Towards Pedagogical Creativity

Formative Guidelines for Steiner Teacher Education

Compiled by the International Teacher Education Project in dialogue with teacher educators practising throughout the world

Produced by the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland

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The intention of this publication is to help ensure sufficient consistent and high-quality teacher education to support the need of Steiner educational initiatives for well-trained and well-supported teachers.

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Contents

The overall aims of this project are:

to ensure there is sufficient consistent and high-quality teacher education to support the need of Steiner educational initiatives for well-trained and well-supported teachers

- to develop guidelines that will help ensure quality, equivalency, validity and reliability across teacher education internationally
- that these guidelines be culturally inclusive and appropriate, that they actively encourage diversity and respect for others, align with an anthroposophical worldview, are research based, seek partnerships and alliances with others, are professional and have contemporary relevance.

Introduction

This publication summarises a process of intensive discussion that has taken place over the last seven years on the subject of Steiner Waldorf teacher education. The purpose of the document is to share the experiences, considerations and suggestions made during this process and present them for further discussion.

The authors of this publication are mostly active in or concerned with teacher education on an international level. They came together under the direction of Florian Osswald from the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum in Dornach (CH) to form the *International Teacher Education Project* (ITEP). The initial members of the ITEP working group were: Aina Bergsma (NO), Neil Boland (NZ), Marcel de Leuw (NL), Jon McAlice (USA), Trevor Mepham (UK) and Carlo Willmann (A), later joined by Vanessa Pohl (CH) then Philipp Reubke from the Pedagogical Section, Melanie Guerra (BR) and Susan Howard (USA).

The working group took on the task of identifying key ideas from the many topics and points of view that were discussed and worked on in teacher education meetings around the world. In this process, drafts were repeatedly revised in the striving to clearly articulate essential tasks and requirements of contemporary Steiner teacher education. In the course of the work, it has become apparent that there are a number of central, almost indispensable fields of work that create the fertile soil in which teacher education can flourish and bear fruit. At the heart of it all is the striving to allow education to become an art and teachers to become educational artists.

The short texts[1] on the areas of focus in teacher education and the characteristic attributes of teacher educators arose out of a sense of deep respect for the core gestures and intentions of an anthroposophical pedagogy. They make no claims of completeness. They are not intended to be binding and have no regulatory function. Rather, it is hoped that they will stimulate dialogue by encouraging each educator to question and explore what is presented here in their own way, to expand on it and to deepen it. The authors are aware that the texts at hand have a general, perhaps abstract character. It is up to every institution and every individual to bring them to life.

This publication should be understood as a contribution towards more intensive communication and exchange about teacher education, be it in the respective institutions, in different regions and countries, or worldwide. Last but not least, it hopes to raise awareness for the quality of this work and the need to spark new initiatives that help ensure that children around the world find the kind of pedagogy they deserve.

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1 Each text is accompanied by a condensed version in blue italics.

The ITEP working group looks forward to critical queries, additions and suggestions for improvement. Even more, it hopes that its work sparks lively discussion and further fruitful developments in Steiner teacher education.

The International Teacher Education Project

The International Teacher Education Project (ITEP) was founded to encourage dialogue and strengthen cooperation in Steiner Waldorf teacher education worldwide. It is based on the assumption that the best tool for raising the quality of education is a collaborative network of educators. The project provides a platform for dialogue at various levels: between teacher educators, within and between teacher education programmes in various localities, and between teacher education programmes and school communities. The goal is the establishment a self-organising network based on a common understanding and shared experience.

ITEP was launched in 2017 at the Pan-African Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. About 50 teacher educators and student teachers took part in the two-day event. In this and the following events on all continents, participants were asked to consider the question: *What are the main priorities for educators and teachers?* The results of these sessions were gathered and collated.

In 2018, following further meetings in Buenos Aires, San Francisco and Chengdu, the project group met to review the material. It initially identified eight core areas: development of knowledge practices, the arts, self-development, teaching as inquiry, basic knowledge, teaching and learning, expanded understanding of human nature, and education and societal change.

Each of these areas was characterised briefly. These characterisations became the basis for further discussion in conferences on the different continents and revised again, based on the feedback received. In the course of these conversations, an additional core aspect was added: legal responsibilities, finances and regulations.

The following year, attention turned to the question of the necessary characteristics of teacher educators. This in turn resulted in the following core areas being identified: adult education, anthroposophy, the child of today, context sensitivity, research, and collaborative governance.

These areas were revised in dialogue with teachers and teacher educators in meetings and in conferences around the world. This process resulted in the first edition of this booklet being published as a PDF file, available on the Pedagogical Section website in English as well as in German, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese and Traditional Chinese translations.

Plans to discuss the document further in conferences were halted by travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic and, instead, such meetings moved online. Since April 2021, monthly meetings have been held on Zoom for those active in Steiner teacher education in different countries to discuss a topic from the booklet. The meetings have up to 60 attendees. After an introduction, dis-

cussion groups are held in various languages (English, Spanish and sometimes German). In order to accommodate time zone differences, one monthly meeting is held for those in Western time zones (Europe, Africa and North and South America) and another for those in the Asia-Pacific region. The meetings have proven to be valuable opportunities to exchange and discuss experiences and approaches to Steiner teacher education with colleagues from around the world. It is hoped that the publication of this document will encourage further discussion, dialogue and cooperation.

Short history of cooperation between teacher educators

The history of teacher education is strongly linked to that of the Steiner school movement. The first teachers' course in 1919 in Stuttgart was an introductory course. It was led by Rudolf Steiner and consisted of three parts: *Anthropological Foundations, Methods of Teaching* and *Practical Discussions*.[2] In the following years, this introductory course was further deepened by supplementary courses and observations as well as conference discussions. It was a practice-oriented process. Subsequently, various forms of teacher education were practised at the newly founded schools. By the beginning of WWII, independent teacher education programmes had been established in Germany (Stuttgart), England and Switzerland.

With the growth of the school movement following the war, further institutions were established. Cooperation between them developed slowly. A dialogue that crossed national borders began in various forms towards the end of the last century.

INTERTEC: The International Teacher Education Conferences were initiated in the early 1990s by Christopher Clouder, Marcel de Leuw and Jon McAlice as a platform for teacher educators to explore themes central to their work. Deepening an understanding of Steiner's pedagogical anthropology played a central role. Conferences were held at various seminars throughout Europe and drew participants from around the world.

South America: Heinz Zimmermann organised meetings of the various teacher education centres at the *Congresso Latinamericano*, which take place every three years in one of the South American countries. Following one of these gatherings, all the Brazilian teacher education programmes decided to engage in a joint study project twice a year.

2 Steiner, R. (1919/2020). *The First Teachers' Course* (M. M. Saar, Trans.; N. Boland & J. McAlice, Eds.). Ratayakom.

AWSNA: The Association of Waldorf Schools in North America holds regular meetings for its member institutes in North America. It has drawn up guidelines for recognition.

IASWECE: The International Association for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education has hosted meetings of early childhood trainers on a biannual basis since 2011–12. Members of the IASWECE Trainers' Network meet monthly to discuss topics from the ITEP meetings.

INASTE: The International Network for Academic Steiner Teacher Education is an independent worldwide network of academic institutions which offer Steiner teacher education programmes. Member institutes of INASTE follow the goal of an academic, research- and arts-based course of study. INASTE organises conferences, congresses and publications, and encourages cooperation between institutions. The network was founded in 2009 and has been managed by the *Zentrum für Kultur und Pädagogik* in Vienna (Austria) ever since. It currently has 18 member institutions in 15 countries.

In addition to these institutions and organisations, a growing number of international teacher development conferences have been established since the latter part of the 20th century in areas such as physical education, crafts, mathematics and foreign languages.

I. Areas of Focus in Teacher Development

What are we working towards?

Approaches to teacher education have much to do with the way we understand the nature of seeing. Consider how the statement "I see you" is different than the statement "I see it". Each statement expresses a different quality of connection. "I see it" speaks of distance, either inner distance or outer distance. The observer is uninvolved, looking at some-thing. "I see you" does not express this quality of distance and nor does it suggest lack of involvement. It speaks of a proximity and of a shared space of presence. As Martin Buber said: "You has no borders. You is no-thing."[3]

Western thought is grounded in the emergence of the experience of relatedness expressed in the statement "I see it". What is seen as an "it" has borders and is some-thing. There is a quality of distance and uninvolvement expressed by Buber's basic word "I-It". It is this lack of involvement which has led to the rise of abstract intellectual thinking and the story it tells about the world we live in.

