

The Educator's View of the Human Being: Consequences for Schools and Teacher Education

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*Report from the ENASTE Congress and
Teacher Education Conference
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1. Overview

A working group with representatives from the Pedagogical Section, Dornach, the International Forum (Hague Circle) and the European Network for Academic Steiner Teacher Education (ENASTE) worked cooperatively together to bring three closely linked events to an international audience of Steiner/Waldorf teacher education organisations, teachers and universities:

- ENASTE Congress
- Teacher Education Conference
- International Forum working together with Conference participants with three country presentations on teacher education

The above three events all focussed on the same theme, *The Educator's View of the Human Being*. This report aims to summarise key features of these events.

2. ENASTE Congress

The European Network for Steiner Teacher Education (ENASTE) held the first congress for teacher education organisations two years ago. This was their second congress. ENASTE is a group of European academic institutions offering Steiner/Waldorf education. Mention was made of expanding this group beyond Europe in the near future. They are responsible for the peer-reviewed journal, *RoSE (Research on Steiner Education)* www.rosejournal.com.

At the congress there were 36 presentations from Steiner teacher education organisations and lecturers from universities (including non-Steiner) looking at the theme through different

lenses. Here are some brief pictures of presentations given in English:

Professor Dr Jochen Krautz, Vienna School of International Studies, Austria.

Person or homo oeconomicus? Premise and rationale of today's educational reform

This excellent and wide-ranging presentation brought into focus global issues facing education. These included: the impact of economic theory on educators and the future of schooling; political and social discourse; mechanistic view of the human being versus spiritual view; what impacts upon political views and education policy; PISA tests and economic organisations and their view of the human being as human capital for economic growth; educational process and community spirit; personality and relationships; education as an empowering process; the exploitation of individual potential as an output-centred measurable criteria; measurement and scrutiny of schools; concepts of competence (*competence theory*) leading to a limited view of education; international tests being used to influence, manipulate and control social opinion and education policy; fight against cultural homogeneity.

Professor Dr Moira von Wright, Vice Chancellor Södertörn University, Sweden.
On the possibility of novelty: Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity in Teaching.

This lecture investigated the importance of language as it reflects our view of the human being as well as our view of education. How we speak of our students and how we relate to them affects the lived experience of the student. "Pedagogical moments" cannot be taught as a method as the unexpected and creative moments that arise require intuition, tact and observation from the teacher. Language of categories does not really give a true picture of the human being. They are often based on subjective views, external observations and

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assumptions. Teachers must train themselves in close observation so they can glimpse the uniqueness of each child. Mechanistic views of development mean education becomes an additive and directed process - the teacher controls; reductionist perspectives limit subjectivity. Steiner/Waldorf education also contains categories for describing human development, e.g. temperaments, developmental stages. We must be careful that we are also not limiting our view of the human being. The lecture finished with the importance of the teacher understanding the Physical, Etheric, Astral and Ego bodies and the Pedagogical Law.

Neil Boland, Auckland University of Technology.

Māori encounters with Steiner in Teacher Education

Neil gave a thought-provoking presentation which carried through into discussions over the next days. His presentation focussed on research he has undertaken about Māori



student teachers encountering Steiner education. Māori student teachers viewed Steiner education as having a “lived spirituality”, a deep connection with the land and “ecological values”. These are seen as stronger in Steiner education than anywhere else, including total immersion schools (*kura kaupapa*). The participants also said they didn’t see Māori culture strongly reflected in NZ Steiner schools. They wanted to see more Māori teachers and students in the schools; the culture to be made more visible in every aspect – staff, language, subjects, arts, science, history, fables, myths, songs and school projects. They expressed the view that Steiner education can come with “baggage” and that it can be perceived as mono-cultural, Euro-centric, middle class, privileged, unquestioning, reliant on tradition, unconsciously arrogant, “guardians of the truth”. This led to much discussion amongst Congress participants around the questions “do Steiner schools ‘colonise’ the cultures they enter?” How

is Steiner education seen by minorities? What is universal and what is culture specific?

Professor Dr Thomas Fuchs, University of Heidelberg, Germany.

Learning in Relationships and the developmental stages of the small child; the importance of the relation of the child to its environment

Prof. Fuchs presented his research on the development of the brain through social and biographic processes; the increased use of neural pathways fires the synapses; our brain changes with use and its relation to its environment; every experience means a change of our brain; tactile experiences necessary in early childhood in order to experience trust in the world; links between neuroscience and pedagogy; that learning in relationships is the main form of learning in early childhood, that learning is cognitive, emotional and interactive, that the environment should be conducive to learning, and the importance of learning through the senses.

