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Abbreviations used in Text:

NT	New Teacher
ST	Student Teacher
SWSF	Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship
TTI	Teaching Training Institute

PREFACE

Mentor: "The name of the Ithacan noble whose person Athene assumed when acting as the guide and adviser of Telemachus. (Odyssey 2, 267 etc.)."

Blackie's Compact Etymological Dictionary

10 years ago, mentoring was almost unheard of in the context of initial teacher education (ITE). Now, most teachers will have some understanding of the term and, in institutions which undertake school-based ITE, many staff will have had some involvement, however fleeting and informal.

Brooks and Sikes (1997)

The idea of a 'Mentoring Pack' for teachers and teacher trainers was first mooted at the Second Mentoring Conference at the end of January 1997. The articles, short working papers, questions and thoughts that are gathered together here represent 'work in progress' and as such, this publication is neither finished nor complete. This was true when the first edition of this booklet was issued in 1997 and it remains true with this revised edition. It is hoped that there are a few thoughts, ideas or practical tips in these pages that may be of help or use for many teachers and colleagues.

In the appendices section a number of suggested guidelines, proposed frameworks and proformas have been included. Broadly speaking, these items are 'work in process' and come with an invitation to teachers to employ and deploy them in the context of mentoring. The test, of course, is whether these things are helpful in the sense of developing and improving the ways in which teachers work and work together. Teachers are welcome to contribute to this 'research' by providing observations, comments and criticisms on the design and structure of these appendices and the underlying rationale for them.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.
(Ecclesiastes IV, vv. 9 – 10)

INTRODUCTION

The teacher's working environment presents a landscape full of variety and polarity. Teachers, in common with doctors, shopkeepers and business people, come face to face with other human beings all the time. In doing this as a teacher, there are always opportunities to meet oneself, as well as the pupils, the parents and colleagues. The 'human contact' in education continues to be one of its defining features. However, in recent decades, the relevance, efficiency and cost of this fundamental, 'human' aspect of pedagogy are increasingly under scrutiny, and even audit. In its philosophy and implementation, Waldorf education is human-centred and the human-social element is held to be of primary and enduring significance. It is now a uestion whether this aspect of Waldorf education s set to become an anachronitic feature of the general educational culture in the years ahead. Just half a century ago the positing of such a question would have been abstract and perhaps hard to imagine.

Where there is the prospect of and opportunity for, a high frequency of human meetings or 'interfacing', then certain characteristics, patterns and dynamics become manifest. These qualities present a complex, multi-layered tapestry of scenarios, settings and events. With respect to human 'feeling' and the life of the soul, the aspects referred to above are largely concerned with movements between polarities. In teaching and collegial work it seems to be healthy when contrasting qualities are embraced in a creative manner. Such a process can forestall or reconcile the expression of polarised views and personality-based feelings and promote understanding as opposed to undermining.

Where human beings meet and enter into relations – fleeting or prolonged, personal or professional – dynamics are present that may be straightforward or complex, fully disclosed or mysteriously veiled. As such, issues which touch on or deal with the 'social question' are forever beyond the grasp of systems and structures. From one perspective, human relations always bear a potential for messiness and creativity and in human relations there lie seeds that carry possibilities for the growth of the sublime, the ridiculous and the common or garden.

In the working landscape of teachers, an appreciation of polarities and manifold relatedness is essential. When it comes to working with the 'social' question, neither absolutism nor relativism offer much beyond a doctrinal cul-de-sac. The embracing and integration of polarities in the human, social realm calls for and creates the kind of understanding that is not sectarian, dogmatic or extreme, but which leads to new, creative substance in human life.

Steiner refers to basic polarities in the soul as antipathy and sympathy and traces reflections of these tendencies in the nerve-sense activity of cognition and the metabolic-blood realm of the will, respectively.[1] Steiner refers to these forces of antipathy and sympathy as "most important psychological concepts"[2] which ray into this life from pre-natal existence and work beyond this life in the realm which beckons after death. Steiner maintains that recognition and understanding of these concepts and their effects is one means by which pedagogy can be "founded on a real psychology", a science of the soul.

A living and conscious identification and assimilation of these soul capacities, or polarities, opens a door to a new faculty, which is not merely synthesised antipathy and sympathy, but an emerging human faculty and a fresh developmental capacity, which is referred to as empathy.[3] Urieli writes that empathy describes a process which "arises out of sympathy, love, concern and compassion for our fellow human being" and which "enables us to extend our own inner being into that of the other person and experience directly, something of his or her essential nature".[4]

In a collegial sense, such a process of empathy calls for the binding together of another aspect of the antipathy – sympathy archetype, namely, the balancing of personal discretion and professional disclosure. This balancing is a sensitive, delicate matter since to retain balance there must be continual movement and learning as well as stillness. Yet where there is imbalance, caricature, gossip, misunderstanding and ill-will may take root. If this is the case then collegial issues may unfold in cycles and patterns that are repetitive, static and lacking in creativity or development. In travelling the mentoring way and exploring the work of teachers helping teachers we will be unable to journey far unless we are prepared to probe the concept and the mystery of empathy which is a psychological development and opportunity of our times.

