

Waldorf Education for the Future:

A framework for curriculum practice

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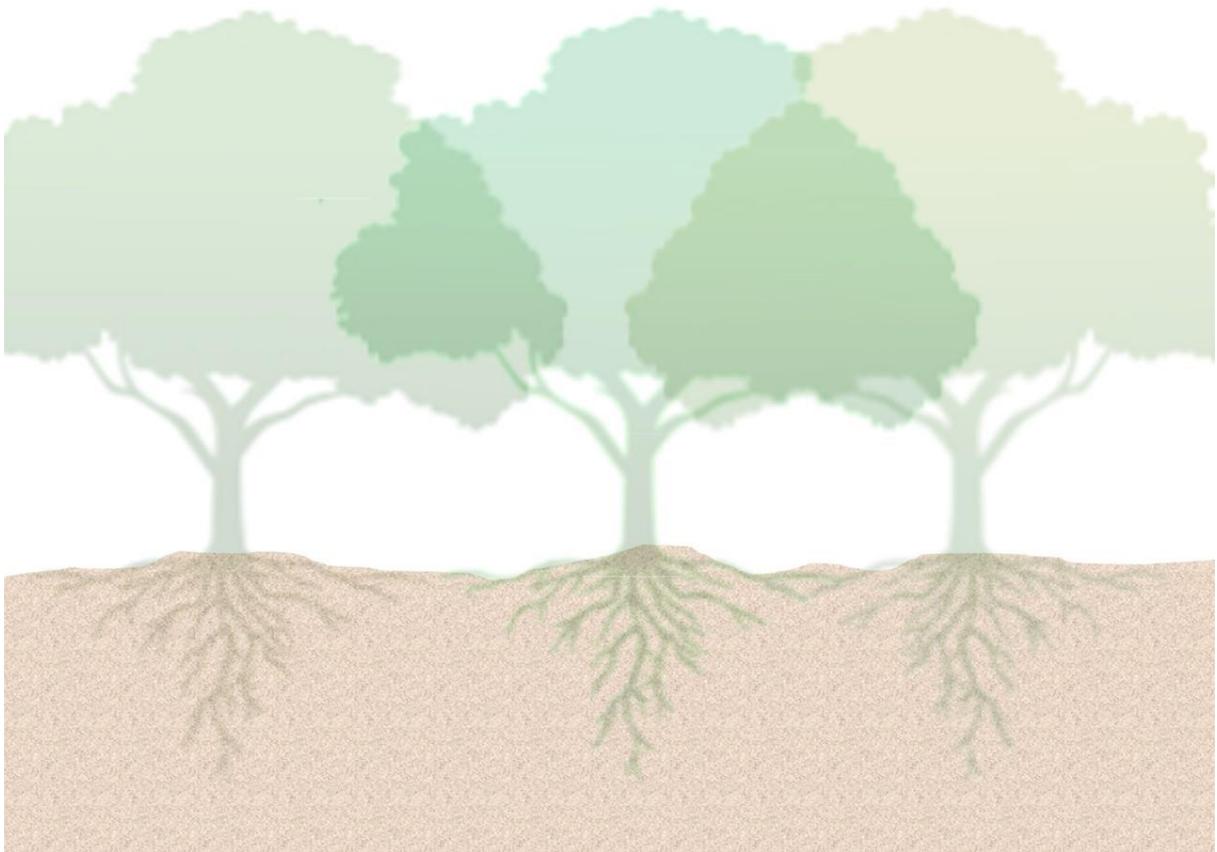


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Preamble

“We do not teach subjects, we teach children and young people,” Dietrich Esterl, former teacher at the Freie Waldorfschule Umlandshöhe, Stuttgart.

You will, to some extent, not teach the subject content of the lessons as this has conventionally been taught. Rather, you will use this material, as it were, as a means to supporting the healthy development of the mental and bodily processes of the students. Therefore, it will not be your task to transmit knowledge as such, but rather your task consists in dealing with this subject knowledge in ways that enable skills and abilities to develop. Therefore, you will have to learn to distinguish between teaching material that is actually only based on convention or is externally prescribed...and content that is based on an understanding of general human nature.” (Rudolf Steiner speaking to the teachers of the first Waldorf School on 21st August 1919, on the first day of their induction course) (translated from Steiner, 2020, pp.51-2 by M. Rawson, see also English version Steiner, 2000)

The question should not be: What does a human being need to know and be able to do for the social order that now exists?, but rather: What capacities are latent in this human being, and what lies within that can be developed? Then it will be possible to bring ever new forces into the social order from the rising generations. The life of the social order will be what is made of it by a succession of fully developed human beings who take their places in the social order. The rising generation should not be molded into what the existing social order chooses to make of it (Steiner, 1985, 71).

Whatever is to be taught and whatever education is to be practised must arise solely out of an understanding of the growing human being and his or her individual capacities. Genuine anthropology should provide the foundation for education and teaching. (from The Essentials of Education, 5 lectures, Stuttgart, 8-11 Apr 1924, Steiner 1997)

This document sets out to explain how curriculum practice in Waldorf schools aims to meet the needs of learners in order to prepare them for the future. It builds on existing and past understandings of curriculum within the Waldorf movement and shows how teachers can take account of the changed and changing conditions within which learning and development occur, including external expectations such as statutory curriculum outcomes.

This document takes a 3-fold perspective: teaching, learning and assessment. The first perspective looks at what guides teaching pedagogy, lesson planning and curriculum development. The second looks at how this relates to learning and development of children and young people in Waldorf or Steiner schools. The third perspective looks at how teaching and learning relate by focusing on assessment, which seeks to provide insight into the learning process to help guide teachers and students. These perspectives are inter-related. The main focus of the present document is the range of classes 1 to 8 (i.e. students from 6 to 14 years of age), and subsequent documents will focus on Early Childhood and the Upper School (ages 15-19).

This document has been prepared as an introduction to the Steiner Waldorf curriculum for new parents, visitors, teacher students, academics and the wider educational community including Ofsted inspectors, to help them to understand what they encounter in a Steiner or Waldorf school. These two terms -Steiner and Waldorf - are synonymous and we abbreviate them in the document to SW. A companion document in preparation (A Curriculum Handbook) addresses these issues in more detail for teachers to enable them to plan and assess their teaching in relation to actual student learning in context. These documents represent current thinking about the educational principles and best practice of member schools of the SWSF and aligns with international SW practice, though individual schools may formulate their own policies and approaches.

1.0 Leading Statement

Aims and intentions

Steiner Waldorf schools seek to educate the whole person in the three domains of educational purpose (Biesta, 2013) by enabling:

- qualification: how students acquire the dispositions, skills, knowledge and cultural capital to participate in and contribute to the world of work and civil society,
- socialisation: how students learn the dispositions, skills, knowledge and abilities to actively participate in their community and within a multicultural society and be able to establish and maintain coherent identities,
- individuation: how students develop agency, judgement, sense of coherence, a feeling for responsibility, ethical dispositions, the ability to orientate their lives, be creative and develop a relationship to spirituality (Biesta refers to becoming a subject, or the process of subjectification).

Steiner Waldorf schools strive to be inclusive spaces that respect difference, have a strong ethic of care and practice no discrimination on the grounds of age, ethnic origin, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, status of marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or indeed any other grounds. They take all necessary measures to safeguard children and vulnerable people. The educational and organisational approaches also aim to cultivate awareness of all these issues and to enable students and staff to develop dispositions of tolerance, sharing and caring, peaceful conflict-resolution and the growth of capabilities, futures-orientated learning and the ability to engage with “wicked problems”¹. This requires school leadership to practice holistic, democratic agency² in order to create a school environment in which people are encouraged to grow as whole people, facilitates fair participation and keeps the focus on improving, evolving and renewing the school culture.

¹ Hipkins, Bolstad, Boyd & McDowall, 2014. Wicked problems involve irreconcilable contradictory certitudes that different parties hold and all possible solutions require that each party be willing and able to step back from their current stance in order to find a ‘clumsy’ but workable solution.

² Woods and Woods, 2012

2.0 Key terms

2.1 Generative principles

The term generative principles refers to a set of ideas that can be applied to generate and assess practice. They relate to the nature of the developing human being from an anthroposophical perspective³ derived originally from Rudolf Steiner's works, lectures and discussions with teachers in the first Waldorf school supplemented by experience over the past 100 years. This pedagogical anthropology includes the interactive relationship between body, mind and the spiritual core of the human being, a theory of learning, the processes of individuation, the threefold nature of the human being into nerve-sense, rhythmical-circulatory and metabolic-limb domains, the nature of thinking, feeling and willing and their interactions, the different sense modalities, the different states of consciousness, and the role of education in guiding and harmonising these processes⁴. These ideas lead to a series of learning, teaching and school organisational practices, which belong to core practices in Waldorf schools around the world.

SW education builds on the general generative principles which are used as orientation to generate, evaluate and develop practice. They are, as it were, the ground out of which the education process grows.

2.2 Curriculum

Curriculum refers to the totality of what students experience during the educational process, including both the explicit and hidden or tacit dimensions. Thus, curriculum includes the school culture, the learning environment, relationships and community as well as what is taught and when and how it is taught. The basic assumption behind curriculum in a Waldorf context is that there is a fundamentally developmental purpose behind the sequence of what, how and when things are taught and learned. Learning situations are arranged in which certain learning processes can occur that serve socialisation, qualification and the individuation process. Curriculum, as the whole educational approach, translates the generative principles into practice that serves the aims and intentions of the education at the local and specific level.

2.3 Teaching pedagogy

Pedagogy refers to the art, craft and science of the relationship between teaching and learning and involves the application of the generative principles in practice. Teaching is an art, in that the teacher combines the methods and materials available in unique ways to shape specific learning situations that enable learning and emergent development to occur in all participants. Each situation requires its own solutions. Teaching is also a practical professional skill based on embodied knowledge of methods, materials and learning arrangements. It uses knowing-in-practice involving pedagogical tact or pedagogical intuition, that is, the ability to respond in pedagogically meaningful ways in classroom situations. Pedagogy is also a science when teachers systematically use reflection, theory and action research to analyse their experiences and data they have gathered related to pedagogical processes in order to generate knowledge of practice, and when teachers practice professional development including accessing relevant research.

SW education believes that teachers matter as people and that the relationship between teachers and students is decisive to learning. Despite all the resources available to learners, children and

³ Steiner referred to his understanding of the human being from a holistic and spiritual perspective as anthroposophy (literally knowledge or wisdom of the human being).

⁴ Steiner, 1996,

students still need to learn something meaningful *from someone* (Biesta, 2019). This someone - the teacher - is a role model for interested, enthusiastic, relevant and responsible learning. Teaching includes the many intentional ways that teachers structure the learning environment and support individuals and groups in their learning. This includes ways of communicating and relating, initiating and guiding learning activities, providing appropriate materials and learning tools, modelling the processes of active learning as well as offering timely, comprehensible feedback to children and parents about the next meaningful learning steps. One of the key functions of teachers is encouraging and enabling full participation in the learning community. Teaching is an interactive process in which both partners listen and learn; pupils learn to learn and expand their skills and knowledge and teachers learn to read and assess this learning process and steer it with insight.

2.4 Learning and development

Learning manifests as sustainable change in the whole person, body, mind and spirit, over time and across social settings (see Illeris, 2014; Jarvis, 2018). Human beings start out with the capacity to develop their innate potentialities (see 5.2 below), in ways that theoretically have no upper limits. With the help of socialisation, education and later self-education, the human being learns through active engagement with the world, with cultural artefacts (from language to laptops) and with other people. Through learning we acquire dispositions, life skills, specific subject discipline skills, procedural skills and knowledge and these enable us to develop our capacities further. Thus we become more capable and therefore progressively more able to act out of insight and a sense of responsibility for our actions.

