32ff

importance of understanding at least the principles of the devices which surround us. Therefore, he postulated that no pupil should leave school without having understood the underlying principles of the technical devices he or she uses daily.[10] We should go through life with the notion that we understand the fundamental workings of objects and processes in our immediate surroundings. In the 21st century, computer and information technology must be part of those objects and processes.

In accordance with the basic intentions of Waldorf education, it is part of the teaching of science and technology that pupils learn about the key functions of everyday devices such as engines, telephones, screens etc. In the mid 80's, Waldorf teachers were already looking for methods to discuss computer technology in schools.[11] Teachers at Waldorf schools started at around that time to introduce lessons about computers and computer technology in grade 9, and based them on several central aspects:

- the practical use of computers (ten-finger system for typing, use of basic applications)
- an understanding of the principles of information technology (hardware)
- a basic insight into the technique of programming (software)
- the historical and cultural aspects of IT

Those objectives were implemented in each school according to the school's individual

possibilities. There is no common technology curriculum at Waldorf schools but there is a common approach. Part of this approach is the consensus that IT education should begin with the practical usage of electronic components and devices.[12]

The ten-finger system for typing should be introduced and practiced no later than in grade 9. In grade 10 or 11, basic computer circuits, based on relay or transistors, should be built and investigated (NOR, OR, NAND, AND, half-adders, full-adders, flip-flop etc). This will lead the pupil to an understanding of the functions of microprocessors. A longer sequence in programming has been taken up by many schools as part of the curriculum.

The overall objective is to show how the machine "computer" changes human logic into a sequence of physical modifications. When pupils explore these modifications, they realize that only human thinking can make sense of these connections and their final state.

Computer technology does not only include theoretical and applied media education. The computer – as part of the ongoing expansion of the internet – is also used as an educational medium.

Many teachers, especially in the upper classes, include the possibilities of the internet in their lessons wherever it makes educational sense. For example, from grade 8 or 9 onwards, various methods of presentation can be implemented and practiced, some of

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10 STEINER, Rudolf: Erziehungskunst, Methodisch-Didaktisches, GA 294, Dornach 1975, S. 162
11 Ernst SCHUBERTH fasste die damaligen Überlegungen in seinem grundlegenden Werk „Erziehung in einer Computergesellschaft – Datentechnik und die werdende Intelligenz des Menschen", Stuttgart 1990, zusammen.
12 In dem 2003 erschienenen Versuch der Darstellung eines allgemeinen Rahmenlehrplans für die Waldorfschulen, wurden diese L. KOLLIGS zusammengefasst: KOLLIGS, L.: Informatik – Computerkunde, in: Tobias Richter (Hrsg.): Pädagogischer Auftrag und Unterrichtsziele – vom Lehrplan der Waldorfschule, Stuttgart 2003, S. 370 – 379

which might be computer based; their advantages and disadvantages are discussed in class. Those skills can become part of an oral test within the context of a presentation; implemented, for example, as part of the "Abitur" (GCSE / Baccalaureate or similar federally approved examination) in the German region of Hessen.

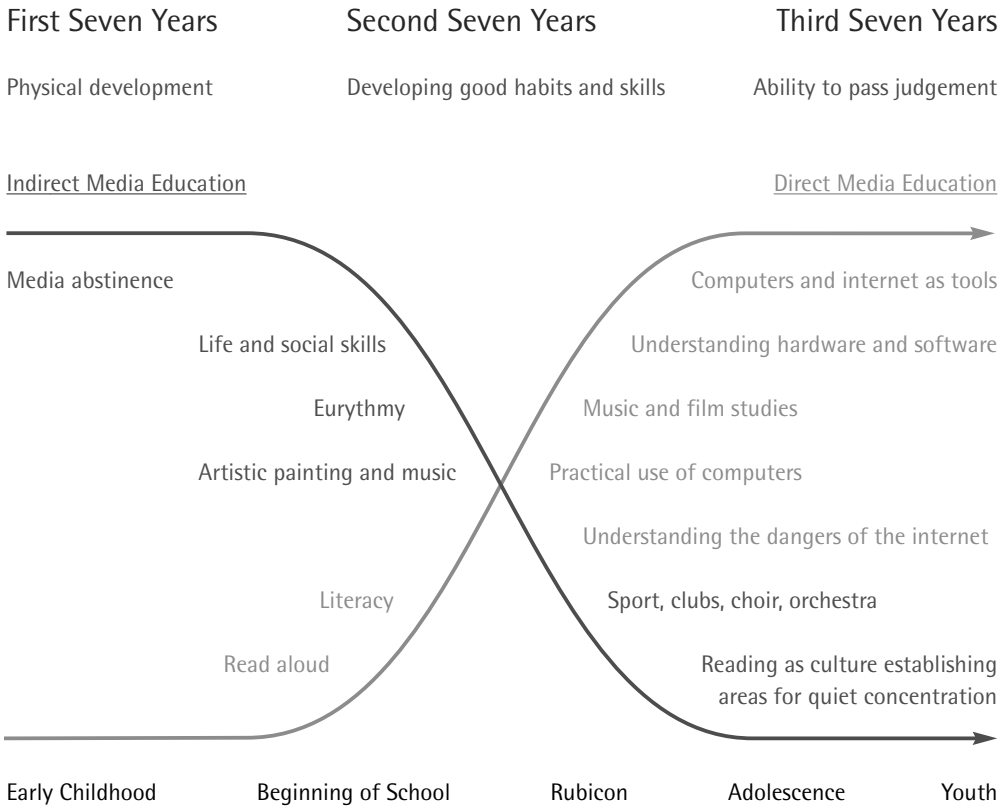## Direct and Indirect Media Education

Life in a high-tech world, full of media, requires life skills which might not be directly related to the use of media but are nevertheless crucial. Those skills must be learned and practised without the use of technology. Media education can therefore be divided into two distinct areas: **indirect media education** and **direct media education**. Every education in the 21st century is an education within the context of technology and media; indirect media education is thus part of every form of pedagogy. Direct media education, however, explores the function, effect and use of media in lessons dedicated to the particular topic of media.

