

NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Please send us...

- ◆ short pieces expressing your insights into education and social renewal in the light of the threefold social order.
- ◆ descriptions of your initiative's experience.
- ◆ information about events in relation to the threefold social order, including study groups, seminars and conferences.

“Upon the threefold educational basis must be erected what is to flourish for humanity's future”.
Rudolf Steiner, *Education as a Force for Social Change*

THE NEW UNIVERSITY

It is not so well known that Rudolf Steiner and those connected with him made considerable efforts toward the establishment of a new kind of university. Like the schooling movement he had initiated, the university impulse was founded on a conception of the threefold nature of society, with educational institutions representing principle organs of the sphere of free cultural-spiritual life. This is not just theoretical; Steiner is referring to teaching and learning practice, to the whole way a tertiary institutions is shaped and governed.

An important aspect of the mission of the *Education for Social Renewal Foundation* is to support the founding, in Australia, of a new university deriving from Steiner's indications and based on the picture of the threefold social organism.

Editor

BECOMING AN ADULT: ENQUIRY FROM THE HEART

If the preceding years have met with their answers truly, then in the 18-year-old there shines forth a new quality of appreciation, a new trust and confidence, a wonderful friendliness towards the world. He has found confirmation for himself that there is truth in life, and he is ready to set out to handle his earthly tasks for spiritual ends.

It is now he [sic] is ready to leave school, to spend his last protected years before he comes of age in free movement amongst his fellows. Now the world becomes his extended school, be it at the university, in the professions, in the forces, or wherever his life should lead him. He steps out into the street to seek his place within the community of man [sic]. This he may do now, for he carries the core of his manhood [sic] within him, and he will not easily suffer defeat.

To borrow an image from Rudolf Steiner, he is ready to stride through the necessities of life on the road to inner freedom. There is a law closely observed in Rudolf Steiner schools – it is that *form* proceeds from the head towards the limbs, always in three main stages. In the embryo it is first the head and then the heart and then the limbs that make their appearance. This sequence continues after birth. In the first seven years up to the change of teeth, it is the bodily organs mainly that are formed and perfected. In the second life period up to adolescence, the formative process turns inwards, the life functions are established, the innate capacities are revealed. In the adolescent it is above all the understanding that is formed.

In the first stage of adolescence, understanding is mainly in the head. The child looks out with new interest and enquiry. In the middle years of adolescence, from 16 to 18, this spirit of enquiry descends to the heart, Questioning about the world deepens into a

questioning about the meaning of life and human destiny. Beyond 18 the urge to explore descends into the limbs and becomes an urge to move on – to learn about the world by moving through it. Thus 18 appears to be the right and natural age for leaving school.

Life is the quest for man. The task of education is to prepare for this. The last phase of education from 19 to 21 leads the young person into the world. At 21 the adult is born. Then, in the truest sense, education ceases and self-education begins.

from Francis Edmunds, *Renewing Education*, Hawthorn Press, Stroud, 1992, pp.107-8.

Excerpt from an essay written between 1941 and 1958.

PLACING HUMAN BEINGS FIRST

“As human beings, we must not allow ourselves to be tyrannised by academic knowledge. In our efforts to emancipate cultural activity, we are combatting the abstract character of academia as such and placing human beings first . . . Humanising academic activity is our goal. We must work toward bringing the human being to the fore in so-called objective scholarship which must be grounded in life and in human beings. Those of us who engage in it must not become dry and shriveled. On the contrary, by “combatting abstract existence”, as I call it, we become useful contributors to the very necessary process of counteracting the barbarisation of Western civilisation”.

Rudolf Steiner, *Youth and the Etheric Heart*, SteinerBooks, Great Barrington, 2007, p.15.

KNOWLEDGE WHICH ADDRESSES THE HEART

“It sounds almost paradoxical to say that the hearts of university students should be addressed in everything that is brought to them. It sounds like a paradox, but it actually could be so!