Whilst each individual has to actively learn, learning occurs in learning communities or communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). A school and a class are both learning communities as is the college of teachers (the body of teachers in a school who work collegially to carry and develop the educational practice). We learn by participating in such learning communities, in which practices are enacted that provide learners with a common language, dialogue and ways of being and thinking. These practices change and evolve over time, as new members join the community. Learning is also a process of becoming within a school culture (Hodkinson et al, 2008), and biographically it is a process of establishing and maintaining coherent identities. SW strives to ensure that learning is deep (Hattie and Donoghue, 2018), meaningful for the learners and takes account of meta-cognitive connections and contexts. Deep learning is transformative, whilst shallow learning largely involves short-term memory and is not integrated into the person's overall understanding of self and world.

Learning embedded in a learning community is therefore the motor of development (Eun, 2010). Though human development usually follows general patterns of bodily and psychological maturation across different modes (e.g. motor development and coordination, language, social, emotional and cognitive development), each person has her own individual developmental trajectory - developmental difference is normal! (Largo, 2019). SW education, however, assumes that each typical developmental phase benefits from a distinct educational approach, for example, early childhood education up to age six, primary education up to puberty and education for adolescence. SW education therefore structures these stages institutionally and pedagogically in distinct ways and uses the curriculum to channel and focus learning and development in response to the developmental tasks of the particular age group. This pedagogical approach provides channels that guide students in age-sensitive ways, whilst taking each individual's needs into account. Within the curriculum, SW identifies specific social and psychological challenges around the 9th, 12th and 14th years⁵, though these 'milestones' are actually ideal types and may vary in different settings and cultural contexts.

⁵ See Militzer-Kopperl, 2020 for a description of the 'milestones'. See also Rawson, Richter & Avison, 2014 and Rawson & Avison, 2013

The learning flow moves along developmental trajectories in different domains (e.g. embodied skills, abilities, dispositions, knowledge) and the task of education is to enable alignment, integration and progression of the domains. Mapping development and learning flow is an important task of teachers to make the process visible and thereby more amenable to intervention.

In this document we propose to present learning and development in terms of a transformation of potentialities into dispositions, skills and abilities as enhanced capacities.

2.5 Assessment

Assessment refers to all forms of support for learners and the ongoing development of educational excellence based on reflection, review and research. Assessment shows impact/outcomes (see section 8 below).

2.6 Teacher values

Teacher values refers to the beliefs and personal pedagogies that teachers have and which inform their attitudes and behaviour in the classroom. It is important that these values align with those of the education. To this end, teacher education and professional development supports teachers to develop the dispositions, habits of mind, skills and knowledge that inform their practice so that they can be effective Waldorf teachers. These skills relate to and underpin The National Waldorf Teacher Standards (SWSF, 2020), a set of self-regulated criteria for professional attitudes and behaviours related to the work of Waldorf teachers.

3.0 A very short history of Waldorf curricula

Rudolf Steiner (1997, 2000), the founder of the first Waldorf School, referred to an *ideal* curriculum during his initial induction course for the teachers of the first Waldorf School. This ideal curriculum would ensure the healthy learning and development of the children and young people, but it would have to be modified to take account of the external expectations and requirements of society at the time, as well as taking account of the limitations of the teachers and the school's resources in those first years. There were also conditions set by the local education authorities who allowed the school to be founded during a fortuitous but brief window of opportunity. Steiner gave suggestions for curriculum but assumed that the teachers would go on developing curriculum based on their insights into the nature of learning and development and local social and cultural expectations (Rawson, 2020a). Steiner's pedagogical anthropology was the basis for the whole educational approach, including what was taught, when and how. The first published curriculum appeared in 1925, compiled by Caroline von Heydebrand and it is this publication that became the initial point of reference from the next generations of SW schools until 2000.

Since the first SW schools in non-German speaking countries were already founded in the 1920's (in the UK, Kings Langley and Michael Hall in 1922 and 1925 respectively, in The Hague in the Netherlands in 1923, in Oslo in Norway, 1926, in Budapest in Hungary in 1926, in New York in 1928 and so on around the world), there was a need to translate the curriculum into the local language and adapt it to the local culture. Informal translations circulated in the 1930s but in 1944 Eileen Hutchins published a translation of Heydebrand's original version in English and followed up with a revised edition in 1966. These revisions included adaptations to the English language and added some new story material and British history. This version was then initially widely used in the US, Australia and New Zealand, although in Australia one of the founding schools took a radical position by emphasising the Australian and to some extent Aborigine traditions.

Hutchins' version of Heydebrand and a later translation of Stockmeyer's (2015/1965) compilation of references to various aspects of curriculum in Steiner's lectures remained the main sources of reference for curriculum in the English-speaking world, though individual schools developed their own local variations. In 2000 Rawson & Richter (2000) published the first full curriculum for Waldorf schools that could be compared with conventional state curricula and which included an overview of Early Years, minimum learning expectations for Maths, English and Second Language, and a chapter on assessment, aspects which had never been published in English until then. A second edition was published with some modification in 2014 (Rawson et al, 2014). This curriculum has become the international standard reference and has been translated into many other languages, with varying degrees of local modification. In Australia, the national Waldorf body published *The Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework* (2017), which has been recognised by the state and is mandatory in all Waldorf schools.

The process of analysing the evolution of curriculum in the international Waldorf movement has only recently begun. Jennifer Militzer-Kopperl (2020) has offered a fine-grained structure for the conceptual analysis of curriculum variations, which is helpful for distinguishing between the various kinds of additions and adaptations of the curriculum that have occurred in the English-speaking world. She also highlights the obstacles to establishing what can be considered relevant and authentic. Neil Boland (2015, 2017a, 2017b) has written about the need for Waldorf to develop conceptual tools to understand how curriculum can be better related to time and geographical space. Boland and Rawson (in press) have also drawn attention to some of the issues related to curriculum translations, including the problematical notion of equivalence to an original norm, and question whether this actually exists. They argue that curriculum in Waldorf schools is (and actually always has been) emergent and rhizomic, growing from a common source but taking on multiple local forms which themselves evolve. Rawson (2019) has also published articles on the principles of choosing story material and de-colonialising curriculum (2020b).

From this brief survey we can summarise the salient points:

1. SW curriculum respects the nature of the developing human being and responds to the social and cultural requirements of education.
2. The first curriculum was published in a 1925, after Steiner's death and was very brief, but became the main point of reference for subsequent curricula.
3. There is no original, definitive or standard Waldorf Curriculum, but rather evolving versions that respond to the context in various ways.
4. Waldorf curricula are adapted to local language and culture, though historically, this has been relatively minimal.
5. The first curriculum in English that is comparable with state curriculum appeared in 2000 (Rawson and Richter) and it is this that has been most translated around the world.

4.0 An outline framework for curriculum in Steiner Waldorf schools

The basis for SW curriculum development is the nature of the developing human being, which is translated into a set of generative principles. Curriculum development starts with the aims and intent of the education, which also function as the criteria for assessment. The relationship between the overall aims of the education, the development of the person, specific learning outcomes in the form of skills, learning dispositions and knowledge on the one hand, and the actual learning process of the students on the other, can be diagrammatically portrayed as follows. What links these two processes is assessment. We found it appropriate to illustrate these processes symbolically as three trees growing from a common ground: the generative principles of Waldorf education.

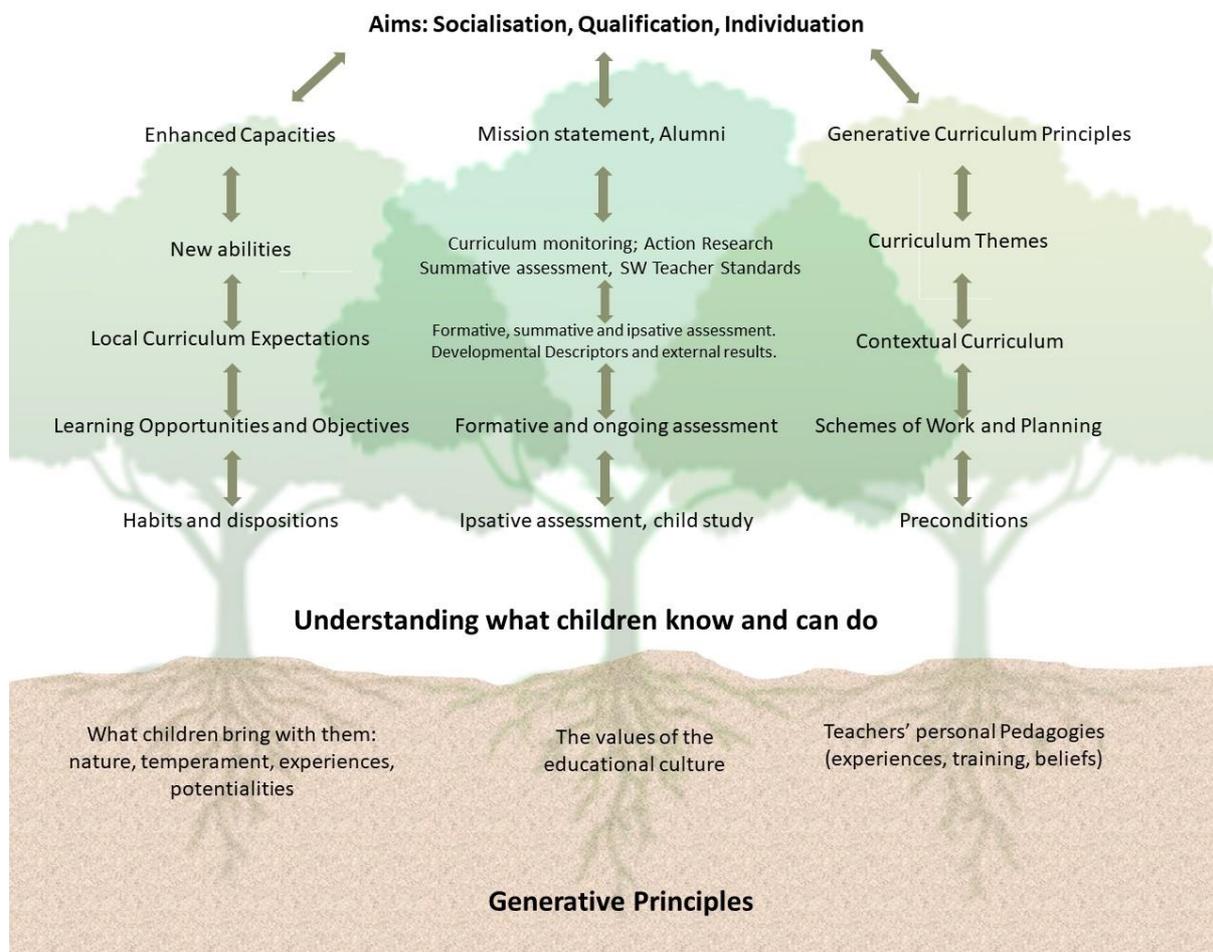
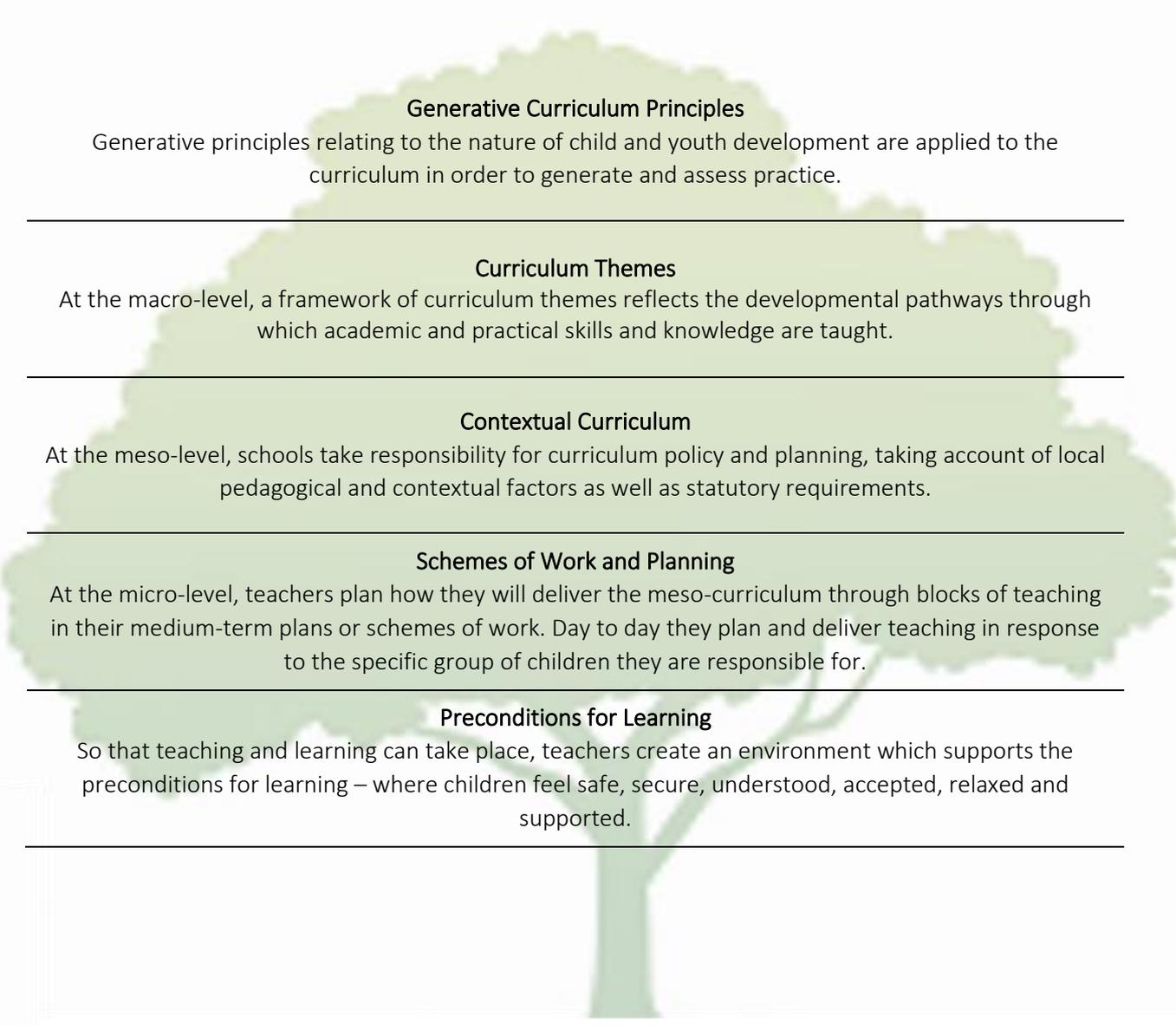


