



Waldorf Science Education: An Investigation of Curriculum & Practice

Waldorf science education has been recognized for its creative, innovative approaches to teaching science, although the implementation of the science curriculum remains a formidable challenge for many educators. This study is intended to address those challenges and to provide insights that will help the Waldorf movement champion the teaching of science in all Waldorf schools. The project consists of a multi-faceted investigation of Waldorf science education, drawing upon a variety of professional and lay perspectives within the Waldorf movement, the academic community, and mainstream education. The overall focus will aim to gain an understanding of the Waldorf perspective of knowing and doing science and to place the findings within the broader context of the mainstream science education community. Specific aims of the project are to:

- ♦ articulate the scope and nature of the Waldorf Science curriculum,
- ♦ examine the curriculum relative to mainstream science education standards, and
- ♦ investigate implementation of the curriculum

What are we doing?

We are visiting a number of schools across the country to observe classes, interview teachers, and in some cases to gather video footage. We are also conducting teacher and alumni surveys and gathering a wide variety of curriculum-related materials. The success of this study depends upon a large number of participants, and you are encouraged to contact David Jelinek for further information.

What will we do with the information?

We anticipate using the findings to assist individual teachers, schools, and the Waldorf movement as a whole to

- ♦ aid in the articulation of pedagogy and curriculum for K-12 science education;
- ♦ help schools and teachers in the process of reflection as they receive data about their own practices;
- ♦ provide necessary data to enable schools to strengthen their science education program;
- ♦ document science education in Waldorf schools from a variety of perspectives;
- ♦ inform Waldorf teacher education for both pre-service and practicing teachers; and
- ♦ disseminate a variety of material such as academic research reports, science curriculum documents, training modules for pre-service and practicing teachers; and a film documentary.

Who are the principal researchers?

Dr. David Jelinek is a graduate of Rudolf Steiner College and was a founding faculty member of the Waldorf School of Santa Barbara. He taught there for ten years, received his Ph.D. in education from the University of California, and is currently Assistant Professor of Science Education at California State University. **Dr. Pierre-Yves Barbier** is also a graduate of Rudolf Steiner College and a former Waldorf teacher at Rudolf Steiner de Montréal and Mariposa Waldorf School. He

received his Ph.D. (pending defense) in Educational Psychology from Université de Montréal and is currently the Dean of Academic Affairs at Rudolf Steiner College. **Dr. Li-Ling Sun** received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of California and is an Assistant Professor of Child Psychology at California State University. Dr. Sun's expertise lies in her ability to work holistically with children to assess cognitive development in the areas of scientific reasoning and problem solving skills.

Who is funding this?

This project is made possible through a grant by the Center for Ecoliteracy, a nonprofit organization committed to numerous ecological and educational programs, including Waldorf initiatives.

For further information please contact

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