The children's and teenagers' daily consumption of violent computer games and their use of social networks need specific attention. Both can, according to initial studies, lead to a decrease in the ability to empathize with others.[13] We therefore need to create an alternative, particularly in pedagogy. The social skills needed in social networks have to be practiced in real life. The methods and the organisation of Waldorf education, with its value of the class teacher, offer particular possibilities to experience human relationships and to develop social skills such as empathy. One of the unique ways of organizing timetables and the choice of subjects at Waldorf schools is for example the so-called "Main Lesson", a daily two hour block dedicated to a particular subject for three or four weeks; furthermore, there are regular drama and music projects. The students are given ample opportunity to create social networks in the real world by getting involved in projects for various age groups. All these activities may be regarded as indirect media education and as an answer to the challenges of virtual social networks.

Therefore, the principle of a media curriculum for Waldorf schools can be characterized with the following illustration:

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13 MÖßLE, Thomas; KLEIMANN, Matthias, REHBEIN, Florian: Bildschirmmedien im Alltag von Kindern und Jugendlichen, Problematische Mediennutzungsmuster und ihr Zusammenhang mit Schulleistungen und Aggressivität, Baden Baden 2007
MÖßLE, Thomas: „dick, dumm, abhängig, gewalttätig?", Problematische Mediennutzungsmuster und ihre Folgen im Kindesalter, Ergebnisse des Berliner Längsschnitt Medien, Baden Baden 2012
BUERMANN, Uwe: Aufrecht durch die Medien, Chancen und Gefahren des Informationszeitalters und die neuen Aufgaben der Pädagogik, Flensburg 2007
TURKLE, Sherry: Verloren unter 100 Freunden, Wie wir in der digitalen Welt verkümmern, München 2012. English Edition: *Alone Together.* Basic Books. New York 2011.

First Seven Years	Second Seven Years	Third Seven Years
Physical development	Developing good habits and skills	Ability to pass judgement

Indirect Media Education   Direct Media Education

Media abstinence   Computers and internet as tools

Life and social skills   Understanding hardware and software

Eurythmy   Music and film studies

Artistic painting and music   Practical use of computers

                                    Understanding the dangers of the internet

Literacy   Sport, clubs, choir, orchestra

Read aloud   Reading as culture establishing
                                      areas for quiet concentration

Early Childhood	Beginning of School	Rubicon	Adolescence	Youth

In the first 12 years, indirect media education plays a central role. The direct use of every kind of media is still in the background and is not forced on the children. From the age of twelve onwards, direct media education becomes more and more important. Students will be able to demonstrate their expertise in the field of media at a federally accredited exam at the end of their schooling.

Introducing Dialogue in Early Foreign Language Teaching

Dr. Christoph Jaffke

In his comprehensive presentation of Waldorf Foreign-Language Teaching Johannes Kiersch expressed the opinion that in the first three school years the language teaching had significantly fallen behind Rudolf Steiner's expectations as far as active use was concerned."[1]. It is no use arguing which specific expectations Rudolf Steiner had concerning the communicative competence of pupils in Class 3, as we have no definitive statements about this.

In the course of the first few years of the Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner gave a number of hints about foreign language teaching in the Lower School. The following perhaps belong to the most important ones:

In 1920, in a series of lectures to teachers, Rudolf Steiner recommended introducing the language in an informal, everyday, conversational way. This would have a tremendously awakening effect on the souls of the children if pursued without any overt grammar.

"Our children start learning English and French as soon as they start school. We spend more time on this than is usual." [GA 301][2]

"We connect not with the words of the other language, but directly with the thing described ... "The child simply learns to speak the language in direct connection with the outer world." [GA 311]

"What matters is that you conduct the language lessons as conversation. [GA 300b]

"In the first three years (of school) poetic language is definitely to be preferred to prose." [GA 300c]

Early foreign language teaching then rests on two pillars: the legato language of poetry and the language of daily interaction, prose. Rudolf Steiner's expressly stated preference for poetic language unfortunately led to the decades-long misunderstanding that children should primarily learn foreign language poems and songs by heart in the first three years of school. Yet he indicated equally clearly that the dialogical element and "everyday conversation" should be fostered just as much.

Recent research in foreign language teaching has shown that it can be a great help for learners at the beginning if for these "everyday conversations" they are given certain formulaic expressions or *chunks* which have not yet been analysed cognitively, i.e. understood in detail, but whose meaning as a whole can be clearly recognised through their context – and through the body language of the teacher. They represent *islands of security* or *secure havens* for the beginning learners and enable the children to interact with one another in the foreign language right from the first lesson.