For young people who have a subjective capacity and inclination may respond to a subject out of the depths of their own heart, even though they may encounter something in the driest book or driest lecture and cannot understand the intent of the author or lecturer . . . That is what one finds so terrible, so shattering in the pursuit of knowledge today: no effort whatsoever is made to understand that the current situation can work upon the entire human being in such a way that young people are prevented from reaching up to what is worthiest in humanity. Only young people acting out of their own deep longing are able to free themselves from the hindrances that have been laid in their way”.

Rudolf Steiner, “The Task of Knowing for Today’s Youth” in *Awake! For the Sake of the Future*, SteinerBooks, Great Barrington, 2015, pp.18-9.

TRANSFORMING THE LECTURE AND THE SEMINAR

Today if the university teacher intends to bring forward all the details of his area of expertise, then he has to lose himself to such a great extent in *the specific* that he has no time left to offer the great, essential vantage-points according to his personal understanding. In addition to this is the fact that it is no longer even necessary to provide this sum of details in the lecture courses. For we currently possess compendiums of these details, which are excellent, and whose current level of comprehensiveness would earlier have been inconceivable to us . . . Lectures should comprise much shorter periods of time. In them, one should renounce the enumeration and critical evaluation of the particular details, and instead set oneself the task of holding *orientation* lectures in which one develops an overall understanding of a certain subject, a general point of view. By contrast, the practical exercises at the universities, the work in seminars, should see a greater expansion. Such work should not, as is currently the case, begin only in later semesters, but already at the beginning of university studies. Here the students should learn the methods of scientific investigation; here one should concretely train oneself to become a researcher.

Rudolf Steiner, “University Education and Demands of the Present Time”, Originally printed in *Magazin für Literatur* 1898, No. 19

THE ADULT EDUCATORS: THEIR EDUCATION AND THEIR PATH

The main task of adult education is to awaken the will to learn. The basic question of the adult educator, therefore, must be: How can I awaken the will in the other person? Awakening the will means awakening the *three drives* in us. These drives are always there, but usually dormant. Only our ego can awaken them. It is not possible to awaken something in us from the outside, least of all the will. All that can be done is to create an opportunity, a stimulus, a challenge, that will allow a kind of self-awakening to occur. This is a chief task of the adult educator. Ultimately, however, it takes place through the self-engendered inner activity of the learner. Self-awakening might also be called “Learning how to Learn”. In other words, the real task of the adult educator is to teach adults the activity of “self-learning”. What gifts are needed for this purpose? To discover and develop these, the adult educator has to go on a path of discovery, or rather, of spiritual research.

The Learning Event

To start on this path, whenever insight occurs, whenever an important event takes place, or we achieve something fruitful, we need consciously to ask ourselves: “*What* is it that I have learned here?” We must then try to put the answer, when found, into words, so that it does not get lost. This means we are really doing a kind of learning review. It gives us the basis we need for researching the path we have been on, to arrive at this particular learning event.

The Learning Path

This path is often hidden, it a mysterious process. An observation, a conversation, a book, a walk, an illness, even an accident, may contribute to it. The learning path has a biography, and this biography needs to be understood. Biographical research into *our* learning path will develop the gifts in us to awaken “Learning how to Learn” (including the biography of the learning path) in the other person. In other words, it is necessary to become clear about the *learning event* first, then to become familiar with our own *path*. This must then be transformed into practical teaching forms.

Creating a Learning Situation

As a next step, this self-examination needs therefore to be made fruitful for other people. In our learning biography we will discover certain basic elements that together have reformed a large number of experiences into an ability. These basic elements have become the material with the help of which learning situations may be created – often in a very simplified way. The core of the adult educator’s arduous, long learning biography becomes a concrete and operational learning possibility for others. Thus, many exercises have come about which are often very simple but which have a strong effect, because they are densified experiences. Many lectures are nothing but the communication of knowledge by lecturers who have not taken the trouble to go through these three steps, asking themselves:

- How and what was my learning moment?
- What is the learning path I have gone through for this to happen?
- How can the essential aspect of this path be made fruitful for others?