MENTORING – ODDITY...

Picture the scene: a young, dynamic, chaotic, disorganised school; a new, inexperienced, unknowing, unsuspecting class one teacher-to-be; a talented, experienced, 'proven' teacher, selected to be the guide, the advisor, the sponsor, the mentor. Outcome – not as planned; not so much mentoring as intimidating, not so much supporting as undermining, not so much a help as a hindrance, or so it was perceived at the time.

The 'mentoring', which was in reality a strained and rather uneasy relationship, lasted for about a term and a half. A broad pattern of events and features unfolded. Each week, on a Friday afternoon, the new teacher and the experienced colleague – who were of the same gender, incidentally – would sit down together, for about an hour or so, in the sponsor's classroom, and discuss the week's events in the green horn's neck of the woods. Apart from this, brief conversations were held while on break duty and sometimes on the phone in the evening. At no point did these two characters see each other 'at work', that is, teaching. The sponsor took class one once a week and 'he who was sponsored' took the other class, in return. The school was in the middle of a long term, yet suddenly discovered, financial crisis. The sponsor had financial and management experience and was very busy trying to sort out the mess and almost permanently double-booked.

The Friday afternoon meetings did prove to be a spur to transformation, if not a source of inspiration. The mentored teacher experienced these weekly meetings as increasingly abstract, demoralising, draining. The ideas, experiences and feelings of the new teacher were dismissed, criticised and ignored, in a low-key, slightly world-weary, intellectual manner. Life in the classroom, meanwhile, was perceived by the new teacher as a kaleidoscopic roller coaster of good days and bad days, surprises, mistakes and tremendous learning – not least for the teacher. In retrospect, a 'settling down, waking up, coming to terms, finding one's feet' process was under way, for pupils and teacher alike. Fundamentally, the children were beginning to accept the teacher as their lot – their class teacher – and a kind of mentoring was unfolding in the classroom. A mentoring community was in the throes of being established – the pupils and the teacher were tolerating, advising, forgiving and beginning to appreciate and enthuse – each other! Compared to the chilly, fraught Friday afternoons, the lessons in the classroom were full to the brim with life and feeling – doubt, anxiety, anger, patience, laughter, bemusement, fatigue – and in an unspoken and unsubstantiated way, a lot of mutual guidance and shared learning, founded on an unarticulated assumption of mutual fallibility. From such a seedbed, development, progression and learning have a chance to grow.

In more mundane terms, signs of these archetypal polarities can be sought and found in many areas of human discourse and inter-action. We can look at a situation with negative and positive subjectivity; we can take part in formal and informal meetings; we can implement summative, uniform assessment and formative, individualised assessment. We can preview our lessons and subsequently, review them. We can discuss ideals and theories and we can focus on realities and practices. Specifically related to mentoring, we can look at structures *for* mentoring and the culture *of* mentoring.

OR ODYSSEY?

Before going off to fight in the Trojan Wars, Odysseus, a great royal warrior, entrusted the care of his son, Telemachus, to his friend and advisor, Mentor. The latter was endowed with some rather special faculties, not least of which was the visiting presence, inside him, of the goddess, Athene. Mentor was an Ithacan noble whose person the goddess Athene assumed when acting as the guide to Telemachus. Mentor was further charged with advising and serving the entire royal household.[5]

Coming closer to our times, the New English Dictionary identifies various uses of the term 'mentor' from around the middle of the 18th century.[6] By the 1970's mentoring began to emerge as a professional career in the business world and the activity of mentoring became a topic of academic research. Mentoring has now entered the vocabulary of business, medicine, social services, education, even sport and is currently employed to describe a variety of functions in a broad cross-section of vocational activities.

In Steiner Waldorf schools and teacher education programmes as well, the term 'mentoring' has begun to murmur around staff rooms and classrooms. Concerns have been expressed in various places that our teaching, our work with our colleagues and our work as 'teacher educators' are adversely affected, even retarded, when we do not create conditions in which the work can be shared, explored, supported and developed in a professional and nourishing manner.

An 'ideal' mentoring form in a school can be imagined in which three fundamental conditions are present:

- a principle of *universality*

a principle of *differentiation* – each colleague is enabled to offer and receive something of worth
a principle of *progression and development* – every colleague learns and continues to learn as an outcome of working with the children on the one hand and with colleagues or peers on the other. This learning is the outcome of active and reflective participation in the life of the school and the fruit of objectifying one's presence and activity in the classroom.

One might venture to argue that this third condition has the substance of a pedagogical law. In seeking to provide help to colleagues the test of any form of mentoring in a school lies in whether the education is enhanced and the children are benefited as a result.

While usage of the term 'mentoring' is a little self-conscious and tentative and has hardly attained the status of common currency, nonetheless, teachers and tutors have begun to talk to each other about what might be cultivated in the name of mentoring. There are many questions, some confusion and a certain potential for the wreaking of havoc, as is the case with many new ideas and fresh approaches. In fact, whether 'mentoring' work is new to Waldorf pedagogy is an interesting question in itself.