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1   J. Kiersch 1992 *Fremdsprachen in der Waldorfschule:* Rudolf Steiners Konzept eines ganzheitlichen Fremdsprachenunterrichts. Stuttgart 1992, S. 81

2   R. Steiner: *Die Erneuerung der pädagogisch-didaktischen Kunst durch Geisteswissenschaft.* Vierzehn Vorträge für Teacher aus öffentlichen Schulen, Basel, 20. April bis 11. Mai 1920 [GA 301]. – 3. Auflage, Dornach 1977, S. 93

Various researchers in early foreign language have recently pointed to this phenomenon[3], but it seems that incorporating these repetitive chunks when encouraging children to speak to each other is much too little practised.

This procedure can be most clearly demonstrated in connection with learning games. (The English examples given here can easily be applied to other languages).

Play is the ideal framework, for here the pupil's attention is fully focussed on the play-activity. Learning happens "by the way" (incidental learning). According to E.-M. Kranich children develop "… – especially when playing – those competences through which, in later life, all learning and working can attain their full human potential – by completely connecting with the activity and the effort and the intensified activity. In play, children completely fill their will-activity with meaningful content, with imagination, intelligence, and joy. … Play is the activity in which all the child's abilities work together most completely."[4]

The Penny Is Hidden

Let us start with a little dialogue which, like so many, starts with a rhyme:

> *The penny is hidden,*
> *Where can it be –*
> *In my right hand, in my left hand,*
> *Please tell me.*

The teacher shows the children the coin and then hides it behind her back. Now one of the children is given the coin, puts both hands behind his or her back and then brings each closed hand to the front in rhythm with the lines "right hand, left hand" with the coin in one of them. Then the other children ask: "Is the penny in your (right) hand?" "No, it isn't. It is in my (left) hand." … The pupil who has guessed correctly is allowed to hide the penny the next time round.

It makes sense to practise this short dialogue in chorus to begin with, but then the individual children can ask and answer the question from the first lesson in Class 1.[5]

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3   C. Jaffke 2008 *Fremdsprachenunterricht auf der Primarstufe. Seine Begründung und Praxis in der Waldorfpädagogik.* 3. Auflage Stuttgart [Erste Auflage Weinheim 1994]: S. 288 und 313f.

4   E.-M. Kranich 1992 Entwicklung und Erziehung in der frühen Kindheit, in: S. Leber (Hg.): *Die Pädagogik der Waldorfschule und ihre Grundlagen.* 3. Auflage Darmstadt, S. 80

5   The following dialogue offers itself for learners of German as a foreign language:

> *Pinke-panke, Schmied ist kranke,*
> *Wo soll er wohnen –*
> *Oben oder unten drin?*

A coin, a button or a hazelnut is hidden in one hand behind the back. Then both fists are brought forward and alternately beaten one over the other. If the 'correct' hand is picked, it is opened with this answer:

> *Genau, genau, Du bist so schlau.*

If the 'wrong' hand is chosen, it is opened with this rhyme:

> *Leider ist Herr Krause heute nicht zu Hause.*

*

I'm Standing, I'm Sitting

We can take the popular *action rhyme* "I'm standing, I'm sitting" as the starting point for a second activity:

I'm standing, I'm sitting,
I'm writing, I'm knitting,

I'm reading, I'm counting,
I'm swimming, I'm shouting.

I'm eating, I'm drinking,
I'm talking, I'm thinking.

I'm giving, I'm taking,
I'm sweeping, I'm baking.

I'm laughing, I'm looking,
I'm washing, I'm cooking,

I'm driving, I'm rowing,
I'm kneeling, I'm growing.

I show my right hand,
I show my left hand,

I show both my hands,
And now I will stand (sit) still.

Through the fixed expressions, this sequence of actions offers a whole series of possibilities to give children the appropriate expressive tools for guessing games. To begin with, the children work their way into the context of the chain of actions through speaking them in chorus accompanied by the appropriate gestures. Then this context is broken up and leads over into various question and answer games:

1. The teachers asks: "*Am I sitting?*" The children answer, initially in chorus: *"No, you're not, you are standing."* As soon as the children have understood what it is all about, individual children can make up three questions, encour-

aged by the teacher: "Who would like to do three things / ask three questions?" – 'Obvious' questions are very popular, like: "Am I driving?" "No, you are not, you're sleeping."

2. One child leaves the classroom and does something in the corridor. Another child stands at the door and observes. Initially, the children limit themselves to actions they know from the above verse. By and by, new ones are added. The children in the classroom now ask the "reporter" in turn: *"Is she (he) looking"? "No, she isn't / is not." – "Is she counting?" "No, she isn't." etc. "Is she jumping?" "Yes, she is."*

3. One pupil goes out and comes back a short time later. Now he or she is asked: *"Were you looking?" "No, I was not/wasn't." "Were you laughing?" "No, I wasn't." "Were you running?" "No, I wasn't." etc. "Were you lying on the floor?" "Yes, I was."*

4. The fourth variation is more appropriate for Class 2 or 3 when the pupils have acquired a basic vocabulary about clothing. One child stands with arms outstretched in front of the class and slowly turns so that all the children can clearly see the details of his clothing. Then the child goes out and changes three things (e. g. opens a shirt button, changes hair or rolls up one trouser leg a little). When he comes back, the others ask questions like: *"Have you rolled up your trousers?" "Have you changed your hair?" "Have you exchanged your shoes?" "Have you opened your shirt?"*

The English Bag

A third example can be used to introduce various word families: the *English Bag*. It might be toy cars (if possible authentic ones like a London taxi, a London double-decker bus, a police car, an ambulance, a fire engine ...). It might also be various animals, or objects which the children deal with every day in school or at home like a pencil, a pencil sharpener, an eraser, a fountain-pen or a ruler. As another variation we can bring things from the kitchen: a teaspoon, a soup spoon, a knife, a fork, a ladle. We can also use various fruits or vegetables. The possibilities are endless.

