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Attachment 3(d):

STEINER APPROACH TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT HIGH SCHOOL POSITION PAPER

High School Curriculum

Position Paper

Contents

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The High School Position Paper

Introduction

The guiding motif for this period is that of Truth: the focus shifts towards critical analysis, independent judgment and self-directed tasks. Students have greater self-awareness in relation to their strengths and weaknesses, interests and goals. Adolescents respond positively to inspiring and worthwhile ideals that provide them with sustenance for their inner journey. They are motivated to contribute towards community life and are concerned about significant social, environmental and global issues. The phenomenological methodology directs students towards an objective understanding of the principles of the natural and cultural worlds; they practice viewing the world from a range of perspectives. It is the making of judgments in particular that helps students to form a relationship between their inner lives and the outer world. For students to be able to trust their own judgments the thought content needs to be accessible – teachers therefore select content where 'objective laws' and the 'true nature of phenomena' can be experienced and made conscious.

Students experience *real* selfhood for the first time; the acuteness of their new level of self-awareness and self-criticism often leads them to hide their new persona carefully and to use fashions as masks. As forces of growth penetrate the metabolic-limb system sexual development takes place. The accompanying hormonal changes introduce disequilibrium: as the will is not yet strong enough to direct their emotions this is the age of extremes and polarities: students swing between the past and the future; the old and the new; independence and group security.

Earlier strategies continue to be used on a more sophisticated level. Research[1] indicates that during adolescence another window of opportunity is presented for imaginative development, the arts-based teaching methods as well as experiential and discovery learning strategies are followed. Although curriculum content is mostly aligned with state requirements, there are several aspects of the Steiner approach to this stage that are different and characteristic of the overall holistic and integrated orientation.

Experiential and active skills learning

> Researchers have found that after two weeks we remember only 10% of what we read, but 20% of what we hear, 50% of what we discuss, and 90% of what we experience. This is one of the most persuasive arguments for experiential, project-based learning (Fritjof Capra, 2004; cited by Fairman, 2006).

Experiential learning, as popularised by David Kolb (1984) who drew on constructivist theories and the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget, is aligned with aspects of the original pedagogical indications. John Dewey's emphasis on making, doing, creating and producing resonates strongly with Steiner's observation that given the "accelerating influence of scientific technology and academic sterility upon education", it would be of great importance "for the future of the new school movement … to turn the rudder 180 degrees in the direction of the artistic and the practical" (Karl Ege, 1979; cited by Fairman, 2006).

> If we were to introduce into educational processes the activities which appeal to those whose dominant interest is to do and make, we should find the hold of the school upon its members to be more vital, more prolonged, containing more of culture. If our education is to have any meaning for life, it must pass through an equally complete transformation (John Dewey, 1915; cited by Fairman, 2006).

[1] Chiltern Pearce (2004) using the research of Paul Maclean observes that the pre-frontal lobes go through a spurt of growth nearly as dramatic as that in early childhood.

It is interesting to compare Kolb's experiential model with Steiner methods:

Kolb's experiential model	Steiner method[2]	Hoffman's model (2007) Artistic stages
Concrete experience	Active skills learning	Earth cognition, physical thinking, mechanical
Reflective observation	Understanding and characterisation	Water cognition, imagination, sculptural
Abstract conceptualisation	Cognitive awakening, concept formulation	Air cognition, inspiration, musical
Active experimentation	Return to step one: active experimentation	Fire cognition, intuition, poetical

Curriculum perspectives related to experiential and skills learning in High School:

Opportunities for involvement with community, social support networks, and service learning

The main characteristics about the 'place-based' approach is that it sets out to involve the students in connecting with family, community and the local region by extending the classroom out into the community. At the same time, students are afforded the opportunity for developing and experiencing hands-on, real-life experiences. Learning is centred on authentic activities which correspond directly with tasks and life in the community, and which have an evident relationship with workplaces of today and the future. This approach enables students to more easily see that what they are engaged in and has a relevance to their own world.

Physical education includes sports, games, and Bothmer gymnastics.
Outdoor education and adventure camps: canoeing, skiing, surfing, abseiling, hiking, camping

In recent years, farsighted educators and environmental organizations have made important inroads into the classroom. Experiential, environmental-based, or place-based education offers a promising alternative. Proponents of the arts revival in schools have successfully argued that the arts stimulate learning in math and science. Based on early research, a similar argument could now be made that nature education stimulates cognitive learning and reduces attention deficit (Richard Louv, 2005).

Artistic forms of movement include: dancing, drama, speech and eurythmy

In the context of high-stakes testing and performance outcomes *pedagogical voice* and *language reflexivity* are not high on educational agendas. Yet, research suggests that sustained exposure to electronic 'voices' – television, computers and electronic games – may impair early speech development (Clouder et al., 2000; Healy, 1998; Pearce, 1992). While not advocating the elimination of the latter, more creative attention to the nuances of the *living word* could facilitate postformal language sensibility at appropriate developmental moments (Gidley, 2009).

