



Evaluation of the results of the curriculum colloquium October 2022

This colloquium took place on the 14-15th of October 2022 in Gent, Belgium. Almost 50 participants attended the event. All of them are involved in curriculum work in their countries.

For about a year the colloquium had been prepared in the ECSWE working group on curriculum. It consists of the following ECSWE representatives and team members: Stephan Grosse (Germany), Christina Vilhelmsen (Denmark), Kath Bransby (UK), Werner Govaerts (Belgium), Detlef Hardorp (Germany), Lucie Iskander (France), Frederikke Larsson (Denmark), Marinka Podnjak (Croatia), Florian Wodlei (Austria), Martyn Rawson (Germany) and Margareta Van Raemdonck (Belgium). The curriculum working group met on the 26th of September 2021 in Frankfurt, Germany, on the 5-6th of December 2021 in Helsingør, Denmark, and on the 10-11th of March 2022 in Paris, France. This working group also produced a draft statement on the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. As preparation for the work at the colloquium, a questionnaire was designed and sent around before the meeting. About half of the ECSWE members filled it out.

Martyn Rawson, a Steiner Waldorf curriculum specialist, gave a lecture on *Rethinking curriculum, some generative principles*. The British representative, Kath Bransby, explained what she and Martyn Rawson had developed for the UK. Marianne Tellmann, a Norwegian Steiner Waldorf curriculum expert, explained how the Norwegians got their Steiner Waldorf curriculum accepted by their authorities. Hans Annot and Werner Govaerts, also curriculum experts, elaborated on the long and heavy legal pathway to safeguard the Flemish Steiner Waldorf curriculum as an accredited qualification on the Flemish national qualification's framework. Stephan Grosse told the story of how the original German Steiner Waldorf curriculum, which has inspired all Steiner Waldorf schools in the whole world, developed and how it is now being scrutinised in the light of societal changes.

The participants were invited to discuss the challenges they encounter to implement the Steiner Waldorf curriculum within their schools as well as how this curriculum is perceived by the authorities in their country. At the end of the day, the working groups could collect their ideas on what ECSWE could do to help the member countries with their curriculum work.

After analysing all that was discussed in the curriculum colloquium ECSWE needs to plan future actions. Not everything the participants asked for should be done by ECSWE alone. Close cooperation with other organisations would be more efficient. A lot of the comments



in the working groups were, for instance, connected to teacher education and there are other national and even international organisations dealing with this issue. Of course, we will get in touch with them and try to get a picture of what they do and how that can help our members. Also, many elements closely connected to the day-to-day teaching in the schools such as providing videos of good practice need to be tackled by others. Some already do it, but ECSWE could prompt them to make their offer more broadly known or translated.

What ECSWE already plans to do is:

- 1) In 2023, a feasibility study will be conducted in order to evaluate if a European-wide macro-level framework curriculum can be developed and implemented. This study will also assess the possibility of referencing that curriculum to the European key competences framework.
- 2) If the result of the feasibility study is positive, ECSWE will coordinate the work towards such a curriculum in 2024 and 2025 with the goal of formal adoption and dissemination in 2025.
- 3) We can explore in this regard the compatibility of the framework curriculum with further EU frameworks such as LifeComp, DigComp 2.2 and GreenComp to showcase how the Waldorf curriculum contributes to preparing students for the green and the digital transition, prepares them to solve problems and in general enables them to become lifelong learners capable of personal development and equipped with the necessary social skills to succeed in life.
- 4) The work on the curriculum will be flanked with another working strand on quality care and development in Waldorf schools with the aim of identifying principles of quality care in Waldorf schools with the possible long-term goal of developing a European-wide quality framework for Steiner Waldorf schools.
- 5) In combination, these measures will enable schools to better explain their work and advocate for recognition of their schools and curricula at national level.

Annexes:

1. Empty questionnaire
2. Short summary of the questionnaire
3. Programme of the event itself
4. Martyn Rawson's powerpoint: "generative principles of curriculum renewal"
5. Statement on Waldorf curriculum
6. Result of the working groups.

Questionnaire Summary

Less than half of all members answered the questionnaire.

State influence varies from no interference to strong interference, but the vast majority does have to deal with a lot of state influence. More in Kindergarten and in upper school than in lower school.

Only half of all respondents have their own national Steiner Waldorf curriculum.

Almost all have to deal with external tests, but sometimes this does not influence the Steiner/Waldorf curriculum.

The problem areas are the acceleration of the abstract thinking the authorities demand, media education and securing enough time for arts and crafts.

