

The Goals and Challenges of Steiner/Waldorf Teacher Education

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Waldorf teacher education aims to integrate educational science, with a particular focus on pedagogical anthropology, with on-going artistic practice. The overriding goal is to create a coherent, interconnected course of studies which provides a rich and fruitful basis for teacher development.

The study of pedagogical anthropology draws on relevant research from a wide range of fields including pedagogical psychology, neurology, educational science and media pedagogy, along with anthroposophical perspectives on child and adolescent development which include the consideration of the spiritual, soul and physical dimensions of one's humanity. These studies are conducted in a heuristic and discursive manner, based on an open exchange regarding the different questions, thoughts and difficulties that may arise. This encompassing pedagogical anthropology is intended to create the foundation for age-appropriate curricular, didactical and methodological approaches, leading to a healthy balance between physical, volitional, emotional and cognitive dimensions in pupils' learning and development.

The central role of on-going artistic practice in teacher education is intended to offer unique possibilities of personal growth and transformation through artistic/aesthetic experience. In the embodied processes of artistic practice in music, clay modeling, painting, speech and drama, theatre clowning and eurhythm, teacher students have opportunities to develop their powers of imagination and creativity, "where the educational movement appears inside the artistic endeavor, in such a way that art itself can and is allowed to teach" (G. Biesta). The forms of embodied intelligence which artistic practice calls for include, sensory/affective/social/cognitive, as well as musical, visual, haptic/tactile, and kinesic. These forms of embodied 'knowledge' can become part of a teachers' practice, as well as enhancing her way of being "...at home in the world" (H. Arendt).

In the confluence of these different streams throughout an entire course of studies, lies the ideal of students developing their observational, imaginative and pedagogical skills and thereby enabling them to achieve artistry in teaching in their own individual ways. Realizing such ideals is clearly a huge task and the unique challenges which this presents for students also requires an on-going practice of critical reflection from faculty and the institution itself.



Human
Intelligence

This presentation will discuss some of the unique opportunities which Waldorf teacher education offers and the daunting challenges which it faces.

Arendt, H. H. (1994). "Understanding and politics (the difficulties of understanding)" in *Essays in understanding 1930–1954*. ed. J. Kohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company), 203–327.

Biesta, G. (2020) *Letting art teach*. 2nd ed. Arnheim: ArtEZ Press.