Training, practice and creative opportunities for ICT skills to develop and to become increasingly refined and complex.
Technology training encompasses handwork, woodwork and metalwork (all classes include both genders).
Farm and work experience programs.

During the age from fifteen to twenty everything to do with agriculture, trade, industry, and commerce will have to be learned. No one should go through these years without acquiring some idea of what takes place in farming, commerce and industry. These subjects will be given a place as branches of knowledge infinitely more necessary than much of the rubbish which constitutes the present (Ed. State German schools of the time) curriculum during these years (Steiner, 1995, lecture in Stuttgart, 1919).

[2] As described in the Educational Foundations Paper, section 6, pp.30-31.

The Class 12 research project includes a practical component, e.g. building projects (boats, pergolas, furniture construction), performance, display a body of artwork, design of sustainable energy sources

If teaching is to be effective and meaningful, then teachers have a responsibility to ensure that students not only experience an awakening of their feeling life in presentations, but that they also have a 'living' experience of the subject and are able to perceive it's relevance to *'real'* life. This can only be fully realized when students are actively involved with their will in the learning process (Fairman, 2006).

Reference: The quotations in this table are drawn from Fairman (2006).

Sustained imaginative development as support for socio-emotional learning

> The cultivation of imagination ... is ... the bringing of thought to life, permeating concepts and abstractions with life-giving images and energies through which thinking can penetrate and participate in the fullness of reality (Gidley, 2009, p. 192).

Chiltern Pearce's (2004) research emphasizes that adolescent development offers a second – and last – window of opportunity for 'imaginative development' as reflected in the rapid potential growth of the pre-frontal lobes. He places much significance on the embedded moral imperative of imaginative education during adolescence.

Curriculum perspectives related to socio-emotional learning in High School:

Arts-based learning modes are connected with cognitive tasks: creative responses elucidate ways in which students have understood and grappled with conceptual content and offer them the chance to extend their thinking and to express original and new ideas

An extended concept of schooling

Educational theory connected to vocational training and to education in the arts and crafts generally focuses on the schooling or training elements of mastery (Schön, 1989). Building on this perspective on schooling and mastery, our research strategy for Waldorf Steiner education extends this concept to focus on interplay between a schooling of thinking, feeling and will. An epistemological basis for such an activity-sensitized ecology of knowing is worked out by Hugo (1995). It builds a bridge between traditional concepts of schooling in education within the sports, arts and crafts and the many exercises directed towards schooling of the soul of the teacher or educational researcher developed by Steiner in connection with the Waldorf school (Hugo, 2010).

Critical and creative thinking abilities are understood to be closely linked; arts-based strategies are interwoven with scientifically oriented styles of teaching and learning; imaginative thinking is seen to support conceptual development

And any cognitive capacity is primarily a skill of practice, of moving attention, separated from but also embedded in the attentive movements of our emotional and bodily modes of knowing (Hugo, 1995). A cognitive capacity may hence be strengthened by a more explicit focus on complementing and entwining it with the practical, emotional and aesthetic dimensions of learning (Gardner, 1984; cited by Aksel, 2010).

Fewer elective choices and more comprehensive inclusion of different forms of art, music and movement classes

The general emphasis given to the arts, and especially to music, in Steiner Waldorf schools seems also to enhance the ability to "listen to the world", rather than impose oneself onto it, which is – as pointed out above – a necessary prerequisite of developing the thinking ability (Dahlin, 2008).

Class guardians maintain continuity of the role of the class teacher in terms of life skills ('learning from life'), pastoral care, counselling, overview of progress, and reporting and relationship with parents.

In the high school we have a special task with our students. The class teacher has the task of being the gardener of the soul, tilling the soul with rhythm and music ... The elementary school teacher guides the children with loving authority ... High school teachers have a very different task. Adolescents … are a listening ear to the world. The high school teacher has to have a listening heart so that the adult's heart touches the student's heart. Many high school students today are asking the Parzival question, "What ails thee?" of the adults in their lives. We adults need to provide guidance without judgment for our students. Our words develop weight in ways we can scarcely imagine (Staley, 2002).

The other aspect of the social pedagogical question is to prepare people to learn from life. We do not fare well in life if we view it as a rigid and foreign object. We can place ourselves correctly in life only when every moment, every day, every week, every year becomes a source of learning for our future development. Regardless of how far we go in our schooling, we will have accomplished the most if, through this schooling, we have learned how to learn from life (Rudolf Steiner (1977), lecture on the 31st August, 1919).

