

Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy in Relation to Holistic Development of the Students

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Abstract

Anthroposophy is a human oriented spiritual philosophy that reflects and speaks to the basic deep spiritual questions of humanity, to our basic artistic needs, to the need to relate to the world out of a scientific attitude of mind, and to the need to develop a relation to the world in complete freedom and based on completely individual judgments and decisions. The present study has emphasis on anthroposophy & Waldorf education of Rudolf Steiner. This study is based only on secondary data. Secondary data are collected from the books, periodicals, research publications, web sites. In this study researcher wants to know that what is anthroposophy & how differ from other philosophy? The present study also focuses to Waldorf education of Rudolf Steiner. Is Waldorf education actually beneficial for the Indian scenario or not? Researcher also made an attempt to analyse does Waldorf Education actually give the importance on self-Education or not. After qualitative analysis the researcher concluded that the Waldorf education is a unified, inclusive school model spanning all ages from pre-school to the end of the high school. Within the curriculum framework of the various class levels, the subjects are connected to each other. As the subjects are oriented to the developmental phases of the children and adolescents, they enable multi-faceted, age-related possibilities of developing the individual.

Keywords: *Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education, Holistic Development.*

Introduction :-

Anthroposophy is a human oriented spiritual philosophy that reflects and speaks to the basic deep spiritual questions of humanity, to our basic artistic needs, to the need to relate to the world out of a scientific attitude of mind, and to the need to develop a relation to the world in complete freedom and based on completely individual judgments and decisions. The present study is trying to focus on the anthroposophy and Waldorf education.

This paper is focusing the following objectives:

1. To study the meaning & concept of Anthroposophy.
2. To study the central idea of Rudolf Steiner work.
3. To study the Waldorf Education of Rudolf Steiner.

Methodology of The Study :

The present study was based on secondary data collected from articles and publications.

Meaning of Anthroposophy:

The word “anthroposophy” comes from the Greek language ‘Anthropos’ meaning man and ‘shopia’ meaning wisdom that means “**wisdom of human being**” or “**awareness of one’s humanity**”. The wisdom ultimately leads to the connection of the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual, which pervades the universe. Anthroposophy as a world-view is not confined to the purely conceptual, but expresses itself in all realms of life on earth.

According to Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophy is a path of knowledge aiming to guide the spiritual element in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.

A system of beliefs and practices based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner; it claims to integrate the practical and psychological in child-centered education.

Pioneer of Anthroposophy :

Anthroposophy was founded by Dr. Rudolf Joseph Lorenz Steiner, an Austrian philosopher, author, scientist, social reformer, architect and esotericist. Steiner was born on February 27, 1861 at Kreljevec, in what is today Croatia, and died on March 30, 1925 in Dornoch, Switzerland. Although Steiner was born in the West, his philosophy is universal. He had the ability to combine modern, scientific thinking with his own inwardly experienced spiritual vision, similar to that of a Rishi. He was convinced that human perception went beyond the physical and the material to reach the realm of the super-sensible, which in turn can be perceived by pure thought. His entire work developed independently, based upon genuine spiritual research, which he made known through his many books and public lectures.

Four Basic Aspects of Rudolf Steiner Philosophy :

1. It is a path of knowledge or spiritual research, developed on the basis of European idealistic philosophy, rooted in the philosophies of Aristotle, Plato, and Thomas Aquinas. Anthroposophy is a spiritual philosophy, mainly developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It is born out of a *philosophy of freedom*, living at the core of anthroposophy.
2. It is primarily defined by its *method of research*, and secondly by the possible *knowledge* or experiences this leads to.
3. Anthroposophy also is an impulse to nurture the life of the soul in the individual and in human society, meaning among other things to nurture the respect for an interest in others on a purely human basis independently of their origin and views.
4. While rooted in a philosophy of freedom, developed as a method of spiritual research and an impulse to nurture a purely human interest in other people, it also has possible practical implications and as such lives as *applied or practical anthroposophy* in various "*daughter movements*" of anthroposophy.

Daughter movements of anthroposophy are biodynamic farming, Waldorf schools and Anthroposophical medicine.