However, the need to address questions such as induction, evaluation, curriculum research and the development of good professional practice and creative pedagogy seems to be a pressing one. With the outer world bearing in to an increasing degree on all schools, and with Steiner Waldorf schools opening themselves towards the world, there is a powerful case for surveying and putting our own house in order. This can be done firstly for our own purposes and for the children we teach, but also in relation to a climate of developing transparency in our relations with the world outside our classroom doors.

Having said this, it is interesting to bear in mind that the development of what is called mentoring work across many different fields in the last two or three decades appears to have taken place without the emergence of a broadly agreed and accepted meaning of the term. This is not that surprising. Defining words and terms can be an abstract, intellectual pursuit that, at times, borders on the arid. More than this, some words elude being caught and contained within a definition and efforts to do so can be misleading and fruitless. A word such as 'rainbow' is defined with impressive clarity in the dictionary, yet this clarity is at the expense of expressing the full meaning of the word. Instead, the dictionary offers a partial, scientific, rational, material definition, which misses the heart of the matter.

Even a cautious and wide-ranging definition of mentoring, that has gained broad acceptance in the mainstream academic community, has a ring of abstraction about it, as though it is a reported, 'third party' definition which circles around the truth without quite landing on it. Thus, Anderson (1987) described mentoring as:

> *a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within this context of an on-going, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé.*[7]

Aside from defining terms and coming to some agreement about what mentoring as a collegial task might be, there are some fundamental, practical questions to focus on as well. Any school in the process of developing a mentoring policy and any group of teachers intending to work effectively in this area will face these questions, either directly, or implicitly. How is a mentor appointed, trained and supported? What is the essential task of a mentor? Is mentoring confidential? Who does the mentor report to and how? What if the mentoring arrangement between two teachers breaks down? If a teacher is struggling in the classroom despite mentoring being in place, at what point does the mentor indicate this, to who, and how? Where is the threshold between on-going support and advice and constructive feedback and the movement into the realm of assessment criteria and a formal evaluation process? What is the difference between mentoring and evaluating and assessing?

There are answers to these questions. They are not definitive and cannot be taken for granted. In an area such as collegial working, guidelines are probably more helpful than answers, research is likely to be more fruitful and effective than a manual and the process and spirit of the mentoring activity is apt to be more important than any preconceived ideas and theories.

THE CASE AGAINST AND FOR

In a Waldorf setting where the independence and creative autonomy of the individual teacher are upheld as defining features of the working environment, there are various arguments that might be lodged, in principle, against the

concept and practice of mentoring. Some of these arguments, may not be articulated loudly, but are apt to manifest in the staff room or classroom by implication, or association. They can be summarised as follows:

- Mentoring is a narrowing path to regulatory, prescriptive and, therefore, restrictive practices. The establishment of criteria for collegial work will lead to structures, procedures and ideas that are fixed and which promote uniformity.
- If the above scenario is correct, then the letter, if not the spirit, of the mentoring process will work against my independence and undermine my creative freedom.
- The mentoring work will necessarily establish and give credence to professional and structural hierarchies, against which I may rebel, thus becoming a heretic, or conform to, thus becoming a dependent of the form and the process.
- One of the likely effects of mentoring will be the diminution of my authority before the pupils. They will see that I need help and that I cannot manage on my own.
- The setting down and adherence to mentoring practices will perpetuate school traditions, pedagogical dogmas and aspects of the school's unwritten ethos, which may be long past their 'use until' date.
- At its worst, mentoring is a form of amateur psychotherapy, which will provide opportunities for interference and sanctioned power trips by assertive colleagues.

On the other side, a case for researching and developing a careful, practical, coherent and essential mentoring facility can be made with some strength. After all, in the 'caring' professions, as a matter of course, colleagues work directly alongside each other and have access to each other, or mentoring support. Nurses, paramedics, firemen, social workers and, arguably, priests share their work by working together. A mutual witnessing of the other and the work is woven into the job. A very different situation can be found in the teacher's life. Teaching can be a very lonely thing to do.[8] Unless there is team teaching, or shared teaching, the teacher doesn't teach with someone. Fundamentally, the teacher is on his or her own

Yet, paradoxically, the underlying gesture of the teaching craft is a social one. Teaching is a social activity, a collegial activity, a progressive, developmental, qualitative activity. For these reasons, the development of a mentoring process is a fundamental school task; fundamental because it will affect the whole school in deep-seated ways.

The cultivation of collegial morale, the sharing and exploration of pedagogical questions and tasks, professional development and curriculum research are four areas that can be fostered by a vital mentoring practice. The development of criteria for discerning 'signs of health' in a teacher and in a class, the establishment of criteria for 'tools of assessment' and the growth of educational accountability are areas that can be sustained and supported by a clear and fair mentoring policy. On a more general level, in an environment where mentoring is up and running, teachers are enabled to become 'reflective practitioners'. Before the children, this activity can provide a healthy picture, where teachers are perceived as Colleagues working together, working for each other, rather than isolated mavericks, or 'Robinson Crusoe'-type figures.

In Steiner Waldorf practice, as much as elsewhere, an important dynamic in mentoring is the degree and extent of warmth and clarity with which individuals and groups of individuals embark on this necessary yet sensitive area of work. The terms of engagement with mentoring processes and structures are essential too, of course. However, put simply, the structures of mentoring and collegial working are, in themselves, incomplete unless infused by the life and culture of mentoring.

