Steiner Education Australia

AUSTRALIAN STEINER CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2011

Educational Foundations
Attachment 3(a):

STEINER APPROACH TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

An Overview of the Steiner Approach to Child Development

Introduction

Steiner education is an integrated approach, designed to provide for the balanced and holistic development of all the dimensions of the growing child, including cognitive and psycho-emotional faculties, artistic and imaginative capacities, ethical-spiritual awareness and practical life skills (Educational Foundations Paper, 2010, v.1, section 3.1, p.6). The developmental schema provides a working evidence-based model of one way in which the Melbourne Goals can be achieved. The Australian Steiner Curriculum includes developmental profiles that highlight key age related indicators of development and the teaching strategies that are used to meet them. In each of the four subject area curricula, following the outline of yearly achievement standards, further descriptors are provided that illustrate the way in which the general capabilities and cross-curricular priorities are met on a year-by-year and subject basis. The following overview provides further details of the developmental approach and associated teaching strategies.

Epistemology

The epistemology [i] on which Steiner pedagogy is based (Steiner, 1947 [1919]) observes that the clarity associated with rational thinking is dependent on the thinker adopting the position of an onlooker [ii] or observer in relation to the outer world. This stance involves an inevitable existential [iii] distancing and separation of the self from outside reality. The process whereby the self establishes a relationship with the outside world unfolds slowly and is associated with the capacity for intellectual thinking which reaches its first stage of maturity when students reach adolescence. The Steiner approach to childhood development suggests that when highly abstract intellectual tasks are scaffolded [iv] too early the associated experience of separation and distancing from the world can have a harmful effect on the socio-emotional development of young children (Clouder, 2008). Steiner researchers [v] identify the significant steps that mark the evolving awareness of separateness from the world and the developing sense of selfhood. Educational strategies are designed to meet the threshold points; the principle of age appropriate learning is therefore embedded in curriculum planning.

Pedagogy

Steiner pedagogy proposes that the soul [vi] has three main faculties [vii] namely those of *thinking, feeling and willing*.[viii] 'Thinking' is seen to relate to cognitive and intellectual aptitude, 'feeling' to the development of emotional and social skills, and 'willing' to the growth of manual skilfulness and moral awareness. Holistic in orientation, the approach emphasises the interrelationship between cognitive maturity and socio-emotional and moral development; Steiner researchers strive to map the interconnections and to apply the recommendations arising from the ongoing study in curriculum design. As noted in the Steiner Educational Foundations paper (section 3.3.2) there is a strong alignment between Steiner educational goals and the Melbourne Declaration:

Melbourne Goals:		
Successful learners	Confident and creative individuals	Active and informed citizens
Key features of Steiner education:		
HEAD/TRUTH **Thinking faculty** Cognitive development Intellectual aptitude	HEART/BEAUTY **Feeling capacity** Socio-emotional learning Empathy; socio-emotional intelligence	HANDS/GOODNESS **Strength of Will** (or 'Willing') Ability to develop inner discipline; to act in a moral way; experiential learning Active skilfulness & Moral consciousness

In the same way that the physical body is not born mature, Steiner education recognises that the soul does not enter the body in a fully developed state but undergoes several birthing stages. Education plays an important role in guiding and nurturing the self as it accommodates itself within the body. Steiner educators therefore also research the interrelationship between bodily functions and the soul faculties. Thinking is clearly related to the head and brain and to the rest of the body through the nerve-sense organisation; feeling is closely connected with the rhythmic system and lungs, and the heart and blood; and willing is associated with the metabolic system and the limbs. In contrast to many educational approaches, the emerging individuality of the child is understood to influence its own development which adds a further significant factor to the debate concerning the influence of heredity and environment. The Dutch paediatrician, Schoorel (2004), labels the pathway whereby the self adapts itself to the body, one of emancipation because the self is seen to have the potential to overcome the forces of heredity and environment.[1]

The main stages

As noted in the Steiner Educational Foundations paper (section 3.3.1) the Steiner approach outlines three main stages in childhood development that unfold in seven year cycles. In each of the stages one of the three principal soul faculties of *thinking, feeling and willing* plays a dominant role. The first stage from birth to age seven is characterised in particular by the development of the will.[ix] From age seven to fourteen the sentient or feeling element of the self [x] of the child is most influential; and from fourteen to twenty one the capacity for intellectual thought matures. As noted above (section 3.3.1) the three soul faculties are closely interrelated and work together as a whole; each undergoes considerable growth and change in each of the phases.

> *Intuitive learning*, an *inspired discovery* of the wonders of the world, and an *awakening understanding* of the rationality of life imaginatively enlivened rather than narrowly confined also characterize the schooling of the three phases (Masters, 2007, p.29).

