

Elan Leibner

Ideas have a mysterious way of occurring to different people in different places at the same time. The history of science, for example, is rife with discoveries and theories that appeared almost simultaneously to researchers working in different locations, even separated by continents. Words (e.g., “collaborative,” “synergy,” “emergent”), phrases (e.g., “paradigm shift,” “multiple intelligences,” “contemplative inquiry”), and even conceptual frameworks (e.g., Transcendentalism, post-modernism, string theory) appear on the scene and take their place in the public discourse seemingly overnight when only a short time before they were merely the private musings of a few thinkers.

Surveying the articles gathered in this issue of the *Research Bulletin*, I am struck by the shared threads that run through the thoughts of writers on both sides of the Atlantic. Douglas Sloan describes the split in academia between science and the humanities and outlines the deleterious effects that this split has wrought. Jonathan Code, writing in the U.K., explores a similar theme from the perspectives of epistemology and history, focusing on the ethical consequences of ignoring the prevailing epistemological assumptions in one’s thinking. Those two articles could easily have been presented at a single conference, and yet they were written three thousand miles apart by writers who had no occasion to collaborate.

Roberto Trostli has been leading an effort in the North American Pedagogical Section Council to publish a collection of essays dedicated to the theme of the College of Teachers as the body of leadership in Waldorf schools. His research article, the first part of which is published in this issue, characterizes the College as mediating the spiritual

underpinnings of all Waldorf schools with a specific school’s earthly circumstances. His description of the way in which the College of Teachers can discharge its duty will resonate strongly with David Mitchell’s musings about the striving in what he calls a “striving-to-become” Waldorf school. The article by Johannes Kiersch and my own graduation address to the Sound Circle Center’s teacher trainees also resonate “in the same key” as Trostli’s and Mitchell’s contributions. A common thread runs through all of these pieces in that they are searching for an authentic education at once universal and utterly local. Kiersch points towards a way of working with Steiner’s foundational pedagogical texts, suggesting that they become truly effective only when taken as meditative, esoteric instructions.

In an article written originally for the Gesell Institute, Joan Almon reviews the practice—widely promoted in educational circles—of speeding up academic learning during the early years of childhood and, with a wealth of evidence, argues that a recommitment to play-based early education is urgently needed. Joan and her colleagues at the Alliance for Childhood, along with their European partners, are advocating for play-based learning as part of a grassroots movement dedicated to children’s true wellbeing. The Research Institute supports this initiative whole-heartedly.

Dennis Klocek was kind enough to provide us with some meditative practices that can support the teacher’s inner work. As I note in the introduction to his contribution, we hope to include some meditative exercises and guidance in future issues of the *Research Bulletin*.

Finally, Kelly Larson provides a glimpse into the work of the Teaching Sensible Science

course. This work, guided by Michael D'Aleo, is sponsored by the Research Institute with financial support from the Waldorf Educational Foundation through the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA).

I warmly invite readers to send feedback and requests/suggestions for topics. My email is: waldorfresearchbulletin@gmail.com.

Thank you for taking the time to deepen your exploration of Waldorf education!

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