Figure 1: The relationship between educational aims, learning outcomes, the process of assessment for learning, and curriculum development.



Generative Curriculum Principles

Generative principles relating to the nature of child and youth development are applied to the curriculum in order to generate and assess practice.

Curriculum Themes

At the macro-level, a framework of curriculum themes reflects the developmental pathways through which academic and practical skills and knowledge are taught.

Contextual Curriculum

At the meso-level, schools take responsibility for curriculum policy and planning, taking account of local pedagogical and contextual factors as well as statutory requirements.

Schemes of Work and Planning

At the micro-level, teachers plan how they will deliver the meso-curriculum through blocks of teaching in their medium-term plans or schemes of work. Day to day they plan and deliver teaching in response to the specific group of children they are responsible for.

Preconditions for Learning

So that teaching and learning can take place, teachers create an environment which supports the preconditions for learning – where children feel safe, secure, understood, accepted, relaxed and supported.

Figure 2: The framework for teaching

Enhanced capacities

SW education believes that the aims of the education can be achieved by the development of potentialities into enhanced capacities through the educational process.

Enhanced Abilities

Emergent proficiency in the academic subjects and practical, personal and social fields of learning lead to new abilities, which in turn contribute to the further development of the person's potentialities.

Local Curriculum Expectations

How and when these subject and age-specific skills are learned is expressed in contextual expectations of typical development in the form of ideal types and developmental descriptors.

Learning Opportunities and Short-Term Objectives

Children are provided with a range of learning experiences and opportunities to facilitate and structure their progress towards the contextual curriculum expectations.

Habits and Dispositions

In order to make progress, children need a foundation of good learning habits and learning dispositions.

Figure 3: The framework for learning

Schools express their aims, priorities and principles, e.g. through a mission statement. The national organisation articulates these messages through its interactions with the wider world. The extent to which schools and the education more generally fulfil these aims, and how well children develop the core capacities, is assessed on a local, national and international basis through the tracking of alumni and academic research and ongoing quality development.

On the macro-level, the academic and practical subjects are a medium through which new abilities are developed, and these abilities nurture and contribute to the further development of the core capacities. Generalized curriculum themes related to the age-sensitive developmental tasks form a framework and are taught in efficient, interdisciplinary ways, either by class teachers or by subject specialists (in the middle and upper school). Assessment at this level is seen on a whole school level through self-evaluation and the monitoring of curriculum coverage.

At the meso-level, the school's curriculum is influenced by external social and cultural expectations and statutory requirements. These guide descriptors of age-related typical progressions and student attainment. Assessment is through a range of ipsative, formative and summative methods, using these descriptors as a frame of reference. It might also include reference to national expectations and external assessments such as GCSE and NZCSE.

At the micro-level of curriculum, assessment sits at the heart of the relationship between teaching and learning. The teacher creates learning opportunities for the children and uses a range of ongoing assessment methods to judge the impact of their teaching. This assessment informs the planning of teaching strategies and learning objectives on a day-to-day basis.

Individual pupil studies are a characteristic feature of SW education, in which teachers reflect on a student's progress in the context of how well the learning environment enables their participation and supports their dispositions and learning habits. These studies are supplemented by a reflective focus on particular learning groups or a whole class.

Figure 4: The framework for assessment

4.1 Developmental tasks

Curriculum today is based not on tradition (though it acknowledges this) but on a reading of the developmental tasks⁶. Developmental tasks are what children and young people need to engage with in order to learn and develop. The tasks are partly given by the innate developmental nature of the human being, and partly by the requirements of the society and culture the student lives in, including statutory expectations determined by the state and individual factors. SW education draws on a model of developmental pathways that channel the direction of learning and development for all learners in a particular age group - the macro-level, generally valid curriculum - and modifies this in light of local and national requirements at the meso-level. Therefore, in constructing curriculum in Waldorf schools, the following factors need to be taken into account:

- The generative principles of SW education (e.g. regarding the nature of learning),
- General developmental pathways deemed to create a healthy progression of learning and development and articulated in the form of themes leading to a progressive process of individuation (becoming an agentic subject),
- Pedagogical approaches including content and methods that meet the requirements of socialisation and qualification in the particular cultural context in terms of dispositions, skills and active knowledge,
- The developmental needs of the particular learning group in a specific time and place,
- External requirements regarding learning outcomes,
- Individual learning needs.

4.2 Four levels of curriculum

Thus curriculum can be framed and analysed at three levels embedded in a meta-level context:

- A *meta-level curriculum* comprising the basic generative principles and aims of the education, based on an anthroposophical understanding of the general nature of the developing human being and how the various aspects of pedagogy affect the human being as integrated body, soul and spirit (body, mind and subject-ness/individuality). These principles describe the preconditions for healthy learning and development and the context for pedagogy. A meta-level curriculum also outlines the capacities that human beings can develop life long, and in particular how these are learned throughout the phases of childhood and youth.
- A *macro-curriculum* framework of age-sensitive and developmental tasks and themes that are structured thematically within a horizontal (i.e. linking across subjects in the same year), vertical (i.e. progressions within subject and skills sets over the whole school career) and spiral (i.e. expanding recurrence of key concepts over the whole school career) structure. A macro-level curriculum is a set of developmental themes that map out a developmental framework that SW considers provides a general structure within which individual development can occur.
- A *meso-curriculum* level involves age-related ideal types or models of teaching and learning that articulate the link between the general themes of the macro-curriculum and interpretations of current learning conditions as well as external social and cultural expectations which feed into curriculum content. This takes into account cultural considerations as well as global issues such as the climate crisis, pandemics, digital media, or sources of conflict. Likewise, national/statutory curriculum requirements (where relevant) are considered at the meso-level. A meso-level curriculum provides a semi-permanent framework of orientation in all these aspects, which is reviewed and modified to reflect the historical, social and cultural space with its specific orientations and requirements. This is the

⁶ See Rawson (2020) for a fuller account of the term developmental tasks.

level at which issues such as de-colonising the curriculum belong, since these are distinctly historically and culturally situated.

- *Micro-curricula* can be developed by teachers for specific classes and learning groups taking account of individual learning differences, biographical interests and needs. The development of the whole group can be considered at this level. Such micro-curricula might regularly be informed by professional discussions and reviewed through internal and occasional external moderation.

The term ideal types refers to models of teaching and learning that frame a best-fit for the various developmental tasks being addressed at any given age or developmental situation, that are offered on the basis of evidence/experience as orientation for teachers to plan their lessons at the micro-level. Novice teachers will probably stay close to the ideal types but experienced teachers will modify their lessons in relation to their understandings. The ongoing review of practice feeds into the evolution of the ideal types.

5.0 Learning and becoming: the transformation of potential into enhanced capacities

The aim of SW education is the healthy development of the person. This means enabling each individual to develop her potential to the fullest extent. Potential is realised through engaging with the world and learning through this process. This notion of development does not involve the unfolding or unpacking of predetermined aptitudes, talents or character traits, though SW education acknowledges that children bring biographical intentions with them. Rather the development of potential is both emergent and open-ended, being a life-long process involving incidental, informal and formal learning and is also situated in a particular historical, social and cultural context. Learning in this sense means the ongoing process of a subject, a person, bodily engaging with the world and in the process of doing so, securing stable identities and developing personhood, thus enabling relatively sovereign, autonomous agency, in particular in relation to learning opportunities. Learning is not merely a linear process of integrating information and being able to use it to solve problems, but is rather an ongoing productive process of re-learning and transformation through challenging encounters with meaningful experience. This active process of developing emergent potentialities is shaped by the developmental tasks presented by the body, maturation, socialisation and the expectations of qualifications, in particular the developmental tasks that the school curriculum structures. In a healthy development, the individual retains a coherent and continuous sense of self and self-efficacy through the various transformations over time and through the various developmental tasks.

5.1 Overview

Our iteration of how people relate to the world and to themselves starts with the innate potential that manifests in different potentialities (see section 5.2). Through these potentialities the human being meets and engages with the world: they are the basis for self-formation and transformative learning leading to the integrated development of the whole person, body, soul and spirit. The term potentiality in this sense refers to “a power or a quality that exists and is capable of being developed” (Oxford Learners’ Dictionary), and “the ability to develop or come into existence” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Potential shows itself in different domains, hence the list of 12 potentialities below in 5.2. In anthroposophical terms, potentialities are expressions of the will that manifest in how people engage with the world and express their agency⁷. Potentialities grow over time, becoming abilities, capabilities and capacities, professional expertise and practical wisdom over the life-course. With the growth of potentialities, the person as a whole grows in her development and understanding.