Henri Bortoft, the British Goethe scholar, spoke of the problem this poses in his last book *Taking Appearance Seriously*: [4]

> *We tend to rely for the most part on the verbal-intellectual mode of apprehension, because this is what is developed through education in modern western culture. The verbal-intellectual mind functions in terms of abstract generalities that take us away from the richness and diversity of sensory experience – this is both its strength and its weakness. It is focused on what is the same in things, their commonality, so that without our realising it we become immersed in uniformity and cease to notice differences. … Thus in the case of the leaves, whereas to begin with we might see each leaf concretely in detail, we eventually replace this with the mental abstraction "leaf". When this happens our attention is transferred from the sensory experience to the abstract category, so much so that, without our being aware of it, we begin to experience the category more than we do the concrete instance.*

In his anthropological/anthroposophical explorations with the teachers of the first Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner enacted an approach to thinking about human nature that could enable the individual teacher to overcome habits of thought leading to abstract non-engagement and bring the concrete, living, breathing, growing human being back into focus, to witness the human being in

3 Buber, M. (1923/2012). *I and thou* (W. Kaufmann, Trans.). Charles Scribner's Sons.

4 Bortoft, H. (2012). *Taking appearance seriously: The dynamic way of seeing in Goethe and European thought* (pp. 53–54). Floris Books.

the gradual process of coming into relationship with their body or 'incarnating'. Rudolf Steiner was quite explicit about this:

> *If you are able to bring these things into relation with one another and form meditative imaginations from them, you can be certain that a deep stream of creativity will be brought into movement within you. It is what you will need when you meet the child as a teacher.*[5]

The way Rudolf Steiner approached teacher education had a specific focus: to make the pedagogical encounter between teacher and student possible. In other words, to ensure that the meeting of teacher and child can resonate as an authentic whole, a place where something can happen. Steiner wanted to initiate pedagogical creativity, not pedagogical conformity. In looking towards the future of Steiner education, ITEP has approached the question of teacher education with this in mind. What are different realms of learning or exploration that can help a teacher access their own sources of pedagogical creativity in ways that both resonate with the educational impulse of Steiner education and are in keeping with societal expectations of teachers?

We have identified the nine fields that follow as aspects to take into consideration as we look towards the future of Steiner teacher education. They focus on areas of development (self-development and inner growth, a spiritual understanding of human development, the arts, context sensitivity, teaching methods) and the capacities needed to participate in various forms of collegial governance. Together they constitute a holistic approach to growing teaching capability, while at the same time heightening the individual teacher's capacity to respond creatively to individual and changing educational contexts.

5 Steiner, Rudolf (2007). *Balance in Teaching*. SteinerBooks. GA 302a.

1. Knowledge practices

Students are introduced to and given the opportunity to consciously follow a sequential path of self-development, allowing them to experience and investigate their own thinking. They are encouraged to question their own assumptions and learn to engage with the world in ways that enable them to form their own concepts and judgments.

It is apparent that many of the challenges we face as a society, including education are based less on what we know than how we know. Although this publication is primarily focussed on Steiner teacher education, it is important to acknowledge the fact that this is but a small piece in a much larger puzzle in the centre of which we find the mystery of the human being becoming human. Education is, in the best sense of the word, the culture of practices we develop to support this process.

What practices, forms of engagement and cultures of participation can best support this process today? In this context we can speak of knowledge practices, of learning culture, of forms of mastery – all terms which need to be defined anew if they are to help us give form to what is asked for in education.

Much of what we know in education has its roots in the past. This is true at all levels. There is little that is new in the sense that it originates in a deep understanding of the nature of the present-day. We are faced with the challenge of feeling our way into the enigma and complexity of the present and articulating educational approaches that resonate with the questions that live now, in what Sardar has called "postnormal times".[6] How can education open doors onto the future rather than channelling and updating forms which come from the past? There are three aspects to consider.

The first aspect of meeting this challenge has to do with sharpening our awareness of the relationship between the world we encounter and the way we think about it. As part of the process of teacher education, students should have the opportunity to become conscious of how inherited ideas are bound up in pre-existing narratives, and how they frame and so limit the way we encounter the world.[7] This can be done through a Goethean approach based on careful observation and the inner re-creation of what is experienced through practices of exact imagination. Concepts grounded in the realness of experienced phenomena become essential in overcoming acquired biases and form the basis of an individual

6 Sardar, Z. (2011). Welcome to postnormal times. *Futures, 42*(5), 435–444. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2009.11.028

7 Gamble, C. (2007). *Origins and revolutions: Human identity in earliest prehistory.* Cambridge University Press.

knowledge practice. Working in this way allows teachers to gain insight through engagement and grasp the importance of intentionality in the learning process.

A second area of focus lies in allowing students to deepen their understanding of the relationship that exists between individual consciousness and the experienced world. All understanding rests on the embodied presence of the individual in space and time, the fact that we are in the world, "related to it, able to move and act". Knowing is "continuously brought forth by a sensory being's sensorimotor interaction with its environment".[8] Steiner's pedagogical impulse rests on a phenomenology of knowing that begins with the presence of the living self as a participant in the world it knows. Learning to recognise the embodied nature of one's own knowing is an essential step towards understanding student learning.

Thirdly, students should be introduced to and encouraged to practise forms of self-reflection that enable them to gain an intentional relationship to their own development. Arguably the single-most important thing for teachers to master in the course of their education is self-education

8 Fuchs, T. (2018). *Ecology of the brain: The phenomenology and biology of the embodied mind* (p. 9). Oxford University Press.

2. Artistic practice

Every child is an artist. The challenge is to remain an artist as one ages.

Pablo Picasso[9]

The arts are valued highly in Steiner education. After all, Rudolf Steiner himself describes it as the art of education. As such we can say that the art of education occupies the highest place among the arts since the teacher is not simply given "dead media like clay and pigments" to work with but "the living human being".[10] Steiner pedagogy is rooted in the striving to support artistically the learning individual's path of self-development.

Practising the arts is essentially transformative; the arts form a path of constant inquiry towards refined sensibility and insight, of the self, the other and the world. Linking thinking, feeling and willing, the arts can act as a bridge between outer and inner experience, enabling students to express and understand themselves and the world in diverse ways. This can be done as creator, performer and/or engaged audience.

This essential quality is reflected in the concept of the Steiner schools as well as in the education of teachers. Rather than a wide range of artistic accomplishments being foregrounded, emphasis is placed on the way in which teachers teach, how they teach and learn, and how teachers and school students, teacher educators and student teachers meet each other.

What role do the arts play in the process of becoming a teacher and what can we draw from the arts to become educational artists?

First of all, we must be clear about what we need in order to learn an art. Erich Fromm has described four conditions that must be met if one wants to master an art: discipline, concentration, patience and the absolute dedication to achieving mastery.[11] These attitudes and abilities, however, do not necessarily come naturally to us. We often have to acquire them intentionally by practising them. Practice is an essential element of all learning,[12] but especially in the process of mastering an art. Only through the practice of practising can we achieve what we admire in artistic mastery: ease, intuition, creativity and a deep connection with

9 Quote attributed to Picasso in *TIME*, October 4, 1976, *Modern Living: Ozmosis in Central Park.*

10 Steiner, R. (1919/1996). *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School: Lectures and addresses to children, parents, and teachers, 1919–1924* (Address at the opening of the first school, September 7, 1919). Anthroposophic Press. GA 298.

11 Fromm, E. (1979/2013). *The art of loving*. Open Road Media.

12 See, for example, Sennett, R. (2008). *The craftsman*. Allen Lane.

what we do. Such mastery is the goal for a teacher who regards education as an artistic endeavour. Thus, for Rudolf Steiner, teacher education not only requires theoretical knowledge or methodological-didactic skills, but also various forms of artistic practice. Artistic exploration enables us to understand the world in different ways as well as approaching situations with greater spontaneity and flexibility. Only when both – knowledge and art – meet and mutually enrich each other, can a holistic understanding of the learning process become possible and a sense for pedagogically meaningful action be strengthened. Or as Steiner succinctly formulated it, the art of education is about the development of a "doing knowing and a knowing doing".[13]

Artistic practice helps students develop a feel for working through processes and open learning in general. It is necessary to ask what we can learn from specific arts for the art of education. Here Rudolf Steiner has made explicit statements that have led to the term "teacher arts", which is often used today to refer to sculpture, music and language. We rightly assume that all the arts support the development of aesthetic sensibility. However, Rudolf Steiner makes distinctions between the individual arts concerning their effectiveness in developing an aesthetic pedagogical sensibility. Because Steiner education wants nothing more than to help the human being be human, it gives an exact picture of the nature and development of the human being, especially the development of the child and young person. If the teacher wants to practise perceiving this development sensitively, empathising with it inwardly and accompanying it in the best possible way, sculptural, musical and language arts are particularly suitable. The pictorial and formative powers of these three arts are closely connected with the life and growth processes of the developing human being.