The sub-stages

Physiological growth

Further sub-stages can also be discerned at intervals of approximately two and a third years. At about two and a third years of age children experience their first awakened consciousness of self which is marked by their ability to refer to themselves as "I". The realisation by children of their separateness from the world around them indicates that a sufficient degree of objectivity has been attained for the thinking capacity to become more active. By the end of this stage (by the age of seven) children are able to associate perception and cognition and have developed the first form of memory (Lievegoed, 2005). However the development of thinking comes to expression initially in the *feeling life* of children in the form of imaginative consciousness; [xi] in the next two and a third years (from 2⅓ to 4⅔) children begin to use their creative imaginations [xii]. From 4⅔ to 7 years of age (the following two and a third years) children awaken to their first conscious experience of the will: they are able to set and achieve goals for the first time.

Psychological growth

While stage one is governed by major physiological changes, the second stage of development is marked by growth towards psychological maturity. During this period thinking, feeling and willing undergo three significant processes of metamorphosis. [xiii] Between their seventh and ninth birthdays a metamorphosis in thinking takes place and children begin to form their own mental images. This development is accompanied by a further distancing of the self from the world. Usually the impact of this separation begins to effect the emotional life of children shortly after the ninth birthday (between the age of 9⅓ and 11⅔), and is known in Steiner circles as the 'crossing of the Rubicon'. [xiv] The experience of objectivity in thinking now begins to be *felt* emotionally as the *feeling life gains objectivity*. Children start criticising the adults in their lives and asking questions concerning good and evil, death and loneliness. Their new experience of the duality of the world, of the sharp contrast between their inner and the outer world tends to make them intolerant, indecisive and prone to difficult moods. The word 'boring' not used

[1] For a further discussion of this topic see the paper: Epistemological and pedagogical perspectives of Steiner Education.

before this, now reflects a significant truth of their experience – that the real world does not match up to their imaginative one.
The final process of metamorphosis that characterises the second stage of development takes place in the will (age 11⅔ to 14 years). During the early part of this sub-stage children do not realise the consequences of their dualism – the domination by their feelings inhibits their ability to apply their will in their newly found world of reality (Lievegoed, 2005). However as their twelfth birthday approaches a desire to conquer the world emerges and children discover their ability to apply their goal setting in a wider arena. Now the total separation of the child's personality from the outside world begins. The specific goals of the 6/7 year old no longer suffice, all their activities are now aimed at conquering the outside world as a whole. Their will has a *realistic-romantic* character. Some express their freshly found power in adventurous pastimes and begin to play out images of heroes from stories or media; others may turn inwards and become obstinate or preoccupied with mysterious daydreams.

Social maturity
The third stage is characterised by the development of social maturity. Changes in the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing are coloured by a movement towards wholeness and synthesis that enables students of this age to bridge the rift between self and world. Here, as in the earlier stages, the thinking faculty guides the process that leads towards emancipation (Schoorel, 2004, p.123) and selfhood as new forces of consciousness awaken in the nerve-sense system and then permeate the feelings and the will. Between the ages of 14 - 16⅓ students' develop greater clarity of thought and an increasing ability to form balanced judgments. However their need to grasp the world tends to make them critical and argumentative.

During the second sub-stage students are able to strengthen the relationship between their inner and outer worlds of experience and to know that: "Whatever the self describes, describes the self" (Boehme). They are now able to meet the other; they can express their own personality and also care for the other; they develop empathy and the capacity to take responsibility for their own work and behaviour; they are able to make and follow through choices based on their own insight. In the final sub-stage a further process of synthesis follows that affects the Will of students: They are now able to express themselves in the world. This period (between 18⅔ and 21) is characterised by a more mature level of social responsibility and career preparation. "Love for responsibility is the path of development from adolescence into adulthood" (Lievegoed, 2005, p.112).

Key Turning Points in Development:

AGE	THINKING	FEELING	WILLING
STAGE 1: Physiological maturity			
0 - 2⅓	**Development of thinking** Ability to say 'I' representing first awakening consciousness of self comes by end of stage.		
2⅓ - 4⅔		**Development of feeling** First stage of imaginative consciousness: expressed in the 'creative imagination' of play.	
4⅔ - 7			**Development of the Will** Development of conscious will: First experience of goal setting in planned play (age 6).

AGE	THINKING	FEELING	WILLING
STAGE 2: Psychological maturity			
7 - 9⅓	**Metamorphosis of thinking** From association of perception and cognition to the ability to form their own mental images that are inspired by multi-modal artistic sources e.g. stories with archetypal meaning.		
9⅓ - 11⅔		**Metamorphosis of feeling** The 'Rubicon Crossing': first emotional experience of separation from the world.	
11⅔ - 14			**Metamorphosis of the Will** Desire to conquer the world: Ability to apply their goal setting in a wider arena. They are inspired by biographies of those who have succeeded in great feats of will.
STAGE 3: Social maturity			
14 - 16⅓	**Synthesis of thought** Developing a worldview.		
16⅓ - 18⅔		**Synthesis of feeling** Religious inclination. Search for self-identity and expression.	
18⅔ -21			**Synthesis of the Will** Ability to express themselves in the world: Social responsibility; career preparation.
References: Lievegoed, 1985, pp.112-113; Rawson & Richter, 2000; Riccio, 2001; Burkhard, 1992			