Potentialities manifest through engagement with the world and become skills, which range from simple to complex and span a spectrum between specific and general. A very early example of this is when young children engage with the things around them in a process of experiential learning - seeing, hearing, reaching out, touching, tasting, smelling, moving objects, moving in relation to objects and gradually learning to hold and manipulate them. Thus they become more skilled in manual dexterity and whilst learning about the properties of these things, they match their experiences with the behaviour and practices of others and learn the language that accompanies these activities.

In reality, learning is far more complex and involves a number of loops involving the learning of skills and dispositions. Skills evolve through practice and this process depends on learning dispositions, which influence how children and students learn and enhance the skills they have and of course this is

⁷ This understanding of potentialities draws on Steiner’s (2011) account of capabilities as the fruits of the interaction of body, soul and spirit, but also on Nussbaum’s (2011) work on capabilities, O’Toole’s (2016) work on core capacities within the Learning for Well-Being framework, Gardiner’s (2018) notion of multiple intelligences, Claxton’s (2007) on the power of learning and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research work on key competencies (Hipkins et al, 2014). Despite the overlaps in meaning, these terms usually have a specific context, epistemology (how we know about them) and ontology (what relationship is implied between person and world).

strongly influenced by the role of teachers and the learning culture in the class. Dispositions influence how and in which situations skills are performed. Once skills have been mastered, they become abilities or enhanced capacities and provide a basis for a new level or phase of learning and development.

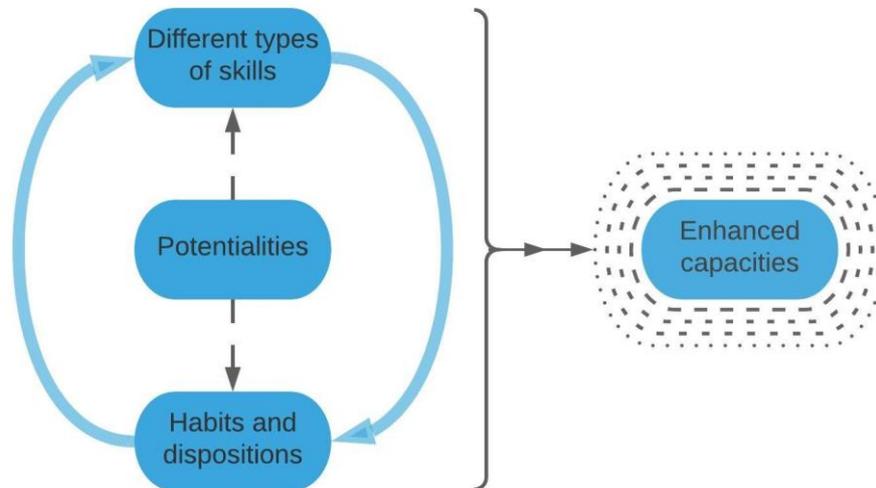


Figure 5: The iterative relationship between potentialities, skills, dispositions and enhanced capacities

Other approaches, such as that of the OECD’s Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo Project), UNESCO; UNICEF, the European Union Qualifications Framework, or the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) generally use the terminology of competences / competencies / competency or key competences, future competences and also life skills etc. It is beyond the scope of this document to review and compare all these approaches. Given the often differing and changing meanings of the term competence, we have chosen to use the term skills. Where necessary we have also chosen terminology that matches current practice in the UK public education discourse and given definitions where appropriate.

5.2 Potentialities

As defined above, SW understands human potentialities as the unique ways human beings relate to the world and which form the basis for people to act in meaningful and meaning-making ways. They are thus the ways the spiritual core of the human being expresses itself through relating to the world, or put another way, people express their potential facilities, aptitudes and capacities in individual ways over the life-course. Different cultures at different times in history have probably expressed these potentialities in different ways, giving rise to distinctive cultural forms, philosophies, religions and ways of being in the world. As described here, potentialities are ideal types that have an analytic function and can be used as orientation and to monitor actual development. Teachers can use the ideal-types of potentialities as lenses to look at, study and understand children and young people’s learning and development.

Whilst potentialities are innate as potential, they are also emergent and can be enhanced through nurture, education and self-development. They arise out of bodily, psychological and spiritual human needs and can be transformed through learning. They form the basis for skills, dispositions and abilities and ultimately enable agency directed towards meeting those needs. They inform the ongoing ability to construct coherent narratives of self and stable identities across different social settings and thus the ability to bring about the conditions that enable human growth and development. Though described here separately, in reality these potentialities function together in intermeshed clusters. In their transformed mode in adults, potentialities can change the conditions under which children grow up and how society is shaped. How potentialities emerge and develop is shaped by the structures they are embedded in, but also by interaction with these structures, leading to mutual co-influencing. Thus potentialities are not static but emergent and evolving and, as such, lead over time to social and cultural change. Following the SW understanding of potentialities, individuals can modify their potentialities through self-education and self-development and are thus a source of social and cultural renewal. Thus there is no upper limit to the development of potentialities; each stage of development establishes a new level of abilities and capacities, which then shape what can be experienced, learned and expressed in a process of ongoing growth and development throughout life. For example, people can achieve different levels of literacy throughout their lives, or different levels of mathematical or philosophical understanding; each new phase of learning building on what has been learned. Dewey (1938) referred to this as the continuity of experience, noting that each authentic new experience changes the person's capacity for further experiences and thus for new learning.

This notion of potentialities recognises that the human being is always embedded in a nested set of ecological spaces or learning-scapes - structured fields of experience. These start from the person's body and expand into the immediate community, the physical environment and socio-cultural contexts, all of which can afford or hinder the healthy emergence of more fully developed potentialities. The balanced interaction of the potentialities, skills and dispositions is the basis for well-being. School provides an environment in which these potentialities can emerge and develop through learning and students can become skilled, capable, autonomous and responsible individuals, who can themselves act with others in ways that contribute socially, politically and economically to bringing about the conditions of general well-being in the social world. To this end SW education seeks to enable socialisation, qualification and individuation (subjectification). This is the ethical intent of the curriculum.

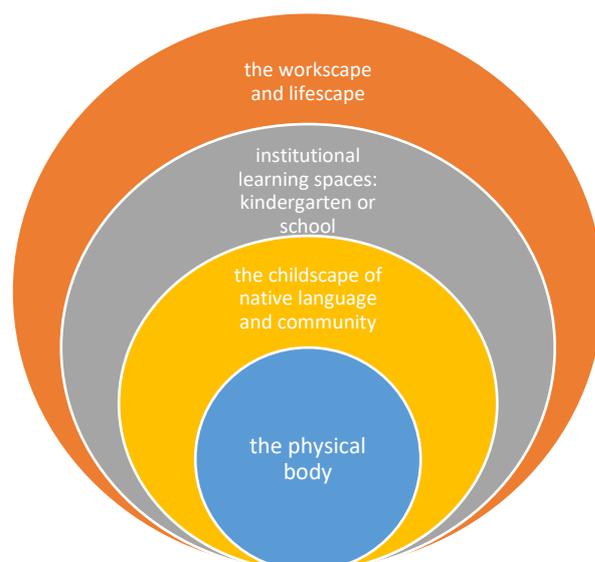


Figure 6: the nested set of learning-scapes

The potentialities are:

Language and communication. The ability to use and understand languages and the relationships between languages is a vital capacity. This includes all forms of orality and literacy, symbolism and the use of signs and logos. Literacy includes digital and media literacy. Being able to speak and have some levels of literacy in at least two other languages is important not only for understanding people from other cultures but also for understanding the relationship between words in different languages to pre-linguistic concepts, many of which are general and some even universal. Each language expresses these concepts in different ways, and even individuals can use words in unique ways (e.g. in poetry). Language in all its forms gives each person and each community voice.

Health and wellbeing refers to a person's potential for health, well-being and bodily integrity. This depends on children and young people feeling at home in their body, having their basic nutritional, emotional and sexual needs being met. Health means being able to generate the health creating salutogenic processes that orientate the person towards balance in mind and body by establishing sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1996, Mittelmark et al, 2017). This is the basis for self-efficacy and self-assurance. Well-being ultimately depends on a healthy and dynamic balance in the interactions between all processes of bodily, psychological, emotional and spiritual development. Steiner referred to this as a process of 'breathing', which regulates the exchange between the inner and outer life of the human being and the transformations that this involves. Children and young people feel safe, secure, seen, heard, recognised and understood and they feel that they have the opportunities they need to learn and develop. This includes the ability to have meaningful, trusting relationships and attachments based on having experienced such in childhood and youth. Bodily integrity means that people are able to relax and have control over their bodies, are free from violence and manipulation and respect the integrity of other people's bodies. A vital aspect of this potentiality is the growth and development of motor skills and physical fluency, as these manifest in all forms of movement, manual dexterity, tool use and gesture.

Senses. Highly developed senses and in particular the capacity to integrate a number of sensory modalities are important for our relationship to the world and our understanding of it. In order to perceive and understand other people, their communications and artefacts we need to be sensitive to a variety of sense impressions and know how to process these meaningfully. Being able to direct our senses towards the world through noticing, attending and focusing on what is salient is a skill that requires time and opportunity to develop. One of the most important senses is the ability to listen and sense what comes to expression when people communicate, in social settings and spaces - hearing what the world has to say, which has been described as resonance (Rosa, 2019).

Imagination. The capacity for imagination is an essential aspect of knowledge. Imagination, particularly when it is based on direct experiences of the world, makes it possible to visualise other worlds, in history, in literature, or as scientific hypothesis and enables us to generate visions of a possible future or solutions to complex problems and processes, as well as being the basis for artistic activity. Play or creativity express the application of the imagination to different situations to bring about novel, unexpected and meaningful outcomes. In free, non-instrumental play, spirit/ideas and matter can be combined to produce novel forms of action, artefacts and knowledge.

Empathy. Empathy is the basis for sociality. It takes embodied form in the direct bodily, intersubjective perception of the other person, her emotional state and intentions and thus forms the basis for understanding others. This perception of the other is given to us in an un-reflected, direct way and is the basis for imitation, mimetic learning and perception of language. As a basis for social skills empathy is necessary for being able to work with people with diverse backgrounds, which is essential in a multicultural society and to counter all forms of discrimination. Thus empathy is the basis for consciously perceiving and recognising the other person as a sentient, agentic and integral being with the same needs and rights that we have and the ability to act out of this insight. Empathy

expresses itself in the ability to work with diverse others on “wicked problems”. Empathy is also the basis for knowing about the world in a phenomenological and participatory way.

Aesthetics. A sense for aesthetics means being able to experience and appreciate the inherent qualities of things and beings in the world, such as colours, shapes, forms, textures, sounds, movement and so on and being able to respond to and engage with these in an artistic way. Art is a way of understanding the world. Everyone is capable of aesthetic sensibility and can be moved, uplifted and sustained through aesthetic experiences. Aesthetic values support identity and meaning-making and are at the heart of each culture. Appreciation of the aesthetics of other cultures can be a liberating experience for all concerned. Aesthetics also includes engaging with materials, recognising their qualities and transforming them into artefacts of all kinds through designing, shaping and making.

Enquiry. Being able to ask questions out of curiosity in ways that open situations up and generate knowledge is important to agency. It is the basis for scientific methods and understandings as well as interpretive, hermeneutic approaches, symptomatology, artistic activity and research of all kinds.

Democratic participation. Human learning and development are located in social practices that have a history, indeed also a history of interactions with other communities of practices. Each person has both the need and the right to participate in practices and not be excluded, and each community ideally enables the participation of each new member. Thus social practices not only reproduce themselves but are modified through the participation of new members and through the changing participation of existing members of the community of practice. This is the basis of democratic participation. The capacity for democratic participation has to be learned through experience of democratic behaviour in all its diversity as well as through understandings of different kinds of societies over historical time and cultural space. The ability to recognise what hinders, manipulates and perverts democracy also belongs to this capacity. Learning about governance in different settings and self-management are also aspects of democratic capacities.

