

# How do we go about developing Curriculum in a Waldorf School?

**Peter Glasby,**  
Mt Barker, South Australia  
pglasby@adam.com.au

## Between the whirlpool of Charybdis and the rocks of Scylla.

It seems this is a question that needs to be asked of schools and teachers.

The Waldorf School is characterised by both the independence of its teachers and its origins in the work of Rudolf Steiner with a group of teachers to whom he entrusted a task with specific detail and direction. This also characterises the spectrum of possibility in which curriculum can be developed, at one end arbitrariness, at the other fixed dogmatism (either from State or literal non-imaginative interpretation of R Steiner). Schools and teachers need to find their way between these two threats: Charybdis, the whirlpool of individual creativity which can get lost in itself and Scylla, the nymph once beautiful and turned into a devouring monster by a witch.

We have at our disposal, in this work, the treasure of indications and suggestions which Rudolf Steiner gave both to the teachers and also to his other students and audiences. This has given a structure and framework around which the endeavour of the Waldorf School movement has grown and flourished now for nearly 90 years, not only in Europe but in all the hemispheres of the World, on every inhabited continent.

What are the steps of building a new curriculum in a Steiner/Waldorf school?

### 1. Look for Steiner's original indications

Karl Stockmeyer (1955) did an invaluable job producing one of the first collations of Steiner's

indications for the Waldorf School teachers. Without it we would have the enormous task of finding Steiner's many indications distributed amongst lectures, conferences with teachers and his writings. In his work is a compilation of extracts from Steiner's indications to teachers about curriculum, methodology and school governance. With each extract there is also a reference to its source which allows going back and reading the original context of the extract. Can you discern the principle embodied in the indication?

### 2. Look at the secondary literature

There has been 90 years of creative teachers working with Steiner's indications and developing excellent curricula for their own time and place. Rawson and Richter's (2001) curriculum book belongs to this section but is not confined to it. There are many hundreds, if not thousands of books which have been based on Steiner's original indications and adapted to particular times and locations. Some of these resources are excellent, some are dated, some maybe quite wrong. Discernment and a knowledge of the primary indications is needed to make true judgement at this step.

### 3. Look at what your Place and Time offers to the education process.

Each curriculum developer (that is: every teacher!) needs to become aware what can be integrated with the curriculum from the local environment and the time in which they live.

There maybe further steps as well as these, however, these steps, I think are the main ones in creating new curriculum for Steiner/Waldorf schools. ♦

**Rawson, M. and Richter, T.** (2003) *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Publisher: Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1900169073

**Stockmeyer, E. A. K.** (2001) *Rudolf Steiner's curriculum for Waldorf schools* Compiler: E. A. Karl Stockmeyer, Translated from the 2nd Edition by R. Everett-Zade, 1965, Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications; 4th edition (2001) ISBN-13: 978-1900169103.