Educational implications and indications

Introduction

The three main periods of childhood development have been characterised as being related to 'head, heart and hands' and to the virtues of truth, beauty and goodness (Steiner Educational Foundations, section 3.3.1). As the pre-school child comes to know the world and others through physical, sensory activity and learns above all through imitation and play, the guiding principle in early childhood is that of Goodness. Very young children learn in an immediate, participative way [xv] and come to know and make the world their own through physical activity (Steiner, 1996 [1907]). When thinking first awakens it finds expression in a type of imaginative consciousness (endnote xiii). The Steiner approach suggests that it is this vital picture-making capacity [xvi] that gives life to cognition and provides the foundation for the development of logical and conceptual thinking (Steiner, 1996 [1907]). The main task of primary schooling is therefore understood to be that of educating and nourishing the imaginative powers of the child. As Beauty is the motif during this stage the arts play a particularly important role in the aesthetic education [xvii] of the feeling faculty. The third motif of Truth is most applicable in the high school when students engage in rigorous intellectual thinking and integrate diverse inner and outer perceptions in a way that enables them to begin to discern truth in and for themselves. The underlying principle aims to stimulate the activity of thought rather than loading the mind with knowledge content.

Participative consciousness (birth to age 2⅓)

The physical body is born incomplete; the limb system lacks differentiation and is subjected to chaotic involuntary movements and the nerve-sense system is totally open. The new child is born unprotected into the world. The Steiner approach observes that the whole body at this stage is one large sense organ [xviii] and that impressions from the environment shape the inner human being. The main principle at work in learning during this early period and onwards (until approximately age nine), is that of imitation:[xix] "Every observation is first taken in deeply, grasped by the will and then, like an echo, comes forth again in a child's behaviour" (Jaffke). The child's first 'educational' task – that of taking hold of their inner body and developing its differentiation – is all learnt through imitation. It is a task that draws on all their bodies' formative growth forces.[xx] As the forces of growth and memory (visual representation) are identical (von Kügelgen), if formal literacy learning is introduced too early it can have a damaging effect on the child's health. During this period the child gains uprightness in the face of gravity and learns to walk and begins to talk, with this latter development of speech forming the prerequisite for thinking.

Steiner educational indications for this stage:

- Nurture the senses; avoid sense malnutrition (bland, over-processed food; mass produced toys) and sense bombardment (technological noise; overstimulation from television; food additives). Work towards creating a 'sense-rich' home and/or day care environment;
- Use imitation wisely rather than "clever teaching" techniques (Jaffke);
- Be a worthy role model and provide a wholesome, safe, joyful and love-filled environment;
- Understand that children need to use their formative forces for building their bodies not for formal literacy learning (von Kügelgen).

Imaginative consciousness (age 2⅓ to 4⅔)

The formative forces that have been active in the head region now are now focused in the middle sphere, of the rhythmical organs of the heart and lungs. Children gain two new capabilities, that of fantasy and memory (Jaffke). When in about the third year of life, young children refer to themselves as "I", this event reflects a consciousness of self that is accompanied by the awakening of emotion – the moment when feelings acquire a semi-conscious, dreamlike quality for the first time (Lievegoed (2005, p.70). At this point children also realise that they can say "no" to the world and that this helps them to feel empowered; the negative phase comes to an end when the experience of self is strong enough not to have to go against the world. Their play shows that they are still closely connected with the environment. While they can, in imagination, take a step back from the world, their feelings are still locked to the 'here and now' to the world of joy and sorrow. They live in present moment awareness: their desire for objects passes as the objects disappear from view. Steiner educational indications for this stage:

- The indications from the previous stage still apply;
- Toys should be capable of transformation so as to stimulate the child's imagination to fill in the details;
- Tidying up and packing away toys is a joyful activity.

Imagination and planned play (age 4⅔ to 7)

Fairy tales also originated in this creative imagination during a stage when men still lived within such forces. The fairy tales, which are true folk tales, are always concerned with great truths of life and death, good and evil, the growth of the soul in humility, and its strengthening in chivalry. The *content* is formed by profound truths, coming from the world of the still semi- conscious creative spirit, the *form* is that of the childish creative fantasy (Lievegoed, 2005, p.74).

The polarities of reality and imagination are characteristic of this stage: Children are able to move in and out of reality and imagination with ease. Their play is governed by rhythm and indefatigable energy, the joy of creation (Lievegoed, 2005). Jaffke observes that if children are creative, around their fifth year, they may experience a second crisis: they may face real boredom. They may complain that they do not know what to do; it appears that their capacity for fantasy has left them. The crisis is overcome when they realise that the stimulus for play has now to come from within them rather than from the environment.

Children begin to have the capacity to create pictures of past events and they can use these in play irrespective of place, time and people; at the age of five and six they may sit together in pairs and small groups and plan their play. Towards the end of the stage they no longer use the forces of creative imagination to the same extent and become more interested in setting themselves goals to achieve. Their soul life gains the structure necessary for learning (Lievegoed, 2005, pp. 70 – 82).

Steiner educational indications for this stage:

- Avoid sophisticated technological toys;
- Encourage children to play in nature and provide as natural an environment as possible;
- Create a world suitable for imitation;
- Create a calm, joyful atmosphere of work – children should feel "lifted up" by adults' work (Jaffke);
- Provide a rhythmical and orderly routine.