Lifelong learning. The capacity for lifelong learning depends on understanding learning as transformation and not merely as the retention of facts, information and accounts of the world that can be reproduced if required. It involves being able to apply different modes of learning and being able to make sense and meaning of experiences and to learn in expansive ways, which means the learner is motivated to learn in order to expand her scope for agency. Lifelong learning depends on the capability to reflect, assess and plan.

Future thinking. The capacity for future thinking involves imagination and understanding of the present and past and involves biographical learning. It means being able to navigate pathways through life and being able to recognise opportunities for furthering one’s biographical interests. It includes not only the ability to aspire to a different future but to be able to plan and take realistic steps towards realising these aspirations. An important aspect of future thinking is the ability of intuition, which is a form of knowledge – sometimes called thinking on our feet- that enables us to anticipate the immediate, emerging future and to recognise what meaningful action options are available in the moment. This means having consciousness that has already expanded into the immediate future as it emerges. It means being able to engage with “wicked problems” (Hipkins, et al, 2014).

Holistic thinking and spiritual experience. The capacity for holistic, living, joined-up thinking manifests in systemic and ecological thinking and enables us to recognise patterns and understand complexity and multidimensional phenomena, such as processes over time involving a multiplicity of factors. It means being able to make coherent wholes out of separate parts, and understand correlations and mutual interactions. An important aspect of holistic thinking, feeling and willing is spirituality, the transcendent experience that we are part of something larger and intangible, which gives meaning to the whole, and from which we can gain ethical orientation in our actions.

Judgement. Being able to form autonomous judgements in various fields, such as logic, rights, aesthetics and ethics, based on insight and on the weighing up of numerous factors, is also the basis for managing one’s own life, including constructing coherent biographical narratives. Practical reason or wisdom is the ability to do the right thing for the common good in a given situation. Sound, autonomous judgement is the basis of ethics and being able to take up positions and the justify and explain them.

Each educational subject area has a set of skills which relate to the potentialities and develop them in some way. As part of the teacher curriculum handbook, these skills have been mapped against the potentialities to enable teachers to highlight how subjects, skills and potentialities are addressed in a cross-curricular block.



Figure 7: The range of potentialities

5.3. A new approach to skills: Waldorf as a skills-based education

One of the significant innovations in this Framework is the re-definition of skills. Conventional curricula are usually framed in terms of skills and knowledge- often in the form of competences- that have to be learned and can be tested. We take the view that being able to apply skills always requires knowledge of the context and the relevant tools and materials, and that knowledge is of less value if it isn't applied, even in thinking, i.e. theoretically. Acquiring knowledge per se is not a meaningful academic aim in school. Being skilled means "the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in ...performance" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). As the same dictionary definition goes on to say, it also refers to dexterity and coordination in the execution of physical tasks and a "learned power of doing something competently". We suggest, instead of treating skills and knowledge separately, it is more useful to think in terms of skills as knowledgeable action with purpose. The consequence of this way of thinking is that it is only really meaningful to assess skills when they are applied in authentic (as opposed to artificial or contrived) situations.

Children learn and develop skills through repeated meaningful engagement with their environment. In an educational environment these skills are intentionally cultivated, though many skills are also learned incidentally outside of formal education. Skills always have a function and a purpose and one cannot really speak of potential skills, since skill only manifests when an act is performed. Skills involve applying knowledge and, in the course of regular use, such knowledge can be applied more skillfully. Having knowledgeable skills means that learners can perform cultural techniques, such as reading and writing, which are embedded in different contexts that afford and support the performance of the skills (i.e. a range of appropriate reading materials are available and time for reading is provided). Being skilled also means being able to apply knowledge of materials, resources and tools in different and changing settings, and being able to relate units of knowledge to larger contexts. Through observation, imitation and practice the learner gets a 'feel' for the way things need to be done "by introducing novices into contexts which afford selected opportunities for perception and action, and by providing the scaffolding that enables them to make use of these affordances" (Ingold, 2000, 354). This requires a schooling of attention.

In order to learn skills children and students need to have opportunities to explore and use their skills but also a sense of purpose and the usefulness of the skill (e.g. why we need to be able to do this). Thus being skilled constitutes knowing with purpose in knowledgeable engagement with the changing world, because skills are bound up with our whole knowledgeable relationship to the world we live in, which involves body and mind and the whole field or relations each person is embedded in. This is why it is less helpful to look at skills solely as properties of individuals. We also need skills to gather, generate and apply knowledge across different fields, such as society, nature, human life. We need different skills in different ways of knowing, for example in natural science, social science, art, religion, language, maths, practical life. Thus the curriculum in SW schools can be seen as a 'knowledge-engaged' curriculum.

In order to monitor the growth and development of skills across school subjects and in different learning situations, it is useful to have a loose taxonomy of skills - loose because there are many overlaps and the same skill may be performed in different contexts.

Type of skills	Descriptors /some examples
bodily and practical skills	fine and gross motor skills, dexterity, balance and coordination, movement skills, muscle memory, effective tool use in all fields (e.g. needle and thread, carving knife, power drill, laptop, driving a vehicle), practical skills in various fields (e.g. cooking, gardening, household repairs), and craftsmanship
social and personal skills	communicative skills, proficiency in other languages, relationship skills, team skills, expressive skills, inter-cultural skills, sense of fairness and social justice, self-managing and personal organisation skills, empathy, ability to construct and maintain stable identities, acting autonomously, planning for the future, democratic skills
procedural skills	procedural skills, organisational skills, scientific methods, organising and curating information, research skills, presentational skills, aesthetic skills
subject-specific skills	reading, writing, numeracy skills, scientific, technological and artistic skills, historical awareness geographical consciousness etc.

Figure 1: Table showing examples of different types of skill.

Constrained and unconstrained skills: from taught to caught

As Paris (2005) has argued, it is helpful to place skills on a spectrum from constrained to unconstrained. Highly constrained skills are those which it is possible to master entirely, contingent on various factors including maturation and the learning environment. Some children may individually take longer than others to become proficient in certain specific skills but most achieve mastery. The timeframe for learning such skills can depend on the onset of instruction (e.g. in SW schools children only start formal learning of reading and writing at the age of six) but the time required is broadly compatible across most children. Constrained skills are learned through explicit teaching and are the basis upon which knowledgeable action with purpose can be developed.

Thus this Framework distinguishes between constrained and unconstrained skills. Constrained skills are the basic skills in a field of learning that are necessary for the subsequent open-ended development of unconstrained skills. Constrained skills are usually only learned through explicit teaching over relatively short periods of a few years, compared to life-long learning of unconstrained skills. An example is learning to read, which involves a series of specific constrained skills. Once a person has learned to decode text and extract meaning with a degree of competence, the further development of the skill depends on opportunity, motivation, guidance and feedback, which involve less explicit and more indirect teaching skills. There is then no theoretical limit to what a person can read. All fields of school learning involve constrained skills. It is important that teachers identify which constrained skills belong to which field, how they are taught and when this process should be complete and involves monitoring of the learning process. Thereafter it becomes important to assess how the person uses the skill.

It is helpful to map the notion of constrained/unconstrained skills onto the wider framework of learning stages and preconditions for learning outlined above in section 6.3. This understanding of learning locates learning as an agentic activity of the learner located in a learning community (Rawson, 2018). This sociocultural account of learning incorporates the conditions for learning through observation and joining in (Rogoff, 2014). Drawing on and modifying Rogoff's (1995) three planes of

sociocultural activity in learning (apprenticeship, guided participation and participatory appropriation), it is possible to describe four basic modes of learning and relate the learning of constrained and unconstrained skills to this. The important aspect of this approach is that it combines the qualities of traditional, informal participatory aspects, akin to indigenous modes of learning (Rosado-May, et al 2020) with formal classroom teaching that engages the whole person. This can be described as an ecological, relational and practice-based approach as opposed to instructional and instrumental approach, or what Rogoff (2014) calls the assembly-line instruction model.

The following iteration of learning offers teachers a differentiated basis for planning and assessing teaching and learning of practical, social, personal and subject-related skills, and offers a terminology and framework for observing and talking about a wide range of manifestations of development.

Mode of learning	Brief description	Constrained/unconstrained
Participation as novice	Peripheral, intended and welcomed participation in a learning community (the Waldorf class). Taking part in classroom practices and routines. Observing, listening, being shown something in context (mimetic learning), being told something using narrative.	Unconstrained skills 'caught'
Guided discovery	Teachers create learning situations in which students are guided in a friendly way through specific learning steps including rich experiencing, recalling (retrieving), sharing, naming and characterizing. This differs from typical instruction in that the teacher does not start with the intended outcome but affords the children's discovery of it. The teacher's choice of material, its preparation, her inner commitment to this process and artistic structuring of the lessons all contribute to creating an 'inviting' rather than directing atmosphere.	Constrained skills are taught in this way
Guided application what has been learning	This follows closely on from the previous mode through applying what has been learned in varying situations to consolidate the skill. Initial stages of applying/practicing are closely teacher led, later more variation is included and finally students can create their own tasks.	Transition from constrained to unconstrained taught/caught
Self-directed application and appropriation, participation with some level of expertise	Full participation in practices. Learners transform their understandings and expand their skills by applying them in authentic and self-directed tasks. In doing so, they appropriate the values that belong to the practice (e.g. weaving, speaking French, doing chemistry). The role of the teacher is to support and give, useful and constructive feedback.	Unconstrained skills caught

Figure 9: Table showing examples of different types of skill.

These modes of learning can span longer periods of time and characterise a predominant approach. In Waldorf kindergarten, for example, learning primarily involves participation in an ongoing structure of regular social practices. The participation is free in the sense that the activities occur, and the children are invited to join in as and when they feel able and willing to. The transition to class 1 involves moving to the next phase, that of guided discovery, for example, in learning the letters and numbers. Here the children are required to take part in the learning activities, though parts of the lessons remain in participatory mode. Though a basic mode of participation in the classroom activities remains, the lessons during the class teacher period involve movement through guided participation to self-activity.

Guided discovery is not necessarily the same as instruction. The Waldorf approach often involves experiencing the phenomenon before analysing it and the guidance is often implicit rather than explicit, in that the teacher's choice and preparation of the material and the way in which it is presented direct the learners' attention to the salient aspects of the experience without explicitly pointing out what they should learn. This strengthens the child's self-activity and identification with the experience. In the subsequent process of recalling, sharing, discussing and characterising, and then applying what has been learned in exercises, the learners acquire constrained skills and later develop these further as unconstrained skills. Each new aspect in a field that is introduced, recapitulates the phase of constrained skills at a higher level with a transition to autonomous use of the skill. This iterative sequence depends on the subject.

In science subjects, which are taught phenomenologically in the middle school, the constrained skills usually involve observing and describing the phenomena along with some practical laboratory or field work skills and safety awareness. Since we are aiming for knowledgeable action with purpose, the knowledge acquired in middle school science is contextual, including practical usage of the knowledge (e.g. in hygiene, body care, nutrition, the uses of plants and plant material, electricity, chemistry in daily life, map reading, weather observations etc.). In the upper school, this practical knowledge is supplemented by theoretical knowledge, complex techniques and terminology (including the use of formulae and maths in statistics, graphs, use of data etc.), as well as understanding of the social, economic, ecological and ethical aspects of the field.

In the appropriation mode of learning students should have a sense for the professional values and culture relating to the field - for example what geologists or chemists, or writers do. Full expertise is unlikely within school learning but the students should be able to develop a feeling for what professional expertise involves among artists, craftspeople, scientists, writers and journalists, doctors, architects and teachers etc.