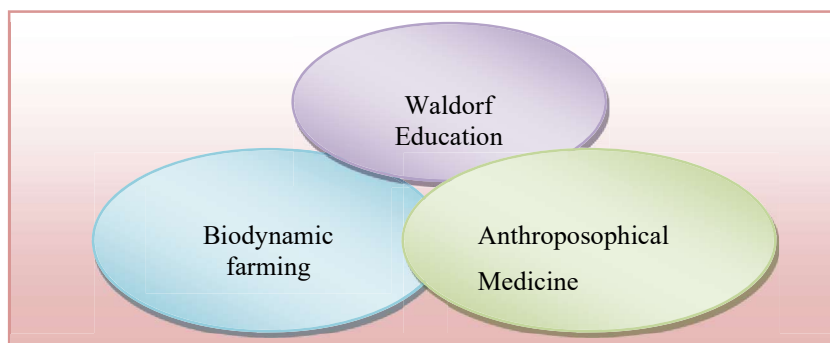


Figure 1: Daughter movements of Anthroposophy

Central Ideas of Rudolf Steiner :

Rudolf Steiner's ideology embedded on following:

1. Spiritual knowledge and freedom
2. Nature of the human being
3. Evolution
4. Ethics

Areas of The Rudolf Steiner :

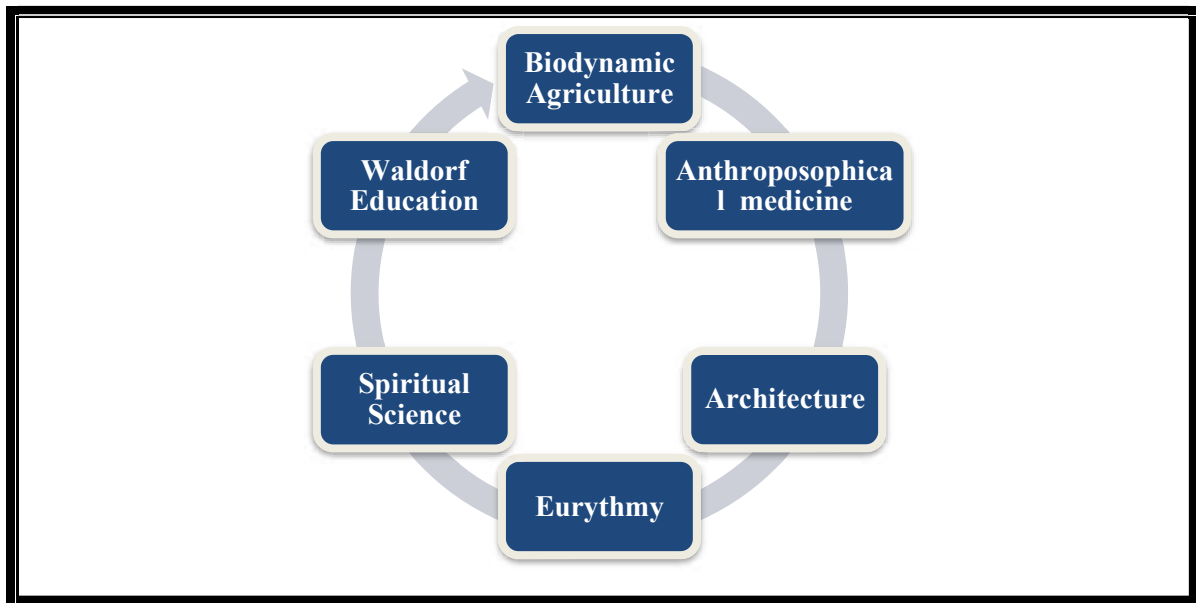


Figure 2 Areas of Rudolf Steiner work

Waldorf Education :

Developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, Waldorf Education is based on an understanding of human development that addresses the needs of the growing child. Waldorf teachers strive to transform education into an art that educates the whole child—the heart and the hands, as well as the head.