Given that no two life-situations are identical, and assuming that growth and change are healthy features of any human interaction, it can be safely assumed that Waldorf teachers will vigorously resist a one-sided development of systematisation and uniformity in mentoring practices. On the other side, the reinvention of the wheel, however artistic, is a tendency that we could also refrain from doing. In the sphere of collegial relations, local agreements, variations on a theme and autonomous working practices can be positive and fruitful, if there is local ownership, allied to clarity of intention and remit.

At the end of the day, the effectiveness and worth of mentoring in our schools will be judged by clear, general criteria. These can be set down as follows:

- the pupils' educational experience is served,
- the pedagogical practice and professional and social development of the teachers are enhanced
- more teachers stay at schools and for longer
- more children are drawn towards the education as a result of the previous criteria being fulfilled

An unwillingness or failure to address these criteria would render further discussion of mentoring futile.

1996 SURVEY

In a survey of class teachers in Britain and Ireland carried out in 1996, working with colleagues was cited as one of the biggest challenges – teaching or otherwise – faced by a teacher in a Steiner Waldorf school.[9] Specifically, respondents made the following comments:

Challenges arise... *"In collegial work dealing with confrontational situations. How* (can) *one be honest without destroying a person's confidence, or damaging relationships."*
Frustration results from... *"Trying to 'accept' varying levels of commitment and standards of colleagues."*
There is a challenge in... *"Trying to work with colleagues with the same sort of camaraderie that is experienced by a group of performing actors, a school of painters, or an ensemble of chamber musicians..."*
There is another kind of challenge in... *"Keeping confident throughout the process of seeking help."*
The task of finding and maintaining this confidence can be undermined by the potential for... *"Defensiveness: in me and others."*

Recent attempts to reflect on existing collegial practices and to consider ways in which mentoring work might be fostered have been born out of necessity. We have embarked on this work because we had to. Instead of turning a blind eye, pleading insufficient time and thus implying reluctance, if not disinterest, in the activities and experiences of colleagues in classrooms, there is a growing perception that we must begin to share our work and our working practices.

The reasons for this are several. Firstly, it is not responsible, professional or fair that a 'problem' with a teacher, and/or a class, comes to the notice firstly, of the pupils in the classroom, then, to the parents at home and in the car park and finally, and belatedly, to the attention of the faculty or College of Teachers. This is bad practice. Situations needing help, transformation or resolution should not have to attain 'fire-fighting' status before being addressed. Mentoring work might lead to an assessment and dismissal procedure on occasions, but in the majority of cases pedagogical development and 'fire prevention' are the more likely and desirable outcomes than crisis management. Simply to provide a simple awareness of what is going on in the different parts of the school would be a sufficient rationale, in itself, for mentoring work.

There are other reasons. A school, as an 'entity' of individuals working together, expresses its responsibility for the educational task by demonstrating professional and human accountability vis a vis the pupils *and* the teachers. When significant difficulties do occur in teaching situations, inordinate amounts of time and energy have to be allocated to finally addressing the problems. Children, parents, teachers and schools all suffer if this process is delayed or obfuscated by ignorance or sleepiness. In the sphere of rights, it can be argued with some legitimacy that pupils and teachers have a right to benefit from on-going professional development and training. Such continual in-service training refreshes the pedagogy, renews the curriculum, deepens the teachers' knowledge of the pupils, and cultivates the professionalism and working spirit of colleagues. In two words, this way of working is thoroughly economical.

As argued in the introduction, there is little point in talking about mentoring, either theoretically, or practically, unless certain ground criteria are rooted. From the teachers' perspective as active and reflective pedagogical practitioners certain fruits of a healthy mentoring process can be posited:

- reflection on practice
- the renewal of practice
- the sharing of ideas and problems
- the articulation of questions
- the discussion of research
- bearing witness to each other

Structures, systems, and forms of working collegially are important and can be a key to whether the work has continuity and depth. Having said this, it must be stated that the quality of participation is of the essence. Mentoring is enhanced when the processes and the structures are characterised by interdependence, dynamism and mutuality, whereas a group or a series of partnerships, teachers are willing participants of equal status and varying experience. Research carried out in the mainstream sector in the 1990's found that mentoring is regarded as important for the experienced colleague as it is for the Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT).[10] A principle of universality in mentoring work is implied here and justified on the grounds that a fundamental theme of mentoring work is a teacher's ability to articulate thoughts and ideas, listen to the thoughts and ideas of others and to share in a reflective process.

INDIVIDUALITY NOT IDIOSYNCRASY

In a lecture given in 1920 in Stuttgart, Steiner presents the Waldorf teacher with half of a certain conundrum. The teacher is advised, on entering the classroom, to shed the narrow, personal self as a snake would shed its skin. We are to lay aside our temporal worries and stresses in the interests of allowing the life of the lesson to breathe through the pedagogy. In surrendering to the content of the lesson the teacher can bring about a 'soul breathing' in the pupils, akin to the physical breathing of the bodily organism.[11]

The other half of this conundrum surfaces in Steiner's frequent references to the first teachers to teach out of themselves, and their own creative forces, unencumbered by dogma, tradition and prescribed, uniformly applied methods.