Many ask help from ECSWE to create a platform for exchange on curriculum matters. Help with assessment matters and media education is also asked several times. Developing guidelines for how a national curriculum can be developed and defended in a national context is also asked for.

Statement on Waldorf Curriculum

By the ECSWE Curriculum Working Group

Contents

- Introduction
- A clarification of terminology- what is curriculum?
- The function of curriculum within Waldorf education
- The relationship of curriculum to the anthroposophical basis of the education
- The model of the layered curriculum
- Curriculum today and historically
- A short history of Waldorf curricula
- A model for reviewing curriculum.

Introduction

These texts explain and contextualizes the role and meaning of curriculum within the overall Waldorf educational approach and makes suggestions about how to develop or review curriculum. It is part of ECSWE's overall information about the education and serves the purpose of advocacy but also provides orientation for aligning the presentations of national Waldorf federations. Some countries have their own published curriculum guidelines (e.g. Germany, UK, Norway, Italy, Poland), which relate to the overall framework outlined here and adapted to local requirements. It the aim of ECSWE that all countries have an official published curriculum.

Curriculum needs to be regularly reviewed and updated because the conditions for learning and development for children and young people have changed significantly. Also the demands on education made by the state and society are increasing. Therefore we need to take the following factors into account:

- macro-level changes in geopolitical relationships and the insecurity this brings,
- the effects of globalization on the economy,
- the digital revolution affects all areas of life and work,
- the crisis of truth and information,
- human-affected climate change, ecological destruction and the need for sustainability mean radical changes are necessary in education,
- young people face new challenges of identity, the changing nature of family structures, social fragmentation, economic uncertainty and radical changes to the world of work,
- new awareness of inclusion, diversity and social justice mean ensuring that the Waldorf curriculum is free of Eurocentric and discriminatory elements,
- the need to live in a multilingual and multicultural society,
- many countries have adopted neoliberal education policies of standardization, testing and control that threaten the integrity of Waldorf education.

All these changes bring risks but also new opportunities. Even a curriculum drawn up 20 years ago is already out of date.

Therefore, the question of how Waldorf education can review and revise its curriculum is urgent. The purpose of this paper is to map out some of the central elements in this process.

Terminology

Despite the increasing globalization of culture, the field of education remains strongly influenced by national and regional cultural traditions. This includes the institutional forms that education takes, the transitions between early years, primary, secondary and tertiary education, and the terminology that is used. Educational terminology (e.g. such terms as learning, pedagogy, competence, skills, outcomes and curriculum) also changes over time. Therefore it is always necessary to clarify the terminology we use when referring to aspects of the education and not assume that the words have the same meaning in different languages. It is helpful if all Waldorf federations use the terms in a similar way and are aware that there are cultural differences of meanings (see section below on meanings of curriculum).

Curriculum is one of the terms that needs to be defined, not least because the original German word *Lehrplan* does not have the same meaning as the English word curriculum. Indeed, even the meaning of *Lehrplan* has changed over the past 100 years in the German speaking world.

What is curriculum?

Curriculum is a sequence of pedagogical responses and learning opportunities across subjects and classes that address the developmental tasks that children and young people face at the various stages of the life course from early childhood to emergent adulthood. This mostly includes what is taught, when, how and why.

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A sequence of possible answers to the questions posed by the developmental tasks,



by describing what can be taught, when, where and why.

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The developmental tasks have three sources:

The sources of the developmental tasks are

intrinsic processes of bodily growth and psychological maturation related to the evolving interaction between body, psyche and spirit,

extrinsic social and cultural expectations (including what the state requires)

individual biographical interests and learning needs

The curriculum offers opportunities for

socialization in a multilingual and multicultural society (e.g. narrative empathy),

qualification through learning the relevant skills and knowledge to participate in and contribute to civil society and the world of work,

the development of the person, the ability to form autonomous judgements, act ethically and take responsibility for one's actions.

Knowledgeable skills with a purpose

Governments have a right to establish minimum learning outcomes in schools in terms of skills and knowledge to ensure that all children and young people have the same opportunities to learn and develop and participate in society. Waldorf education fully supports this wish to establish social equity.

It is important to show that Waldorf education also has valid and appropriate expectations of learning outcomes and has ways of demonstrating that all children achieve these. Indeed Waldorf education actually aims to enable a wider range of skills, abilities and knowledge than state standards often require.