Using five different formulaic expressions ('chunks'), the children can take part in this game with almost no other prerequisites:

1. *"In the English Bag there is ..."* The objects are taken out of the bag one after the other, displayed, named and laid on a table or, in the case of the movable classroom where all the children are sitting in a circle, on the floor. The children repeat the words in chorus. It makes sense to keep the number of objects small at the beginning, not more than five.

2. In a second step, individual children are allowed to say which object should be put back in the bag. Teacher: "Please tell me what to put back in the *English Bag.*" Pupil: *"Please put back the* [small London taxi]." "*Please put back the* [ambulance]."

3. One pupil is given the *English Bag*, puts his inside and touches an object – hidden from the other children. They try to discover what object the pupil is just holding: *"Have you got ... in your hand?" "No, I haven't." / "Yes, I have."*

4. Five children are given an object from *The English Bag*. They stand in a circle and as soon as the other children have closed their eyes ("Eyes shut, heads down, please!") they swap the objects among one another ("Give one, take one – no grabbing!"). Then the five children go around and put their object on the table of one of the children (in the movable classroom, on the floor in front of one of the children). – One child counts slowly from 1 to 7, so that those who cannot make up their minds where to place their object realise that time is running out.

When all the objects have been distributed, the five children stand next to one another in front of the blackboard and the others are told to open their eyes: "Heads up, please." All the children open their eyes and those with an object in front of them pick it up and stand up. Now the gripping question: "Did you put the crocodile on my desk/in front of me, Robert?" "No, I didn't/did not." – "Yes, I did." ... The children who have guessed correctly move forward to the next round. To avoid confusion, they first stand apart from the others (by the window or door). The ones that were picked go back to their seats.

5. Finally, the children who were not chosen say which object they put in front of which pupil: "*I put* [the rattlesnake] *on* [Jennifer]*'s desk / in front of* [Jennifer] ..."

*

Many more such examples could be invented. – My most recent teaching experiences in

the Lower School in Germany and abroad have confirmed to me how easily and indeed, naturally children immerse themselves and move about in the foreign language with the help of fixed expressions.

From Doing to Understanding is a basic pedagogical principle for teaching in the Lower and Middle School In the games described, the children use core elements of English grammar, although they have no awareness of the existence of grammar. These elements are, among others,

- the *Present Continuous/Progressive*
- the forms of the *Past Continuous*
- *Present Perfect*
- *Simple Past*

It is from the Middle School that language teaching also has the task of making the learners conscious of the grammatical structures and rules giving them "that inner groundedness they need for life".[6] It makes sense that experienced teachers come back to play activities in which the children's emotions were involved. In this context these teachers make use of the numerous formulaic expressions that their pupils have by now acquired unconsciously. The more such fixed expressions are learned in the Lower School, the better.

Recent didactic research has shown that language expressions acquired in the early learning stages are applied, i. e. are also used in other contexts. Thus they have great rele-vance far beyond the framework of the 'every-day conversations' in the Lower School.[7]

Numerous other topics are, of course, also dealt with in these *factual/everyday conversations* in the first few years of learning. They cover colours, classroom objects, family, pets, the weather, the seasons, food and drink.

An "Everyday Conversation" — Poetry–Based

The following transcript (extract) from a lesson at the end of the school year in a Class 3, shows that also the poetic language, for which a basis was laid in the first three years of school, can form a starting point for "everyday conversations". A poem about the seasons was the starting point for the following conversation. In this conversation, the children often used turns of phrase that for them had become fixed expressions (chunks), but some questions clearly went beyond the familiar frame.[8] It is noteworthy that the teacher often accepted shorter utterances by students and expanded them into longer sentences. Through such *expansions,* the children become attentive to longer, connected expressions. All utterances that are grammatically incorrect are mirrored in correct language in a way that the respective pupil does not feel exposed or 'corrected'.

The poem was first recited in chorus. When the children had sat down, the following conversation took place:

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6   R. Steiner: *Gegenwärtiges Geistesleben und Erziehung*. Ein Vortragszyklus, Ilkley (Yorkshire), 5. bis 17. August 1923. [GA 307] Dornach, 5. Aufl. 1986, S. 194

7   Karin Aguado 2002 Formelhafte Sequenzen und ihre Funktionen für den L2-Erwerb: *ZfAL* 37: 27 – 49
    Roshanak Saberi 2008 „*Memorisierte Chunks*" – *Möglichkeiten der unterrichtlichen Integration*. Masterarbeit Universität Kassel. Fachbereich Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften. Fachgebiet Deutsch als Fremd- und Zweitsprache: Sprachlehr- und -Lernforschung

8   This is the poem in question:

Teacher:	"I have a few questions for you. Please tell me some signs for spring!"
A pupil:	"The blackbird comes and sings sweet and clear."

