

CELEBRATING THE NINTH YEAR OF GLENAEON TEACHER TRAINING INTENSIVES

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Peggy Day is currently the lead writer of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework, and has recently become Coordinator of the Education Section of the School of Spiritual Science (Anthroposophical Society for Australia). Because this edition 16 of our Journal is dedicated to Peter Glasby (the former coordinator of the Education Section in Australia), it is timely to hear from Peggy as to her connections and contributions to Waldorf Education over many years. Peggy has also volunteered to join me in being co-editor of this Journal so we thought an interview style of telling her story might be the most appropriate!
NC (ed.)

How did you find your way to Anthroposophy?

I was fortunate in my teens to have teachers who inspired a deep love of learning. Outside school I was able to study the many philosophies of the time. It was the early 70s, a time of great searching by youth. A family member worked at the Theosophical bookshop in Sydney which facilitated my wide reading greatly. By the age of 21 I was studying at Sydney University by day as well as with four main people in the evenings. One had been a student of the modern Rosicrucian path for 25 years, another was a gifted healer, a third was an Anthroposophist who lectured in Natural Health, and the final one was an elderly man who was a student of the Pythagorean School.

And to Waldorf education and Glenaeon in particular?

During that following year I wrote a list of many things I knew had deeper spiritual dimensions e.g. numbers, colours, sound, the word,

elemental life and so on. Next to it was the question- how do I bring this to children? I knew one shouldn't explain it. I had completed a degree in English and German Literature and Psychology and decided to become a teacher. While doing a post-graduate education qualification I visited all the alternate schools in Sydney in 1979.

The last school I visited was Glenaeon School. I had read several of Rudolf Steiner's educational lecture series and knew a few parents. I stayed to have a look for a month, not a day as planned, and then was asked to begin a short term class teaching contract for a teacher coming out from Emerson in four months, then another four months for a teacher on leave and so it was a wonderful, gentle beginning. The fairy tales, numbers, letters were first and then I jumped to Norse Myths, Human and Animal and Local Area. Quite an introduction! This was followed by some years in Early Childhood, then some time Class Teaching, teaching a High School subject and then Teacher Training.

When you first began at Glenaeon, how did you become acquainted with what you had to teach? What was available to learn more about the education and study Anthroposophy?

There was no training in the Southern Hemisphere in 1980. Sitting in on classes for a month and reading further of Rudolf Steiner's lecture series as well as Marjorie Spock's *Teaching as a Lively Art*, Harwood's *The Recovery of Man in Childhood*, Francis Edmunds and *Child and Man* extracts - these were small beginnings. What really carries one is a great love for the children. Sylvia Brose, the founder of the school, was a grounded and

intelligent guide who left me free while supporting my early years with study and clear and open conversation. We read as a faculty; *Knowledge of Higher Worlds, Occult Science* and Willi Aeppli's *Care and Development of the Human Senses*. I was given some sample main lesson books and somehow understood the three-fold work. My earlier studies of the realm of the spirit were actually the great support as everything of the background spoke to me, but I had to learn so much still of the teaching technique and the arts! In the classroom it was a great help to be an idealistic girl in my early twenties, full of enthusiasm as the children responded so warmly to this, which gave me time to build classroom skills.

I remember thinking how wonderful it would be if for each main lesson there was a folder with key background indications for the educational work, and for in-depth understanding of the content such as botany or history as well as classic poems, suitable verses and inspiring drawings as a kind of springboard while one learnt their way. That is quite interesting of course, given the task that emerged 30 years later on the Australian Steiner Curriculum.

How was the school governed and managed in those days?

There was a faculty and a somewhat smaller College of Teachers as well as the School Council. Sylvia was a clear leader who gave weekly staff development on the curriculum and there was also always one of the arts undertaken by the staff at this session. The faculty/college study session was at lunch time or during a free lesson in two or three groups. We had a facilitator, Graham Harvey, with a Social Development training who was at every faculty and college meeting, study and mandated group, and quietly supported healthy processes. The whole school was on one campus and single streamed, and, for 400 children, the only administration comprised

Sylvia Brose who worked with teachers and parents, a secretary, bursar and very part-time library support.

At what stage of Glenaeon's development did the impulse come to become involved in tertiary training? Can you tell us a little about your work in teacher training?

Sylvia Brose trained in Edinburgh and London and when she came back to start the first school in 1957 she soon organised and held informal weekly teacher training which a range of current and future teachers attended. She also invited out Francis Edmunds, Ron Jarman, Helmut von Kugelgen and Edwin Ayer.

When Parsifal College was formalising a course, Sylvia Brose and Erwin Berney planned a term each. The full-time, two-year course grew from there.

I had written the 1996-7 reaccreditation syllabus for the Education Year and a Graduate Diploma while on maternity leave and then I became coordinator in 1999.

I lectured in Steiner pedagogy, festivals, biography, storytelling and early childhood education. When the Education Year syllabus re-writing was done again in 2004 and 2009, the challenge was to write in such a way that the essence was protected but the language was accessible to the university professors who were on the accreditation panel.

How did the Glenaeon Intensives begin and what questions and requests came from outside your school that inspired you and colleagues to begin the Intensives?