The perception of the life forces as formative forces of bodily development can be trained through the experience of sculpting, the wealth of spiritual feeling and experience can become present in the experience of making music, and in the cultivation of the art of language our sense for the awakening spiritual and individual being of the growing human being is strengthened.

It must be clear to us, as noted above, that these arts cannot be isolated: only in conjunction with all other arts such as painting and drawing, architecture and the art of movement can they develop their power and effect. According to Rudolf Steiner, they should not be missing in any teacher education programme. They are indispensable educational forces not only for the perception of development but can also bring about that transformation in ourselves that enables us to move from "logical recognition to artistic apprehension"[14] of the human being.

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13 Steiner, R. (1924/1997). *The essentials of education* (3rd lecture). Anthroposophic Press. GA 308.

14 Steiner, R. (1921/1998). *Erziehung zum Leben. Selbsterziehung und pädagogische Praxis* (p. 18). Rudolf Steiner Verlag. GA 297a. (Not available in English.)

To be more precise, to come to a living understanding of each child entrusted to us, who – as Picasso so beautifully says – is always an artist. Practising art should help us to be and remain an artist as an adult and thus a companion to the developmental artistry of the growing child.

3. Self-development

Self-development is central to teacher preparation and teacher being. It contains a clear notion and recognition of agency and is a continuously transforming, holistic learning process. Self-development includes artistic practice, inquiry, the development of new capacities through inner work, challenging, developing and strengthening identity, and individualising inherited values. It is enacted through dialogue and work with oneself and others and aims to develop a healthy and resilient soul life.

Self-development describes the personal aspect of education. It is of central importance for the preparation and personal development of the teachers. In this context personality is understood in Jungian terms: "Personality is the act of the highest courage to live, the absolute affirmation of being individual and the successful adaptation to the universally given with the greatest possible freedom of your own decision."[15]

Self-development promotes professional identity and authenticity. It can only be acquired individually and provides the basis for the personal relationship between teacher and student. Its focus is the intentional development of inner capacities, i.e. to strengthen the self of the human being and to learn to become a conscious participant in differentiated relationships to the natural and spiritual world.

Self-development includes striving for conceptual clarity and recognition of agency. It is a constantly changing, holistic learning process.

The task of teacher educators is to point out the necessity and opportunity for self-development, to impart the appropriate knowledge while engaging students in various forms of practice and to offer advice.

Self-development takes place on three levels:

The way we experience what we encounter in life

Everyday educational life is rich in experiences. Inner habits and preconceived notions often blind us to its abundance and lead us only to recognise what we already know. Pausing to perceive in an unprejudiced, unbiased and attentive manner allows us to become active participants in the events of the world.

The challenge of the experienced encounter includes encountering myself, my own biographical situation. Self-development at this level should contribute to conscious encounters with both the world and myself that lead to growth and learning.

15 Jung, C. G. (1934/2014). *The development of personality* (R. C. F. Hull, Trans.). Routledge.

How we respond to life

The way we encounter life is each one's responsibility. This responsibility cannot be delegated. Everyone creates their own feelings. They express in an individual way how we respond to events. The same applies to our actions. The drive to act takes form based on what we can call attitude or disposition. This is the "medium" within our motives that takes on conscious form. Self-development takes place in dialogue and in collaboration with oneself and others, and aims to develop a healthy and resilient soul life. Self-development at this level enables people to form self-responsible attitudes, which in turn form self-responsible motives reflecting an affirmation of life.

What we create

We express our attitude through our actions. The unique gesture of the individual comes to expression in them. This lives in the 'how' as well as the 'what' of creation. We often judge people based on their actions.

Our sense of self is constantly shaped and re-shaped in dialogue with other human beings. The meeting with 'you' is an essential aspect of my sense of 'I'. Creating relationships is an existential act.

Many of our actions are in response to what we meet outside of us. An important aspect of self-development is learning to act out of one's own volition. This entails becoming aware of our motives and learning to form motives out of a contextual understanding. Every motive that is translated into a creative act strengthens us or, in Steiner's terms, creates new life forces: The goal is to act out of love for action and not for success. Self-development at this level should find its expression in learning to act in a conscious and self-responsible manner.[16]

16 For further details, see Steiner, R. (1894/1995). *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path* (M. Lipson, Trans., centennial ed.). Anthroposophic Press. GA 4. (Also known as *The philosophy of freedom.*)

4. Inquiry

Research is creative and systematic work to identify and relate phenomena in order to further and deepen understanding and know-ledge. In Steiner teacher education, it can include teacher inquiry into practice (both inner and outer), often through action research and reflective practitioner models, based on what would further teaching and learning. In this context, research is situational, investigating and expanding the changing picture or understanding of the child and is responsive to place and cultural context. It can be done individually and in groups

We live in a rapidly changing world and the ability to generate new knowledge is becoming increasingly important. Precisely because schools are places dedicated to the appropriation of knowledge and the acquisition of skills, it is essential that teachers themselves are able to continually expand and deepen the knowledge and skills necessary for their profession. It is an important part of a teacher education programme to encourage future teachers to question and reflect on the professional knowledge (technical, pedagogical, social, psychological, etc.) that they acquire in their studies and during corresponding internships. Experience gained in this way can be a good basis for continuous research-based learning in and around the teaching profession. This does not only benefit the quality of teaching, but can also ensure lasting job satisfaction.

We assume that students do not want to be passive recipients of prescribed learning content, but instead want to participate actively in the teaching and learning processes. This requires openness, healthy curiosity and the ability for self-perception and reflexive thought. Together, these can lead to new perspectives, convictions and options for action in teaching practice.

True practice – unlike routine – has no fixed patterns. It is a flowing process characterised by complexity and uniqueness and is therefore often associated with uncertainty and instability. It requires an intuitive approach, an artistically flexible attitude that can deal productively with these imponderables in practice. In turn, the basis for a creative approach to practice is formed by intentional reflection processes that combine attentive observation and critical reflection, and strengthen the students‘ personal responsibility and autonomy. Such research-based learning, based on and derived from one's own practical experience, serves to enhance students‘ professional capabilities. It applies not only to teaching and learning situations, but also to the organisation of learning environments, working consciously and productively with colleagues, and nurturing positive social atmospheres. These are all situations that can be positively guided and shaped through participatory reflection.

Action research is therefore an important component of professional and personal further education. In a social context (university, school, class, colleagues) it can be particularly effective in learning groups in which students and teaching staff work together on a project.

In the context of learning groups, an individual's acuity of perception, scope of understanding and richness of interpretation can grow quickly. Feedback from outside often makes it possible to see and recognise things that one cannot or does not necessarily want to see. In addition, it also strengthens interaction and communication processes. This is especially important in all schools practising forms of collaborative governance.

The practice of such processes during the course of study is therefore an important prerequisite for later testing and implementation in a professional context. Students can and should voice their unanswered questions and criticism as well as contribute their increased knowledge and personal insights. The cyclic nature of action research ensures that static positions are challenged and disrupted, encouraging personal transformation.

In a course of study, there is room here for very different forms of processing and presenting self-explorative learning. In addition to written reflections, conversations and interviews, artistic forms of expression can be used, for example in the form of theatrical presentation. Steiner education with its artistic versatility offers a wealth of possibilities in these directions.

A key benefit of action research lies in the presentation and questioning of the developmental steps of the students themselves. They learn to recognise what changes these developments have brought about, what insights they have gained, what obstacles they have overcome, and also what questions and tasks still remain. Action research becomes a tool with which students learn to guide their own professional development.

5. Basic knowledge

The role of a Steiner teacher is complex and challenging; it is never static and requires constant attentiveness and growth over the course of a professional lifetime. Research shows the positive effect teachers' knowledge and cognitive skills have on students.[17] What we are terming basic knowledge here covers two broad areas:

Teachers need sound general knowledge as well as an embodied understanding of their social and cultural contexts, which allow them to be successful professionally. They need effective literacy and numeracy abilities and appropriate oral skills to facilitate successful learning.

1. Background knowledge and understanding ensuring that teaching graduates enter the profession with appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy and oracy for the tasks they need to undertake, and
2. What this basic knowledge then allows and facilitates.

Background knowledge

Increasingly, initial teacher education (ITE) programmes have begun testing applicants to ensure that they meet basic literacy and numeracy standards. Some cover basics of grammar and punctuation as well as spelling and writing conventions within the programme. Overall, these interventions have positive effects both during study and after graduation.

Oracy features strongly in Steiner education, and the ability to communicate effectively is an essential for any teacher, particularly when much of the Steiner curriculum as it is taught today relies on oral presentation. Clarity of speech and expression and breadth of vocabulary are attributes of an effective teacher. Strengthening and developing these is an important facet of teacher education.

We know by word of mouth, personal experience and through research that a proportion of society suffers from a degree of maths anxiety. It is found also among student teachers. Addressing this could be of particular relevance to future class teachers.