Teacher repeats what was said to make it clear for all the children. Then he asks:

	"What else does the blackbird do besides singing sweet and clear?"
Pupil:	"The blackbird builds its nest."
Teacher:	"And another sign for spring?"
Pupil:	"The violets peep through the blades of grass."
Teacher expands:	"The violets, very shy, little flowers, they peep through the blades of grass. Do you know another sign for spring?"
Pupil:	"The very green trees."
Teacher:	"Yes, the trees get green."
Another pupil:	"The spring is before summer."
Teacher:	"That's right, spring comes before summer. – Please tell me some signs for summer."
Pupil:	"The honey-bees hum."
Teacher:	"The honey-bees hum, that's right.".
Another pupil shouts:	„Herr X, ich hab' noch eins: The cows stand under the shady trees."
Teacher:	"Very good. Now why do the cows stand under the trees?"

A pupil calls out, without putting up her hand:

	"Too hot!"

– Many pupils laugh approvingly.

Teacher:	"Yes, that's right, because it's too hot in the sun. That's why they go under the shady trees, the cows."
Another pupil:	"The butterflies flit."
Another pupil:	"The berries are ripe.
Teacher:	"Yes, that's right. You can go and pick the berries and eat them, or you can cook them at home and have some nice jam in winter ... Do you know any other signs for summer?"
Pupil:	"The sun is ..."

– thinks , another child helps by shouting,

	"hot".
Teacher:	"and ...",

What does it mean when the blackbird comes
And builds its nest, singing sweet and clear?

When violets peep through the blades of grass?
These are the signs that spring is here.

What does it mean when the berries are ripe?
When butterflies flit and honey-bees hum?
When cattle stand under the shady trees?
These are the signs that summer has come.

What does it mean when the crickets chirp,
And away to the south the swallows steer?

When apples are falling and leaves grow brown?
These are the signs that autumn is here.

What does it mean when the days are short?
When leaves are gone and brooks are dumb?
When fields are white with drifted snow?
These are the signs that winter has come.

The seasons come and the seasons go;
The skies that were stormy grow bright and clear;
And so the beautiful, wonderful signs
Go round and round through the changing year.

Pupil:	"high."
Teacher:	"Yes, the sun climbs high in the sky." ...
Another pupil:	"Kids singing."
Teacher:	"Yes, the kids sing out in the garden, don't they."
Another pupil:	"Swimming."
Teacher:	"I see, you go swimming. – Now children, please tell me some signs for autumn."
Pupil:	"The apples are falling."
Teacher:	"That's right, in autumn the apples fall."
Another pupil:	"The crickets chirp in the autumn."
Teacher:	"That's true, the crickets chirp. Another sign?"
Another pupil:	"Away to the south the swallows steer."
Teacher:	"Yes, the swallows, they steer away to the south, to warm countries."
Another pupil:	"In autumn the leaves grow brown."
Another pupil:	"In autumn the kids eat apples."
Teacher:	"In autumn the children eat apples. Another sign for autumn?"
Pupil:	"It's getting cool in autumn."
Teacher:	"Yes, in autumn it gets cooler. Some days in autumn can be quite cold already."
Another pupil:	"In autumn, cows do not stand under shady trees."
Teacher:	"Right, now do you know any signs for winter, please?"
Pupil:	"The brooks are dumb."
Teacher:	"Yes, the small rivers do not speak any more. You cannot hear the brooks murmur any more, because the water has frozen."
Another pupil:	"The days are short."
Another pupil:	"The snowman comes."
Another pupil:	"The night is long."
Teacher:	"Right, in winter the nights are long."
Another pupil:	"We go *Schlittschuhfahren*."
Teacher:	"I see, you go skating on the ice."
Another pupil:	"Children go skiing."
Another pupil:	"The leaves are gone."
Teacher:	"Very nice!" ...
Another pupil:	"The fields are white with drifted snow."
Teacher:	"Wonderful."
Another pupil:	"The tree is white."
Teacher:	"Yes, the trees are white. And another sign?"
Another pupil:	"The house is warm."
Teacher:	"It's nice and warm in the house, isn't it? – All right. That's fine. Thank you very much."

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Transitions as Developmental Dynamics between Dissolution and Re-Birth (Part One)

Claus-Peter Röh
Translated by Karin Smith

Starting from birth, there are three different movements mutually permeating each other in the child's development.

- If we observe a small child, we are amazed to see how it expresses itself in movement, gestures, sounds, eye contact and facial expression.
- These lively expressions emerge from the innermost core of the child and are closely connected to the growth of the organism; there is harmony between soul qualities and physical development.
- The small child can be seen as one complete sense organ; this is the reason why it absorbs all external sensory impressions entirely, and, by the power of imitation, is deeply connected with its surroundings.

These three aspects permeate each other and it is at this interaction point where the child develops day by day. The spiritual element radiates outwards the soul and is thus closely connected to the physical body and its surroundings. However, despite all the movement, we also notice *phases of consolidation* within the child's temporal development. In these phases, the child incorporates new experience and recently acquired skills into an existing framework, and by doing so, the experience in turn strengthens the child. So, on the one hand, we see phases of consolidation, but on the other hand, we observe *dynamic phases of metamorphosis* which strongly influence the child's development. New, unsettling impulses lead the child into transitional phases with their own dynamics

of transformation, departure, sensitivity and insecurity. The aim of the planned Teachers and Early Childhood Educators' Conference, just before Easter in 2015, is to explore the qualities, dangers and possibilities of those phases of transition and re-birth.