I was coordinating the full-time course which was our ideal, a full two-year training. Schools approached us at the twice yearly Australian Rudolf Steiner Schools meeting saying that they would have two or three new teachers with no training or background in Steiner Education at

the beginning of the following year. Could we not hold a week on the basics of Pedagogy, Child Development, what a Main Lesson was, Morning Circle, Form Drawing and so on? We held one five-day combined course for eight or nine new teachers at different class levels. It was pioneering work. The success has been in no small measure due to Andrew Hill and Ann Jacobson who have been key tutors for each year level from the beginning, and have taken through several cycles as class teachers and undertaken teacher training for well over a decade. Diane Tatum always carried the eurythmy, child observation and drama.

Can you tell us about the growth of the Intensives over the years? I understand that initially there were intensives for specific class levels in January, April and September holidays?

Six years ago registration of teachers in Australia became more formalised and many long term Steiner teachers who had done in-school apprenticeships or unrecognised training retired early and teachers from a mainstream training were being employed to fill the gap. It was quite a difficult challenge. Holiday courses were an opportunity for teachers, new to Steiner Education, to do an intensive training while working, and so gain insight into the pedagogy and curriculum of the class teacher period.

After two years we prioritised the deepening of the curriculum work with current Australian Steiner teachers again and the building of a pedagogical community of class teachers. We moved all the weeks into one in mid-January, working with the background indications, artistic rendering of the Main Lesson material and the deeper pedagogy. Teachers loved the social connection and it went quickly from 70 to 120 teachers each January.

The next phase was the response to the Australian Government initiative to develop a

mandatory curriculum for all schools, which saw the writing of an Australian Steiner Curriculum for recognition and we had to meet the integration of this opportunity. Of course schools had diverse curriculum documents and for Australia it was a time to re-assess where the individual schools traditions had come from, sometimes years before, and to look anew at the curriculum in essence and in relation to each place, group of children and time.

*And currently? What format and themes have developed? Can you tell us something of this year's theme - **the teacher as a time artist, and developing imagination, Inspiration and intuition?***

We hold Classes 1-7 in the same week. We begin each day with singing and then universal lectures each morning followed by class specific workshops until 5.30. In the evenings are festivals (fire sticks), astronomy sky observation and trips to the beach for a swim and dinner! We now have around 170 class teachers that come each year and many have been for 5, 6, 7 or more years and are on their second cycle. Some completed two years training with us but come back each year to deepen the next stage of the curriculum and share ideas and friendships. We have the opportunity to extend the pedagogical research on the background as well as deepening the artistic work.

As well as Eurythmy, we have offered art with Van James for each class, music with Christian Lilicrap and speech now with Linden McCall. Lisa Romero works with inner development. Our dear colleague Peter Glasby lectured and did the class 6-7 science for a few years. We have a key lecturer for each year and these have included Bernadette White and Neil Carter from New Zealand and Pauline David from the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar. This year for the first time eight of the lecturers and tutors met for a weekend beforehand to do Pedagogical Section work together and focus on the themes.

This was felt to bring the core work together during the following week.

The Teacher as a Time Artist arose out of a great love for the curriculum as meeting the destiny and incarnation journey of the child. When writing the main lesson topics for the Australian Steiner Curriculum, we hoped that by reflecting on the headings *Central Experience* and *Future Capacities* for each, the idea of meeting key incarnation moments and of the metamorphosis of capacities later in life, would be highlighted as questions. Destiny questions, biographical rhythms, pedagogical intuition and what the “I” of each child seeks, need to remain central in the face of the pressures of the world for basic skills and ever increasing compliance. We will certainly continue to develop this next year in the sessions.

If teachers are to access the insight to work with the curriculum at this level, they need to be able to work out of realm of *imagination, graced by pedagogical inspiration and intuition*. So this too is a developing theme and one which we will continue to focus on next year.

For a new theme ... we will have to see what the future brings! ❖



Andrew Hill, B.A., M.Ed.

Andrew has lectured in the full-time Advanced Diploma Steiner Teacher Training course in Steiner Pedagogy, English and Science, and has taken three class teacher cycles. With a background in Anthropology and English literature as well as experience in a curative school, he has been involved in Steiner school curriculum, teaching and management for many years, as well as giving national lectures



Diane Tatum, M.Ed.

Diane has been teaching Eurythmy, Music and Drama in Steiner Schools for over 30 years on 4 continents. She has lectured on Child Study and Inner Development in the Advanced Diploma Course as well as tutoring in the Curriculum Intensives since their inception. Diane currently teaches at Kamaroi School in Sydney. Her plays are produced widely in schools across Australia and the US. Diane is also an award-winning children's music producer.



Peggy Day, B.A., Dip. Ed., M.Ed.

Peggy has been active in Steiner Education for 33 years as a teacher and teacher trainer. She has coordinated and lectured in the Advanced Diploma Teacher Training Course for 12 years covering Steiner Pedagogy, Main Lesson Theory, Festivals, Story Telling and Interpretation of the Fairy Tales and Myths as well as Biography and Adult Learning. Most recently she has been the Lead Writer of the Australian Steiner Curriculum and was also founder of the Glenaeon Curriculum Intensives in 2006.



Bernadette White B.A. Dip. Cur Ed.

Bernadette trained as a curative teacher in England before working at Inala Curative School in Sydney. She was a class teacher at the Perth Waldorf School and then took a cycle through at Glenaeon. With a love of both the oral language tradition and history she has tutored in Speech for morning circle, Anthroposophy and Steiner Pedagogy. She now lives in Auckland and returns each January to contribute to the Class Teacher Intensives.