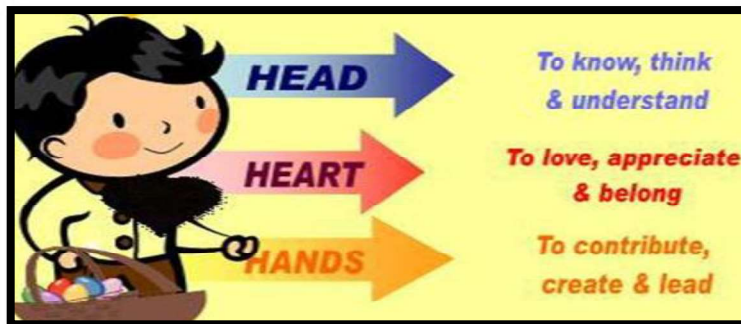


Figure 3: Development of Head, Heart and Hands of the child through Waldorf Education

According to Steiner's philosophy, the human being is a threefold being of spirit, soul, and body whose capacities unfold in three developmental stages on the path to adulthood: early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence.

History of Waldorf Education:

In April of 1919, Rudolf Steiner visited the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany. The German nation, defeated in war, was teetering on the brink of economic, social, and political chaos. Steiner spoke to the workers about the need for social renewal, for a new way of organizing society and its political and cultural life. Emil Molt, the owner of the factory, asked Steiner if he would undertake to establish and lead a school for the children of the employees of the company. Steiner agreed but set four conditions, each of which went against common practice of the day: 1) that the school be open to all children; 2) that it be coeducational; 3) that it be a unified twelve-year school; 4) that the teachers, those individuals actually in contact with the children, have primary control of the school, with minimum interference from the state or from economic sources. Steiner's conditions were radical for the day, but Molt gladly agreed to them. On September 7, 1919, the independent Waldorf School opened its doors.

Some Statistics About Waldorf Schools :

Today, there are more than 900 Waldorf schools in 83 countries. In North America Waldorf Education has been available since 1928, and there are now over 250 schools and 14 teacher training centres in some level of development. These schools exist in large cities and small towns, suburbs and rural enclaves. No two schools are identical; each is administratively independent. Nevertheless, a visitor would recognize many characteristics common to them all.

Developmental Approach :

The structure of Waldorf education follows Steiner's theory of child development, which divides childhood into three developmental stages, and describes learning strategies appropriate to each stage. These stages, each of which lasts approximately seven years, are broadly similar to those described by Piaget. Steiner's educational ideas closely follow modern "common sense" educational theory, as this has developed since Comenius and Pestalozzi.