3. Teacher Education Conference, 4-6 May

This focussed on two questions:

1. How do teacher education centres work with the theme, *The Educator’s View of the Human Being*?
2. How do we create an international network?

- The teacher education discussions and issues raised in first session as a bridge from the Congress to the Conference were:
 - There is currently no worldwide association or forum for Steiner/Waldorf Teacher Education organisations
 - What is necessary in a teacher education course for these times?
 - Schools should feel jointly responsible to teacher education as well as offer good job opportunities to graduates
 - An international network could support student teacher exchanges

- Concern is widespread for the future of Waldorf education and the need to learn what the needs are in other countries
- How do we keep the values of Waldorf education and also meet academic educational standards required for teacher registration? Are they mutually exclusive?
- Where will we be globally in 10 years?
- Growth of Steiner education in Asia
- How do we keep the anthroposophical basis and inspire student teachers to undertake this work?
- What are the needs of high school teachers and high school teacher education and ongoing support?
- Concern about current push in Germany of some academics criticising Steiner education and anthroposophy, publicising articles and going on talk shows, talking about racist terminology – these papers will soon be published in English. As a movement, how do we counteract this?
- In the 1970s many teachers were in their 20s, in the 1980s, they were entering the profession in their 30s, in the 1990s they were often in their 40s. Not many teacher education organisations had young teachers. However, now in the US there are younger teacher trainees and they are very clear about what they will and will not do when they become teachers e.g. Some say they won't attend faculty meetings, they won't work weekends, they want to be well paid. So how does the teacher education organisation meet the younger person? One organisation reported that student teachers come back from their practicums in schools and quit, saying that it's not what they want, or that it is all too hard, or colleagues continually argue in College meetings.
- How do teacher education organisations work closely with the schools?
- How can we as an international Waldorf movement come together as one?

3.1 Three Country Presentations on Teacher Education

- United States
- Brazil
- South Africa

3.1.1 Summary - United States

- About 120 schools in the US, as well as many kindergartens and charter schools.
- Five teacher education organisations on the West Coast, two on the East Coast.
- Teacher education institutes are spread across the continent, a total of 12 in US, two in Canada and one in Mexico.
- In addition there are many retired teachers who create their own small businesses and work with teacher education in a few schools.
- The teacher education organisations may be free-standing institutes or embedded in the education department of a university or in a school.
- Some programmes are full-time, others are on weekends over several years, or summer intensives; or a hybrid of all three forms.
- Approximately 150 teachers graduated in 2012 but the institutions are not producing enough teachers with Steiner experience.
- The teacher education organisations are not full, many still in the pioneering phase.
- Rudolf Steiner College, California (www.steinercollege.edu) offers Class Teacher programmes, Master programmes and Early Childhood programmes (EC is the largest programme in the US). They also offer pre-natal to seven-year-old parent education courses, train public school teachers with certain elements of Waldorf education and have outreach programmes into inter-faith communities.

They also offer Outdoor Kindergarten education.

- It is felt that most student teachers undergo transformative processes through artistic work.
- Issues and challenges raised are the need for new teachers with a greater sense of form, self-awareness and self-consciousness; the generation gap between the age of the teacher educators and those of the students; question about the continued validity of the lecture format moving to a guided approach and the importance of relationships.
- How are the teacher education organisations preparing student teachers for criticism of Waldorf education?
- How are the teacher education organisations preparing student teachers to work with children with special needs?
- How do we deal with the esoteric nature of our work and place it in the world in an appropriate way?

Brazil

- Oldest school is 57 years old (Sao Paulo) with 96 schools in the Federation having approximately 10,000 students, including Kindergartens (47 schools in Sao Paulo!) Many other schools and kindergartens that exist but do not belong to the Federation.
- They have 15 teacher education organisations. As teachers have to have a Bachelor of Education in Brazil, all the Steiner teacher education organisations are unregulated and two of them offer a Master's programme.
- The Brazilian presentation largely focused on how they work in teacher education organisations with *The Foundations of Human Experience*.
- Every two years they hold a national teachers' conference and each time they focus on a lecture from *The Foundations of Human Experience*.
- In Brazil there are more artists than philosophers and thinkers so the courses are linked strongly with art – most courses have one day theory and one day artistic work and movement.