It is important within each subject to establish what constrained skills need to be learned and by when. Secondly, adequate opportunities need to be provided so that unconstrained skills can be encouraged to develop further and be monitored. Not least because enhanced skills, potentialities and capacities are the basis for more advanced forms of learning in the high school and beyond. In lesson planning, teachers identify when constrained skills need to be taught and when to allow students to apply them. This is part of the rhythmical balance in the learning process. In terms of assessment, constrained skills need to be more exactly monitored in the early stages of learning, along the lines of can't yet, can with support, can without support. With unconstrained skills, assessment modes can vary and include a wider range of criteria and can take a more appreciative and relational form, including self-assessment, because the outcomes are less standardised and more open.

5.4 Dispositions and habits of mind

As Claxton et al (2011, 37) put it, “we have to move from thinking about learning as a set of techniques and skills that can be ‘trained’, to a set of dispositions, interests and values that need to be ‘cultivated’”. Having a skill means being able to do something that one couldn’t do before. Having a disposition and habit of mind inclines one to use that skill and influences whether one uses the skill reluctantly and only when externally necessary (e.g. learning for a test) or willingly (as in expanded learning based on self-motivation). A resilient learner will persist in the face of setback and difficulties and will actively learn from mistakes. A learner disposed to playfulness and creativity will experiment, try out different solutions, be creative. Dispositions also include values and beliefs. If people find skills important and socially and culturally valuable they are more likely to develop dispositions to using them. Values also influence the way we do something. It makes a difference whether where we do something with care and pride in the outcome, with the sense that because if it is worth doing, it is worth doing well, or whether it doesn’t personally matter to us how we do something and the consequences this has. Some who takes pride in doing something well may also care for the tools, materials and workspaces, will clear up afterwards, will find pleasure and affirmation in whether others appreciate what we do. Notions such as vocation, service and doing good, as well awareness for the consequences of our actions, are values that enhance skills.

Through application and frequent and varied practice, skills and dispositions become abilities or enhanced capabilities- or what Claxton (2007, p124) refers to as “the sum total of one’s habits of mind”. Having such enhanced abilities means a person is a more capable learner, which drives the learning process onwards towards the development of potential through transformative learning.

The educational approach of the SW curriculum is designed to afford, encourage and support students to, as Claxton (2007, 121) describes, “learn more robustly, more broadly, more skillfully and more flexibly”. The pedagogical task is what Claxton (2007, 2009) refers to as teaching to expand learning capacity by creating epistemic cultures, that is, school cultures that foster powerful learning. Since dispositions and inclinations may be tentative as well as strong, it is important that a school culture encourages and avoids hindering and blocking dispositions that are vital to classroom learning, such as asking questions, questioning assumptions (even those of the teacher or other authorities), imagining how things could be different (or could have been different in the past), the courage to risk a minority view and go against the common discourse, trying other ways of doing things and not being unduly reticent if they don’t at first work out or make sense to others. In fact, making the learning process transparent, by for example establishing a clear vocabulary for talk about learning processes, is a precondition for enhancing learning dispositions. Claxton and Carr (2004) refer to learning cultures that have a “potentiating milieu” in which “there are plenty of hard, interesting things to do, and it is accepted as normal that everyone regularly gets confused, frustrated and stuck” (Claxton, 2007, 125).

Like potentialities, dispositions also grow over time from a basic moral relationship to the world and others that brings to expression the notion that ‘the world is good’. One could say the primary function of Waldorf Early Years provision is to establish healthy dispositions. In primary education these dispositions transform into the sense that the world is beautiful and in adolescent education, the core disposition is the question for truth. All these dispositions flow together into the foundational belief in social justice, service and the capacity for conflict resolution, and also into democratic values, holistic thinking, a sensitivity to spirituality, and the ability to make autonomous judgements out of insight. In anthroposophy, these are the qualities Steiner associated with freedom based on intuitive thinking.

5.5 Abilities and capacities

Skills that are honed through practice become abilities, which are more generalised capacities. Abilities often blend a range of specific skills into a more comprehensive aspect of personality. Someone who has a learned ability is often in a position to teach others because they understand the detailed skill steps that belong to an overall ability. An example of an ability is being able to play a musical instrument well. This is based on a number of specific constrained and unconstrained skills, from manual coordination and movement, breath control, hearing melodies and being able to pick them up, keeping time, recognising if an instrument is in tune, reading music notation, playing with other musicians, recognising different musical styles. Musical ability then becomes a capacity and changes the person and her relation to self and the world, when a person can describe herself as, "I am a musician". Something similar can be described for ability in a particular sport, or for the literacy skills that enable a person to become a writer, or science and empathy skills that enable a person to become a doctor, or the practical and theoretical skills and knowledge to become a designer or architect. Being a teacher requires- as we have shown in section 7 below - a wide range of skills, that in themselves do not make a good teacher, though they are preconditions. The transformation required, as in other professions, from being skilled to being expert marks the transition from skills to capacities. Enhanced capacities alter a person's dispositions and thus the nature of what they can subsequently learn life-long.

5.6 Knowledge and knowing

Doing and knowing are different activities yet belong together. In Steiner's pedagogical anthropology, thinking and knowing belong to the cognitive processes connected with the nerve-sense system, centred in the brain, whilst acting and doing belong to the will and the forces of volition and are related to the limbs and metabolic processes of the body. Mediating between these systems is feeling, which is less conscious than thinking but more conscious than willing. In pedagogy, knowing is obviously a particularly important part of learning. Knowing is the ability to apply understanding in meaningful situations, whereas knowledge as such, is a representation of what is known. Knowledge is reified so we can reflect and communicate about it, whereas knowing is more immediate and intuitive (knowing-in-action, knowledgeable action, artistic activity, skilled artistry). Understanding can be communicated and related to other knowledge using reified knowledge, usually expressed through language and mathematical symbols.

SW distinguishes between surface knowledge (e.g. terminology, simple disconnected facts, number bonds, vocabulary, simple procedures) and deeper knowing, which is contextual, has its own particular methodology and can be linked with other knowledge. Deep knowing influences ways of seeing and thinking and is thus linking to our dispositions and abilities (e.g. geographical knowledge enables us to access unfamiliar geographical phenomena, knowledge of methods of interpreting literature can be applied to novels we haven't read). The function of block teaching in SW is to dispose the learner to specific ways of seeing and understanding the world and this is linked to practice and skills in this field. The transfer of knowledge, or rather the ability and capacity to understand different but related situations, comes from these ways of seeing linked to subject specific skills and knowledge and the ability to apply this. Generic abilities enable us to generate and use knowledge effectively. Thus specific knowledge about aspects of the world can be applied through knowing-in-practice in life situations.

6.0 Learning

As we have outlined above, learning is about long-term, sustainable change in the whole person leading to skills, stable dispositions and ultimately new capacities and thus to overall development. In this section we describe the preconditions for learning and the rhythmical nature of learning.

6.1 The preconditions for learning

As already explained above, the learning of skills depends on establishing healthy learning dispositions. Certain preconditions in the learning environment enhance the child's ability to learn and consolidate dispositions and skills and thus the ability to acquire and use knowledge meaningfully. These preconditions dispose children to active and healthy learning over time. In order to learn, learners must feel:

- bodily safe and as much at ease as possible,
- emotionally secure in the group,
- seen, heard, accepted and understood as who they are by teachers and other students,
- feel supported by long-term reliable relationships with adults (i.e. teachers) who take an interest in and know the children and young people,
- they have the support they need to learn and develop in a healthy way,
- their teachers are personally committed to what they are teaching and find it meaningful,
- they have role models they can emulate,
- they have social boundaries that enable healthy interaction,
- able to participate as accepted members of a learning community.

6.2 Sense of Coherence

SW education emphasises the creation of a learning environment in which children and students can experience a sense of coherence⁸ in age-sensitive ways. This means each individual generally has the basic feeling that the tasks and challenges she faces are comprehensible, manageable and meaningful. Establishing conditions for sense of coherence and recognising whether students experience their learning in this way requires teachers identify these qualities of learning.

- *Comprehensibility*: In order to be comprehensible experiences must be rich, direct, immediate, sensory, or activate vivid, exact imagination. These experiences are then consciously recalled and contextualised in a process of meaning making, thus each child has the feeling that 'what we are learning makes sense and can be understood'. The opposite of comprehensibility is the child's permanent feeling that she doesn't and can't understand (e.g. because she feels stupid or inadequate) and that she is unable to access the content of the teaching.
- *Manageability*: The child generally has the feeling that she has the resources and support she needs to cope with the challenges she faces, the tasks she has and what is demanded of her by others. The opposite is the continuous feeling of not coping, of lacking self-efficacy, of being overwhelmed, incapable and therefore excluded because she is unable to participate. This can occur because the child has regular experiences of failure, not making the grade, always being in the lowest set and even there, not really managing. The sense of not coping may not reflect actual performance and some children often suffer from the feeling that they

⁸ The construct sense of coherence was first formulated by Anton Antonovsky (1987, 1997) but has gained wide application across a number of fields (Mittelmark et al, 2017)

are never good enough for the expectations of significant others, whatever their actual performance.

- *Meaningfulness*: The child has the feeling that it makes sense for her personally to direct her attention towards the matter in hand and is willing to invest effort in the tasks she is given. She also feels that this effort is rewarded by an evidential sense of understanding and meaning, like a discovery or an ‘aha!’ experience. This generates a deep sense of connection and meaning. This is likely to occur when the student has the sense that what she is learning relates to other things that are important, to other knowledge she has and to other subjects she has worked with. Making sense of an experience also enables the learner to connect that experience to others in other fields. For example, in geography the student might understand how the geography of a particular place influences the cultures that originally developed there, such as urban centres on major rivers and natural harbours, economies that develop based on local natural resources, like coal, iron or fish. Even if those industries no longer exist, they will have shaped the place physically and influenced the mentality of the people and local culture. This could enhance the learner’s relationship to the place she lives in, as well appreciating the character of other places. Learning becomes meaningful for the individual when she herself has worked to construct and grasp it, rather than when it is simply given as a fact to be learned.

6.3 Learning as a rhythmical activity

Learning is a complex process which, in SW education, is viewed as rhizomatic, emergent and individual, rather than strictly sequential and predictable. The teaching and learning process needs a skilled balance between a guiding structure and allowing individual learning processes to occur in their own time. Sustainable, deep, long-term learning takes time and has three primary dimensions: content, incentive and interaction (Illeris, 2018). Motivation is linked to sense of coherence, content is related to the developmental tasks and interaction occurs within the learning community. According to SW learning theory (Rawson, 2019, 2020c) the primary learning activities in general terms involve the following:

1. *attunement*: this involves activities that enhance the experience of being met, welcomed and accepted, when the student has a sense of bodily ease, relaxation and focused attention, and when each individual feels a sense of social belonging in the learning group,
2. *rich experiences*: these are either directly experienced through encountering real phenomena or indirectly mediated through narrative or media (e.g. story, oral description, text or images) that leave deep impressions,
3. *forgetting*⁹: including the unconscious processes of sorting, matching and assimilating that enrich long-term memory and deep learning in connection with retrieval and rebuilding,
4. *recalling*: remembering, re-living, re-constructing and sharing lived experiences,
5. *sharing*: comparing, elaboration (explaining to others), supplementing, clarifying, contextualising, making sense, interleaving (i.e. practice spread over time),
6. *making meaning*: constructing concepts together in dialogue with others, working with meaning,
7. *applying & practicing*: consolidating deep learning and developing skills,
8. *growth of abilities as enhanced capacities* leading to transformational learning.