Evaluation skills are understood to embrace the 'weighing up of feelings' which is one of the steps in the phenomenological methodology

The Class 12 research project includes a creative component, e.g. illustration of the thesis, artwork, performance, creative design

As teachers think about the relationship between the aesthetic and the intellectual, they develop pedagogical strategies that encourage engagement ... This involves the recognition of multiple ways of knowing which assists more students to discover that they are imaginative, creative and smart (Rose and Kinchloe, 2003, p.46).
(Gidley, 2009).

Rigorous intellectual development: deep knowledge and thinking skills

A research strategy dedicated to develop Waldorf education must focus on the fruitful complementarity between the science and the art of education. The intimate relations between art and science presented in Steiner's theory of knowledge (Steiner 1886) links up to the general reappraisal of Goethe's scientific method, which can be found in modern theory of knowledge (Amrine et al. 1996, Barnes 2000; cited by Hugo, 2010).

Curriculum perspectives related to intellectual development in High School:

Phenomenological methodology: astute empirical observation skills and in-depth evaluation is extended to include logical analysis, 'discovery learning' and complex conceptual thinking

This consists in starting the teaching of any natural phenomenon with pure *observations*, e.g. of a plant, or of an experiment, e.g. the refraction of light in passing a prism, consciously holding back any theorizing about it. This is followed by as careful as possible *reconstructing or recollecting* the observed phenomena without them being physically present, followed by – on the following day – the *conceptualization* of that which was observed (cf. Steiner, 1986, p. 46-48). Attentive dwelling on the observations of the senses enhances the potential of immediate experience to break through the armour of preformed conceptions, i.e. of ready-made thoughts. The recollection of the observations made earlier stimulates penetration of what was experienced by active thinking (Schieren, 2008). This approach is a very good exercise in the discipline of allowing phenomena to speak for themselves, rather than imposing a network of pre-established concepts on them (cf. Dahlin, 2001). It allows the children's judgement to mature without "jumping to conclusions". It teaches open-mindedness, flexibility, truthfulness, and exactitude in dealing with phenomena of nature. It also takes advantage of the

beneficial influence of sleep on the learning process, an influence which was repeatedly stressed by Steiner as early as 1919 (1980, p. 95-152, passim) and which has recently been confirmed by neurobiologists in a number of studies (Hairston & Knight, 2004; Huber, Ghilardi, Massimini & Tononi, 2004; Yoo, Hu, Gujar, Jolesz, & Walker, 2007).
(Dahlin, 2008).

Science and mathematics teaching methods focus on the strong development of thinking skills and include a socio-emotional dimension: content is placed in a social context and includes biographical perspectives;

In his educational ideas he paid much attention to the question of the right development of the thinking powers of children. Steiner's non-materialistic, spiritual framework is of course one of the cornerstones of his pedagogical ideas. Thus in Rudolf Steiner schools pupils are not in their chemistry, physics, and particularly biology lessons exposed to question-begging (because ultimately grounded in metaphysical preconceptions, not scientific facts) claims, images and metaphors, such as that the universe is at bottom composed of atoms (or other "smallest" subatomic particles/elements), and of purely physical forces; or that thoughts and generally all so-called mental phenomena are (nothing but) products of brain activity; that the brain is (nothing but) a complicated computer; that man is (nothing but) a higher animal and a product of blind evolutionary forces, one of the most potent of which is the struggle for survival. As pointed out above, such claims may yet turn out to be not only biased, but even poisons for a growing mind in its struggle to develop deeper thinking powers. It also undermines the development of trust and confidence in one's own thinking power, that it can actually understand the reality of the world (cf. Schieren, 2008).
(Dahlin, 2008).

Depth of content and cultural perspectives in the aesthetic main lesson stream encourage deep knowledge processes: themes emphasize ethical concerns and self-discovery in relation to meaning, connection and the development of courage, confidence and optimism;

Comprehensive and broad curriculum: subject expertise in many areas is encouraged to ensure balanced and all round development; specialist expertise is seen to be the domain of tertiary education;

The Year 12 project is an extended unit of independent study and research. Assessment criteria include research skills, analysis, the writing up of the research findings in thesis format, creativity and extended oral presentation (half an hour) to a large public audience. Many students select to focus on themes related to social issues, ethical concerns and sustainable/ecological living.

At the UN World Summit for Sustainable Development held in 2002, it was announced that 2005 – 2014 would be the decade of 'Education for Sustainable Development'. The UNESCO report (2002) sums up the ideals as follows: "This represents a new vision of education, a vision that helps people of all ages better understand the world in which they live, addressing problems such as poverty, wasteful consumption, environmental degradation, urban decay, (etc). This vision of education emphasizes a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to developing the knowledge and skills needed for a sustainable future, as well as changes in values, behaviour, and lifestyles. This requires us to orientate education systems, policies and practices in order to empower everyone, young or old, to make decisions and act in culturally appropriate and locally relevant ways to redress the problems that threaten our common future. In this way, people of all ages can become empowered to develop and evaluate alternative visions of a sustainable future and to fulfill these visions through working creatively with others."

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