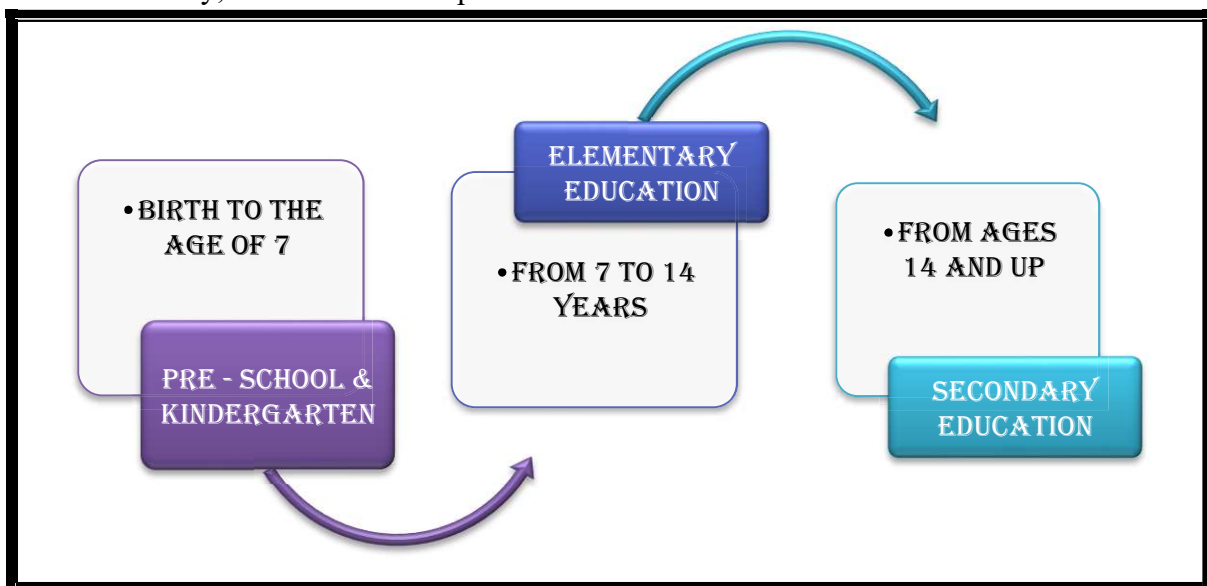


Figure 4: Three developmental stages of the child according to Rudolf Steiner

The stated purpose of this approach is to awaken the "physical, behavioural, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual" aspects of each individual, fostering creative as well as analytic thinking. Waldorf schools successfully develop creative, social and other capabilities important in the holistic growth of the person.

The Essential Phases of Child Development :

The First Seven Years: Imitation -

Apparently helpless in her mother's arms, the infant seems incapable of learning. In fact, the baby is at the most absorptive stage and totally open to external influences. From birth she learns to stand, to talk, and to think. Becoming able to stand upright, to speak, and to think are remarkable achievements in a period of three or four years. And the young child does this without benefit of formal instruction through a combination of latent ability, instinct, and, above all, imitation. Imitation is the special talent that characterizes the period up to the age of six or seven. The young child mimics everything in the environment uncritically—not only the sounds of speech, the gestures of people, but also the attitudes and values of parents and peers.

The Second Seven Years: Imagination -

Toward the end of the child's first seven years, various changes take place. Teachers in Waldorf Education consider the most prominent physical change being the loss of the milk teeth. It is a fact well known by biologists that it takes seven years for the transformation of every inherited cell in the body. Now, for the first time in her life, the child is wholly herself. This is manifest as the child develops: on the one hand, a new and vivid life of imagination, and on the other, a readiness for more formal learning. She both expresses and experiences life through finely tuned and delicate feelings.

As the child moves through these years, the faculty for more sequential and logical thought begins to unfold. Yet careful handling is necessary, for while this faculty needs nurturing, the ability to be fully at home in the world of imagination remains the child's most vital asset.

The Third Seven Years: Truth, Discrimination And Judgment -

By the third developmental stage—adolescence—the child is on a search for truth, and she begins to experience the power of her own thinking. Two other features are present in the adolescent psyche: a healthy, valuable idealism and a vulnerable sensitivity—about both one's own inner experiences and the unfolding, insecure sense of self. The adolescent psyche needs protection, and many youngsters from puberty onwards are energetic in disguising their inner condition. Girls may become coquettish, daring and defiant. Boys' defences may take the form of sullen or introverted behaviour, apparent unwillingness to communicate, or a withdrawal into a "cocoon." In any case, they often erect barriers for self-protection. The adolescent behind the barrier is constantly seeking a role model with qualities to emulate.

Table 1-Phases of Child Development, according to Waldorf founder Rudolf Steiner

<p>Physical Body Birth to 7 years</p>	<p>"Ethereic" Body Ages 7-14</p>	<p>"Astral" body Ages 14-21</p>
<p>the period of childhood lasting till the cutting of the permanent teeth</p>	<p>the period between second dentition and puberty</p>	<p>the period from puberty to the beginning of the twenties.</p>
<p>This physical body of man, in its form a product of the ego organization, is the bearer of inorganically active forces</p>	<p>The ether body is an organism that preserves the physical body from dissolution every moment during life. In order to see this body, to perceive it in another being, the awakened spiritual eye is required. Without this ability its existence as a fact can still be accepted on logical grounds, but it can be seen with the spiritual eye just as colour can be seen with the physical eye. The etheric body is more or less luminous and fluidic. Instead of organs there are currents of diverse colours, the heart being a veritable vortex of forces and streaming currents. The etheric body is the 'etheric double' of the material body</p>	<p>the bearer of instincts, drives, passions, desires, and of the ever-changing content of sensation and thought "The astral body is the intermediary between the activity of the ego-organization and the etheric and physical bodies. The astral body [is] the bearer of joy and sorrow, of desire and passion. the astral body can take on all the colours of the rainbow, according to the passion by which it is animated. Each passion has its astral colour.</p>
<p>Where the physical body predominates, we have to deal with a <i>melancholic</i> temperament.</p>	<p>Where the etheric or life-body predominates, we speak of a <i>phlegmatic</i> temperament.</p>	<p>Where the astral body predominates, we find a <i>sanguine</i> temperament</p>
<p>The physical body as such expresses itself only in itself"</p>	<p>The etheric body expresses itself in the glandular system</p>	<p>The astral body expresses itself physically in the nervous system</p>
<p>"The forces which place the etheric body in the world come from the Cosmos <i>around</i> the Earth"</p>	<p>"[The forces] for the physical body radiate from the <i>centre</i> of the Earth. activity of cosmic Beings, who, in their combined working, shape the etheric body of man</p>	<p>World-impulses... work in the astral body of man.</p>