Waldorf education aims to enable children and young people to learn knowledgeable skills with a purpose across the fields of academic, artistic, practical, cultural, social and personal development. That means students learn the skills needed to apply different kinds of knowledge to a wide range of authentic and meaningful tasks.

Therefore Waldorf education uses a number of methods (e.g. portfolio, dialogic assessment, artistic, scientific and social project work, naturally occurring evidence, self-and peer evaluation etc.) to make these knowledgeable skills visible and does not just rely on academic testing (see link to Dialogic Assessment).

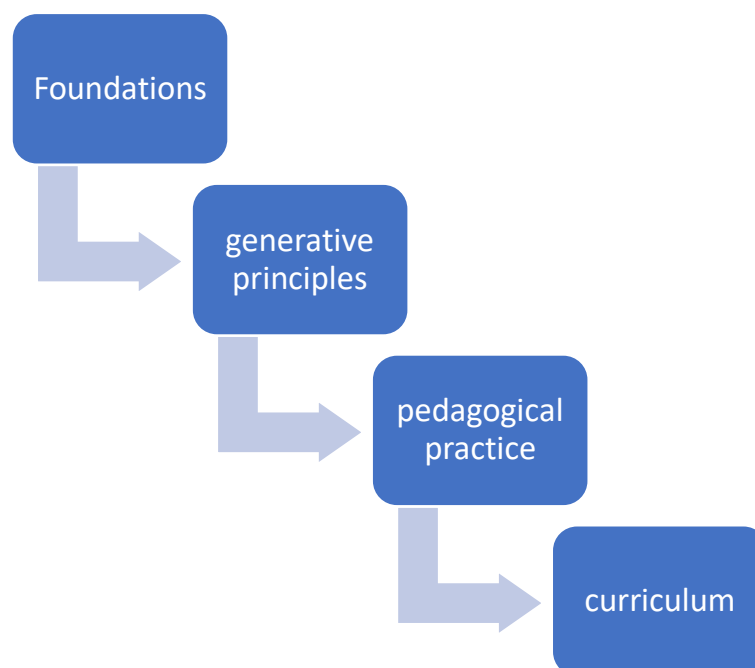
The relationship of curriculum to the anthroposophical basis of the education

Waldorf education and thus the curriculum are ultimately based on Steiner's theory of knowledge and his anthroposophical anthropology (referred to below as Foundations) and the subsequent development of these ideas. (see link to [The relationship of Waldorf education to anthroposophy](#))

Based on these foundational ideas a number of generative principles have been established (e.g. that learning is a rhythmical process, that continuity of relationships is important, that the education is thoroughly inclusive, that the self-activity of the learner is crucial, that all human beings have a range of potentialities that can be developed into skills and capabilities, the importance of school autonomy etc. see Rawson 2021 for a fuller description).

These principles are used to generate pedagogical practice (e.g. the main lesson, the roles of the class teachers and subject teachers, the structuring of the lessons the organization of the college of teachers etc.). One of these practices is curriculum. Thus curriculum is embedded in the overall theory and practice of Waldorf education.

The relationship of curriculum to the anthroposophical basis of the education can be shown graphically as follows:



A layered curriculum

The core idea of the Waldorf curriculum is that it relates to the general developmental processes of childhood and youth that are structured essentially into three main phases, early childhood, childhood and adolescence. However we know that what characterizes human development above all is variation and individual difference. Difference is normal. Therefore we cannot say that every child or young person undergoes exactly the same developmental processes in their bodily, emotional, linguistic, social or cognitive development. There are

simply too many individual and cultural differences. The most obvious example is that the age at which puberty starts is culturally situated and is significantly earlier than it was in 1919.

Therefore, the ideal-curriculum that Steiner referred to, is an ideal-typical developmental framework that provides a healthy and harmonizing developmental journey for children and young people of the same age embedded in a class community. This sequence shapes and prompts the developmental processes of the children and young people. No single child corresponds exactly to the stages of the model; rather, they oscillate around this ideal or theoretical norm because the class share the same developmental challenges at the same time.

The curriculum formulates this developmental sequence as a series of themes and suggests learning opportunities in the form of content, experiences, narrative material and activities in which these themes come to expression across the different subjects. The content and teaching methods therefore structure the learning and development. For example, in grade four one of the developmental themes is the individual gaining a new relationship to the peer group, and in a wider sense the relationship of the parts to the whole and how this can be represented. In sport and movement, for example, this comes to expression in activities in which the individual stands against the group and in which individual exercises begin to replace the predominant group exercises. Story material reflects the different psychological characters in relation to the whole community (of gods for example). In maths fractions are introduced. In geography, the home base is located in the context of its immediate surroundings and this relationship is mapped- and so on. All these topics respond to development theme for the year. Of course these contents can vary from culture to culture whilst retaining their relationship to the archetypal theme.