Teaching students looking to work in the high school frequently already possess a strong background in their chosen discipline(s), for instance a university degree or similar. In many disciplines however, subject knowledge is rapidly evolving; within a number of years, what was contemporary knowledge learned at univer-

17 Hanushek, E. A., Piopiunik, M., & Wiederhold, S. (2019). The value of smarter teachers: International evidence on teacher cognitive skills and student performance. *Journal of Human Resources, 54*(4), 857–899.

sity becomes dated and outmoded. As the period since formal study lengthens, it becomes increasingly important for teachers to maintain currency in the subjects they teach through regular professional learning, whether that learning be formal or informal. Teacher education programmes need to reflect current knowledge in each discipline and be able to challenge it in a subject-appropriate manner.

Cultural knowledge and confidence

Class teachers in Steiner schools represent and characterise cultural information across a broad range of subject areas. This includes world history (from ancient civilisations to the present day), world geography, multiple world cultures, the arts and fields of science among others; the challenge this poses for a new teacher is significant. Hirsch published his influential book on the decline of a shared cultural literacy in the United States in 1987, defining such literacy as "the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world".[18] As populations have become more diverse, this knowledge becomes more important. Just as a shared language makes communication possible, shared cultural understandings facilitate communication. To counter this decline, Steiner teachers need consistently to extend and deepen their understanding of their own and other cultures. This will involve becoming familiar with the complexity of multi-ethnic, mixed-culture societies and strengthening their ability to navigate the tensions and challenges, which can arise within these.

A sound knowledge of relevant subject matter and appropriate cultural competence has a further advantage. It leads to confidence on many levels: confidence on the part of the teacher that they are well equipped for the task they have taken on; confidence on the part of the students that their teacher is knowledgeable and can help them with what they need to learn; confidence on the part of the school that the teacher is well prepared for the task of teaching; and confidence on the part of parents that their children are in good hands.

This is a solid foundation on which to work as a teacher.

18 Hirsch, E. D. J. (1987). *Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know* (p. 92). Houghton Mifflin.

6. Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is primarily a dialogical process of experiencing, knowing and understanding the world, oneself and others. It accommodates itself to diverse peoples, locations and circumstances. It includes an understanding of a developmentally appropriate and responsive curriculum and involves periods of practical work in schools in which student teachers work towards achieving proficiency in the art and craft of teaching. The teaching/learning process involves an on-going conversation with a mentor who recognises that the path towards being a teacher is an individual one.

Every teaching process is, at the same time, a learning process. A successful teacher learns to craft the time element of a lesson in such a way that the formal distinction between learner and teacher becomes increasingly permeable. In this process of transformation, the classroom becomes a shared learning space. Essential characteristics of this space are its experienced authenticity and that within it, the unexpected can occur. Prospective students should experience this and learn to understand the conditions necessary for the transformation to take place. The most successful teachers are those who have mastered the learning process and understand how to enact it with their students.

The central aspect of any teaching and learning process is the dialogical relationship between teacher and student. It is a dynamic and two-way process of discovery. Learning happens in diverse situations, locations and contexts, inside the classroom and out; it is both formal and informal; intentional and unintentional. Through the teaching and learning process, the student gradually situates themselves in the world and in the society around them, and gains self-knowledge and understanding as an individual.

The teacher gradually develops a fluency in mediating this dynamic relationship which will both mature and change over time. To assist with this, Steiner talked about three essential pedagogies of Steiner education – one for early childhood, one for primary and one for secondary-age students. These are indications of possible teaching approaches and will be adapted to best suit the students and situation.

Rudolf Steiner frequently mentioned the importance of a teacher 'reading' the students, to respond to their individual and collective needs. "[T]he most important thing is to learn how to read children. And, in this, we are guided by a truly practical understanding of the human being in body, soul, and spirit."[19] If

19 Steiner, R. (1923/2004). *A modern art of education* (p. 88) (J. Darrell, Trans.). Anthroposophic Press. GA 307.

this is done effectively, Steiner education will be of value to all students whatever their background, situation or culture. Curriculum can be thought of as a set of developmentally appropriate tasks which are responsive to the needs and situation of students. To remain responsive, curriculum must be dynamic and not become fixed or prescriptive. This approach is then emergent, one that allows the taught curriculum to emerge in response to the individuals in a class, taking into account Steiner's understanding of human development or anthropology.

An important part of teacher education involves student teachers spending time in early childhood settings or schools on placement, with appropriate levels of teaching responsibility depending on students' development and experience. These periods on placement allow the student teacher to work on the art and the craft of teaching. They form an invaluable opportunity to explore the interface between theory and practice. Time on placement is where all the areas of teacher development come together and where the remaining vital piece – the students – is added. It is through practical experience, guided and supported by a mentor that a student teacher begins to construct their own teaching identity and individual way of teaching.

At all levels of being a teacher, it is valuable to have a mentor with whom issues can be raised, questions asked and who can give formative feedback to encourage further development. Mentors understand that each teacher is individual and that there is no one way to become or be a Steiner teacher.

7. Expanded understanding of the human being

A teacher needs an understanding of the human being that embraces both the tangible and the intangible, the bodied and the embodied. A phenomenological approach that seeks to apprehend the full spectrum of human experience enables the teacher to anticipate and respond to the learning needs of individual children. This affirmation of the emergent nature of what it means to be human is the foundation for a creative approach to education.

For Rudolf Steiner the key to a new approach to education lay in a holistic anthropological understanding that enables the teacher to recognise the presence of the spiritual in the individual. He spoke of this explicitly in a series of lectures given in Dornach shortly before initiating the first teacher education course: "We must also learn to raise anthropology to the level of Anthroposophy".[20] The basic elements of an anthropological/anthroposophical view of the human being were then laid out in the early morning lectures given in Stuttgart for the teachers of the first Waldorf School. The German title of these lectures – *Allgemeine Menschenkunde* – translates literally as *A general anthropology*.

The intimate connection between our conceptual framework and our ability to perceive has far-reaching consequences for the way we approach education. What we know colours the way we meet our students. To paraphrase Goethe: We are only able to recognise what we expect to see. Steiner's anthropology can be seen as a phenomenological approach, not one which is unduly limited by materialistic, conceptual models. It is centred on the question of the spiritual expression of individuality – the self – in the sense world. Instead of providing a new conceptual framework through which we can categorise and order, he introduces us to ways of looking that allow us to perceive and respond to the spiritual reality of the child or young person in the process of becoming their own self. The concepts he develops are mobile and dynamic, not schematic; they shed light, illuminating the human being in a way that allows us to differentiate without losing a sense of the living whole.

If we approach these lectures as a path of schooling leading to a new way of being with our students, we find that it makes sense to follow Steiner's lead, to walk the path the way he laid it out. At each turning, he widens the notion of being human and at the same time lets the concept of humanness become increasingly dynamic. The human being as a whole is present in the world in what Steiner describes as three different ways. Each is the expression of a quality of

20 Steiner, R. (1919/1997). *Education as a force for social change* (p. 63) (R. F. Lathe & N. P. Whittaker, Trans.). Anthroposophic Press. GA 296.

relatedness. Steiner looks at these three ways of being in the world – thinking, feeling and willing – from three different perspectives: the psychological, the spiritual and the anatomical/physiological. In doing so he develops working concepts that can provide the foundation for a multi-perspectival phenomenology of human development.

In the course of a teacher education programme, students should:

1. Have the opportunity to wrestle with and understand the way Steiner approaches the development of a new pedagogical anthropology
2. Explore how Steiner's approach fits into and differs from the development of contemporary understandings of human development and education
3. Gain a sense of how anthropological understanding comes to expression in the praxis of teaching.

The balance must be found between critical analysis, working to gain a deep and nuanced understanding of Steiner's thought, and reflecting on shared observation and experience. A pedagogical anthropology should not be thought of as theoretical understanding to be applied in the development of curricula and teaching methods. Differentiated, spiritually appropriate concepts allow us to recognise and learn from the expression of human individuality in each child and young person. This becomes a source of pedagogical insight and creativity that allows the teacher to respond to the essential beingness of the child in the process of becoming.[21]

21 See, for example, Kranich, E. M. (1999). *Anthropologische Grundlagen* [Anthropological basics]. Verlag Freies Geistesleben.

8. Education and societal change

> … [T]he most important thing is to learn how to read children. And, in this, we are guided by a truly practical understanding of the human being in body, soul, and spirit. [22]

'Reading' the children in front of us characterises an essential aspect of Steiner education. To do this, Steiner teachers need to be highly responsive to the needs of the present and to have a sense for what a situation (and child) calls for. Just as we (hope to) do this in the classroom, so teachers need to be responsive to larger movements and changes within society. In responding to unfolding situations, teachers see the importance and necessity of themselves changing too.