- Work is underway to authenticate a “Brazilian” Waldorf culture rather than a European Waldorf culture with German traditions.
- The teacher educators want their students to work out of themselves and not imitate others.

South Africa – Cape Town

- The Centre for Creative Education in Cape Town is a private university and offers fully accredited degree courses in Waldorf Early Childhood Development, a Bachelor of Arts in Dance/Eurythmy and a Bachelor of Education (Primary). They are four-year programmes.
- There are also outreach programmes for mothers with young children.
- At the end of the four-year course, teachers choose where they want to teach. Some decide to teach in Waldorf schools and some decide to take what they have learnt to children in state schools.
- The Centre works strongly with Waldorf principles.
- The teacher educators observe their student teachers closely to see what they bring, need or want.
- They focus on helping students be flexible and cope with change; to overcome doubt in themselves; the course is strongly linked to self-development and self-love as well as love for others, as many carry a legacy of hatred/ shame/ antipathy/ blame, sense of mistrust, fear of others.
- Many students are young, 18 or 19; with little knowledge of the world.
- Delegates gave a detailed presentation of their modules and how the first year is based on three-fold aspects, second year on four -fold aspects and seven-year phases of development. Lots of artistic focus; not lectures but more interactive ways of working, lots of discussion, self-responsibility, sharing of struggles
- There are 80 students in full-time education.

- Every two weeks, they go on nature hikes and have many camps to build relationships between students and teachers and to provide the students with practical skills.

3.2 Discussion points following country presentations

- We discussed what was unique and what was universal in all the presentations. There are many ways of explaining culture and with these three presentations we saw three different pictures. There are many similarities to make a cultural denominator:
 - Mutual respect for each other
 - Importance of listening to what is behind someone's culture. What are they really saying?
 - We need to find solutions to current problems locally, nationally and internationally; support and work with each other, develop impulses and support initiatives.

These were some of the further points raised:

- "Colonisation" of Steiner pedagogy - good to see the flexibility of approaches in other cultures.
- Sometimes it is not Waldorf 'tradition' but 'copying' – teachers need to have the courage to be creative and make things their own out of anthroposophical understanding.
- The importance of a good mentor – not telling new teachers what to do, but helping them to take responsibility and create things anew by developing a deeper understanding and careful observation of the children.
- Limitations versus freedom.
- Finding a genuine universality – opening the discussion globally.
- Customary approaches do not always transpose between cultures, e.g. in South Africa, their fairy tales are not suitable for children until they are in Class 4.
- Teachers should look at and study what is living in their community, their own

locality. What is a local culture? Does it exist? How strong is it?

- How are we bringing Waldorf education that meets the needs of children today?
- Importance of the relationship with self, others and anthroposophy.

3.3 ENASTE – a history

ENASTE is a European-based group of teacher education institutions which help each other develop Master's programmes, collect research and peer review through the RoSE journal. They offer mutual support during accreditation processes and develop Waldorf education university courses. There are opportunities to explore how to work with national restrictions in order to enable a strong future of Waldorf education.

The university system has changed in Europe (the so-called Bologna Process). A new openness has come into universities and Waldorf academics have found a place inside universities. *"It is only when you are inside a process that you can influence it. Professors influence politics, influence policy."* Therefore, if we want to influence education policy, we need to be *inside the system*. We need to learn to speak a language which is valid also outside the Waldorf movement. The Centre for Culture and Pedagogy in Vienna was looking for connection and cooperation with other teacher education centres. In 2007 it invited them to come to Vienna to discuss possibilities. In 2009 ENASTE was founded for organisations which work in an academic context or wish to, and/or need support. ❖

ENASTE now supports communication between the organisations – to know strengths and weaknesses and work together, to consult, to facilitate exchange programmes for student teachers. They also share mentors for new teachers. The Congress in 2013 was the second of its kind to bring together professors from both Waldorf and non-Waldorf backgrounds. As a Hungarian neuro- scientist asked, *"How can Waldorf educators speak in a way that others understand?"* He believes the dialogue with the Waldorf movement is vital to building strong relationships, understanding and cooperation as he sees the education as valid for this time. In 1922, Steiner held an East-West Conference in Vienna to see how polarities can work together. This was also an aim of the ENASTE Congress in 2013.