At the same time curriculum has to take account of the sequences of skills that are needed in each cultural setting (though in Europe these are broadly similar across countries).

Furthermore, each individual student will experience the archetypal developmental themes and tasks in unique ways and they will have individual ways of developing the skills and knowledge that go with them and the teachers will modify the tasks to suit individual learning needs. Thus the art of teaching involves teachers matching the needs of individual students and learning groups to the overall curriculum tasks.

In order to develop , compare and evaluate curriculum we can see it as comprising three layers.

The layered curriculum

Macro level: this includes a sequence of developmental themes.

Meso level: the macro level themes are translated into content and learning opportunities that take the local geography, language and cultural traditions (and state requirements) into account to enable students to learn skills and knowledge.

The micro level: this requires the art of teaching to address the individual needs of students and learning groups within the macro and meso framework

Who is responsible for curriculum development?

Macro layer: This curriculum level is the responsibility of transnational Waldorf bodies such as the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, the International Forum, ECSWE, AWSNA, IASWECE etc.

Meso layer: This local curriculum is the responsibility of national Waldorf federations and individual schools.

Micro level: This level is the responsibility of individual teachers who are accountable to their colleagues and school.

There is general consensus that curriculum in Waldorf education has the character of an orientation, rather than being prescriptive. Though the curriculum in all Waldorf schools has a common source and set of guiding principles, each country applies these principles in ways that are appropriate to that country at a particular historical time.

Curriculum today

Today the word curriculum usually refers to a set of measurable learning outcomes formulated in terms of knowledge and skills or competences. In other words it prescribes what should be taught when and specifies what knowledge and skills students should have. Therefore curriculum is often linked to high- stakes testing regimes. High-stakes testing often applies not only to students but also to teachers, administrators and schools. High-stakes tests “do not give an objective understanding of students’ learning; rather, they construct reality through the narrow lens chosen by the examiners” (Gergen & Gill, 2020, 17). The long term effects of high-stake testing and standardization of curricula can be summarized as follows:

- they lead to teaching-to-the-test,
- which leads to students learning-to-the-test.
- This can lead to estrangement from the education process of self-formation (Bildung)
- leading to defensive, passive learning (to avoid stress with teachers and parents) rather than to expansive active learning (self-motivated learning because the learner feels the effort involved furthers their biographical interests).
- Pedagogical practice and curriculum are often narrowed.
- Teachers are de-professionalized and reduced to technicians delivering a preset programme and continuously under pressure to reach (real or imagined) targets.
- High-stakes testing leads to little sustainable or long-term learning.
- It tends to link socialization and identity to the accumulation of cultural capital through paper qualifications, rather than enhancing the growth of learning autonomy and development as a person (what Biesta, 2019, refers to as grown-up-ness).
- Standardized curricula and testing ignore cultural difference and enhance social elitism,
- and lead to competition between schools for higher status (and better funding or more selective intake of students) through exam results.

The historical meaning of curriculum

In 1925 Caroline von Heydebrand titled her curriculum text “*Vom Lehrplan der Waldorfschule*” (From the curriculum of the Waldorf School). The little word *vom* (from or relating to) suggests that the content of the booklet is an extract from something larger called the *Lehrplan*. The Swiss academic Rebecca Horlacher has researched the different meanings of *Lehrplan* and curriculum historically and today. She notes that at the beginning of the 20th Century in the German-speaking world, *Lehrplan* referred to the education as a whole unified concept, usually the creation of a single mind. She gives the example of the highly influential Georg Kerschensteiner (1854 to 1932), who is known as one of the creators of the German public schools system and especially schools for vocational education (Arbeitsschulen). Kerschensteiner produced a *Lehrplan* and wrote standard text on the meaning of *Lehrplan*. Horlacher points out that this meaning contrasts strongly to the Anglo-Saxon use of curriculum, and she also shows that *Lehrplan* today in the German-speaking world often has the meaning of Anglo-Saxon curriculum.

When Steiner referred to the curriculum he rarely separated content from methods and linked both to the universal nature of human development from an anthroposophical perspective and and to the specific children being educated.

Rudolf Steiner often referred to the Waldorf School as a method school (*Methodenschule*).

