

Fonda Black



Rudolf Steiner mentioned that handwork is gymnastics in miniature. Handwork teaches very refined, minute movements that take the material world and fashion it finely, merging form and function. Spacial Dynamics is about a larger gymnastic activity: choosing, creating, and crafting one's own Gestalt. Spacial Dynamics draws on that most overlooked of all artistic raw materials: the very space around us. Simply put, in handwork we learn to take the world and make things to wear. In Spacial Dynamics we learn how to "wear our space" in the world. The patterns of movement woven in both disciplines entwine to become living works of art.

Years ago I began to see the connections between the gestures of students' handwork projects and their overall bodily gestures. I began to observe their large motor movements and see that similar smaller gestures emerged in the hand-sewing or knitting of each person. For example, if a gesture of general contraction was present in a child's larger movement patterns, the stitches of that same student were predictably tight, the fabric even gathered, puckering up all around the stitching. I began to wonder, "If the students were able to unfold and enhance their large motor movement patterns, would this affect their fine motor movements and vice versa?" Years of exploration and experience have shown me that micro and macro movements are certainly interconnected.

Learning to observe movement in space is key. Recently a student came to me with stitches so tightly knit that he was unable to insert the needle into the stitch. As the student approached

me, I observed that his general gesture was one of contraction, elbows tucked in, shoulders narrowing and raised. I recommended that the knitting rest on the table for a moment while we addressed the space around the shoulders. I reached out and suggested a new gesture by gently placing my hands upon his shoulders. Giving gentle weight and a new direction through a Spacial Dynamics gesture to the space around the shoulder girdle, the tightness in his shoulders magically melted away. As he relaxed, a big, deep sigh and in-breath followed and he was ready to try anew. Together we returned to his knitting and discovered a way to loosen the stitches so that his struggle ceased and his knitting movements gained ease, rhythm, and growing effectiveness.

I was introduced to Spacial Dynamics during my handwork training at Sunbridge College, in Chestnut Ridge, NY. Each morning during the three-year part-time course, we engaged in one hour of movement, practicing both Spacial Dynamics and Bothmer gymnastic exercises. As I incorporated these movements into my daily routine, the world around me began to shift and new insights sprang from the spaces and the corresponding dynamics I began to weave around me.

Waldorf education moves from the whole to the parts. Spacial Dynamics helped me own my part and change my own movements so that I was then able to perceive the children in new ways and help them enter more fully into the whole.

One of the most valuable things I have learned from taking trainings in both handwork and Spacial Dynamics is to become a researcher by observing my own actions and movements, as

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well as the dynamics with the other. Both disciplines help create spaces where true creativity can spring to life.

Handwork training provided me with the foundation of *what* to do in the classroom, the practical activities within the curriculum. Spacial Dynamics provided me with a method of *how* to be with the students and how to help them move into new spaces of possibility. It taught me to use space to enhance their own movements in the artistry of handwork as well as how to use space to weave the social dynamics of the whole class into a finely knit fabric—a real art in itself. Both disciplines are “gymnastics,” which, by forming, transform and in-form.

Both handwork and Spacial Dynamics help craft the true task at hand: to become the artistic weavers of our own destinies.

The world becomes a piece of art through the fine movements of handwork. Similarly, the body becomes artistically woven into the larger world through the discipline of Spacial Dynamics. Both handwork and Spacial

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Surely the shortest commencement address in history—and for me one of the most memorable—was that of Dr. Harold E. Hyde, President of New Hampshire's Plymouth State College. He reduced his message to the graduating class to these three ideals:

Know yourself – Socrates.
Control yourself – Cicero.
Give yourself – Christ.

– Walter T. Tatara