Students are encouraged to critique forms of educating currently practised and investigate what might become appropriate in the future. They have the opportunity to question the stated purposes of education and explore its potential to facilitate social change. Students examine how to ensure that Steiner education is inclusive, anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory, and is embedded within society as a force for social good. Social capacities are developed to support teachers to work professionally and successfully with parents and colleagues. Students become familiar with the importance of perseverance and resilience and of engaging positively with challenging situations.

What the purposes of education are has long been argued. The most commonly stated purpose of Steiner education is that it educates the child for freedom:

> *… a teacher's primary task is to nurture the body to be as healthy as possible. This means that we use every spiritual measure to ensure that in later life a person's body will be the least possible hindrance to the will of one's spirit. If we make this our purpose in school, we can develop the forces that lead to an education for freedom.*[23]

Over decades, Steiner schools have developed forms and traditions which enable this. It is what we think of when we think 'Steiner school'. This central purpose has not changed since Steiner formulated it in Oxford in 1922. Yet since then, societies have changed greatly. We have largely moved away from empires and colonies, countries have become independent and attempts are made towards a postcolonial and decolonised education. Despite this, it is easy to teach out of and to support former attitudes and values (albeit unconsciously) rather than current and developing ones. In recent years the #MeToo movement has become prominent, as has #BlackLivesMatter. Institutions have broadened curricula to

22 Steiner, R. (1923/2004). *A modern art of education* (p. 88) (J. Darrell, Trans.). Anthroposophic Press. GA 307.

23 Steiner, R. (1922/2004). *The spiritual ground of education* (pp. 48–49). Anthroposophic Press. GA 305.

better represent their societal demography (having been too white, too male) and the teaching of history has begun to address the marked absence or silencing of minority viewpoints. There is increased gender and sexual diversity expressed, communities become more diverse, cultures increasingly mixed. As the conversation turns to issues of inclusivity, anti-oppression and anti-discrimination, established norms are being challenged and minority and underprivileged voices are increasingly heard. It is vital that these voices are present within teacher education, that the complexity of learning to teach in complex societies is addressed in a nuanced way. Essentially, it asks teacher education models to 'read' the times – so they can prepare teachers who can offer contemporary generations what it is they need to prepare them for their future. This indicates an essential and fundamental aspect of education in general and Steiner education in particular, the challenge to be the change which needs to happen, to create a more just and equitable society. As Steiner put it in the opening address of *The First Teachers' Course*: "We must use the Waldorf School and the possibilities it offers as a means of reforming, of revolutionizing, education."[24]

In doing this, "[t]eachers must understand the time they live in because they must understand the children entrusted to them in relation to that time", [25] remaining "guided by a truly practical understanding of the human being in body, soul, and spirit" at all times. For this to happen, Steiner education needs to remain nimble and reflexive. At its root, Steiner education has a desire for social justice, that each young person can be educated to meet their highest potential. This can only happen when Steiner education joins others in actively seeking to remove systemic societal and historic barriers which stand in the way of some students realising that potential.

Learning to work effectively with parents and colleagues as partners in the education of children is important, as that is where many issues arise in schools and centres. This includes learning how to structure meetings to encourage open and free dialogue, to acknowledge and seek to draw out those who do not immediately offer their opinion. Working creatively with tension or conflict is a skill which needs to be practised, as does learning how to have 'courageous conversations' and how to find pathways to address difficulties which encourage dialogue rather than rebuffal or hurt.

Teachers in all situations need to be resilient. This can include teachers prioritising some time for themselves, for their own growth, for artistic activities, hobbies, families. All too often the needs of a school can take priority and teachers' wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families suffer. There is a place for teacher education to address this tendency and to suggest effective ways to manage the

24 Steiner, R. (1919/2020). *The First Teachers' Course* (p. 16) (M. M. Saar, Trans.). Ratayakom. GA 293-5.

25 Ibid. p. 163.

work-life balance which will aid students, parents, teachers and their families and colleagues alike. This of course needs modelling by teacher educators.

These things combined will help equip future teachers to meet societal and educational changes and challenges as they occur.

9. Legal responsibilities, finances, regulations

Teachers work in the public domain and need an up-to-date understanding of the legal and financial aspects of their professional role and the operations of their workplace. Teachers are required at all times to act ethically and uphold their professional responsibilities, in line with their task of working and caring for children and young people, to ensure their safety, health and well-being.

Teachers often find themselves struggling with the tension between societal expectations and requirements and the perceived needs of the children entrusted to them. This tension was present at the founding of the first Waldorf School. Steiner spoke about it openly and, in this context, differentiated between the need to compromise outwardly and the danger of inner compromises. It is the teacher's task to work creatively to bring both poles – institutional requirements and student learning – into a productive balance. Prospective teachers should have the opportunity to understand and recognise the importance of this aspect of their work.

Teachers work in the public domain and have a duty of care towards the students they teach and to the parents and extended families of those students. They accept the responsibility to ensure that student and parental rights are upheld. This is a professional obligation. Teachers need to have a full and up-to-date understanding of the responsibilities and requirements pertaining to their situation in order to meet their professional responsibilities.

Each country has its own laws governing education. Steiner schools and early childhood settings are licensed and operated in accordance with these laws. The legal requirements, educational expectations, reporting requirements, funding arrangements, financial frameworks and socio-cultural conditions differ widely. Some schools and early childhood settings are independent with comparatively little governmental oversight, others are fully funded by the state with greater accountability. In the course of a teacher education programme, students should have the opportunity to orient themselves concerning what will be required of them and explore different approaches of meeting these requirements.

Many faculties struggle with the question of teacher freedom. Individual teachers understand this differently. Steiner was clear that this freedom extended solely to the teachers' pedagogical practice. It does not extend to disregarding the professional obligations of their chosen vocation nor does it convey the right to neglect to uphold the agreements governing the operation of a school or early childhood centre. In educational settings, individual freedom is always in a dynamic relationship with shared responsibility. It is helpful if student teachers come to understand this relationship during the course of their studies and to understand

that communication and dialogue are essential tools in the collegial adventure of living in this tension every day

Many teachers begin teaching not fully prepared for the administrative aspects of their work. These range from correcting student work to parent communication, from writing reports to preparing field trips, from planning conferences to preparing parent evenings. Questions such as which form of communication in appropriate in each situation arise. When is email communication productive? What role should social media play? How does one prepare and enact difficult conversations? Students should have the opportunity to develop their skills in these areas.

The learning space shared by students, teachers and parents does not end at the classroom door. The ethic of care which all teachers have covers the health, well-being and safety of the students at all times. Most teachers discover quickly that being a teacher comes with life-shaping expectations. Outside of school, teachers are expected to maintain the same ethical principles they embody in the classroom as responsible and influential members of their communities.

II. Characteristics and Responsibilities of Teacher Educators

The task of a teacher educator is broad and multi-faceted. It is fair to say that there is no acknowledged set of requirements or consistent expectations for those who work as Steiner teacher educators, nor is there an accepted pathway of suitable preparation or continued professional development. Furthermore, Steiner teacher educators work in diverse settings, teaching students of teaching from early childhood to secondary in full-time and part-time courses and in intensive blocks. They teach on weekend courses in their own countries and as visiting experts in programmes overseas where all sessions may need to be interpreted.

For some, teacher education is a fulltime job, but for many it is not. They take occasional sessions as needed in their local situations or travel to give courses elsewhere. Those who act as mentors to teachers already teaching or who receive student teachers into their classrooms also act in a capacity of teacher educators. In whichever form it happens however, it is clear that the position of a teacher educator is one of importance and that it bears with it influence and responsibility.

In every educator, some characteristics will already be established and more advanced, others will be only just developing. Some will be more relevant to one context than to another. There will be different expectations of someone who leads a teacher education programme to someone who works a few days a year or who has just begun the work, but we believe that the overall recommendations for teacher educator excellence remain valid for all. They can also be taken as indications of a possible path for long-term professional development and further study for teacher educators. We are not aware that such paths of development have been set out before and hope that these are useful in this way.

In the *Curative Course*, Steiner spoke of the importance of the developing teacher:

> *You have no idea how unimportant is all that the teacher says or does not say on the surface, and how important what he himself is as teacher.*[26]

This is just as important for teacher educators if not more so, as they act as role models showing teachers-to-be what it is to be a Steiner educator. Part of this is the relationship teacher educators have to the work of Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy, of being able to demonstrate the practice of anthroposophy as a "a path of knowledge which seeks to lead what is spiritual in the human being

26 Steiner, R. (1924/1998). *Education for special needs: The curative education course* (p. 40). Rudolf Steiner Press. GA 317.

to what is spiritual in the universe".[27] Another factor of central importance is the issue of relevance and contemporaneity – being up to date. All teacher educators will have had their own education to be teachers in the past; they are teaching teachers how to teach children who may not have been born yet. Staying up to date, maintaining currency, are essential attributes of an effective teacher educator; as Steiner says in *The First Teachers' Course*, "[t]eachers must understand the time they live in because they must understand the children entrusted to them in relation to that time".[28]

27 Steiner, R. (1924/2007). *Anthroposophical leading thoughts* (p. 14). Rudolf Steiner Press. GA 26.

28 Steiner, R. (1919/2020). *The First Teachers' Course* (p. 163) (M. M. Saar, Trans.). Ratayakom. GA 293-5.

1. Teaching adults

Teacher educators understand that the process of teacher education needs to be health enhancing, to encourage mental and physical wellbeing as the basis for resilience.