School Readiness

In assessing school readiness it is necessary to understand the social importance of imaginative play. After the age of four children no longer play alongside each other but engage with their peers in a creative and constructive style of play. This social interaction signals a significant development which requires maturation time:

> Many children are quite capable of applying their intelligence to tasks such as learning to read and write. The question is: Shouldn't this intelligence be given time to develop a social awareness of others through creative play? Without this, literacy can become anti-social, rather than a means of communicating and sharing. The listening and oral language skills, the social interaction and initiative that children can develop at this age in a structured Kindergarten setting should not be underestimated. If the early years period is essentially characterised by the child's will in activity, this last part of the seven year phase is important for the development of will in the social and feeling realm (Rawson and Richter, 2000, pp.16- 17).

Other signs of school readiness include the following factors:

- Co-ordination of movement;
- Memory abilities for example the ability to perceive, recall and reproduce shapes and figures;
- Emotional independence and the strength to leave the security of parents and the Kindergarten teacher (Rawson, 2000, pp.16-17).

The coloured veil of Imagination (age 7 to 9⅓)

> During this stage children[2] gain their own little world with growing enthusiasm; a world still enclosed by the safe walls of the feelings of their own selves. Between inner and outer world there is still a coloured veil of imagination. This little world is in many ways comparable to the small principalities of the eighteenth century where the prince or duke could walk around the borders of his own realm before breakfast. However, within those miniature states it was just as busy as in a large one (Lievegoed, 2005, p.87).

Age 7 marks the beginning of formal learning. Children take early steps towards cognitive development by learning basic skills and strengthening their memory. Thinking undergoes the first major metamorphosis (Lievegoed, 2005, p.85):

> Thinking is no longer limited to eagerly grasping and associating perceptions of the outside world but is gradually able to stretch its wings and soar in its own element. It acquires the possibility of developing its own images; … the child rises from *perception* to *concepts*. During the first years of the second stage the life in thought-pictures is very pronounced: the images amalgamate to form an enclosed world which is not disrupted until puberty. This childish world

[2] The writer's original expression has been adapted to the plural form of 'child' to make the language gender neutral.

> has a strange 'realistic unreality.' … Images are not yet sharply defined; they are fluid, mobile and active like people in a stage-play.

The images can be compared to the day-dreams or poetic mood of adults where imaginations and drives interact without a direct relationship with reality. Lievegoed suggests that to provide the right educational diet for the children in the first three years of primary school, we should really be poets (2005, p.86).
Teaching in the lower primary school is directed towards the aesthetic education of the children's inner sensibilities and life of feelings; during this period, as the children learn *how to breathe,* 'their external experiences and their inner reflections become more differentiated' (Rawson, 2000, p.40). Teachers guide children in their encounter with external reality and help them to feel at home in the world. Strategies which assist teachers to meet this educational orientation include:

- rhythmical repetition to support the development of memory;
- helping children to build imaginative pictorial images;
- presenting universal concepts in picture form;
- using strong narrative content;
- focusing on art and music to engage their feelings;
- encouraging children to identify with the subject matter on an emotional level;
- providing opportunities for experiential learning;
- valuing social, emotional and volitional learning as well as cognitive development.

Lievegoed (2005) emphasises the importance of a further strategy: children should be given many opportunities for speaking and recitation. He explains that children of this age would like to 'paint the world with words', because they "can only grasp the spoken word and come to understand it through speaking" (p.86).

Crossing the Rubicon and beyond (age 9⅓ to 11⅔)

At around the age of nine years a change takes place in the feeling life of children: they experience their first emotional separation from the world. The potential loneliness that accompanies this increasing capacity for objectivity is balanced by their growing ability to employ causal logic and to begin practising a more conceptual and critical style of thinking. The Steiner approach identifies the risk of disconnection and the consequent manifestations of early cynicism if pressure is placed on the development of the new critical faculty for over-hurried development. Signs that children are suffering from experiences of alienation are apparent in the increased rate of media articles reporting on the incidence of group bullying, early delinquent and violent behaviour and depression in this age group and in even younger children. For this reason teachers clothe causal thinking in imaginative and pictorial language and strive to *strengthen the connection* between the inner experience of the children and their relationship with the outer world by using the following strategies (Rawson, 2000, p.18; p.45):

- continuing to use earlier teaching methods which favour experiential learning and multi-modal artistic learning;
- directing their curiosity and natural interest in the world towards an inquiry into the laws of the plant and animal kingdom;
- using sense-based scientific inquiry methods;
- showing that history has "been shaped by humans, who are in turn shaped by historical forces";
- providing a rhythmic structure for lesson content;
- following the dictum "to work in the world is to understand the world".

