

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**WALDORF TEACHER EDUCATION:
THE IMPLICATIONS
FOR
TEACHER EDUCATION
OF
RUDOLF STEINER'S
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
AND
ITS PRACTICE IN WALDORF SCHOOLS**

**A dissertation presented in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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ADDENDUM

To Chapter 1, Section 3

The purpose of the research was to ascertain the implications for teacher education of Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy. The thesis was not approached from a specific theoretical perspective but rather from an eclectic mix of approaches that seemed to be useful and relevant to the set purpose.

Although I did not consider it necessary to follow a particular research theory or procedure very closely, I was able to explicate the educational aims and methods expounded by Steiner's writings and lectures and used this as a basis of critical comparative analysis of what appears to be done in teacher training courses, based on formal curriculum statements.

By means of questionnaire and interviews I tried to (a) find out how much of Steiner's educational theory and programme is followed, and (b) whether the differences discovered resulted from changed social and educational circumstances.

This approach and method seemed adequate to satisfy the purpose of the research.

ERRATA

Page 120 Line 8: insert 'these' after 'such as'.

Page 181 Line 8: delete italics in 'in Kiel'

Page 191 Line 10: should be '...attend the Seminar'

Page 194 Line 5: should be '...attending the Seminar'

Page 206 Lines 17-18: delete italics for 'Toronto' and 'Los Angeles'

Page 207 Line 15: change 'paper' to 'section'

Page 212 Line 3: delete italics

Page 269 fn 10: change 'Victoria' to 'Geelong' and 'Kennis' to 'Kemmis'

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ABSTRACT

This study is a critical analysis of Waldorf teacher education in Australia. Beginning with an exposition of the central tenets of Rudolf Steiner's philosophy and educational theory, and his lectures to teachers, the author identifies what he sees as the requirements and characteristics of an ideal Waldorf teacher education program. The study next investigates the development of Waldorf teacher education provision in Australia, and surveys a wide cross-section of teachers and teacher educators in Australian Waldorf schools, to ascertain the type of preparation they received or have contributed to, and elicit their views as to its strengths and weaknesses. These findings are then critically analysed, making comparisons with Waldorf teacher education programs in other countries. The feasibility and implications of including a Waldorf course in a main-stream teacher education Faculty in Australian universities are discussed, in relation to current prevailing government policies regarding schooling and the values and emphases which these impose upon state university courses. The study concludes with proposals for change and improvement in Waldorf teacher education provision in Australia to make Waldorf teachers better prepared to educate Australian children for the 21st century, still in keeping with the essential values of Steiner education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The production of this thesis has been made possible by the contributions, both great and small, of a wide range of people and groups, and also by the personal and professional support of some people whom I wish to acknowledge and for whose assistance I am indebted.

I want to thank the numerous Waldorf school teachers around Australia for their willingness to participate in the study, their helpful comments and their patience in completing the somewhat lengthy Teacher Training Questionnaire. Also to the many Waldorf teacher educators in Australia and New Zealand, Europe, North America and South Africa for giving their precious time for interviews, and for their enthusiastic interest in and support of the study.

My thanks to the Anthroposophical Society in Australia, and the Ileen McPherson Trust for their generous financial contribution towards my two overseas study tours. My thanks also to the Graduate School of Education at the University of Adelaide for its infrastructure support and the friendly interest of staff in the progress of my research.

I am deeply grateful to Ian Brice, my University of Adelaide supervisor, for his encouragement, ever helpful feedback and scholarly advice. I felt free to work independently yet could rely on Ian's support and interest in the content and process of my research. In particular I valued his non-intrusive guidance in helping me to bring greater critical distance and objectivity toward an educational philosophy and practice in which I have been committedly involved for the greater part of my professional life.

I want to thank my partner Susan Laing for her personal support, feedback and general forbearance throughout the candidature, as well as express special thanks to our children Emilia, Clara, Raphaela and Melchior for their enthusiasm and practical help. Thanks also to Susan Laing and Maeve Archibald for their 'lay person legibility checks' and their fresh eyed help with proofreading.

While the production of the thesis has been made possible by the contributions of many, I alone accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

FOREWORD

Anthroposophy, the Waldorf Teacher and Subjectivity

The present writer is an active member of the Anthroposophical Society in Australia, and regards Rudolf Steiner's works as a key source of wisdom and insight in his life. However Waldorf schools have never sought to indoctrinate their students into Anthroposophy: the majority of parents are not adherents of Anthroposophy, and teachers are not required to be. Like the contemporary Catholic schools of Australia, Waldorf schools do not restrict their staff to Anthroposophists, but expect all teachers to be 'in sympathy with the aims and values' of Steiner-Waldorf education. It is quite possible to accept Steiner's ideas on the nature of humanity and on child development, and the broad elements of the curriculum he designed, as the foundation for a type of schooling, without necessarily assenting to every aspect of Steiner's philosophy.

Likewise it is possible to examine the requirements, and current provision, of Steiner-Waldorf teacher education, from a critical standpoint which makes use of the insights of a practitioner, while not requiring the reader to be a 'true believer'. Indeed, it is one of the aims of the writer to make this study interesting and valuable to educators beyond the confines of the Waldorf education movement.

Note: Conversion of this thesis to .pdf files resulted in some changes in the pagination. Pages shown on the Contents page show the changed pagination but there are some gaps and overlaps in the sequence. Thesis content is the same as that in the printed copy.

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