The key to understanding and reconciling this apparent contradiction lies in drawing a distinction between a teacher's individual characteristics and personal idiosyncrasies. In highlighting and enhancing the former, while eschewing and seeking to transform the latter, the teacher promotes creativity and independence, while denuding the latent egotism of the 'idiosyncratic' path. Not only is this a recipe for health in the classroom, it is also a model for collegial relations founded on interdependence and cohesive pluralism. In other words – a basis for mentoring work that is universal, mutual and developmental.

Autonomy and Unity

In Lecture 2 of The Kingdom of Childhood (1988), Steiner identifies and embraces a fundamental polarity which faces the Waldorf teacher each day:

> *There are no prescribed rules for teaching in the Waldorf School, but only one unifying spirit that pervades the whole. It is very important that you should realise this. The teacher is autonomous. Within this one unifying spirit he can do entirely what he thinks right.*

And later:

> *You will see that you are allowed the greatest liberty, and yet the teaching in each class is what is right for that age.*

A philosophical, spiritual foundation unites the teachers in a common pedagogical research. Standing together on this bedrock of principle, the task for colleagues, individually and together, is to interpret the guiding principles artistically and develop imaginative, fresh and effective methods and techniques, in accordance with the particular spirit of a class and the age of the children. The webbing and weaving of form (pedagogical principle) and freedom (artistic creativity) poses great opportunities and challenges for the teacher, both as an artist and as a fellow researcher in a collaborative pedagogical project.

In a lecture given in Bern on December 12th 1918, Steiner commented in detail on the dynamics and hidden realities that work between people in their meetings.[12] Referring to the particular times in which we live – the Consciousness Soul era – and the manner in which the human being asserts an independence of spirit and a sense of autonomy to an increasing and inevitable degree, Steiner directs us to ask ourselves:

> *What is the relation between people with regard to social and anti-social forces? We need to see that the relationship between people is fundamentally a complicated matter. When one person meets another, I would say we must look into the situation radically. Meetings of course point to differences that vary according to specific circumstances; but we must fix our eyes on the common characteristics, we must clearly see the common elements in the meeting, in the encounter between one person and another. We must ask ourselves: What really happens then, not merely in that which presents itself to the senses, but in the total situation, when one person stands opposite another, when one person meets another? Nothing less than that a certain force works from one person to the other. The meeting of one with another leads to the working of a certain force between them. We cannot confront another person in life with indifference, not even in mere thoughts and feelings, even though we may be separated from them by distance. If you have any kind of relation to other people, or any communication with them, then a force flows between us creating a bond. It is this fact which lies at the basis of social life and which, when broadened, is really the foundation for the social structure of humanity.*[13]

The task that lies before the human being today is to take hold of oneself to such a degree that one can become independent, autonomous and 'within oneself'. What has resided in the unconscious realm now has to be faced by the individual, embraced and taken on. In the Consciousness Soul period social instincts

and unconscious social forces are pressing into human consciousness. These social currents and impulses have been asleep; they are no longer. We face the challenge to wake up to what we are doing in the social realm, in our meetings and in our teaching. There are few areas of life in which the opportunities for social inter-action – whether with pupils, parents, colleagues or members of the public – are quite so varied or important as in teaching. The teacher is called upon to walk the inner path and be guided on that path by the voice of self-accountability and self-responsibility, rather than by outer forms and conventions.

In the passage quoted above, Steiner provides a clear indication that we should not fool ourselves by thinking we can rest on our laurels and skirt the need to shape new social forms out of ourselves. Nor should we delude ourselves by imagining that what occurs in the human, social realm is confined to a psychological, 'mind game' compartment. What we do and think and feel in the presence of each other and in solitude has real substance and objective meaning. What I think or feel about another person is not confined to the privacy of my mind. These thoughts and feelings, along with my actions, are real happenings and events in the world, whose content bears repercussions and consequences for others and myself. At first glance, the comments cited in this lecture might strike one as having an almost 'anti-mentoring' flavour. However, the focus on the individual's role and the emphasis on cultivating and nourishing a new social order out of one's own inner efforts does not exclude or neglect the 'social' dimension that such work requires.

COLLEGIALITY, EMPATHY

R. S. Barth pinpoints the quality of relations between teachers as one of the key determining factors in the effectiveness and well being of the school as a whole.

> *It's difficult to spell. Hard to pronounce. Harder to define. It's harder still to establish in a school. Collegiality. After a lifetime of residence in different sorts of schools, I am convinced that the nature of the relationships among the adults who inhabit a school has more to do with the school's quality and character, and with the accomplishments of its pupils, than any other factor.*[14]

Goodlad describes the difficulties and challenges of achieving a healthy working environment among teachers in stark terms.

> *The classroom cells in which teachers spend much of their time appear to be symbolic and predictive of their relative isolation from one another and from sources of ideas beyond their own background of experience.*[15]

Seemingly, the proximity of isolation and the notion of the classroom as a walled castle, are pictures of inherent dynamics in the teacher's workplace, which construct an ingrained but artificial reality, if not tempered by practices that are more social and collegial.