What happens occultly, when a person sleeps? ...The physical and etheric bodies remain in bed.	What happens occultly, when a person sleeps? ...The physical and etheric bodies remain in bed.	The astral body, together with the ego, rises out and floats over them in the form of a ring, When the person is awake, the astral body penetrates and interweaves the physical body.
After death the physical body dissolves into the mineral world.	After death ...the ether body [dissolves] into the life-world.	

STAGE 1: Preschool and Kindergarten in The Waldorf School

The early childhood teacher in a Waldorf school works with the young child first by creating a warm, beautiful and loving home-like environment, which is protective and secure and where things happen in a predictable, regular manner. Here she responds to the developing child in two basic ways.

1. The teacher engages in domestic, practical and artistic activities that the children can readily imitate (for example, baking, painting, gardening and handicrafts), adapting the work to the changing seasons and festivals of the year.
2. The teacher nurtures the children's power of imagination particular to the age. She does so by telling carefully selected stories and by encouraging free play. This free or fantasy play, in which children act out scenarios of their own creation, helps them to experience many aspects of life more deeply. When toys are used, they are made of natural materials. Pine cones, wood, cotton, silk, shells, stones and other objects from nature that the children themselves have collected are used in play and to beautify the room.

STAGE 2: Elementary Education: Age 7 TO 14

Waldorf pedagogues consider that *readiness for formal learning* depends upon increased independence of character, temperament, habits, and memory, one of the markers of which is the loss of the baby teeth. Formal instruction in reading, writing, and other academic disciplines are therefore not introduced until students enter the elementary school, when pupils are around seven years of age. Steiner believed that engaging young children in abstract intellectual activity too early would adversely affect their growth and development.

Waldorf elementary schools (ages 7–14) emphasize cultivating children's emotional life and imagination. In order that students can connect more deeply with the subject matter, academic instruction is presented through artistic work that includes story-telling, visual arts, drama, movement, vocal and instrumental music, and crafts. The core curriculum includes language arts, mythology, history, geography, geology, algebra, geometry, mineralogy, biology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and nutrition. The school day generally begins with a one-and-a-half to two-hour, cognitively oriented academic lesson that focuses on a single theme over the course of about

a month's time. This typically begins with introductory activities that may include singing, instrumental music, and recitations of poetry, generally including a verse written by Steiner for the start of a school day.

Elementary school educators' stated task is to present a role model children will naturally want to follow, gaining authority through fostering rapport and "nurturing curiosity, imagination, and creativity". The declared goal of this second stage is to "imbue children with a sense that the world is beautiful. "There is little reliance on standardized textbooks.

Waldorf elementary education allows for individual variations in the pace of learning, based upon the expectation that a child will grasp a concept or achieve a skill when he or she is ready. Cooperation takes priority over competition. This approach also extends to physical education; competitive team sports are introduced in upper grades.

Each class normally remains together as a cohort throughout their years, developing as a quasi-familial social group whose members know each other quite deeply. In the elementary years, a core teacher teaches the primary academic subjects. A central role of this class teacher is to provide supportive role models both through personal example and through stories drawn from a variety of cultures, educating by exercising creative, loving authority. Class teachers are normally expected to teach a group of children for several years, a practice known as looping. The traditional goal was for the teacher to remain with a class for the eight years of the "lower school" cycle, but in recent years the duration of these cycles has been increasingly treated flexibly. Already in first grade, specialized teachers teach many of the subjects, including music, crafts, movement, and two foreign languages from complementary language families (in English-speaking countries often German and either Spanish or French); these subjects remain central to the curriculum throughout the elementary school years.