Transitions in Childhood, from Birth to 14 Significance, Challenges and Consequences
Tasks for Teachers and Early Childhood Educators

Conference of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum and IASWECE, the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education

– 31st March to 3rd April 2015 –

Anthroposophical Perspectives of Transitions
There is is a dynamic relation between the changes and turning points in child development and working with Anthroposophy. To start with, I want to consider the three stages of metamorphosis described by Rudolf Steiner at the end of lecture three in *Supersensible Physiology and Balance in Teaching* (21st September 1920): Conscious studying, – meditative and repeated processing in order to "digest" and deeply understand the content, – and, as a third step, remembering anthropological psychology during teaching which leads to new, creative impulses and activities. To sum up, the three stages may be connected to the following qualities:

– Studying Anthroposophy – conscious thinking perception

– Meditating Anthroposophy – repeated intimate contemplation

– Remembering Anthroposophy – actively creating new impulses

At the moments of transition from one developmental step to the next, when the child changes on the inside and on the outside, we are faced with the challenge of moving from stage one to stage two of the process described above: How do we achieve the transition from ordinary thinking and observation to a streaming way of thinking? The child's inner being brings forth metamorphosis, and we can only discern this inner being, if our cognition becomes "fluid" as it were. If this does not happen, then there is a danger that we remain on the surface of observation. Rudolf Steiner encourages teachers to develop a precise insight of transitional moments.

"These changes are mentioned, it is true, but only as they affect the actual physical body of the child or are expressed in the soul's more superficial dependence on the physical body. Consequently, people have little to say about the important changes that have occurred in the child's whole physical organization, such as those that happen at the change of teeth, at puberty and again after the twentieth year. This would require much more delicate observations.[1]"

Steiner describes a series of exercises which practice these kinds of 'delicate observations'. They follow a certain pattern: Through inner, flowing activity, we must strive to lessen the distance between ordinary thinking and profound observation and thus achieve true intimacy and deep cognition.

"These exercises are based neither on superstition nor merely on fantasy, but on clear thinking and deliberation as exact as that used for mathematics. They lead human beings to develop a capacity for thought in a much more vital and active way than that found in the abstract thinking of people today. [...] Once we have condensed and concentrated our thoughts by means of the exercises mentioned, we experience spirit in such a way that we no longer have the abstract feeling, which is so prevalent today, that objects are far from us. We get a true sense of them that arises from practiced, concentrated thinking."[2]

Exercises for observation and imagination as a bridge to active, vital thinking

Let us consider the so called "cloud exercise" as described by Rudolf Steiner in *Practical Training in Thought.* He suggests to carefully observe some phenomenon at a certain time of day, for example cloud formations at the time of sunset. The observation should be retained in memory in all its details. Next day, the cloud formations are observed at roughly the same time. Thus, a series of concise cloud formation images is built up. We do not interrupt the connection to the phenomenon with quick, intellectual interpretation or speculation but rather try to increase our awareness and retain as much detail as possible. If we achieve an intimacy with the reality of the clouds, then we can try, as a next step, to merge the pictures into each other,

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1   Steiner, R. *The Roots of Education,* Lecture 2, Bern, 14. April 1924. First published in English in 1968 (translator unknown). Revised by Helen Fox in 1982.

2   Ibid.

from one day to the next. There is a twofold movement within this process: First, avoid any speculation, we focus our attention completely on the phenomena and retain it. Then, consciously, we seek to move from one cloud picture to the next, as inherent in the nature of clouds. This movement emerges from the clouds themselves and is not invented by us. After some repetition, this exercise leads to:

– higher awareness
– awareness of quick, speculative thinking
– trust in the union of phenomena
– fluid, vital thinking which is closer to reality

These effects are possible because worldly events, through intense inner activity, bear upon the astral body and thus also upon the ether body.

To the extent we insert ourselves into the course of the world through observation of the events in the world and receive these images into our thoughts with the greatest possible clarity, allowing them to work within us, to that extent do those members of our organism that are withdrawn from our consciousness become ever more intelligent. If, in the case of inwardly connected events, we have once acquired the faculty of letting the new picture melt into the preceding one in the same way that the transition occurred in nature, it shall be found after a time that our thinking has gained considerable flexibility.[3]

Here, Steiner describes a training in thought and observation which goes back to Goethe. It does not take place outside objects and phenomena, but rather at the core of life's processes.

The Child at the Age of Three

Bearing in mind the above, let us now consider the transitional phase at the age of three: The child's senses are still very much open, just as they were in early childhood; this can be seen when the child is completely lost in perception as in the following situation:

– In late autumn, the child watches in awe as an adult is pushing a wheelbarrow full of dry leaves. Next day, the child pushes her own little wheelbarrow full of dry leaves alongside the adult. The child is comfortably absorbed in imitation. The adult, needlessly, comments on the child's action by saying:"It's really nice that we are both pushing our wheelbarrows today." These direct words interrupt the child's active will. She stands still and says decidedly, "both of us – and me!" Then, she carries on with the work.

A few days later, there is a second incident:

– Walking through town, the child recognizes the streets; she realizes that she is close to the market square and suddenly wants to go there. The mother, however, wants to go somewhere else and the child protests angrily, "No! No! I don't want to go there!" The child is seized by a strong will which shows itself to the point of stamping and shaking. (Unfortunately, most adults have lost the ability to say "no" with such vehemence.)

A short while after the third birthday, there is a new phase in the described transitional period:

– After a moment of contemplation, the girl asks with a serious expression:

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3   Steiner, R. *Practical Training in Thought.* Karlsruhe, 18. January 1909. Translated by Henry B. Monges

"Mama, how does God make hair grow? Does he sprinkle some seeds on the head?"