Humphreys shares the view that the nature and quality of human relationships are pivotal in understanding the overall performance of a school. He describes an effective school as one which is characterised by high expectations on the part of the teachers, of the pupils, themselves and each other, emotional responsiveness and effective leadership.[16]

The aspect of collegial relations in a school and the need to foster collegial working did not escape Steiner's notice. In his meetings with the teachers of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, between 1919 and 1924, Steiner made frequent and repeated references to this need.[17]

Empathy, or, in Urieli's words, the ability of a person to relate to another in a selfless way*, is a dawning human faculty, which complements and counter-balances the consciousness soul's unrelenting movement to identify the individual in distinction to everything else in the environment. This emergent faculty encompasses three inter-related capacities – a heightened, transformed compassion, the inner voice of conscience and the development of a soul-spiritual literacy which endows a person with an ability to read and understand the human need and condition of the other. These capacities are active in that they are inspired and guided by the differentiated moral will of the individual human being.

On the basis of this outline, the difference between sensitivity and empathy, as it relates to the classroom, can be grasped. Children, individually and collectively, are sensitive to the thoughts, words, deeds and

* Lecture given at the Steiner Waldorf Teachers Conference, Belfast, Easter, 1996.

feelings of their teachers. In a variety of half-conscious and unconscious ways, pupils manifest their sensitivities, sympathies and antipathies. The feelings ebb and flow in a script that lacks the attention and understanding of empathy. The pupils' responses and behaviour do not necessarily reflect the teacher's abilities, capacities and persona, yet a teacher can make an almost *a priori* assumption that the pupils' behaviour, the mood and quality of the class is, in part, a response to the teacher and the teacher's work. A symbiosis of action and response unfolds, rather than a case of reflected glory and gloom. As such, pupils do not plan, think and talk assessment, feedback and mentoring; they feel it, do it, live it.

There is a tension between Urieli's description of empathy as arising out of compassion[18], and Weih's view that compassion, on its own, may be an untransformed expression of sympathy and therefore, an unreliable and unconscious soul force.[19] This apparent contradiction is not merely a matter of semantics. It might seem pedantic or even hard-hearted to pose questions over the integrity and authenticity of a quality or gesture such as compassion. Is it legitimate to sense or conceive the possibility that particular forms, or expressions of compassion might be rooted in vested interest, fear, egotism, or illusion?

The problem is depicted and unravelled in tracing the distinction between a compassion that is born out of human feeling – sympathy untransformed – and a compassion which issues from a selfless interest in, and identification with, the subject of compassion.

The forces of sympathy and antipathy mark out the theatre and field of the life of the soul. There are many expressions of this archetypal polarity – love and hate, sadness and joy, extroversion and introversion, life and death. The developing faculty of empathy leads the individual into the clear waters of the spirit, into the integrated duality and transcendence of the etheric realm.

Working as colleagues in a plurality of models of Waldorf schools there are opportunities to develop the collective and individual inner work that support the growth of empathy. This is what Steiner challenged the first group of teachers to do in 1919 when he indicated that a responsibility to the spiritual life and an involvement in spiritual activity were fundamental requirements for the teachers, which would enable "the spirit that will unite the School" to be present and active.[20]

A few years later, at another teachers meeting, Steiner made what appears to be a rather wishful statement when he said,

> *There cannot be such a thing as a Waldorf teacher who is not well disposed towards another Waldorf teacher.*[21]

Considered merely from the soul's working environment of the ebb and flow of sympathy and antipathy, this comment is hardly tenable. However, when placed in the context of an emerging psychological-spiritual faculty that transcends personal likes and dislikes and looks beyond existential human suffering and illusion, Steiner's comment begins to sound self-evident.

STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL IMPERATIVES

Chewing the Cud

A group of 12 second year students on a B.A. (Hons.) Education Studies Programme were given a practical pedagogical problem to contemplate, discuss, reflect upon and at last, to agree a problem-solving policy, incorporating rationale, approach, regulation and consequence. The issue was outlined as follows:

> *A pupil is observed chewing gum in your lesson. This happens on more than one occasion.*
> *What feelings does this arouse in you? What response do you make?*
> *At the time? After the lesson?*

The second part of the problem moved from the individual to the collegial. The 12 students were asked to consider themselves as members of a teacher's faculty, in the midst of a regular teachers meeting. The issues of eating in lessons and eating sweets at school were on the agenda. The 'aim' and objective for the group was to present the problem, discuss it and to arrive at an agreed strategy and policy.

Given that this particular student-group was involved in an 'education studies' programme and that not all of the students considered themselves to be 'prospective' teachers in training, the spectrum of views expressed is probably more varied and theoretical, or ideal, than would otherwise have been the case. However, an underlying issue of our times can be heard in the responses set out below. Namely, voice is given to the questions, doubts and paradoxes which corral many aspects of discipline and authority.[22]

In an age when the outer, inherited forms and norms of discipline, respect, deference and tradition are crumbling, or dissolving, many people experience uncertainty, disquiet, or even ineptitude when faced by a whole range of questions which, a few decades ago, would have caused little or no anxiety to the of parents, teachers and 'responsible' adults.