While class teachers serve a valuable role as personal mentors, establishing "lasting relationships with pupils," especially in the early years, Ullrich documented problems when the same class teacher continues into the middle school years. Noting that there is a danger of any authority figure limiting students enthusiasm for inquiry and assertion of autonomy, he emphasized the need for teachers to encourage independent thought and explanatory discussion in these years, and cited approvingly a number of schools where the class teacher accompanies the class for six years, after which specialist teachers play a significantly greater role.

Four Temperaments

Steiner considered children's cognitive, emotional and behavioural development to be interlinked. When students in a Waldorf school are grouped, it is generally not by a singular focus on their academic abilities. Instead Steiner adapted the idea of the classic four temperaments – melancholic, sanguine, phlegmatic and choleric – for pedagogical use in the elementary years. Steiner indicated that teaching should be differentiated to accommodate the different needs that these psychophysical types represent.

Table 2- Pedagogical use in the elementary the classic four temperaments

THE FOUR TEMPERMENTS			
SANGUINE	CHOLERIC	MELANCHOLIC	PHLEGMATIC
1.Light-hearted, fun loving, confident 2.Cocky, arrogant, indulgent 3.Day-dreamers, off task often, act on whims.	1.A doer-ambition, energy. 2.Dominate people of other temperaments. 3.Easily angered or bad tempered.	1. Ponderer, very kind, considerate. 2. Highly creative. 3. Pre-occupied with tragedy-depressed. 4. Perfectionists, loners.	1.Self-content, kind but shy. 2.Enthusiasm inhibited, lazy, resistant to change. 3.Relaxed, rational, curious, &observant. 4.Many friends, more dependable.

STAGE 3 : Secondary Educations - Ages 14 And Up

In the high school, from grade nine through grade twelve, a new image of the adult stands in the young person's mind as an ideal. Truthfulness, thoughtfulness, self-possession, consideration, strong-mindedness, warm-heartedness-these are the qualities the adolescent holds as ideals. From around age fourteen, the student looks for such qualities in his teachers. No longer blindly accepting authority, he looks to a mentor who inspires him and who is clearly worthy of emulation.

The high school student also needs teachers who have devoted themselves to and mastered particular subjects or skills-the logic in mathematics, the control of the hand and sharpening of eye in metal-work and wood-carving or the development of bodily grace, control and expression in eurythmy and gymnastics. Students will gravitate towards particular people and areas of study according to their individual preferences and talents. At the same time each student should continue to accept the discipline each subject demands and also appreciate the insights and broader perspective that an interdisciplinary approach makes possible

The Purpose of Waldorf Education :

1. To develop balance, coordination, rhythm feeling, and spatial orientation (Physical activities).
2. To make physical, art and academics assignment complete depending on age.
3. To deepen feelings (Drama, drawing and story activities).
4. To improve from simple concrete sorting to abstract thought.
5. To inform about historical and cultural development of humanity & wonders of nature.
6. To determine the children's interests.
7. To gain moral and ethical rules which includes mutual respect and cooperative helpfulness.
8. To prepare children to today's world and gain them knowledge and ability as to today's conditions which are based on time and environment.

Teacher's Role in Waldorf Education :

1. To be a nurturer, partner and guide to their students.
2. To create beautiful classrooms in calm, pleasing colours.
3. To have a performance role in the classroom by leading stories or plays involving the integration of the academic and the artistic with a notion of the spiritual as well.
4. To be didactic moral leader, seeking to provide an intimate classroom atmosphere permeated with a sense of harmony and full of themes about caring for the community and for the natural and living worlds.
5. To support a classroom in which the individual needs of each student are considered, including their own unique personalities and temperaments.

Waldorf Teacher Education Program :

The Rudolf Steiner Centre offers a one-year training for Waldorf Early Childhood and Grade Schoolteachers. This program has been running since 1985.