Dasjenige aber, was aus anthroposophischer Grundlage aus der Waldorfschule gemacht werden soll, ist eine Methodenschule, eine Schule, welche die gewöhnlichen Anregungen für die Pädagogik, für die Methodik, für die Didaktik aus anthroposophisch orientierter Geisteswissenschaft heraus holt. (GA, 304, 94, a lecture from 11th November 1921 in Aarau, Switzerland)

A recent translation into English says thus;

The Waldorf school, which has its roots in anthroposophy, is a school applying specific methods and classroom practices, as well as pedagogical ideas and impulses drawn from anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science (*Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy Vol. 1*, published by Anthroposophic Press, 1995, US).

A clearer translation might be;

What is to be made out of the anthroposophical foundations of the Waldorf School is a method school which draws its ideas for everyday pedagogical practice, methods and didactics from an anthroposophically orientated spiritual science (translated by MR).

Another reference to method school says;

The Waldorf-Scholl principle is not a principle that wants to make a school with a particular world view, but rather a method school. What is to be achieved through a method that is based on a knowledge of the human being, is what makes children into people who are physically healthy and strong, psychologically free and spiritually clear (Steiner, 1947. Lecture 8, The Spiritual Ground of Education, 9 lectures Oxford)

If one takes all the various references Steiner made to his notion of a ‘method school’ we can identify several factors. These are:

- the education starts with a knowledge of the general nature of the human being based on anthroposophy,
- an educational approach is developed out of this, in which the teaching and learning methods and are based on this anthropology,
- this has the aim of enabling children and young people to have a healthy physical, psychological and spiritual development.

Steiner uses the word method in its origin meaning *methodos* in Ancient Greek, which literally means the way of pursuing something, a way that leads to a goal. Thus a method is the way we do something to achieve our goal. Didactics, a word that Steiner also uses, refers to what teachers do, whilst pedagogy tends to refer to the relationship between teaching and learning.

This is the model on which the layered curriculum is based.

A very brief history of Waldorf curricula

In 1919 Rudolf Steiner gave the future teachers in the Waldorf School in Stuttgart an introductory course. This was followed up by regular discussions with the teachers in which the actual practice in the school was discussed and further developed. Steiner also continued to give lectures on the education, both in Stuttgart and in other cities around Europe. This body of lectures are compiled in Steiner’s Collected Works.

The Waldorf School was inspected by the education authorities and one of the things that the inspectors noted was that there was no written curriculum, explaining what was taught, how, when and why. Steiner intended to provide the education authorities with a curriculum but was unable to complete this work before his death in April 1925. In October 1925 Caroline von Heydebrand published a 40 page account of what was being taught in the Waldorf School, briefly listing the contents for each subject in each class from 1 to 12. In her introduction to the text, which was published in the Newsletter of the Association for Free Education, she made it clear that the publication was not to be taken dogmatically as *the* curriculum, but emphasized that teachers should create curriculum on the basis of Steiner's 'ideal' curriculum and their reading of the children within the actual conditions. In terms of the layered curriculum, what von Heydebrand produced was a meso and micro-level curriculum and was therefore historically and culturally situated.

In the 1950, Stockmeyer published a compilation of all the references in Steiner's lectures and meetings with the teachers in Stuttgart (later published as the 'Conferences'). These two sources remained the primary source of reference until the 1990s, though ideas about curriculum were informally spread by word of mouth from school to school and country to country.

Even in the 1920's Waldorf schools were founded in other cities in Germany, in England, Norway, the Netherlands, Hungary and the United States. This meant that the Heydebrand curriculum was translated into other languages (though only published much later). Initially very little was modified, except in terms of some story material, some aspects of local history and geography were adapted. Since all the European languages (except Russian and the Cyrillic languages) use alphabets comparable with German, the methods of teaching reading and writing were more or less copied from the German practices that Steiner had developed. Otherwise, many countries stayed very close to the original German curriculum, even in the United States. In Australia, the British version of the Waldorf curriculum was initially practiced but this modified in some schools in more radical ways to take on an Australian focus. This has remained a pattern; some national federations, schools or even teachers have adapted and developed curriculum but most of the movement reproduced the historical Middle European version.

In the 1990s, the opening of former Soviet Union countries to Waldorf and the expansion of Waldorf into South America and Asia led to the founding of many new Waldorf schools. This did not on the whole initially lead to significant cultural adaptation and Waldorf curricula were still very European in many countries. What prompted the biggest change was external pressures. The rise of neoliberal education policies (starting in the Anglophone world) led to national curricula with standards and specified outcomes and testing regimes. This put pressure on Waldorf schools to justify their curriculum in terms the state could compare with its own curriculum.