In summing up, the three incidents can be described as follows:
– The will to imitate is interrupted for a moment and sparks an instant of self-consciousness
– Anger flares up in a moment of defiance
– The child imaginatively weaves two pictures into a question

We understand the dynamics and relevance of the transitional phase better if we now try, from the child's perspective, to merge one image into the next: The child is still utterly devoted to her surroundings, however, this devotion is interrupted from time to time, in varying degrees, by an emerging self-consciousness. During peaceful, quiet moments, the emerging self-awareness turns inward and new questions arise. These are relevant for the child within her new relationship to the world and often appear as imaginative pictures. The parents have the impression that the quality of the earlier, natural devotion and imitation has changed: Out of the inner will, little by little, self-consciousness and self-awareness emerge. This first feeling of self-awareness expresses itself in various ways during the transition period. There are moments of quiet contemplation, moments of energetic action and sudden outbursts of anger.

The above depiction leads to a deeper understanding of the three-year-old and, as an inner consequence, shows the way forward: The child's own strong powers of development can unfold best when parents and teachers don't interfere directly, but rather when they create imaginative surroundings worthy of imitation including:
– purposeful activities
– lucid language
– true and sincere human encounters
– artistic and musical activity, whenever possible
– a loving understanding for the true being of the child which emerges step by step

Rudolf Steiner sums up the meaning and responsibility of the educator's attitude with the words,

"We have to be aware that we cannot influence the child with words of advice or by setting rules but only by what we do in the child's company."[4]

The child as the basis for education and curriculum

The child's maturation can be experienced in the transition periods, when the child changes, when new forces grapple with existing ones and the young person is seeking safety on diverse levels. The closer the educator understands the child's true being, by way of observation as described above, the more agile their observation and thinking becomes, the better they will be able to find educational responses from the child itself.

"Practising living thinking will create new life-forces when one is dealing with growing children, even if there may be a whole crowd of them in one class. Only in this way will the teacher learn to recognise the children's inner needs, so that he can create the lessons and the entire curriculum in order to satisfy them."[5]

4 Steiner, R. *Erziehung zum Leben.* Amsterdam. 28. February 1921. GA 297. (No published English translation available.)
5 Steiner, R. *The Renewal of Education.* 26. April 1920. GA 301. Translated by Robert F. Lathe and Nancy Parsons Whittaker

In this sense, the term *curriculum* does not describe a complete program, but rather the realization of what the child needs for his or her development. If the educators implement what they perceive as the child's need, then a kinship grows between development and activity; this kinship has strengthening and encouraging significance. I want to describe the "reading" of the child a bit closer now, focusing on various phases during the change of teeth at the age of six or seven. Let us start with the kindergarten teacher's perspective:

– It is early summer and all the children are putting their wellington boots and coats on to go outside. While the teacher is helping some of the younger children, two boys are standing by the door, uncharacteristically hesitant. The older one, who's already lost some teeth, says, "Let's go to the shed and talk about lightning and such!" He starts to run and the younger one follows. Towards midday, they both sit quietly and watch the puppet show. The younger one is quickly absorbed in the images of the enacted fairy tale while the older one shifts between serious, wakeful, questioning expressions and complete immersion.

When the teacher hears the words of the older one she remembers other, recent incidents: How he withdrew from games, the lengthening of his body, the look of suspense and the emerging of the second set of teeth. All this creates an overall image of deep transformation. She becomes aware how new, strong impulses arise from deep within and change his experience of the world. Rudolf Steiner describes this kind of transformation:

"The remarkable physiological conclusion of childhood, [...] when hardening makes its final push and the permanent teeth crystallize out of the human organism. It is extremely interesting to use spiritual scientific methods to look at what lies at the basis of the developing organism, what forms the conclusion, the change of teeth. However, it is more important to follow what I have just described, the parallel spirit-soul development that arises completely from imitation.

Around the age of seven, a clear change in the spirit-soul constitution of the child begins. We could say that at this age the capacity to react to something quite differently than before emerges. Previously, the child's eye was intent upon imitating, the child's ear was intent upon imitating. Now the child begins to concentrate upon what adults radiate as opinion, as points of view."[6]

When the teacher and her colleagues discussed this particular boy and the way he had changed, they visualized his position in a kind of "tidal zone", between imitation, which still gave him a sense of security, and the impact of his new self-awareness. The encounters with the boy and the contemplation of his position helped the teacher to develop a new attitude towards him: She addressed him with clearer words and gave him new tasks and responsibilities within the daily kindergarten routine. It was clear for everyone involved that he was ready for school. For the younger boy, the decision to let him start school was only taken in May, when his teeth started to change and new skills emerged. After a further three months marked by more changes, both boys were admitted to grade one.

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6   Steiner, R. *The Spirit of the Waldorf School.* 27. November. 1919. Stuttgart. GA 297. Translated by Robert F. Lathe and Nancy Parsons Whittaker

The transition of the seven year old: a battleground for diverging forces

Let us now look at the transition period, described above, from the perspective of teaching.