Following this path, our lectures will assume a different character – there will be less communication of knowledge, but more awakening of the will. Our aim is the latter, which, however, we can achieve only if we embark on this research path. Thereby we turn ourselves into adult educators. The numerous excellent artists, scientists and specialists will become adult educators, *only* if they have first made their own development and instrument for others.

from Coenraad van Houten, *Awakening the Will: Principles and Processes in Adult Learning*, Adult Learning Network, Forest Row, 1995, pp.105-6.

CREATIVE TEACHING AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Basically, teaching as an art should be always based on love. Any real act of creation is done in total freedom through the inner impulse of love and care for the revelation coming through. The teacher is always sharing those revelations with the student. S/he is a link between the subject being taught and the student, both of which s/he must love in order to be a true artist, a true teacher.

Not loving the subject could make the teacher cold and uninspiring and not loving the student will make for a pedantic and cold teacher. So, how can the teaching be creative at university level?

What wants to be revealed from any subject at this time of human evolution? For many centuries the universe wanted to reveal itself as information, as something concrete, as physical, as clear and well defined, as divided into different entities. The students of those days needed to develop a clear way of thinking, separated from their feeling life, that would give them a sense of truth and freedom in order to acquire a strong and healthy sense of themselves as free individuals in the world.

Now the creative/spiritual/hidden forces active in the visible world want to be recognised by human beings in order to work together to fulfil the mission of the Creation. In freedom and with a rich sense of truth we need to embark the students on the magic journey of developing the inner qualities that will allow them to sense, anew, those creative forces.

How can the university teacher manage that task in the art of teaching? Steiner indicates that with the type of thinking developed in order to acquire a clear sense of truth and freedom – intellectual thinking – we can only reach the external, material, rigid, final product of the subject of study. In order to know the living processes/spiritual activity, hidden and creatively active in things, and so to be able to reach a union with them, our thinking must

become more dynamic and alive being able to sense clearly the multitude of expressions of the hidden world. The root of this kind of thinking was discovered by Goethe and developed by Rudolf Steiner through the presentation of his books on Goethean sciences.

Basically, again, the art of teaching towards an evolving humanity involves revealing the subject through new kinds of concepts that give expression to a clear sensing of the creative world. Those living concepts – concepts which refer not only to static realities but to living, active realities – penetrate deeper in the souls of the students, enlivening and warming them inwardly towards a spiritual life.

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WISDOM AND UNIVERSITY LIFE

“Young people at the universities are seeking for something. This is not surprising, for their purpose in going to college is to seek for something. They have been looking in those who taught them, for real leaders, for those who were both teachers and leaders or — as would be equally correct — teachers endowed with leadership, and they did not find them. And this was the really terrible thing clothed in all kinds of different words — one man speaking conservatively, the other radically, one saying something very wise and another something very stupid. What was said amounted to this: We can no longer find any teachers.

What, then, did youth find when they came to the universities? Well, they met men in whom they did not find what they were looking for. These men prided themselves on not being teachers any longer, but investigators, researchers. The Universities established themselves as institutes for research. They were no longer there for human beings, but only for science. And science led an existence among men which it defined as “objective.” It drummed into people, in every possible key, that it was to be respected as “objective” science. It is sometimes necessary to express such things pictorially. And so this objective science was now going about among human beings but it most certainly was not a human being! Something non-human was going about among men, calling itself “Objective Science . . .

And having made its acquaintance, having this objective science continually introduced to one, one perceived that another being had stolen away bashfully,

because she felt that she was no longer tolerated. And if one were spurred on to speak with this being, secretly in the corner, she said: "I have a name which may not be uttered in the presence of objective science. I am called Philosophy, Sophia — Wisdom. But having the ignominious prefix 'love' I have attached to me something that through its very name is connected with human inwardness, with love. I no longer dare to show myself. I have to go about bashfully. Objective science prides itself on having nothing of the 'philo' in its makeup. It has also lost, as a token, the real Sophia. But I go about nevertheless, for I still bear something of the sublime within me, connected with feeling and with a genuinely human quality.

Rudolf Steiner, *The Younger Generation*, Lecture 2.