6.4 Typical and characteristic curriculum practices in Steiner Waldorf schools

There are many typical learning practices in SW education. These include:

⁹ Hattie and Clarke, 2019, 87, “forgetting helps us to remember”, “ forgetting, rather than undoing learning, creates the opportunity to reach additional levels of learning”

- *daily main-lessons* (90-120 minutes) structured to include various age-sensitive modes of learning and interdisciplinary elements (music, movement, speech, writing, reading, drawing, working with different media, practice of numeracy- i.e. interleaved learning, repetition and differentiated practice);
- *teaching in blocks* (usually four weeks, 90-120 minutes a day). This means immersing children and students in thematic domains of human experience and culture (farming, local surroundings, plants, Industrial Revolution etc.). This process is supported by regular practice lessons in reading/writing and maths (i.e. distributed practice) and review lessons at the end of the school year and at the beginning of each new block (i.e. retrieval practice);
- *a spiral curriculum* in which key themes/concepts reappear over the years in an expansive and deepening way (i.e. retrieval practice and layered learning) leading to more complex knowledge schemata; new concepts and terminology are often 'seeded' through usage (Tomasello, 2018) in context, before re-appearing more consciously at a later stage;
- *teaching in economical and interdisciplinary ways* wherever possible (e.g. main lesson blocks involving literacy work and dialogue, art, practical skills, mathematical skills, conceptual skills);
- *daily attunement phases* involving activities, for example such as bodily, social, speech, musical and oral maths exercises practiced to enhance daily learning readiness and to provide a balance between different qualities of engagement and different types of activity (head, heart and hand);
- *experiential learning* always comes before conceptual learning, this includes direct experience or using the imagination as a primary means of engaging students, with other media (e.g. images, sounds etc.) as secondary supporting media;
- *emotional balance in lessons* between seriousness and levity, individual work and group work, classroom and extra-mural activities, speaking and listening etc;
- *a holistic curriculum*, in which understandings go from the whole to parts and then re-integrate the parts back into a meaningful whole;
- *two modern languages* from class one throughout the school, taught orally for the first three years, ideally in alternating periods of immersion (e.g. through block teaching in the two foreign languages following the main lesson);
- *an equal balance of 'head, heart and hand'* or cognitive/academic, artistic work and practical activities- each of these domains has equal priority;
- *main lesson books or folders* produced by the students themselves to document what they have learned. These are used for reference and for retrieval practice at the start of each new block and are a form of learning organiser helping students to retain knowledge for future reference and to reinforce working memory;
- *making useful things* in handwork, handcrafts and crafting, in which the making of meaning objects that can be used and meet a real need is emphasised (e.g. clothing and footwear that can be worn, garden produce that can be eaten, artefacts that have a real function in context), wherever possible sourcing materials locally in environmentally sustainable ways;
- *a balance between classroom teaching and the outdoor classroom and/or real world experiences* (gardening lessons, outdoor sports, walks in nature, field trips, visits to museums, art galleries or visitor centres in connection with nature or history, work in the local community and environment, outward bound activities (e.g. trekking, climbing, survival training and camping), crafting in nature etc);
- *Eurythmy lessons*, a special art of movement unique to SW schools in which speech, poetry and music are given expression through gesture and choreography;
- *a wide range of movement activities* including dance, games, gymnastics, swimming and a wide range of team games and sports (depending on the available facilities)
- *drama and performing music* throughout the curriculum- each child should learn an instrument and be able to read music;
- *an annual framework of celebrating festivals* and community activities;

- *links to the local community* through projects and work in the community, including partnerships with local organic farms and garden, craftspeople, local historians, and other social and care institutions;
- *the physical environment* of the school is designed and arranged aesthetically (within the scope of the resources available) to support the learning and to create a child-friendly, warm, welcoming and appropriate spaces for learning, working, meeting and relaxing for students, teachers and the school community;
- *a safe yet welcoming atmosphere* in the school that is conducive to effective and creative working.

7.0 Teachers

“The remarkable feature of the evidence is that the biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers” (John Hattie, 2012, 18)

Teachers are central to SW education and so teacher education and professional development aim, as far as resources permit, to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared for the special challenges of this education. We know from experience supported by research¹⁰ that teacher beliefs are important for effective and professional pedagogy because these influence what teachers do, what they perceive, how they make judgements and decisions and who they are as people. Self-development, therefore, is an important aspect of SW teacher practice. A collegial basis for teachers working together is important in shaping teachers’ values and beliefs.

7.1 Teacher values, beliefs and dispositions

SW teachers require specific sets of dispositions (Fonseca-Chacana, 2019), skills and knowledge for this education.

Good Waldorf teachers can:

- engage with the generative principles of SW education in such a way that the teacher becomes disposed to observing and understanding their practice and their pupils from this perspective;
- have the dispositions, skilled artistry and knowledge to create powerful learning environments and to teach in ways that are health-creating and foster sense of coherence in their pupils and that support their appropriate socialisation, qualification and development as persons;
- understand and be able to use the generative principles of Waldorf pedagogy to develop and assess practice in context, to create original lesson plans to suit the situation, rather than use standardised materials;
- teach creatively with enthusiasm and be able to inspire pupils;
- be artistic, work with the imagination and have good narrative skills;
- enable students to learn the necessary skills and dispositions;
- develop dispositions to pedagogical tact¹¹ and knowing-in-practice¹²;
- take the spiritual dimension into account¹³;
- develop authentic teacher identities that enable them to model learning and positive ways of being for their pupils;
- act in sustainable, ecological ways as a model for children and young people and being able to bring this awareness in effective and holistic ways into their teaching;
- act in socially inclusive, non-discriminatory ways, being sensitive to and accepting of difference;
- be social responsibly and committed to democratic practices;
- work out of an ethic of care, including self-care, that prioritises well-being and human flourishing and requires attentiveness, listening skills, dialogic skills and agency;
- practice culturally responsive teaching;
- be able to practice assessment for learning effectively,

¹⁰ See Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015, and 2017

¹¹ Van Manen, 2008

¹² Kelly, 2006

¹³ See Rawson , 2020b.

- practice professional reflection, participate in ongoing teacher learning and self-development;
- research and develop their practice in a cooperative way and generate useful educational knowledge;
- work collegially in the interests of the education and pupils in regular weekly teachers' meetings and class meetings;
- practice holistic leadership to draw out the potential in each individual¹⁴;
- retain and recreate their interest, vitality, health and creativity.

7.2 Teacher standards

Waldorf teachers work to actively develop their professionalism. This results in the kinds of professional behaviours and attitudes which are described in the *National Steiner Waldorf Teacher Standards* (SWSF 2020), which include the following commitments :

1. Personal and professional development, and an openness to exploring the principles underlying Steiner education.
2. Inspire and motivate children's progress.
3. Demonstrate good subject, curriculum and pedagogical knowledge
4. Planning and teaching with creativity and effectiveness
5. Adapt all classroom practice to the strengths and needs of all pupils
6. Productive and contextual use of observation and assessment
7. Promote children's wellbeing and welfare through awareness, practice and conscious modelling
8. Teachers keep the child at the centre of their wider professional activities, responsibilities and relationships.

7.3 Planning and reviewing practice

Good teaching depends on effective planning and reviewing. Planning occurs at three levels. At the macro level teachers orientate themselves by referring to the developmental themes for the year, to the generative principles of SW education and to existing practice in the school regarding the themes and learning forms. At the meso level teachers refer to the national or school level / local framework curriculum of content examples and they align their planned content with the expectations of skills across the subjects for each year. At the micro-level teachers take both the macro and meso level guidelines into account and then plan their schemes of work and lessons, considering the learning history of the class and individual learning needs, and preparing differentiated tasks for the learning group. Good practice in Waldorf schools involves teachers drawing up, actioning and assessing:

- *Annual class plans*: making an annual plan for each class covering all subjects (class teacher and subjects share this in class planning meetings), also to ensure synergies and avoid overlaps.
- *Block plans*: Each main lesson block (~4 weeks) or block of subject lessons is planned and outlined, showing the main content (including the experiences, tasks and resources planned) and new knowledge (including the retrieval and revision of embodied knowledge). The skills and dispositions being practiced are also included, contributing to planning for long term progress against the intent of the curriculum.

¹⁴ Woods and Woods, 2012

- *Schemes of work and lesson plans*: outline the structure of the lesson, sequence of activities, content, tasks and activities.

Whilst each school has its own practices, the general principle is that these plans are all reviewed and outcomes briefly documented (e.g. including some copies/photographs of examples of student work from weak, typical and very good students showing the span). From class 6 (age 12) onwards, pupils are given a brief text description of the content of the forthcoming block and the assessment criteria, showing possible levels of outcome. At the end of the block each student receives a brief summary of attainment based on the criteria that the pupils were given at the beginning and feedback about the next learning step.

7.4 Researching practice

One of the primary historical functions of the college of teachers is to evaluate, appraise and research practice¹⁵ using the methods of illuminative practitioner research¹⁶. Steiner¹⁷ spoke of the college of teachers as being a living university in which dialogue, debate and research are carried out. In Steiner's original model the college of teachers collectively has responsibility for the development and evaluation of the curriculum and educational practice. The generative principles outlined in the original teachers' course were to provide them with a basis for this work. Steiner was very keen that each teacher take full personal responsibility for the educational provision and was convinced that this work together would be the basis for the necessary solidarity and core values of the school. Whatever organizational form of school leadership a SW school has- and there are various distributed, flat and tiered models- they all depend on this collegial and holistic ethos in the development of the education. Collegial co-responsibility in the day to day educational practice is non-hierarchical and is based on dialogue between peers.

Research literacy is an area of the education that is now featured in professional development and needs to be included in initial teacher education. Teachers are increasingly in a position to use action research. There is a wide range of literature and online support available¹⁸ and there are a number of approaches that also specifically use SW theory.

¹⁵ See Rawson , 2014

¹⁶ See Rawson, 2018

¹⁷ Steiner, 2004, 184.

¹⁸ See <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/the-teacher-as-researcher-making-the-case-for-research-in-schools>

8.0 Learning-centred assessment

Waldorf education recognises that learning-centred assessment is a vital support for learning and development that enables quality development and high levels of teaching effectiveness (Ciborski and Ireland, 2015, Rawson, 2015). The phrase learning-centred assessment interprets learning as defined in the section on learning above, and takes the whole human being into account. It is not just about measuring the delivery of cognitive, disciplinary knowledge and subject-based skills, but has to do with making judgements about pupils' learning processes and overall development and appreciating their development as persons, their achievements and interests. It is also about recognising emergent qualities in the person. In this sense the SW approach to assessment is relational because it sets out to value and appreciate what people do, and as much as possible, it is a dialogic process focused on well-being based on trusting relationships whilst seeking to avoid hierarchical relationships. A healthy culture of assessment is one in which each person- student, teacher, administrator is enabled to extend their potential and literally do their best. The core aim of assessment is to enhance learning, including interest and motivation in learning as a lifelong disposition, and development not just of individuals but of the school as community and in a wider sense by contributing to the well-being of society.

8.1 Assessing skills, knowledge and dispositions

Assessing the learning of dispositions, skills and knowledge require somewhat different perspectives. We can start by judging the degree of autonomy in learning.