Munching of sweets in lessons aside, how widespread would agreement, or disagreement, amongst a group of teachers be today, as to whether pupils should stand when a teacher enters the classroom, as to whether and when pupils should be allowed to wear 'jewelry' in school, as to whether pupils should be suspended, expelled or counselled for swearing at teachers, or even as to whether pupils should be sent from the classroom as a consequence of misbehaviour?

To return to the simulated 'problem', a summary of what was said and what happened – thoughts, feelings, proposals and disagreements – over the course of 40 - 45 minutes – is set out below:

- This 'problem' wouldn't bother me; I wouldn't find it offensive, I wouldn't do anything about it.
- I would be rather annoyed by this, I would see it as rudeness, sloppiness and I would deal with it with fairly short shrift.
- When the children speak, sing, play recorder, move, they should not chew gum anyway, for pedagogical reasons.
- I would insist the gum be dropped in the basket; there would be no further consequence.
- I would not favour pupils eating sweets, but I would deal with each incident on its merits, on a case by case basis.
- My response would depend on the age of the child, or children involved.
- I would tell a pedagogical story to the pupils (up to the age of 10), in order to address the problem.
- I would make a presentation on the ingredients of chewing gum and the origins of chewing gum, to pupils from age 12.
- I would tell children of age 13+ about the effects of chewing gum on the digestive system and stomach juices.
- I would ask the offenders (age 13+), to write an essay on the nutritional and environmental issues connected with chewing gum.
- I would simply ban all sweets during school time.
- I would put the transgressors into detention automatically.
- The classrooms and the whole school would become a tacky mess if children were allowed to chew gum at will.
- I am not clear about the consequences I would support.
- I would propose a policy placing a complete ban on the eating of sweets during school hours. This policy would be set down in the parent and staff handbooks. I would expect universal agreement on this policy from my colleagues. I would be prepared to resign my position if this policy could not be agreed and supported.

Time for discussing this issue ran out. By the close, one member of the group had been asked to 'resign' for failing to support any 'whole school' policy banning sweets. A basic rule banning sweets at school had been proposed and then agreed by the remaining members of staff. Discussion of the consequences of breaking the rule was protracted and verbose. Agreement on consequences had not been struck by the end of the teachers meeting. It *was* agreed, wholeheartedly, to defer consideration of a policy on the wearing of hats in lessons throughout the school, until a much, much later date.

It would be straightforward enough to take this group of 'teachers' to task over a number of shortcomings relating to self-management, republicanism, mandated responsibility, the mis-use of the principle of consensus and quite simply, too many cooks failing to make an edible broth.[23]

In a 'real-life' situation, one would have serious questions regarding the process and premises here entertained. On the other hand, one might argue that such a simulated, problem-solving exercise such as this, is unavoidably hindered by the fact that real children, real teachers, real time and real place are not provided for.

Nonetheless, in the debrief and the reflection, it was apparent that the students had learnt a lot about themselves, their pretend-colleagues and teachers meetings at their worst. They had experienced frustration, impatience and, among a few, a simmering wish to appoint a head teacher and accept a diktat? They had also witnessed, albeit theoretically and at second-hand, the prospect of 12 adults grappling with rules, discipline and punishment, post-modern style.

As an instance, among hundreds, of collegial working practices, this exercise throws into relief the burning need for a harmonious flowing together of structure and culture. This requirement is in the front-line of priorities in a Steiner Waldorf school, where the principle and ideal of self-management calls upon the teachers to evolve ways of managing, leading and organising a school that does not rely on vertical hierarchies and institutionalised power structures.

Models of Collegial Working Practices

Taking the sympathy-antipathy polarity as an archetype, a model and framework for collegial working practices can be formulated. This kind of model derives from a very broad paradigm and can be adapted for various theoretical scenarios. As with any model it does not offer a representation of reality, but serves to highlight tendencies contained in certain sets of circumstances and dynamics. The particular scenarios addressed here are founded on the identification of structure and culture as fundamental features of a healthy working environment in a school.

In order to clarify terms, by 'structure' is meant the forms, processes and architecture of organisation that are designed and implemented in a school to serve the working-together of teachers. In pictorial terms, one could liken the structure of an organisation to the task carried by the skeleton in serving the movement of a human being. By 'culture' is meant the working life - the shared experiences, communication, learning, teaching, the togetherness -- of a group of teachers. If the image of the skeleton holds a grain of truth for 'structure', then a picture of the flowing, changing, dynamic, airy element and the breathing process performs a similar role for the concept of 'culture'.

The model (Figure A) indicates five conditions of health or frailty regarding collegial relations and mentoring. An absence of structure and culture leads to inactivity in mentoring work and results in a condition of inertia. This condition is characterised by stagnation and apathy, a lack of human interest and engagement, perhaps a degree of school-wide depression and culminates in a state of collapse and implosion.

The character and disposition of Mr. Gradgrind, the schoolmaster in Dickens's *Hard Times*[24], provide a 'human' example, albeit fictional, of the singular development of the structure-antipathy pole. In addition, the educational ideas espoused by John Locke in the 17th century reveal a similarly one-sided emphasis, tending towards the *forming-crystallising* aspect.