Parent Involvement In Waldorf Education :

1. Helping out with after school activities.
2. Heeling out in handwork, and other special subject classes, sharing special knowledge.
3. Participating in monthly assemblies.
4. Assisting with festivals and fairs, etc.
5. Cleaning up at the school
6. Serving on committees
7. Preparing art supplies, etc.
8. Each child's birthday is celebrated with this child's mother or father who brings gift for child in school

Atmosphere in Waldorf Education :

1. Entering a Waldorf kindergarten, one would first notice the warm and joyful atmosphere, the rich colours and the large play area.
2. One would see many baskets with different natural materials and objects for play, perhaps baskets with wood pieces of all sizes and shapes to be used for building.
3. Baskets with shells, chestnuts, wool, and coloured cloth are there to stimulate the child's imagination for play but also to give a multi-sensory experience.
4. There would be play houses with furniture, dolls, dishes, etc., and wooden stands used as walls or dividers for castles or stables, stores or houses, or anything else the children might want to create.
5. Everything invites them to enter into imaginative symbolic play.
6. In Waldorf education, play takes an important role that in play child makes friends with the world and begins to understand it.
7. Play is an activity into which children enter with their whole being.
8. Therefore, play is self-healing, it is therapy as the child is not in touch with the world but at the same time with his/her own creative potential with her own self.
9. Through these, the child's motor sensory development is developed. Motor sensory, creative imaging and language development are key aspects of the Waldorf kindergartens.

10. The more practical activities center around the kitchen where everyday a meal is prepared. Children help with cleaning and cutting of vegetables or fruit, and with baking of bread. Snacks are prepared, tables cleaned and floors swept.

Assessment :

The schools primarily assess students through reports on individual academic progress and personal development. The emphasis is on characterization through qualitative description. Pupils' progress is primarily evaluated through portfolio work in academic blocks and discussion of pupils in teacher conferences. Standardized tests are rare, with the exception of examinations necessary for college entry taken during the secondary school years. Letter grades are generally not given until students enter high school at 14–15 years, as the educational emphasis is on children's holistic development, not solely their academic progress. Pupils are not normally asked to repeat years of elementary or secondary education.

Curriculum :

Though most Waldorf schools are autonomous institutions not required to follow a prescribed curriculum, there are widely agreed upon guidelines for the Waldorf curriculum, supported by the schools' common principles. The schools offer a wide curriculum "governed by close observation and recording of what content motivates children at different ages" and including within it, for example, the British National Curriculum.

The main academic subjects are introduced through up to two-hour morning lesson blocks that last for several weeks. These lesson blocks are horizontally integrated at each grade level in that the topic of the block will be infused into many of the activities of the classroom and vertically integrated in that each subject will be revisited over the course of the education with increasing complexity as students develop their skills, reasoning capacities and individual sense of self. This has been described as a spiral curriculum.

Conclusion :

1. In the present study researcher found that the Waldorf School is a unified, inclusive school model spanning all ages from preschool to the end of the upper school/high school. Within the curriculum framework of the various class levels, the subjects are connected to each other. As the subjects are oriented to the developmental phases of the children and adolescents, they enable multi-faceted, age-related possibilities of developing the individual.
2. Rudolf Steiner gave a detailed description of the human being's physical, psychological, and spiritual development from pre-natal existence through old age, death, and beyond. This view of the evolving human being provides a cornerstone for the unfolding of the curriculum in Waldorf schools around the world.
3. Recognizing and honouring the stages of child development as elaborated by Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy to ensure that these stages inform our pedagogy and curriculum so teachers will bring appropriate educational content through appropriate educational methods to their students at the right time.
4. An understanding of child development according to the principles of anthroposophy is at the core and heart of Steiner education.

- Rudolf Steiner emphasis on self-education and experiential study, and the sharing of classroom experiences, has been largely taken over by the Teachers' Meeting attended by the whole faculty of teachers on Thursday afternoons. At the moment we are working through Steiner's 'Study of Man' to deepen our understanding of child development. Parents too take part in this deepening of their understanding with weekly study groups and weekend events.

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