Institutionalised adult education is an inescapable reality of modern society. The challenge of developing appropriate ways of meeting the learning needs of adults is an essential aspect of the future success of Steiner teacher education. Andragogy (the education of adults) presents different challenges than pedagogy does; being recognised as a successful teacher of children does not necessarily prepare one to support adult learning.

Dialogue and co-creation are essential to all learning processes. Teacher educators strive to improve their ability to support student participation. Of particular importance are the skills of self-reflection and listening. Teacher educators acknowledge that their students are adults, that they come with their own experience and knowledge and take this into account in their teaching. They encourage students to search for and develop their own questions and strive for teaching approaches through which conceptual understanding grows out of lived experience.

The development in societal conceptions of adult education range from general and vocational education to "lifelong learning". Steiner teacher education programmes tend to merge these into a comprehensive whole that can either support a deep, self-directed transformational learning experience or simply confuse students. The central idea of "lifelong learning" in adult education was perhaps first articulated by the Chinese sage, Confucius, who is believed to have lived from 551 to 478 BC. His teaching – the "good way" – is not a religion, but rather a philosophy of life. The "good way" can be understood as a path of constant learning. Not only are the learning results important, but the learning process itself provides satisfaction: "The way is the goal".[29] Adult learners, however, tend to have the hope that the way does indeed lead somewhere.

Steiner addressed the question of university education in various contexts.[30] In school, the goal of education is comprehensive and general. In vocational and higher education for adults the focus is on specialisation. There is no general university pedagogy; each department demands its own form of teaching. Nev-

29 Hontoy, F. (2018, June 2). *Mastery or Perfection?* Retrieved from https://aicomo.com/mastery-perfection/

30 For example, see Steiner, R. (1898/2016). *University education and the demands of the present time*. Retrieved from https://wn.rsarchive.org/GA/GA0031/UniEdu_index.html, GA 31, and Steiner, R. (1922/2015). *Reimagining academic studies* (C. Bamford, Trans.). SteinerBooks. GA 81

ertheless, it should be borne in mind that the educational process places people in a certain position in society. The skills acquired are used in a social context. This means that, in addition to the specific vocational and professional focus, it is necessary to offer students the opportunity to expand and deepen their general understanding. This is not subject-specific, but should be cultivated in interdisciplinary dialogue. This dual gesture must be taken into account when designing courses.

There is a great diversity of approaches in adult education. These are reflected by a wealth of theories concerning adult learning. Although these differ in their details and are to some extent based on conflicting epistemological views, they tend to agree on certain points:

- Adult learners bring knowledge and experience that must be incorporated into the learning process.
- Adult learners need to participate in the design and implementation of their own learning processes.
- The role of the adult educator is to scaffold and support student learning.

Teacher educators need to develop and embrace methods that ensure the specific needs and gifts of adult learners can be incorporated into the courses offered. These must take into account that adults choose to learn, that their participation is voluntary. Adult-oriented forms of teaching and learning see the participants as serious people engaged in their own learning process. This leads to the recognition that individuals may well have different paths to the mastery of the same content. Differentiated approaches are essential. Learning to work with and respect individual difference should be a central goal of any teacher education programme.

This also includes working to cultivate a sense of partnership between everyone involved in a course. Learning is an individual process that takes place in dialogue with others. Accompanying learning means, on the one hand, accompanying individual learning processes and, on the other hand, promoting shared learning in a group. Teacher educators should know and be able to draw on techniques that engage students in both areas.

Furthermore, it can be assumed that adults have a wealth of experience that they can use to learn new knowledge and skills, that they want to engage directly with what has relevance for their real-life problems and tasks and that they stand in individual biographical moments that influence their learning opportunities.

Steiner teacher education programmes engage students in three different, yet mutually supportive modes of learning:

1. Broadening and deepening their conceptual framework
2. Acquiring new skills
3. Developing and practising a reflexive attitude (participant/observer) in their interactions with the world.

These are all growth processes. Teacher educators enact them with their students as co-participants in a shared learning environment. If this is done in an atmosphere of respect and attentiveness for the challenges of education the shared learning space can become both one of individual renewal and educational innovation.

2. Anthroposophy

Teacher educators have a living, personal relationship to the work of Rudolf Steiner. This relationship embraces contemporary discourse and advances in related fields of knowledge. They are able to mediate their strivings in the work with students in ways which generate deep meaning, and they appreciate that a student's path towards anthroposophical understand¬ing, like theirs, is individual and one of gradual transformation. Teacher educators are able to present anthroposophy as a spiritual knowledge practice that seeks to safeguard the dignity of the human being, establish human freedom and make tangible our essential connection to what is spiritual in the cosmos.

Rudolf Steiner spoke explicitly about the need for anthroposophy not to flow directly into the Waldorf School.[31] The school was not envisioned as a sectarian environment designed for the purpose of propagating a specific "worldview". Neither does Steiner appear to have pictured teachers merely "applying" the knowledge gleaned from his own research into the nature of the human being and the cosmos. On the other hand, he articulated clearly the role anthroposophical practice has to play in the development of a pedagogical consciousness capable of intuiting the developmental needs of the individual child. The educator's relationship with and practice of anthroposophy has the potential of enabling them to become more able to participate instinctively and effectively in the unfolding learning processes of their students. For Steiner, anthroposophical practice was a source of pedagogical creativity.

It is emphasised here that anthroposophy is a practice, not a set of beliefs, inherited traditions or book-based knowledge. In the context of teacher education, two aspects of this practice deserve special attention.

The first concerns anthroposophy as a way of knowing. The epistemological basis of Steiner's approach is to be found in Goethe's descriptions of his scientific method. Steiner's anthroposophy is a further development of Goethean phenomenology. As such, it presents us with a methodological approach to understanding that is guided by the process of attention which unfolds between ourselves and the phenomena with which we are concerned. While much has been made of the critical relationship the observer must develop to their own preconceptions and prejudices, we often overlook Goethe's description of this process as a "delicate empiricism". There is a tentative, respectful gentleness inherent in Steiner's anthroposophical phenomenology, a quality of relatedness that makes space for

31 For instance, see Steiner's opening address the evening before the first teachers' course began, in Steiner, R. (1919/2020). *The First Teachers' Course* (M. M. Saar, Trans.; N. Boland & J. McAlice, Eds.). Ratayakom. GA 293.

what is still in the process of coming to expression. It is a way of knowing that originates in the experience of wonder, the experience of being touched or moved by what comes to meet us. It is exploratory and takes joy in the details. To paraphrase Steiner: It lets the world become a riddle that engages me in its solution.

The second aspect comprises the exercises, meditations and practices that Steiner suggests – the inner work of the teacher. "[A]nthroposophy has an important role to play, but again not in dogmatic, ideological form, but as a store of practical activities, artistic processes and meditative exercises geared towards personal development."[32] These originate in the conviction that within each human being are potential capacities of consciousness and action that can only be awakened through individual practice. This developmental process, the intentional practice of becoming, is the basis for teacher presence and authenticity. Schieren points out that, although such considerations are not always factored into teacher education at a university level, they lie at the heart of Steiner education.

For many of our contemporaries, especially in the wider academic community, Steiner education suffers from its connection to Steiner's anthroposophy. Many appreciate the educational approach, but its conceptual underpinnings can raise concern, even suspicion.[33] Much of what Steiner articulates lies well beyond commonly accepted boundaries of knowledge. Teacher educators face the challenge of bringing anthroposophy to students in such a way that it can speak for itself. They should enable students to encounter anthroposophy in a thoughtful, questioning manner. They engage students in the study of anthroposophy in a way that allows each student to develop their own relationship to Steiner's way of seeing the world. Anthroposophical insights that directly impact didactic approaches and teaching methods that are central to Steiner education cannot be presented as self-explanatory truths with the intention that they should be accepted as such, but must be examined and understood. Students are encouraged to use anthroposophical concepts as lenses through which to consider the dynamics of human development and what takes place in a classroom.