The romantic-realist (age 11⅔ - 14)

By the end of this final stage of the second seven year phase (in their 14th year) students will be ready to enter fully into the conceptual stage traditionally marked by 'formal operations' and abstract thinking. The Steiner approach however, identifies a further transitional stage between the time of students' twelfth and fourteenth birthdays. While it is recognised that students of this age are loosening their attachment to concrete reality and to thinking that is grounded in the rich imaginative life of feeling and that they are more able to use causal logic, teaching strategies aim to use the emerging conceptual capacities in a way that harnesses them to a closer, deeper understanding of the nature of the real world around them.[3] Students only form concepts in relation to embodied learning: what they are able to see and/or experience; scientific conceptual models are therefore not favoured. Teachers direct students towards observing on an experiential level the laws and principles at work in the natural world; students then reflect on what they have learnt and use this knowledge to form judgements and new questions. In this way teachers support students to find their own voice and to awaken a capacity for original thinking – they come to realise in a living way that their own process of knowing (brought about through the synthesis of their perceptions and thoughts) is aligned with the knowledge of others and that "thinking integrates world phenomena" (Steiner, 1964 [1894]).

An example from the Science curriculum of the development that takes place during the transition from Class 7 to Class 8:

In Class 8 the development of critical and creative thinking is carried further than in Class 7. The lessons in Class 8 are still rich in experience, and require the students to separate observations from explanations, however, the experiences in general are not as sense-based, e.g. the force that travels in all directions (pressure) in a fluid, or the transmission of a wave of pressure and rarefaction (a sound wave) in the atmosphere cannot be seen. To understand such phenomena the student has to use their imagination to build a picture of the underlying causative principles, which is a form of primary model building. The understanding of the phenomena requires a greater degree of abstraction than the thought processes in Class 7. For example the elements of galvanic electricity explored in Class 7 become now the elements of electromagnetism – where the themes of electricity and magnetism unite in a way that underpins much of modern technology. The different areas of Year 8 (Science 8.1 - 8.5) engage thinking in qualitatively different ways, each exercising another aspect of intelligence.

As they are now able to relate the concept of causality to their own behaviour they are able to take up more responsibility for their actions and can weigh up the implications and consequences of rules at home and in the classroom. This attribute sometimes manifests in the challenging of adult authority as students yearn for independence and want to participate in decision making that is related to them and request the freedom to express their own point of view. The period is characterised by an increasing interest in the world which includes consideration of the significance of laws in wider society, ecological awareness and respect for different cultures. Students are able to take responsibility for their own class community and willingly participate in service learning.

However students are aware that they have moved beyond the innocence of childhood and that they do not yet fully belong to the world of the teenager. As they strive towards independence they are sometimes troubled by awkwardness and beset by feelings of anxiety; solitude is sometimes accompanied by subdued introspection (Rawson, 2000). The Steiner approach aims to strengthen the students' growing sense of self by working towards the integration of their soul faculties. If the will becomes too powerful a tendency towards destructive behaviour may develop; on the other hand if thinking predominates the newly forming critical capacity may lead students to adopt a cynical attitude towards life. If the feeling faculty is too strong students are likely to become preoccupied with their inner selves. The curriculum is designed to support students to re-find equanimity. To strengthen the will students are encouraged to participate in physical activities including Bothmer gymnastics, [xxi] eurythmy, [xxii] games, sport and dancing. In particular outdoor education camps give students opportunities to

[3] The difference relates to the epistemological underpinnings of the approach. Imagination is valued as a capacity that synthesises perception and cognition (Steiner, 1964/1894); as a form of "thought-imbued" perception (Warnock, 1976, p.196) that enables the thinker-observer to penetrate more deeply into the essence of the real world.

become self-reliant and to test their growing physical prowess and survival skills while also learning to appreciate the natural environment. To support and bring harmony to the feeling life of students, artistic and multi-modal teaching methods continue to be used; opportunities are provided for students to extend their Imaginations in new directions. Teachers build on students' thirst for knowledge: new perspectives include journeys of exploration in history, areas of combustion and mechanics in physics, a global view of the world in geography and the study of health and nutrition in biology. As students leave the magical realm of childhood behind them it is appropriate for them to study the transition from myth to history. Given that a guiding motif for this period of development is that of the 'romantic-realist', curriculum content includes heroic and romantic themes and inspiring biographies. Overall teachers work towards building an integrated and meaningful world picture "in which the striving ethical human being has central significance" (Rawson, 2000, p.49). Further strategies which teachers use to meet the developmental needs of this stage include:

- recognising that their desire 'to conquer the world around them' has a playful element in it;
- encouraging technical expertise in woodwork and handcrafts;
- strengthening cross-curricular links and the interrelationship of the disciplines;
- developing a capacity to hear the inner speech of their students;
- providing opportunities for daily speech work including choral speaking, recitation, talks and oral presentations to help students to find their own 'authentic voice'.

Adolescence

> The human being works his way through via the breathing system and the circulatory system right into the part where the muscles are attached to the bones. He works right to the edge of being human and at puberty breaks out into the outside world. Not until this moment does he arrive fully in the outside world (Steiner, 1986 [1922]; cited by Rawson and Richter, 2000, p.46).

The guiding motif for this period is that of Truth: the focus shifts towards critical analysis, independent judgment and self-directed tasks. Students are guided towards learning to view the world from a range of perspectives. Teaching methods become more conceptual and cognitive. Adolescents respond positively when presented with worthwhile ideals that provide them with sustenance for their inner journey. The phenomenological methodology directs students towards an objective understanding of the principles of the natural and cultural worlds. 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 (Rawson, 2000, p.51).