A process began in the 1990's to develop a more up to date version of the curriculum in German. This led to the publication of a manuscript curriculum edited by Tobias Richter in the late 1990s. This met with considerable resistance in Germany from teachers who felt that any published curricula limited teacher autonomy and also that many local variations had developed. This did not help schools in new Waldorf movements lacking full-time teacher education programmes and an established Waldorf tradition of innovation. Even today, many countries struggle to offer full-time teacher education. Not having a national Waldorf curriculum makes negotiations with state authorities difficult.

In the UK in the late 1990's, the New Labour government was interested in including Steiner Waldorf schools into the mainstream and a comparison between the then English National Curriculum and the Waldorf curriculum as practiced in the UK was made (Mepham and Rawson, 1997). In 2000 a curriculum was published by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (Rawson & Richter, 2000), though in the name of the Pedagogical Section in Dornach. This took note of the German Richter curriculum (hence the reference to Richter as co-editor) as well as curriculum practice in the United States, Australia and some other countries. It reviewed current practice in the UK and added a section on Waldorf Early Years and offered a modern account of Waldorf education that government official could relate to. This book was then translated into many languages around the world (the most recent translation was in China) and adapted to varying degrees. In many ways the Rawson & Richter curriculum became the international Waldorf curriculum partly because of the English language but also because it was written so state authorities could understand it. In Australia in 2017, the government recognized the Australian Steiner Curriculum as valid for all Steiner/Waldorf schools. In preparing this the editors consulted widely on curriculum developments in other countries.

In various European countries the Steiner/Waldorf curriculum has been adapted to the local culture and particularly to the existing educational system. These adaptations are more profound in the upper schools than in the classes 1-8. In the upper schools the question of qualifications and exams plays a significant role in shaping and modifying the upper school curricula. The extent to which the state curriculum influences the Waldorf curriculum varies from country to country and is sometimes contested within the Waldorf movement.

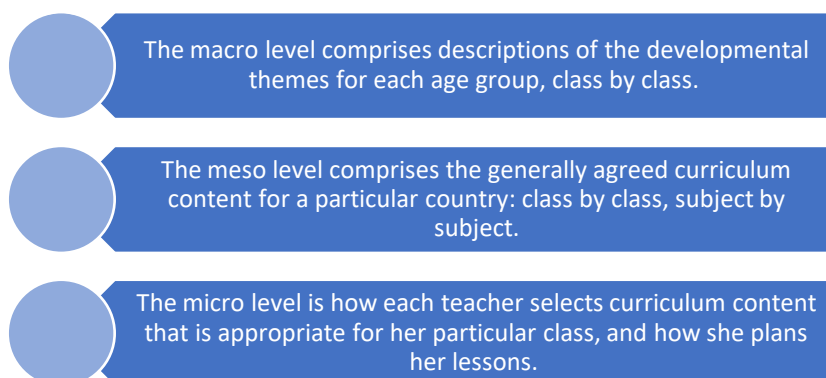
Since 2006 a series of updates of the German Richter Curriculum have been published, the latest in 2019. This has been translated into English.

To date there has been no unified approach to adapting curriculum and there is a widespread belief that there is a single, origin, authentic Waldorf curriculum and that modifications to this must stay as close as possible to this 'original'.

The idea of the layered curriculum is an attempt to provide a framework for addressing some of these issues.

Developing a Waldorf curriculum

The concept of a layered curriculum offers a model for curriculum development at a national and local level. It rests on the understanding that the anthroposophical understanding of the developing human being represents a universal ‘core’ of Waldorf education, and that this provides ideal-typical developmental themes for each class that are generally valid, no matter what the context.



Digital app for curriculum design and review

Kath Bransby and Martyn Rawson have recently developed a digital tool based on this layered model to support teachers in selecting appropriate content and planning their lessons. This is available in English and was based on a review of the existing published Waldorf curricula. This tool can be accessed by arrangement with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship in the UK and Ireland.

The app gives teachers access to the following:

- Descriptions of the developmental themes for each class (macro level)
- Introductions to the aims and purpose of study for each subject. This may be broadly similar for all countries regarding most academic subjects (literacy, numeracy, science etc.) but may differ regarding the foreign languages taught and the arts and crafts.
- A map of the relationship between the various subjects and the skills, knowledge and long term curriculum intent (socialisation, qualification and individuation). The models given for these aspects may need to be modified from country to country.
- Planning support for the main lesson blocks and subjects traditionally taught in UK schools
- A description of the typical learning journey a child takes through each of the subjects

The app can be also be used to document, develop and review curriculum at a school level.