As Steiner once pointed out, anthroposophy as a theoretical construction leaves much to be desired. Its value lies in enlivening our relationship to the world and in deepening our sense of responsibility and agency. "Anthroposophical reflection begins by making friends with the world."[34]

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32 Schieren, J. (2015). Anthroposophy and Waldorf education – a dynamic relationship (p. 146). *Research on Steiner Education, 6*(2), 139–149.

33 Traub, H. (2020). "Atelier 'Anthroposophie'". *Steiner Studies. Internationale Zeitschrift für kritische Steiner-Forschung, 1*. https://doi.org/10.12857/STS.951000140-3/

34 Steiner, R. (1924/1992). *Anthroposophy and the inner life: An esoteric introduction* (p. 95). Rudolf Steiner Press. GA 234.

3. The contemporary child

In a highly engaging study of the development of human identity in prehistory, the English archaeologist Clive Gamble introduced the term childscape to denote the "emotional, material and symbolic" environment within which children develop their sense of identity.[35] This process has both material (tangible) and metaphorical (intangible) aspects. The way children learn to place themselves in relation to the experienced world evolves through participation and narrative. Culturally informed interactions with the experienced life-world[36] and the stories that inform these interactions are essential aspects of child development.

Teacher educators need to be in an active, dialogical relationship with contempo¬rary children and/or adolescents. They must have a living sense of how children and young people are developing in today's rapidly changing world and the challenges these changes bring in the life of families and relationships as well as to a school or kindergarten. A central aspect of Steiner education is to be found in the pedagogical relationship between teacher and student. Student teachers should experience this relational pedagogical practice in their studies. This is possible when teacher educators are able to imbue their teaching with the immediacy of on-going encounters with children and young people.

A similar understanding of the formative nature of the experienced life-world on child development is apparent also in Rudolf Steiner's pedagogical anthropology.[37] Much of the Steiner curriculum is based on an understanding of the changing nature of the formative relationship between the child and the environment (natural and cultural) in the course of child development. This relationship must be viewed as concrete and individual. Children inhabit specific locales at specific times. Generalisations about child development overlook the fact that under different conditions developmental stages express themselves differently.

Steiner's anthropological approach rests on the assumption that child development is a sequential process of embodiment or incarnation. Education is seen as the challenge of supporting the child in the process of embodiment. In contrast to other thinkers, Steiner calls our attention to the formative aspects of the soul/

35 Gamble, C. (2007). *Origins and revolutions: Human identity in earliest prehistory.* Cambridge University Press.

36 A term taken from phenomenology – life-world includes individual, social, perceptual and practical experiences.

37 Among others, see Steiner, R. (1906–1911/1996). *The education of the child and early lectures on education*. Anthroposophic Press. GA 34, and Steiner, R. (1924/1997). *The roots of education* (H. Fox, Trans.). Anthroposophic Press, GA 309.

spiritual environment. Human development can only be understood if we take the whole of being human into consideration.

The entire body of Steiner's anthropological work was written at a time when the experienced life-world within which child development took place was markedly different than it is today. Some of the most dramatic changes are relatively recent. These include the ubiquitous presence of digital devices in children's life-worlds and the apparent presence of the virtual within the context of the real.[38] The extent to which this impacts the way we experience ourselves, the natural world and those around us has been the focus of a growing body of research.[39] How does the rapidly shifting life-world, the childscape impact child development and learning? This is one of the central questions as we look to the future of education. What role does school have to play in supporting healthy processes of incarnation under these rapidly shifting developmental conditions?

In thinking through core characteristics of Steiner teacher education going into the future, this question emerges as key to envisioning teacher education. It is apparent that if teacher educators are to be able to awaken living forces of pedagogical creativity in students, they must have embodied experience of the real dynamics of learning as these bring themselves to expression in today's children. Steadfastly holding onto and perpetuating approaches to teaching which were developed in response to the conditions of a life-world different from that which children experience today limits our ability to respond creatively to the needs of the present.

Steiner education rests on the vitality of the pedagogical relationship that develops between teachers and students in connection with the subjects that are taught. A successful teacher understands how to craft the encounter between the student and the lesson content in such a way that a resonant space of shared attentiveness appears.[40] To help prospective teachers understand and work productively with the conditions that allow resonant learning to arise, a teacher educator must be able to imbue their teaching with the immediacy of on-going encounters with children and young people. This is only possible if they are in an active, dialogical relationship with contemporary children and/or adolescents. The immediacy of teacher educators' own encounters with the learning needs of children today is the spark that can enable a student to kindle life-long warmth for the challenges of teaching.

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38 There is a wealth of literature exploring the anthropological foundations of Steiner education. Most, however, was published before the emergence of digital technology as a ubiquitous presence in the experienced life-world. Research into the anthropological impact of this shift from an anthroposophical point of view is limited.

39 Glöckler, M., & Brinton, R. (2019). *Growing up healthy in a world of digital media: A guide for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents* (A. Klee, Trans.). InterActions.

40 Beljan, J. (2019). *Schule als Resonanzraum and Entfremdungszone. Eine Neue Perspektive auf Bildung* (2nd ed.). Beltz Juventa.

4. Context sensitivity

In the time since the first Waldorf School was founded in 1919, societies around the world have changed in many and diverse ways. Steiner education has expanded across the globe into widely diverse cultural and geographical settings. Expectations of life and of society have similarly changed. To be effective, Steiner teacher education needs to be awake to its context in three key areas: historical–cultural, geographic and temporal.

Historical and cultural

The first Waldorf School was founded in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and German empires and the removal of their emperors/czar. Since then, other empires have fallen and some have been created. Scores of countries have won their independence from their former colonial rulers and the decolonisation movement has gained wide currency, supported by a range of theorists from Freire, Fanon and Foucault to Giroux.

It is hard to always be changing as the world changes. In the last twenty years, the expression of values in many countries has undergone a sea-change. Many of us grew up in societies which were to a greater or lesser extent homophobic, white-dominated and which saw gender as a binary concept; in which Indigenous inhabitants of the lands we live in were marginalised, forgotten and not considered part of current debates; in which the colonising of other places in a positive light, as a 'civilising' influence; where history was told as a single narrative. What we can lose sight of is how this influences what we think, feel and do. It is difficult to have lived through the past and not have been influenced by systemic racism, sexism etc. These form unconscious biases which we then can unwittingly carry into our work and so perpetuate. Education cuts both ways: it can empower and liberate; it can work just as easily to replicate the inequalities and injustices of our societies.

Teacher educators need to identify their own biases,[41] so they can experience "what it means to unlearn certain regressive behaviours, ideas, habits, and values that the dominant culture imposes on [us] as second nature".[42] This is a necessary step to be able to teach future teachers ways in which they can approach their students in nuanced and sensitive ways. Such work informs curriculum choice.

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41 Harvard University. (2019). *Project implicit*. Retrieved from https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

42 Giroux, H. (2019, August 15). *Now is the time to break the spectacle of ignorance and violence*. Retrieved from https://truthout.org/articles/henry-giroux-now-is-the-time-to-break-the-spectacle-of-ignorance-and-violence/

Geographic

Steiner education has gradually developed into a worldwide movement over the last hundred years. It is important that teacher educators have a lively and detailed understanding of how the education embodies the place they are active. This localisation of the curriculum to spring out of the land the children live in ensures that the education reflects the lived experience of both future teachers and school students. This will include questions of local geography, flora and fauna, the seasons, religion and belief, histories, crafts, resources, the climate, festivals and similar. If students see teacher educators actively involved in this work, its impact will be greater.

Temporal

As well as in cultural and geographic contexts, teacher educators also work in the context of time. The world has changed in fundamental ways since the first teachers' course was given and since many teacher educators first began teaching. Remaining attuned to the gesture of the time is an important part of educating teachers – the goals of the present change over time as do those of young people.

Teacher educators will always have had their own education in times that have passed. They teach future teachers in the present to prepare them to teach students in the future. In order for this to happen effectively, teacher educators need to be alive to changes in society and to changing values and expectations. To teach in the present requires constant vigilance and active work. If it is done however, Steiner education will not be a set of practices or given attitudes to be passed on and replicated; it can be made and formed anew in every place at every time.

5. Research

Working from a research-informed position profoundly strengthens the authority and effectiveness of a teacher educator. Teacher educators should contribute to the research environment and, where possible, engage students in their work. In addition to standard methodologies, the teacher educator can practise phenomenological and contemplative approaches that lead to an understanding of the spiritual qualities of phenomena. Research is often situational and thus responsive to place and cultural context. It interacts with contemporary educa-tional research and gains value when disseminated in effective and appropriate ways.

In their overview of what teacher educators should 'know' and 'do' and how and why it matters, Loughran and Menter[43] argue persuasively for teacher educators to be researchers and model to their students what a synthesis of practice and theory involves. This helps student teachers experience that these two facets of teaching are complementary and that each needs the other as support. Standing on one leg as a teacher educator is not as secure as standing on two.