Developing a worldview (age 14 to 16⅓)

Students develop greater clarity of thought and an increasing ability to form balanced judgments. They 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. Their wish to be understood is relieved and supported by diary writing. 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 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. At this age students aspire towards ideals long to make a connection with a hero. If the direction of their will is blocked they run the risk of falling into apathy or aggression (Lievegoed, 2005, pp.104-109). Strategies which teachers use to meet the developmental needs of this stage include support for (Rawson, 2000; Lievegoed, 2005; Mitchell & Clouder, eds, 2001):

- farm and work experience and service learning;
- teamwork; collaboration and conflict resolution;
- independent student research and self-motivated interest and study;
- the translation of theory into practice;
- 'hands-on' experience and technical expertise in the arts and technology;
- structured logical thinking and causal deductions;
- imaginative, creative and original thinking;

- understanding that the development of the arts and sciences reflect historical changes in cultural consciousness;
- understanding that artists and scientists express worldviews in their works.

Search for self-identity and expression (age 16⅓ to 18⅔)

The students' desire for knowledge broadens to incorporate a new intellectual focus. They desire to gather not only information about a topic, but also insight into how we know something may be so. There is a greater objectivity and clarity in thinking, bringing an increased ability to draw conclusions logically out of the formation of common sense judgments; they are able to justify their opinions articulately. Students begin to apply the conceptual tools of analytical thinking to practical situations and complex processes. In particular students are encouraged to develop mobility in thinking and to move from analysis to synthesis, to look for correlations and to bring disparate elements into a holistic overview. Strategies which teachers use to meet the developmental needs of this stage include support for (Rawson, 2000; Lievegoed, 2005; Mitchell & Clouder, eds, 2001):

- self-directed social responsibility; objectivity in feelings, resilience and empathy;
- objectivity and clarity as well as creativity and originality in thinking;
- the application of theory in practice; an independent and extended research project;
- skill and expertise in the arts and technology.

Social responsibility (age 18⅔ to 21)

The foundations are laid for lifelong learning and self-education. Students search for truth and authenticity in every sphere of life and develop an integrated world view of the human being, society and nature. They prepare themselves for their work in the world and endeavour to grasp and understand the nature of their spiritual task on earth.

Concluding comments: Embedded values

Steiner education focuses in particular on the "development of the Self". As Steiner (1971, GA 9) proposes that the self is the vehicle of the spirit,[4] the realisation of the self is understood to be "the human being's most sacred task" (Lievegoed, 2005, p.133). The developmental approach is therefore deeply embedded in the values that inform the soul-spiritual orientation of the pedagogy. Three major transitional points which have been noted above are pinpointed here:

Self-awareness (around age three)
Most people are able to remember back to the point in their lives when they first become aware of their own selfhood. Until this awakening children refer to themselves by their name, but at this moment they call themselves "I" for the first time (Masters, 2007, p.32; Schoorel, 2004, p.27). Consciousness of Self continues to unfold and develops in two ways: it becomes more continuous (not only asserted at times) and "there is a shift from outward action in the world to the inner activity of forming an opinion about the world" (Lievegoed, 2005, p.130). Both of these developmental aspects are essential prerequisites for learning and both contribute towards the growing sense of "consciousness of self" as separate from 'outer' events. This awareness of 'self' as a detached observer in relation to the outside world is a function of conscious thinking (p.131).

[4] See the paper" Epistemological and pedagogical perspectives for further detail and discussion.

Experience of Self (around age 9 to 10 years)
The self is not only experienced consciously in thought but is also experienced in the deeper layers of the feeling life. It is this deep-seated and felt experience of self that finds its first expression towards the end of the ninth year and that "is reinforced during pubescence and becomes the dominant feeling in puberty itself" (p.131). The first felt experience of the separation of self from the world is tragic in an archetypal sense: it is as if every self has to re-experience the original expulsion from Paradise. The Biblical account of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden is one that 'rings true' to our inner psychological experience of the lost paradise of childhood; children undergoing this experience often feel naked and vulnerable in a world that now appears strange and new.

Self-realisation (age 18 years)
The felt experience of self is not the deepest layer of self-awareness, for lying deeper still and more hidden from consciousness is that aspect of self that is related to the will. However it is from this source that the resolution of the painful experience of separation finally flows. Consciousness and experience of self are followed by a need for self expression in the world. Lievegoed (2005) observes that realisation of self is always accompanied by strong idealism (p.132). Students of the age of 18 (identified as the time of the awakening of self-expression and self-realisation), are often motivated to 'save the world', some are even prepared to fight and die for their ideals. A further stage of self-realisation follows in adulthood when the insight comes that there is an inner pathway to self-realisation where the self turns the will inwards to work for self-change – then education and inner development of the self become a prerequisite for working towards change in the world (Lievegoed, 2005, p.132).