Learning skills benefits from being scaffolded by teachers or competent others offering support and help. It is helpful to recognise different stages in learning skills, such as only being able to do something only with help, with a lot of help, with occasional guidance and quite autonomously. Skills can be performed on a spectrum from dependent on scaffolding to autonomous performance. Skills can thus be assessed in terms of whether they can be performed with help or without help along a spectrum or continuum from:

The learner can do this:

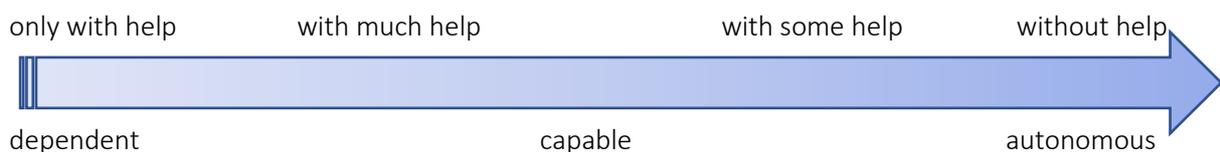


Figure 10: The learning continuum from dependent to autonomous

The level of skill can be assessed along a continuum, showing the direction of movement in the growth of independent skill.

Assessing knowledge progression

Having subject-based knowledge is important but it is more important to know the meaning of subject knowledge in the wider academic, social and ecological context, and this has both a global and a local perspective of where we are now. The two key questions are always; what does this mean for humanity and the world as a whole, and what does this mean to me personally (with perhaps, what does this mean for us locally? as a middle position). As Gill and Gergen (2020, 41) put it, from a relational perspective:

knowing that something is the case is far less important than knowing how to participate generatively in ongoing relational processes from which something becomes meaningful and significant. What one takes to be useful knowledge will change over time and circumstance. In fact, students tend to remember little of the content they have acquired in the first 12 years of schooling. But the challenge of relating to others, the communities, and the wider world in a possibly enriching way will remain for a lifetime. This is so not only in the demands for continued learning, but also for human well-being more generally.

Therefore, it is important to emphasise contextualised knowledge and the meaning we give to it. We can show the student's knowledge progression along this continuum and assess her ability to recall and use knowledge in context. The continuum starts with unconnected knowledge (what, when) and progresses through knowing things in context, moving towards meaningful knowing in different contexts/or multi-perspective knowing. The aim of knowing is understanding, which implies knowing in context as well as knowing from different perspectives. Understanding is, of course, unconstrained. We can go on deepening and broadening our understanding throughout life. In a school context we can aim to arrive at understanding, which will inevitably be relative and relational. Understanding is a key stage that can be reached but is itself the starting point for unconstrained further learning. Here this process is phrased as self-assessment, but it can of course be assessed by a teacher, if she can gather appropriate evidence, ideally in context ('naturally occurring evidence', Hipkins, 2012).

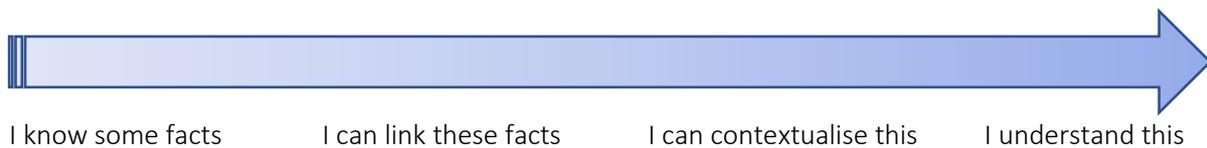


Fig 11: Assessing knowledge progression

Assessing knowledgeable action with purpose (skills)

We have defined skills as knowledgeable action with purpose because applying any skill requires knowledge (e.g. of tools, materials, techniques, context etc.) and a reason or meaningful purpose for applying them (i.e. other than the purpose of merely demonstrating the skill, as in conventional testing). We can therefore assess learners' capacity to apply knowledge to solving problems or being productive in other ways by judging performance on a continuum between being unable to act skillfully and being expert



Fig. 12: Assessing knowledgeable action

Assessing dispositions

Similarly we can assess dispositions to learn. Learning dispositions include being a resilient learner, being enthusiastic, engaged and motivated, being persistent and not giving up when faced with difficulties, seeing the positive in every situation, and so on. These can all be observed and monitored. In the example given below, the assessment is expressed as self-assessment, but can of course be assessed by a teacher.



Fig. 13 Assessing dispositions

8.2 Formative methods

Knowing how pupils are learning, what difficulties they may have, and what they can do well enables teachers to offer the right kind of support at the right time and provides the teacher essential information about the effects of her teaching. Therefore, formative modes of assessment are used to accompany learning processes and give individual pupils ongoing and concrete feedback. It is important that pupils understand in age-sensitive and language appropriate ways, what the learning aims are, how to achieve them, how they are currently doing and what criteria will be applied to assess a particular assignment or a whole learning block. This may be implicit (i.e. reinforced by teacher behavior and classroom practice) or explicit (i.e. cognitive or through the use of a rubric).

SW works with the understanding that young children assume that what their teachers teach is important. Teachers also prepare their lessons in such a way that they understand what is important. Helping children understand what is important is pedagogy and takes many forms, including the richness of the child's classroom experiences, the nature of the presentation, summarising key points, reviewing and recalling - each retrieval reinforces and enriches knowing. Older pupils can be provided with criteria in writing so they can refer to it, but the above applies to teaching at all levels. This is done according to individual school practices, but with the understanding that simply informing pupils cognitively (e.g. text on the blackboard, or verbally stating) what the criteria for success are does not necessarily lead to them grasping what is important, and that the development of intrinsic motivation is more important than merely learning for the test ("learn this because this is what you will be tested on").

8.3 Ipsative methods

Ipsative methods are used in one-to-one pedagogical conversations, both informal and formal, in which the learner is helped to recognise her own progress measured against her own previous achievements and levels of participation. Thus the pupil has the feeling that she is not competing with others or external standards but is trying to do better, or maintaining her own standards. Children and young people undergo all manner of developmental crises prompted from outside or through changes in themselves and this often impacts on school learning. They need to be helped to see what these causes and symptoms are, recognise the effect they are having on them, rather than having the feeling "I am too stupid" or "it's the teacher's fault that I don't get it". Then they can find ways of moving on with the help of the teachers. Waldorf schools practice individual case studies (sometimes referred to as child studies) in which a group of teachers who teach a particular pupil meet, share their experiences of the pupil, look at her work across all subjects and activities, discuss her situation in school, take into account her overall development throughout childhood (as much as is known). The parents are involved and can contribute their perspective and when the pupils are old enough, they too can contribute their own views in age-sensitive ways (though they usually don't participate in the case study itself). The teachers try to form a picture of the pupil's learning and developmental

pathway, how it has been and what is now in the current situation and try to sense the nature and character of the emergent person and her biographical intentions. The purpose of such case studies is to grasp the 'meaning' or signature of the pupil's biographic trajectory through her life course so the teachers can understand her situation better. Of course the process also leads to possible support and interventions. It is also a significant pedagogical learning process for the teachers involved.

8.4 Summative methods

Summative methods are used at the end of learning blocks and year-end assessments to show performance of groups or individuals over time and for purposes of quality assurance.

The emphasis is on assessment being useful for pupils and teachers, which means that it has to be uncomplicated, unbureaucratic, intermeshed with practice and effective and not a burden for all concerned¹⁹. Meaningful learning outcomes are best established in authentic learning situations through performance of the skills being assessed using methods such as naturally occurring evidence (Hipkins, 2012), rather than in isolated, de-contextualised tests. Many tasks in reality involve teamwork and therefore group assessments are appropriate.

Modes of assessment include observation and monitoring of performance or activities, projects, group work using checklists with criteria (including naturally occurring evidence), both verbal and written feedback on main lesson books and other work, presentations, portfolios (in which pupils select the work they want assessed), end of block written tests, oral exams (often in small groups), and self-evaluation. Monitoring includes noting when students have completed a piece of work, when feedback was given, the need for follow-ups, the degree of originality (e.g. on a spectrum from copied to entirely self-produced), what is a draft, improved version, final version etc. The emphasis is on giving feedback that is kind, helpful and specific (Berger, 2003). Internal moderation of typical examples of children work and teachers' assessments of this (e.g. two poor pieces, two competent pieces and two examples of very good work) by other teachers can raise awareness and standards. Occasional external moderation of assessments by colleagues from other schools can help define and maintain quality through comparison.

8.5 Assessment values

Assessment and evaluation are expressions of the values we hold and enable us to identify what we value and make judgements about. This means formulating what we value, finding appropriate indicators for this, observing closely and interpreting intelligently and insightfully. Judgements about quality are always related to purpose: why we are teaching what we teach? and that reflects the functions of education that we hold as an educational philosophy. Each school has to find the right balance, so that the domains of socialisation (being), qualification (skills and knowledge) and becoming a subject (dispositions, motivation, interests) are respected and do not crowd each other out. Therefore, Waldorf schools formulate their own values as well as recognising external evaluation criteria.

Typical values that manifest in learning situations and can be assessed include:

1. constructive participation in the social practices of the learning community and allowing and enabling others to participate,
2. ability to work with others,
3. listening when others (and not just teachers) speak,
4. being able to articulate one's thoughts, feelings and intentions in ways that others can understand,

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit>

5. understanding of the topics being taught as expressed in words, text and images,
6. application of relevant subject-related skills,
7. ability to learn from mistakes and improve their work,
8. ability to work independently and with others in projects,
9. self-assessment and setting own goals,
10. aesthetic presentation of work,
11. motivation as manifest in behaviour.

In forms of formal assessment these can be grouped into fewer items.

8.6 Self-assessment

Pupils are encouraged to assess their own activities in age-sensitive ways. Younger children are invited to express their feelings and thoughts about their activities. Older pupils can participate in formulating appropriate criteria (what makes a good presentation?) and self-assessment. Students in the upper school can apply the same criteria used by the teachers.

8.7 Pupil progress meetings and class conferences

Pupil progress meetings are held once a term between the class teacher and a senior colleague. In schools where this process is established, subject teachers also have regular meetings. Prior to the meeting, snapshot data (generated through the teachers' professional understanding and judgements about children's learning and dispositions) is entered into a tracking system and analysed. The aim of the meeting is to use the data in a dialogue which identifies children's needs for more or different support, and to ensure that the teacher has what she needs to meet these needs. Guidelines are provided by SWSF. Related to pupil progress meetings, and sometimes incorporated into them, are class conferences, in which all the teachers who teach in a particular class meet to discuss the class as individuals and as a whole.

8.8 Individual annual reports

Each year the teachers write a brief summary of what was taught in the year and an appreciative evaluation of each child's performance, participation and progress in text form, characterising the child's strengths and areas for further development. Typical items referred to include participation in classroom practices, progress across the subjects, particular achievements, social behavior and personal development. The report is both summative, in that it summarises the pupil's attainments in relation to normative expectations and ipsative, in that it addresses the individual in relation to her overall development in comparison to the previous year. Comparing annual reports should give a picture of the overall development of the person. It also offers practical advice for the coming year, perhaps in one area that the pupil herself can tackle.

Conclusion/Summary

Curriculum blends educational generative principles with learning requirements, documents traditions of best practice and offers orientation for generating and assessing practice. It is not an algorithm to determine specific procedures and outcomes. It is an artefact and servant, not a master. Because education is a living process it is always historically, culturally and socially situated and its primary function is to enable the educative process of leading children to salient and important experiences and encouraging them to partake. It supports their individual process of self-formation by providing learning opportunities, experiences, content and opportunities to learn skills. From the perspective of SW, it is certainly not a fixed quantity of reproducible, measurable information that can be tested; rather it is a way of making children knowledgeable and capable of using this knowledge meaningfully to generate new knowledge and meanings and to work towards social good in the world.

This document is only the beginning of a process, though its production was in itself a long journey. It is a start so that teachers and school leaders can continue the development of their curriculum work in ways that will make it more accountable, more professional and, we hope, more attuned to the needs of children and students in Waldorf schools. The next stage is to develop detailed guidelines for teachers and to start publishing an overview of themes and skills frameworks for the purposes of tracking learning at student level in ways that help with lesson planning.

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