

Editor's Introduction

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Even as world affairs all around us seem to bear the symptoms of global decline, we, at the *Research Bulletin*, want to believe that we are, in fact, entering a time of renewal. Having overcome the crisis of COVID-19 in our schools, we are emboldened by the sense that when the needs of the hour are met by resolute, intentional action, a road to the future unfolds – informed by the old while set up to meet the new. What new avenues await a spirited, inspired education with over 100 years of experience?

The current issue of the *Bulletin* aims to pick up on this question by zooming in on suggestions for new directions in Waldorf education and revisiting old practices.

We start out with a voice coming from a pioneer of Waldorf education in Israel. Gilad Goldschmidt is a founding teacher of Israel's first Waldorf school, *Harduf*, established in the north of the country in 1989, and has since been followed by close to 30 other Waldorf schools throughout the country. Writing from his experience as a Waldorf educator, but also as professor of alternative education who teaches in several academic institutions, Goldschmidt raises the question of the future of Waldorf education. In order to meet the students where they are, including their specific culture and historical moment, Goldschmidt calls for a combination of esoteric work that focuses on the inner being of the individual child and active research into existing pedagogical practices with an aim at improvement and innovation. A third element offered by the author is entitled "Waldorf for Every Child" – an initiative of sharing Waldorf practices with mainstream and other schools that are open to adopting selective pedagogical elements from Waldorf education without becoming Waldorf schools as such. According to Goldschmidt, this exportation of certain Waldorf practices has been happening in Israel for a while now.

An indefatigable force of Waldorf research, proliferation, and innovation in Europe, Martyn Rawson, is teaming up here with Kath Bransby, a former teacher in Britain's mainstream education who is now the Education Coordinator at the *Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship* of UK and Ireland; the two are taking a closer look at the so-called "Waldorf Curriculum." The authors claim that there is no such thing – neither the original curriculum taught at the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, nor any one of its subsequent iterations codified in Waldorf research books as *The Waldorf*

Curriculum should be seen as such. Instead, Bransby and Rawson prefer to speak of Waldorf *curricula*, in the plural, drawing inspiration from the same well but branching out to adapt to cultures and demographics in which Waldorf schools operate worldwide. (If you spotted a mixing of metaphors in the previous sentence, it is intended to draw attention to the authors' own suggestion to replace the metaphor for the spread of Waldorf curricula from that of the many branches coming out of a single trunk to that of a rhizome with its network of underground roots.) The article further suggests new ways of looking at the Waldorf curricula and laying out strategies for renewal.

Another source for reviewing and renewing the work done in Waldorf schools is set up by the ongoing, multipart surveying of Waldorf communities that has been conducted by the Research Institute for Waldorf Education in several stages and across several decades. The latest installment in this work, a survey of parents of past and current Waldorf students, is sampled here with "The Community Speaks," penned by David Sloan in collaboration with Connie Stokes, Andrew Starzynski, and Douglas Gerwin, offering a chapter from the book-length report that will be published later in this school year.

In soliciting thoughts for renewal, we keep on going back to the source, to Rudolf Steiner's guidance to the first Waldorf school, whose own guiding heart, Steiner made clear, should be the faculty members gathered together as the College of Teachers. The seasoned Waldorf teacher, Roberto Trostli, went back to the source to reconstruct once more the concept of the College. "Rudolf Steiner broadly sketched out the intentions and tasks of the College," Trostli wrote in his 2017 book, *Thy Will Be Done: The Task of the College of Teachers in Waldorf Schools*, "but he left it to us to make this form our own." We are glad to be able to reprint here two chapters of this important book – one reviewing Steiner's address to the first Waldorf faculty and mining it for the original concept of the College, another describing making this form "our own" by describing the work of the College of Teachers in practice. We encourage Waldorf communities still grappling with models of self-administration to closely review the study offered in these two chapters and in Trostli's book, which is available from Waldorf Publications.

“If you are teaching today, you are teaching children who have experienced trauma,” writes Megan Sullivan, who teaches Social Emotional Learning and Health at the Sacramento Waldorf School. Writing in a style that reflects the urgency of her topic and her attunement to the emotional cadences of her students, Sullivan presents here stories and models of Social Emotional Learning and of Emotional Literacy. Having started out as a class teacher in a small Steiner school in Australia, Megan discovered after a few years that her students had a real need for guidance in their social interactions and emotional self-knowledge. Counter to orthodox opinion, Megan realized, the sensitivities and sensibilities of Waldorf education were not fully sufficient to support this need in a world that is moving away from the repression of the emotional inner life. She was excited to discover Social Emotional Learning (SEL), developed in the United States by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Emerging in the mid-1990s, this work followed theoretical investigations and practical experimentations growing from late 1960s progressive pedagogy that aimed to support the “whole child.” The story of innovation and renewal offered in Megan Sullivan’s article tells about stepping out of Waldorf education in order to bring back a model for Social Emotional Learning developed in the program she co-founded in the Sacramento Waldorf School fourteen years ago. Megan shares here a host of strategies aiming to allow middle and high school students to identify, acknowledge, and communicate their feelings—an arising necessary condition for adolescents struggling to navigate the sea of troubles of their age and our times.

The final two contributions to the current issue are offered as a continuation of last year’s double-issue of the *Research Bulletin*, which was devoted to Waldorf initiatives in supporting students facing learning, cognitive, and emotional challenges – a theme we see as central to any attempt at Waldorf renewal.

Jennifer Militzer-Kopperl—whose article “The Remedial Staircase” appeared with an unfortunate printing error in the previous issue, but is now available error-free at www.waldorflibrary.org/journals/22-research-bulletin—offers here strategies for remedial work with students who fall behind their grade level in reading. Rather than teaching the whole class by grade, Militzer-Kopperl instructs, teaching should be differentiated by the phase of reading development that students are detected to be in. A full manual is included in this article.

Meron Barak, a medical doctor and psychotherapist with expertise in anthroposophic medicine and attention deficit disorders, is redrawing in the final article the anthroposophic approach to treating children with

ADD and ADHD. The key to a successful treatment, to be enacted in collaboration between teachers, medical therapists, and parents, Dr. Barak reminds us, lies in “seeing that the child is a spiritual being who is attempting to express itself through a physical body.” From this core anthroposophic and Waldorf principle flows an attentiveness to the needs and struggles of the child suffering from attention deficits. The article moves systematically from symptom description, to analysis, to treatment methods, and concludes with a case study that demonstrates the anthroposophic approach in action. The selection offered here is adapted from the author’s book, *Restless Children: Coping with Attention Deficit and Anxiety Disorders from an Anthroposophic Point of View*, which should become available in English translation in early 2023.

We conclude the issue with reports from Waldorf Publications, the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, and the Online Waldorf Library. As is our custom in the Fall/Winter issue, we are including a full index of all articles previously published in the *Research Bulletin*, and which are now available online at www.waldorflibrary.org/journals/22-research-bulletin.

Submissions

Submissions to the Research Bulletin should be made as Word document attachments sent to theresearchbulletin@gmail.com. You are welcome to suggest topics and themes for specific articles by writing to the editor at the same email address.