Steps towards curriculum development and documentation at Federation level

The process of generating the curriculum text and suggestions contained within the app resulted in fruitful collaborative work nationally in reviewing, considering and revitalising existing published documents and established practice. For any teacher or school wishing to access the app, this process would have to be repeated at a national level, to ensure that curriculum content is appropriate to the national and local context. We would recommend that this process is undertaken as follows:

1. Appoint a curriculum team

We recommend that the curriculum review be officially the responsibility of a small group of practicing teachers who are appointed by the federation and who are familiar with the local regulatory situation (the ‘core group’). This group can then coordinate groups of class teaching and subject specialists (‘the teachers’) who contribute to the various descriptions. It is important that the core group have the mandate to complete the final editorial process in the event that there is any disagreement.

2. Translate the developmental themes, aims and purpose of study of each subject, and the unconstrained skills / curriculum intent, all of which may need to be modified in each country. These translations are discussed by the teachers, and a final edit is agreed upon by the core group.

3. Review and develop content recommendations.

- ❖ The teachers document the content and themes that are traditionally taught in each class. It may be helpful to distinguish between short blocks which are 3-4 week main morning lessons and long blocks that describe the subjects that are continuously taught in a term (or one third of the school year).
- ❖ Together with members of the core group, the teachers consider how this content relates to the developmental themes for the relevant class. If this content has historically been useful, what are the developmental challenges that it meets? If this content was the answer to the questions posed by the developmental tasks, what was the question? How might this affect the content that could or should be chosen? Could/should ideas about appropriate content be broadened, reviewed or changed?
- ❖ Decolonizing and contextualising: The core group in consultation with the teachers should consider which aspects of the curriculum need modifying in the light of new awareness of the role of women, gender and family models, Eurocentrism, marginalization of minority groups and indigenous voices. The aim is to make the curriculum fully inclusive and to ensure that it promotes intercultural understanding and counters any forms of discrimination. Teachers should consider the impact of this on curriculum content as before: could/should ideas about appropriate content be broadened, reviewed or changed?
- ❖ The core group identify issues that they think need to be addressed within any of the blocks or subjects. It may be that it is felt that certain aspects of a subject are neglected and need to be brought to the fore, existing content changed or new content added (e.g. relationships education, technology and media education etc). These can then become the subject of discussion amongst the teachers.
- ❖ Finally the core group create the final text for each block and subject, class by class:
 - Indicative content – an outline of the themes covered in the block, and the content that is recommended based on the pedagogical justification and considerations for decolonisation and contextualisation (below)

- Pedagogical justification – how the topic is related to the developmental themes and contextualised within the whole curriculum
- Considerations for decolonisation and contextualisation – suggestions for how teachers can make their curriculum more diverse and inclusive.

Throughout this process, curriculum issues and challenges can be discussed internationally, for example drawing on international work on media education. This is where ECSWE will provide support in connecting those working on curriculum with their international colleagues.

4. Collect recommendations for resources. The teachers and the wider teaching body nationally can contribute to the collection of appropriate resources and teaching methods/ideas, including research material, narrative material (stories, songs, poetry, texts) and learning activities (outings and visits, experiences and learning tasks for the children and young people to complete). These can be collated and curated by the core group.

5. Learning Journeys. If there is a need to demonstrate learning outcomes (and this can be pedagogically meaningful), Kath Bransby and Martyn Rawson have developed a method of describing learning opportunities and learning descriptors that help schools and teachers to articulate the learning journey of children through the different subjects. If a federation needs help with this they can contact Kath and Martyn.

Martyn Rawson 15.3.2022

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Annex 6

Result of the working groups

This is a broad summary of the ideas expressed in the working groups on the basis of what was written on flip charts. It is a basis for further strategic planning of what can be done in this field in the coming years.

I. Internal challenges

It is clear that the internal challenges and the way to tackle them, go beyond the curriculum itself.

Related to the content and methods:

The traditional curriculum developed in Germany should be adapted to both other national educational cultures and to new developments in our societies. There is not one monolithic Steiner Waldorf curriculum, as the schools operate in different countries on different levels and are confronted with different social expectations. Different views on history or even histories, globalisation versus nationalism, decolonization and sense of identity have to be taken into account. The urge to protect the life and health of children has a strong influence on expectations for schools nowadays. The new technological reality should be addressed which means that an age appropriate, healthy media education should become an essential part of the curriculum. Technology should not be a black box but the basic elements need to be understood.