What then is research? It can take many forms but essentially it involves the creation of new knowledge. Passing on traditions of classroom practice and accepted attitudes by teacher educators does not generate new knowledge or insight. Uncritical engagement with Steiner's ideas does not realise Steiner's own hopes that the validity of his statements would be tested rather than just transmitted; not doing this results in the inner work he advocated remaining undernourished.

Research into Steiner education can take many forms and use a diverse range of approaches. These range from simple to ambitious. Teachers are often expected to be 'inquiring practitioners', that is, to use action research models to improve their teaching – whether this be done formally or informally. Reflection is expected of all teachers. How then might teacher educators take this a step further? What might creating new knowledge involve?

This will likely depend on context. A full-time teacher educator in an established tertiary institution will approach research differently to someone who teaches a few sessions a month, but the gesture is similar. New knowledge can be gained through reflection, through simple or complex action research models, working individually or in groups. Larger projects can be initiated using standard research approaches. It can also be gained through what Arthur Zajonc has called

43 Loughran, J., & Menter, I. (2019). The essence of being a teacher educator and why it matters. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 47*(3), 216–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2019.1575946

'contemplative inquiry'[44] – using meditation as the inquiry tool. Such work is undoubtedly tentative, courageous and "straightforward as it is exacting"[45] yet if it is undertaken by teacher educators, it has value in showing student teachers someone 'walking the talk' and demonstrates how knowledge and insight can be gained using anthroposophical methods. There is a need for such work.[46] It is also important that research into Steiner education is aware of and engages with contemporary educational literature.

There is a second important aspect to research of any kind – that it is shared with others. Again, this sharing can take many forms, but it is key that it happens. Sharing can take place at conferences, in school meetings, in local or national meetings. It can take the form of a presentation, a talk, a webinar, a video, a classroom resource with accompanying information, a short informal article in a local Steiner education magazine, or one for a wider public. It can be printed or downloadable from a website. Ideally it is made available to the whole Steiner community so that teachers around the world can benefit, but the telling factor is that this knowledge and insight are shared. This allows others to engage with it, critique it, use it to inform and improve their own practice and perhaps use it as a spur to generate their own research which will in turn create new knowledge.

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44 Zajonc, A. (2009). *When knowing becomes love: Meditation as contemplative inquiry*. Lindisfarne Books.

45 da Veiga, M. (2014). A new paradigm in dealing with anthroposophy (p. 148). *Research on Steiner Education Journal, 5*(1), 145–148.

46 Boland, N. (2021). Transgressing boundaries: Documenting liminality in first-person research. In L. Benade, N. Devine, & G. Stewart (Eds.), *Scholarly writing for publication: Liminal reflections for emergent academics*. Springer.

As A. W. Whitehead puts it:

> *Knowledge does not keep any better than fish. You may be dealing with knowledge of the old species, with some old truth; but somehow it must come to the students, as it were, just drawn out of the sea and with the freshness of its immediate importance.*[47]

Teacher educators working to create new knowledge as well as work with what is established will help ensure the currency and deepen the understanding of Steiner education.

47 Whitehead, A. N. (1929/1967). *The aims of education and other essays* (p. 98). Simon and Schuster.

6. Collaborative governance

The teacher educator is able to work with confidence and consideration within the organisational culture and structure of their institution. Clear and reliable communica¬tion at all levels of the work is essential. As a mentor, the teacher educator exercises a duty of care in a professional and ethical manner. When engaging with colleagues, their work is founded on the principles and practices of collaborative leadership and individual accountability. Good social practices are demonstrated and actively encouraged in students.

Governance structures that are worthy of the ideal that lies at the core of Steiner's educational impulse have one thing in common: They are there to support the striving individual. They are, in the best sense of the word, learning structures, as opposed to control structures. The development of such structures, structures that support us in becoming better able to meet the needs of the children entrusted to us, requires a complete re-thinking of our notion of governance.

What are the words which allow us to capture the essence of an approach to governance that is worthy of what we are striving for in education? Such an approach must be participatory, allowing individuals throughout the school community to engage themselves in the life and well-being of the school in a manner that allows them to grow as individuals. It must be an approach that encourages initiative and fosters dialogue. And it must be dynamic in the sense that it must be able to change and grow as the school does and as the abilities of the individuals involved in the school change.

Steiner schools are social experiments. They recognise that the striving to enact appropriate forms of collaborative, participatory governance is an essential element in creating viable learning environments. Teacher education programmes support students in acquiring the skills needed to become active participants in this ongoing process. Collaborative governance is not something a school has, it is something the teachers and parents do.

Just as we encourage prospective teachers to practise the skills they will need in the classroom, it is essential that they have the opportunity to become acquainted with and practise the skills they will need to become active participants in the social experiment "school".

Mohandas Gandhi was a person Steiner admired as a social activist.[48] It was during his South African years that Gandhi developed the inner qualities that were to become the signature of his outer work. The inept middle-class lawyer

48 See lecture of 16 October, 1923 in Steiner, R. (1923/2007). *Balance in teaching* (R. Pusch & R. Querido, Trans.). Anthroposophic Press. GA 302a.

metamorphosed into a disciplined spiritual leader and statesman. At the core of his work were two practised tenets to which he would remain faithful the rest of his life: never use the weakness of another to advance one's own goals, and, secondly, once he had committed himself to fight an injustice, he let nothing dissuade him from continuing that battle. Unless the situation changed. For instance, he set aside the struggle for Indian rights in South Africa to serve in the ambulance corps during the Zulu rebellion. A changed situation called for a changed response. Like Steiner, he worked out of the realities of the situation, the context in which he found himself.

As teacher educators we must model the capacity for situative response in concert with others. Collegiality and collaborative forms of leadership and management are based on our ability to act out of the needs of the situation. Effective teacher educators find ways to give students opportunities to practise perceptive discernment and responsive engagement where-ever possible.

In Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path, written many years before the beginning of the Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner characterised the quality of social relationship that makes collaborative, dynamic governance possible:

> *To live in love of action, and to let live in understanding of the other's will, is the fundamental maxim of free human beings. …. A free person lives in trust that the other free person belongs to the same spiritual world and that they will concur with each other in their intentions. Those who are free demand no agreement from their fellows, but they expect it, because it is inherent in human nature. This is not meant to indicate the necessity of this or that outer arrangement. Rather, it is meant to indicate the attitude, the state of the soul, with which a human being, experiencing himself or herself amidst esteemed fellow human beings, can best do justice to human dignity.*[49]

Collaborative governance in Steiner schools is only possible if we give students the opportunity to practise and learn to embrace this ideal of individual freedom, rooted as it is in interest and respect for the other. By doing so, we can return the idea of government to its original meaning: the forms we give ourselves to guide us in fulfilling what we have set out to accomplish.

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49 Steiner, R. (1894/1995). *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path* (pp. 155–156) (M. Lipson, Trans., centennial ed.). Anthroposophic Press. GA 4. (Also known as *The philosophy of freedom*.)

III. Next Steps

To date, ITEP has worked in two areas: the preparation of teachers, and development of teacher educators.

In cooperation with teacher educators and students worldwide, central concerns have been distilled into the key points or fields which are presented in this publication. They are not checklists, but rather allow the possibility of self-evaluation and the identification of the developmental needs of an institution. The key points in these two areas can be worked with in two different ways.

- They outline the extent of the fields which teachers or teacher educators need to become familiar with and increasingly proficient in. They indicate a structure around which comprehensive teacher education or teacher educator programmes might be developed.
- The key points can be used as guidelines by which teachers and teacher educators can improve their everyday practice. They indicate a way in which a permanent cycle of professional development can be established.

Projects planned which stem from this include:

1. Regarding teacher education:

- To run conferences on teacher education organised by continent. The nine existing fields of being a teacher (see page 6) will be worked on, teacher educators can reflect on the programmes they offer, identify areas for development and build a worldwide network of mutual support.
- To develop new impulses for teacher further education in all sectors from early childhood to secondary. The most significant way for the education of school students to be improved is when teachers work to improve their own classroom practices. This happens best when teacher development initiatives respond to the needs of individual teachers and when they form part of an on-going and structured programme.
- To identify a range of teacher education programmes and encourage them to trial these recommendations and feedback experiences of working with them.

2. Regarding the education of the teacher educators:

- To work with teacher educators to develop and run preparatory and professional development courses based on the recommendations in this document, to support those who receive little or no preparation when taking up this new task.

- To encourage continuous professional development for teacher educators based on areas outlined in this document wherever teacher education takes place, so that teacher educators own teaching activities can be steadily reflected on, evaluated and improved, including, as appropriate, being worked on as research content.

For information about new initiatives and updates on ITEP work worldwide, please visit the Pedagogical Section website.