– A few days after the start of the school year, the new grade one children happily enter the classroom. All eyes are on the teacher. The children are engrossed by her words which lead them to the choral recitation of the morning verse and further on to singing. This is followed by a few chosen words from a longer verse. It seems that the teacher's language opens a gate through which the children enter into their own world of imagination. The teacher now adds some gestures to the verse, these are readily imitated by the children. They become one with the language, rhythms, imagination and movements. The younger boy described above is still very much absorbed by the pictures and copies the teacher's gestures out of a childlike, subconscious will to imitate. The older boy seems more awake and picks up some of the subtle nuances of the gestures. His speech is also more purposeful: he pronounces individual sounds with more certainty. Later, the teacher asks the children for their memories of yesterday's fairy tale; the older boy remembers the pictures and actions of the story with ease.

As a notable tendency, the teacher experiences the children's increasing need to transform their outer abilities and skills into new, inner ones during the first few weeks of school:

– a profound listening to the words of the adults
– the harmony between beautifully spoken words and carefully led movement
– imaginative inner pictures
– ability to be absorbed in stories
– remembering what was told or happened the previous day
– independent execution of tasks

The sum of these emerging inner soul qualities describes the re-birth of the etheric forces which free themselves from the connection with the child's physical growth. With the help of careful observation and daily reviews, the teacher now becomes aware of what the children are looking for and need day by day. She thus understands and realizes the *inner curriculum* for this age group. Furthermore, she develops a more and more finely tuned perception of the children's *individual differences*. To the individual eye, the time of transition presents itself as a battleground for existing and newly emerging forces: The older boy is drawn to the new inner soul quality of imagination and memory, he needs to be encouraged to join in schoolyard games and to physically move enough. The younger one, on the other hand, who still runs, jumps and plays a lot, needs powerful stories and strong pictures to find his way to inner resonance which will eventually lead to the ability to remember. Rudolf Steiner describes this inner battle between existing and emerging forces:

"Then those forces which come newly into being in the body as soul-forces begin to be active with the seventh year – [...] And then what radiates upwards from the body is repulsed, whereas the forces that shoot downwards from the head are checked. Thus at this time, when the teeth are changing, the severest battle is fought between the forces, [...] the forces that later appear in the child as the reasoning and intellectual powers, and those that must be employed particularly in drawing, painting, and writing." [7]

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7 Steiner, R. *Balance in Teaching,* 16. September 1920. Stuttgart. GA 302a. Translated by Ruth Pusch

The qualities of the transitional period around the age of six and seven can be summed up as follows: comparing this phase with the changes in the three year old child, we see a more complex picture now. The early abilities for growth and imitation are transformed, but at the same time they remain side by side with new forces: Continuation, liberation, transformation and re-birth completely permeate the young person, the inner spiritual aspects as well as physical growth.

The child's individuality is the conductor of these complex processes. On the one hand, it moves deeply into the physical body but at the same time it opens up completely new possibilities for the soul. The child's individuality now faces the teacher's individuality on an increasingly conscious level: we will discern the child's true being if we improve our ability to think in fluid, perceptive ways and thus incorporate various perspectives and observations in one bigger picture. The complexity of the child's transformation at the age of six and seven forms the basis for Steiner's description of spiritual cognition in *Balance in Teaching*.

"In spiritual science there is no other way to present characterizations than by approaching a matter from different sides and then observing simultaneously the different resulting aspects. Just as little as a single tone can comprise a melody can a spiritual-scientific content be contained in a single characterization. This must be done from different angles." [8]

If we indeed achieve to describe, and deeply understand, a child's or a group's melody of development based on a series of observations, then we may learn to read therein the true curriculum and implement it in distinct educational steps.

In Part Two we will explore the transitions around the ages of 9/10 and 12, as well as the mystery of time within the human biography.

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8   Steiner, R. *Balance in Teaching*. 22. September 1920. Stuttgart. GA 302a. Translated by Ruth Pusch

International Conference at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
31st March till 3rd April 2015

Transitions in Childhood, from Birth to 14 Years:
Significance, Challenges and Consequences
Tasks for Educators and Teachers

The human being remains incomplete until long after birth. Initially completely helpless and dependent, it gradually adapts to its environment and gains its own autonomy. However, this is not a linear process – a number of crises, transitions occur, introducing new developmental steps, in which the child is especially vulnerable: at the physical birth, with the 3-, 6-, 9- and 12-year old child adults have a special role. Education is the art of midwifery, raising the question to educators, how they can accompany the various subsequent "births" in a way that allows waiting, acceleration, protection and encouragement, so that one developmental step prepares the next, in order for the developing human being to become able to take development into their own hands. Health, joy of life, learning abilities – through watchful and loving accompaniment of these "nodal points" and transitions, the adult can provide the child with an invaluable basis for later life.

From birth to age 14 years the child is, in addition to its parents, accompanied by a number of close people and specialists, who often do not know each other: midwives, child minders, nursery teachers, kindergarten teachers, after-school carers, teachers, therapists, doctors ... This conference is an attempt to look at a wider phase of childhood with all these professionals together. Do we as educators know the consequences of our daily practice? Do we as school teachers know the origin of the forces with which the child learns? Can we gradually learn to better assist the child by perceiving the amazing metamorphoses which the child undergoes? Aspects of pedagogy, medicine, nutrition and social sciences will be addressed. The morning lectures will present interdisciplinary themes across the ages. The workshops, podium discussions, discussion forums and research contributions will on the one hand, provide an opportunity to deepen age- and profession-specific topics. On the other hand, they will address specific themes which concern everyone: sleep, nutrition, health & illness, collaboration between institutions, child observation, kindergarten and school as living space, adult social skills, health of the children etc.

Please reserve the conference dates now.

In the coming year we will send you suggestions for how you can help to prepare the content of the conference in your own work context.

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