



THE REVOLUTIONARY EVALUATION TECHNIQUES IN WALDORF SCHOOLS

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Abstract *"Waldorf Education is not a pedagogical system but an art - the art of awakening what is actually there within the human being."- Rudolf Steiner*

The Waldorf-Steiner education system is globally known as being an infused canvas of anthroposophical, experiential, creative and cognitive oriented activities, which mainly focus on the comprehensive integration of the intellectual, rational and artistic human evolution of students. It encompasses all kinds of arts and crafts combined with music, dance and theatre, writing, literature based on legends and myths that encourage a distinct development of the mind and a practical orientation towards life. A crucial principle of Steiner's education represents the formative approach of the child's growth divided into three major stages: pre-school & kindergarten, elementary and secondary education. The approach of early childhood education focuses its attention on the hands-on activities and creative play which nurtures and conserves the child's deep, innate pure attitude, character and beliefs. In the elementary stage, children are prone to establish artistic expression through elements such as motion, color, rhythm etc. and social abilities not necessarily as a way of self expression, but as a way of constructing an efficient perception of the world and to learn to connect with it: "Only when we have made the world-content into our thought-content do we again find the unity out of which we had separated ourselves" – R. Steiner. Secondary education centers on every person's unique consciousness while acquiring critical reasoning and empathic understanding of what is true based built on each individual's personal experience, thinking and judgement. The overall aim is to enable students to build their own personality and freedom of thinking while venturing into the world.

Key words:

Steiner,
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I 22

TEACHING NOT PREACHING

There is a great amount of difference between Waldorf education and other pedagogical systems. Think of it like throwing an item into the sea. The first thing that an individual usually notices is the sound it produces when it reaches the water. However there are countless effects going on that aren't visible to the naked eye, like the impact the item has when sinking into the water, the effects on the living creatures there, the flora and the fauna

that lay beneath when throwing the item. This could be compared to the way most teachers of the regular education system develop their thinking and teaching methods. They only expect to see the immediate results, but the truth is, students are before anything else, human beings. Their reactions are on a short-term basis, but the effects of those reactions could linger on through their adult life and unfortunately, they are not easy to spot. People spend most of their lives in school and so their experiences that take place in that period

of time would definitely take a toll on them if not conducted and led properly by someone who can both understand and help them manage through the entire process of maturation.

Steiner education relies on human progress that endorses the significance of the sensorial and body language of the individual and its far-reaching important role in developing new learning skills. Waldorf Teachers acknowledge that education has become more than a simple procurement of information and austere academic curricula or competitive testing. They comprehend that the world is constantly changing and that is merely impossible to predict what sort of knowledge people would have to acquire to ease their life in the near future. Nevertheless, they are also aware that intellectual elasticity, creative interpretation, self-reliant reasoning, moral discernment, elegant and precise written and oral communication skills, and the capability to work together productively will be essential to success in today's ever changing, global community. The Waldorf teaching methods are especially designed to preserve these exact abilities and to guarantee a high rate of success in any domain in which students wish to engage.

Teachers are devoted to create an inner excitement when it comes to learning. This rules out the necessity for quantitative testing, academic ranking, and compensations to further stimulate learning and enables motivation to appear from within. The main goal concentrates upon children having the ability to integrate free thinking into their daily lives, to mentally absorb

information rather than memorize isolated facts, to be willing to take risks and to ultimately become leaders with refined ethical and cultivated moral guidelines who take action and are spirited and fierce when going for their desires.

The main focus of this system is the analysis of the teaching content and methods to the pupil's learning process correlated with the stages of his mental development regarded in childhood and adolescence. The lessons are devised to target the prevalence of the inner freedom and independence. Therefore Steiner does not attempt to link the gaps between us and the outer world. Instead, students' reasoning ought to be assumed as part of the world that they can learn to control and steer to their own needs and desires. This qualitatively thinking, which they can practice to take part in rather than just examine the world around them, gives birth to concepts that represent the true aspects of the world, rather than just some logical abstractions. Waldorf schools find it very effective that during the first years of life, children can be urged to learn at their optimum level by being deeply involved into an environment where they can seek knowledge through uninhibited simulation of day-to-day activities. From birth to nearly the 7th year of growth, children build the foundation of their unification with the outside world by finding out how to walk, talk, and get a grip of the basic control they can have over their body. This is the period of time when the emphasis is on developing the will while the governing impulse is

to learn through doing, through imitation. The early childhood educational programs therefore focus on empirical education, permitting children to attain and use information by the power of example, and by involving themselves in activities based on imaginative play. The overarching goal being to instill the child with a sense of reverence upon the definition of the world. Teachers usually apply a constant routine that combines free play with handcrafting such as sketching or carving, circle time that bind songs with story-telling, and practical tasks like cooking, cleaning or even gardening. While engaging in what might frequently be seen as some common household tasks, children learn how to do things for themselves rather than being taught about how to do them. Furthermore, the classroom is so manufactured that it resembles a warming home, filled with toy-tools and trinkets usually made from very natural-sourced materials that contribute to their daily imaginative play. The adoption of the organic materials has been extensively exalted as accomplishing children's aesthetic needs and reinforcing their identification with nature reacting against the dehumanization of the industrialized era.

When reaching the age of 7 years old, the child begins to rise through the development of feeling. Feeling here does not mainly define the regular emotions of the being, but to aesthetic feelings such as trust and beauty. Therefore, in Waldorf elementary school, the child realises his feelings are awakened through stories and poems that draw creative and magnificent

pictures and that work actively on the imagination. In order for children to truly link themselves more profoundly with the academic subjects, they are bridged through theatre drama, eurhythmy, vocal and instrumental music, developing writing, etc. The major subjects include language arts, mythology, history, geography, algebra, geometry, biology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and nutrition. Teachers target is to present a role model children will naturally desire to lead by, gaining loving authority through cherishing and supporting the extended prosperity of the curiosity, imagination, and creativity. There is a narrow dependence on standardized textbooks as Steiner's education reassures the individual variations regarding each student's pace of learning with the sole expectation that a child will absorb a concept or acquire a skill when he or she is up for it. Cooperation takes priority over competition. Steiner's theory relied on the need for teachers to always support independent thinking and to conserve the role of a great mentor without affecting children's own assessment of authority and inquiry.

In the final phase of Steiner's education – the upper school, the system helps once again a student to build his or hers last traits before joining the world as it is, shifting from the emphasis of developing will and feeling to develop thinking. Students are demanded to comprehend any abstract material handed to them and are expected to have the right amount

of maturity and self-awareness in order to create conclusions by their own set of judgment.

The student can be now associated with nature by transforming him into a plant. The plant now brings forth a bud, but the roots, stem, and leaves continue to grow.

Ordinary and Steiner education have shared a common purpose in teaching youngsters to reason, but with quite contrasting approaches to reaching this goal. In mainstream education, the main focus depended on the development of a predominantly cognitive and further thinking abilities interventions to improve it, whereas in Waldorf education, where the ultimate aim for the individual is to grown into a free man or woman, through the development of thinking, with a progressive harmony between willing- crafted from personal experience, feeling through the innate aesthetic sense and thinking. There is a forceful perception that is attempted in mainstream education to get young people to think by making them think, whereas in Waldorf schools, from childhood to puberty, thinking is trusted to develop by letting nature take its natural course, encouraged by the development of will and feeling.

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