The way in which self-realisation is brought to expression depends on the student's pathway through the earlier two stages of self-consciousness and self-experience which is why Steiner educators place much emphasis on these thresholds. There are two main dangers: one where self-expression becomes too pronounced and students assert themselves and their own wishes and desires *against others* and the world; the other where self-expression fails and students' sense of self-identity is stamped out, leaving them in the *slavish service* of others. It is the task of the teacher to help students to maintain the balance between these extremes.

The ability to express oneself in the world takes place on many levels but all are ultimately related to the identity the self forges in terms of its own biography, and the way this is integrated with its sense of vocation and relation to the world. Assisting students to have the ability to find their own authentic and embodied voice is the main goal of Steiner education aptly expressed in the following words:

> Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives (Marie Steiner, 1923).

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Glossary

[i] Epistemology: The study of the theory of knowledge; Steiner's epistemology includes a soul-spiritual dimension.

[ii] Onlooker consciousness: Originally based on Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am') which leaves the thinker confident of their own inner thought activity only – the thinker looks out on a world that does not necessarily connect with inner thinking.

[iii] Existential distance: Unresolved epistemological issues i.e. the inability to untie the 'body-mind knot' – the question of the distance between objective and subjective reality – led existential philosophers to focus on human experience and the search for meaning rather than on the objective truths of science and mathematics. Existential philosophers popularised the notion of the 'existential dilemma' i.e. the challenges associated with the separation between subjective and objective epistemologies – as well as their response –' for the self to take responsibility for meaning making.'

[iv] Scaffolded: Relating to Vygotsky's 'ZPD' – the zone of proximal development where the assistance provided by a teacher or adult can help a student to learn more quickly and effectively.

[v] Researchers: Include doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists and educators.

[vi] Soul: "By the word *soul* is signified that by which one links the things of one's own being, through which one experiences pleasure or displeasure, desire or aversion, joy and sorrow in connection with them" (Steiner, GA 9, 1971 [1922], pp.4).

[vii] (Soul) Faculties: Inherent physical, mental, or psychological powers or aptitudes. From the Latin words *facultas* and *facere* – to make or do*;* Related to capacities, from the Latin word *capere,* to hold; and powers (*posse)* to be able (Latin for potential). 'Facult'y is a word that is traditionally used in theology to describe the soul.

[viii] Thinking, feeling and willing: Thinking relates to the intellectual and cognitive aptitude/intelligence; see the following two notes for comments on the Will and feelings.

[ix] The Will: The Faculty of the Will in Steiner philosophy (1894/1964) refers to the full range of motivational behaviours from drives, instincts and desires to more refined moral impulses. Steiner education proposes that the three faculties need to be integrated; it is particularly important for will forces to influence and enliven thinking and for thinking to refine will impulses; the feeling faculty is understood to play a harmonising and mediating function. Steiner teachers aim to awaken children's thinking so that they learn to 'think for themselves' instead of reproducing factual content.
Broadly speaking 'the Will' can also be understood to refer to the physical aspect of development because Steiner education suggests that the Will as a psychological function is associated physiologically with the metabolic-limb system. As skills learning inevitably uses the limb system, in this way 'the Will' is also related to skills learning and to physical activities. The use of the word 'behavioural' does not have the meaning that is applied in behavioural psychology.

[x] Sentient or feeling element of the self: The feeling faculty can be understood as the emotional component of the soul or self. The verb *fostering* denotes the gesture of caring and nurturing that is needed for the development of aesthetic awareness, sentience, sensibility and the senses in general.

[xi] Imaginative consciousness: The young child's consciousness differs from the adult's – it is more like an adult's day-dreaming consciousness - Steiner education calls this "imaginative consciousness". Imagination is understood to be a capacity that can be developed through phenomenological (Goethean-style) observation and arts training. In adults Imagination is understood to develop artistic inspiration and spiritual insights; in children imagination refers to a capacity to be creative in play and learning and to form inner mental images (these do not have to be visual). See the note below.

[xii] Creative imaginations: The imaginative flow of a young child's consciousness runs along with the creative stream of life. "Participative consciousness" (which is characteristic of the earlier stage of the baby and toddler) is the type of consciousness associated with deep sleep – it is the most unconscious

mode of awareness. We know this level of awareness from tasks that once learnt we are able to perform automatically. Athletes and sports people call “participative consciousness” being in ‘the zone’. It is not possible to be analytical when one is performing a learnt physical skill and yet we can experience that we are in a stream of knowing consciousness. “Imaginative consciousness” is one level more conscious – whereas participative consciousness relates to the sphere of the will – imaginative consciousness relates to the feelings. This is the awareness of the artist and poet who know how to switch off their critical thinking while they draw on the creative stream of consciousness. This too is the level of awareness of the young child – they are able to slip into a creative flow of awareness that informs their play.

[xiii] Metamorphosis: A word used to describe change in the natural world; it is used in Steiner literature to refer to psychological growth where the stages of change are distinctly different from each other – where growth and development proceed in jumps.

