

Elan Leibner

The sense of thinking has long been one of the most puzzling aspects of Rudolf Steiner's teaching about the senses. Sensory input (or percept) is defined as that which we join with concepts, gained through thinking intuition, in order for full cognition to arise. How is it possible to perceive a thought before thinking? Detlef Hardorp explores this mystery, including a fascinating description of the one instance in which we gain concepts directly from other human beings without needing intuitions to facilitate the acquisition of these concepts. His extended essay offers a significant contribution to the study of the senses and will be of special interest to high school teachers working with the higher, cognitive senses.

A trio of articles explores issues related to health and wellbeing. Philip Incao contemplates the role of warmth in allowing the human being's spiritual essence to take hold of healing processes. He describes a historical progression that has led to a significant decrease in "warm" (fever-inducing, acute, usually infectious) diseases and childhood mortality, but that, having swung the pendulum too far in the other direction, has led to the rise of "cold" (and chronic) conditions such as ADD and asthma. One is left with renewed appreciation for the crucial importance of warmth not only as a physical process but as a pedagogical and social principle as well.

Sue Gerhardt writes about brain development during infancy. The studies she describes show from a scientific perspective what good parents and care givers have long sensed: Calm and loving care is not just a "nice" but a critically important factor for the development of the neurological networks that shape behavior later in life. She adds scientific rigor to the importance of the "only real healing force."

Christof Wiechert describes what research has identified as five key areas in the development of resilience in children. It is clear that Waldorf education has been doing much to support resilience, and the research supports essential aspects of Steiner's approach. Though many teachers may be doing the right thing as a matter of course, the more fully conscious we are of the consequences of our work, the more likely we are to do it with conviction and joy.

There is a short article by Sebastian Suggate, who has done empirical research in New Zealand concerning the difference (or none thereof) in reading competence among children who began reading instruction before age 7 or after. He describes conclusive evidence that there is absolutely no measurable difference in ability by age 12. This is the kind of scientific research that can help allay the fears of parents in Waldorf schools that their children are "falling behind."

Michaela Glöckler, a frequent and much-appreciated contributor to the *Research Bulletin*, offers a meditation on the structure and purpose of the Medical Section. As few can, she illuminates the profound spiritual archetypes underlying the structure of the organization she has been leading for the past two decades. Anyone involved in the governance of an anthroposophical institution is warmly encouraged to read this piece. A short description of work with the circle-and-point meditation, written by Rudiger Grimm, a long-time remedial teacher, concludes Dr. Glöckler's article.

Arthur Zajonc is another of the *Research Bulletin's* stalwarts. In an article reprinted from his most recent book, *The Heart of Higher Education: A Call to Renewal*, he offers a comprehensive, integrated, and holistic approach to adult education. Describing in lucid terms how scientific

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thinking has overcome a reductionist paradigm by learning to ask new kinds of question, he charts a path towards a truly human academia. He and his colleagues, including his co-authors Parker Palmer and Megan Scribner, stand at the forefront of efforts to bring true humanity back into higher education.

Dorit Winter writes a review of *The Age of Wonder* by Richard Holmes. With her customary precision and insight, she describes an author who, through impeccable research, arrives at profound experiences of his own consciousness, as well as the consciousness of his subjects. As would befit an educator of teachers, Dorit also offers practical application of the material from the book for different grade levels.

Finally, I include in this issue a short article suggesting a study methodology for working with

written anthroposophy. This methodology can be used both for individual study and for faculty or college study. It has been refined in courses I have taught over the past three years and leads from a detailed summary of the content of the text, through two intermediate steps, towards meditative contemplation of selected questions or themes.

A personal note: This issue is my first as the new editor of the *Research Bulletin*. I am honored to join the ranks of this publication and invite our readers to send comments and suggestions. Above all, we want the articles published here to be helpful to the practitioners and students of Waldorf pedagogy. My colleagues and I hope that the selections included in this issue will enhance the understanding and practice of Waldorf education.



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