It all needs rethinking, not by ignoring all traditions but with consciousness of the Steiner Waldorf background. It is important not to change too quickly and too much at once. As a participant put it “If there is too much of the new we could lose the melody”. This means that when changes are made they should start from the understanding of the human being, as expressed in the foundations of Steiner Waldorf pedagogy. The Steiner Waldorf curriculum is not a goal in itself but an instrument to bring about healthy development of the pupils. Dogmatism should be overcome, and innovations introduced after studying good practices, also outside of Steiner Waldorf schools. Modern research should be



studied as an inspiration to come to a performative curriculum. Inclusion is a necessity, which demands differentiation according to the needs of individual pupils.

Related to teachers and teacher training or continuous professional development

Many teachers, and especially the new teachers, do not know enough of the foundations of Steiner Waldorf education. They should be able to understand how we want our curriculum to work as a means to educate the pupils. Without this knowledge, it is difficult to keep a good balance between freedom and the traditional content and methods. It is important that there is an understanding of and an emphasis on generative principles and core capacities. Teachers need to learn how to motivate the pupils and how to guide them. They need to become artists in their 'trade'. A possible suggestion is to put emphasis on assessment for learning instead of assessment of learning (e.g. portfolio assessment and other broad assessment methods.)

Related to school policies and leadership

Teachers should be offered enough teacher training and professional development. They need peer mentoring and continuous professional development organised for them. It is also important to establish trust, supportive vulnerability and the right attitude to spot latent questions. The school needs to work on quality care, which among other actions also means explaining to parents what is being done in the school. With good leadership in place, which supports the teachers' community, the health of the teachers can improve and exhaustion can be prevented in the interest of high quality education.

II. External challenges

A huge challenge is the increasing pressure by the authorities. They demand cognitive and especially digital literacy, science and mathematics to be taught for increasingly younger pupils, sometimes even in a preschool curriculum. At the other end of schooling, the upper schools are forced to offer the content and/or do the national exams that the national authorities expect for all pupils in their country. There is not enough research about how Steiner Waldorf education succeeds in educating young people without this very early cognitive orientation and reaches totally comparable learning outcomes in the cognitive realm. There is also a lack of research on what other important capabilities, necessary for their future life in an uncertain world, the alumni gain through Steiner Waldorf education.



The demands from the authorities are also putting pressure on the curriculum work because of constantly changing views by politicians on what is needed. It is difficult to get acknowledgment of the fact that different pedagogical approaches with a long tradition exist and can also result in a qualitative education.

Steiner Waldorf schools need to meet the educational quality demands with their own strong quality care. The Steiner Waldorf movement should explain to authorities as well as to academics, how, what, when and why the curriculum is employed in a language that they can understand. This also needs to include the right language for every one's spiritual experience. So, good contact with authorities as well as with the academic world is called for.

III. What ECSWE could do to help its members

A. Advocacy on the EU level

- Inform all members about the 'highlights' that come from the EU.
- Work with the key competences: key potentialities. "Our 'key' is the same but we enter through a different door to a different path."

B. National advocacy level

- Advocacy training for the national level: how to reach the educational authorities or the national MEP's.
- Networking among the reps.
- How to keep the matter alive on the local level? For instance, say 'thank you' when you gain something from the ministry.

C. Qualifications

For Pupils

- Help for the Steiner Waldorf curriculum to be accepted.
- An international Steiner Waldorf qualification for pupils.

For teachers

- Teachers standards such as inner attitude or understanding curriculum.
- Accreditation for teacher trainings.



D. Funding

- Help countries which cannot afford paying someone for doing all the curriculum work to professionalise their federation work.

E. Pedagogy (in cooperation with other international Steiner Waldorf organisations)

- Clarifying the layers of curriculum and starting a project of finding the common basic developmental tasks.
- Providing access to a macro level international curriculum.
- Coordinating webinars on specific subject themes.
- Dissemination of offers of international workshops on specific subjects/themes.
- Platform for exchanging curriculum ideas |(summary).
- Network for exchanging ideas related to curriculum on the questions of the children today.
- Create a series of videos on a variety of practices.
- Visit non-Waldorf initiatives with interesting practices and invite experts who are interested in dialogue with Steiner Waldorf.