[xiv] ‘Crossing of the Rubicon’: The Rubicon (Latin: *Rubicō*, Italian: *Rubicone*) is a shallow river in northeastern Italy, about 80 kilometres long, running from the Apennine Mountains to the Adriatic Sea. The idiom "Crossing the Rubicon" means to pass a point of no return, and refers to Julius Caesar's crossing of the river in 49 BC, which was considered an act of insurrection. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubicon

[xv] Participative way: see note xii above.

[xvi] Picture-making capacity: The characteristic imaginative consciousness of children assists them to create picture-like images in their minds. Their image making capacity is not limited to visual images and includes images related to all the senses.

[xvii] Aesthetic education: Training in the appreciation of the principles of beauty and art. Steiner education is oriented towards educating the senses of students (12 senses are identified) as a pathway towards developing creativity and imagination. The aim is to refine and extend the students’ abilities to perceive with their senses (in the same way that a musician is able to hear more than the average person and an artist to discern colour and light more effectively). The phenomenological observation methods as well as practise in the arts are used as aesthetic training. These methods also aim to educate the feelings or emotional intelligence of the students. Research indicates that in the rushed and noisy, technologically dominated contemporary world the human senses are degenerating: we are losing our ability to use our senses as the neural pathways in the brain are changing (Kniessle; see attachment 3c).

[xviii] One large sense organ: … (T)he young child is almost entirely one sense organ. What is the nature of a sense organ? It surrenders fully to the world. Consider the eye. The entire visible world is mirrored in the eye and is contained in it. The eye is totally surrendered to the world. Likewise the child, though in a different way, is surrendered fully to the environment. We adults may taste sweet, bitter, or acid tastes on the tongue and with the palate, but the tastes do not penetrate our entire organism. Although we are not usually aware of it, it is nevertheless true to say that when the baby drinks milk the taste of the milk is allowed to permeate the entire organism. The baby lives completely like an eye, like one large sense organ. The differentiation between outer and inner senses occurs only later (Steiner, 1923, *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, [14],* p.195).

. . .(D)uring the first period of life the child is in the highest degree and by its whole nature a being of sense. The child is like a sense organ. The surrounding impressions ripple, echo and sound through the whole organism because the child is not so inwardly bound up with its body as is the case in later life, but lives in the environment with its freer spiritual and soul nature. Hence the child is receptive to all the impressions coming from the environment (Steiner, 1907, *Education of the Child*. [2], pp.20-21).

[xix] Imitation: Children learn mainly through imitation in the early years but the principle continues to apply until age 9. Babies and young children are characterised as being like ‘one large sense organ’ because they absorb their environment (like a sponge) and do not have a screening device to shut out harmful influences. What is taken in becomes formative in both a physiological and psychological sense (Jaffke; Schoorel, 2004; Lievegoed, 2005).

[xx] Formative forces: Formative forces relate to the Steiner concept of the ‘etheric body’ which forms the interface between the physical body and the psychological functions which are related to the ‘astral body’.

> "The etheric body is a *force-form;* it consists of active forces, and not of matter. The astral or sentient body is a figure of inwardly moving, coloured, and luminous pictures"(Steiner, *Education of the Child,* 1996 [1907], pp.8-9).

Like the wind which can only be seen by its 'passing through', the etheric body is visible (to physical sense perception) only through its activity in the organism in the life processes of breathing, biochemistry, biorhythms, heartbeat, brainwaves, and in the daily rhythms of organic functions including the female menstrual cycle. In the same way that the waves of the sea leave a tracery of branching forms in the sand on the beach, so does the etheric body flow into the form of our habits to shape the patterns of our lives. The key characteristics of the etheric body are therefore its *formative or forming/structuring influence* and its *life sustaining* and *regenerating qualities*; throughout our life the etheric body works continuously against the deadening effects of the mineral forces to preserve the shape and life processes of the body. When 'life' leaves the body it becomes a 'corpse' (derived from the Latin word for body) and the process of decomposition begins (Schoorel, 2004, p.17).

"Formative forces arise out of the realm of life energies — the etheric body — known in various traditions as vital force (homeopathy), chi (Chinese medicine), and prana (Ayurveda). They are a counterpoint to the physical energies and substances studied by the conventional materialistic science of our time. This reductionist science explains the formation of a living entity, such as a plant, as the elaboration of DNA programming in the cells and other biophysical mechanisms. By contrast, … living science recognizes the etheric formative forces that interact with physical substance. They are like the guiding hands of the potter that shape the clay as it turns on the potter's wheel. Yet, because they belong to a realm that is invisible to our ordinary sense impression, we only "see" these forces by their results, by studying the forms in nature." (From a book review by Richard Katz, of *About Formative Forces in the Plant World* by Dick van Romunde.
Downloaded from: http://www.flowersociety.org/About_Formative_Forces.htm)

[xxi] Bothmer gymnastics: A series of exercises based on space and gravity which use the three dimensions, width, depth and height. The exercises are designed to enable participants to rediscover space as a reality that can be felt and used to their advantage.

[xxii] Eurythmy: an expressive art of movement created by Rudolf Steiner and Marie von Sivers that visually represents in the sounds and rhythms of speech and the tones and rhythms of music. It is a performance art that is also used for educational and curative purposes.