Locke held that the primary purpose of education lay in the transformation of uncivilised children into civilised adults. The taming of unruly, un-mannered children into upright, socially responsible citizens, merchants and traders was regarded essentially as a task to order and form society by providing a clear and uncompromising structure.

In terms of teachers working together, a high degree of structure that is not complemented by a vital culture can lead to a highly organised, formal system of appraisal, testing and evaluation – for pupils *and* teachers – based on tradition and a sclerotic, narrowly-held school ethos. In extreme circumstances, such an environment may emit an atmosphere of anxiety, fear, mistrust and anticipated criticism between and amongst colleagues. In such a one-sided, out-of-balance development of the structure-antipathy pole, a contracted collegial working ethos, fixated working practices, dogmas and elements of Gradgrind-like tyranny are some of the characteristics and weaknesses that are likely to manifest, in part, or whole.

In an 'ideal' setting, where the letter, or script of mentoring is clear and coherent and the mentoring spirit is alive and moving, conditions for the development and practice of empathy are enhanced. In *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, Steiner talks about the importance of ideals for human spirit. Steiner also cautions the reader to complement the holding and pursuit of ideals with a necessary degree of humility and steadfast composure.[25]

In the 'ideal' setting, structure and culture weave together and the strengths of both create an organ of research and innovation and a vessel of disclosure and discretion, where independence is fostered and interdependence is forged.

The life and course of a river provide an exemplifying picture of some of the qualities of this *optimum 'position'*, or condition, of teacher development and collegial working. A river is unique. There is no exact formula for a river.[26] Diversity around an archetype and an absence of uniformity and repetition characterise rivers everywhere. A river is an expression of time and place, as well as mood, gesture and age. If a river is not literally alive, we can certainly talk of the river's water teeming with life. As such, the river is a vehicle for life in many ways. Whereas the banks, the bed and the bends of the river constitute its form and structure, it is possible to picture the river's water as its culture. A free-flowing river that is alive and bounded, transporting a culture and held within itself, can be likened to a group of teachers who meet, learn and work together in a way that allows for independence, responsibility, togetherness and equal rights as professional practitioners.

The river analogy can be taken a little further to illustrate how over-structuring, or an excess of 'life', in the absence of a counter-balancing tendency, can tarnish the course and health of a river. Likewise, a teachers group can be damaged, or held back by a one-sided development of culture or structure.

In the case of a river, over-structuring results in a dam, a reservoir, or a system of irrigation channels. When the river is hampered by excess 'life', or culture, and the structure is dissolved, the river's banks are broached and floodwaters sweep over the bordering fields and land. In a group of teachers, too much structure leads to hardening and dogma; too much culture leads to a nebulous and naive ethos that engenders drift and chaos.

In the late 1920's the philosopher Bertrand Russell and his wife Dora, set up a 'free' school – Beacon Hill – in Sussex.[27] In educational-philosophical terms, Russell's ideas were clearly nailed to the 'freedom' pole and in terms of the model presented here, offered an uncompromising example of the 'cultural' pole, developed to state of the art permissiveness. In a general sense, this side of the polarity can be sketched and described by phrases such as youthfulness, sympathy, dispersal, combustion and formlessness. If the 'structural' pole poses the spectre of fixation, the 'cultural' pole opens the door to illusions and permissive practices.

Looked at from another perspective – that of the image of the nature of childhood – whereas Locke offers an uncivilised, unruly, 'non-adult', Jean Jacques Rousseau draws a figure of an untamed free spirit, the 'noble savage', the wild plant that grows where it will, untrellised, unpruned.[28] In certain of his ideas, if not his practices – his own children were placed in an orphanage – Rousseau occupies similar intellectual ground to Bertrand Russell in his advocacy of tenets of the freedom – cultural pole.

Organisationally and collegially, this type of one-sidedness is apt to surface in new, pioneering schools, where the themes of inspiration *and* necessity are change, growth, flexibility, expansion, informality and cheerful, dynamic optimism in the face of adversity and hardship. The downside to this array of indisputable qualities, if they are not bound in to certain structural – forming features, is the possibility of a certain unhinged idealism that might also become anarchic in tone.

On a collegial level, growth and change are understood as constant and imperative 'positives', while consolidation, policy-forming and attempts to create organisational structure may be regarded as old, corporate and fixed. In the teachers' work there might be absence of memory, or since it relates to the past, a disregard for it. This can weaken or disrupt the sense of rhythm and the existence of form in the school, which, in turn, can lead to clumsy and inefficient re-inventions of the wheel necessitated by a dearth of policy in key areas. When these aspects develop into reality, teachers meetings become infested with high-frequency parochialism and a continuing re-emergence of old issues in new garb. Some of the typical old chestnuts include – what teachers are required to do during 'wet' breaks, school rules and arrangements in the car park before and after school.

Such a situation is understandable, if not excusable if, at a teachers business meeting, issues such as those cited above are responded to by one, or several, of the following: no decision taken, a decision apparently made but not recorded, a decision taken, but then not implemented, a decision taken and subsequently, partially implemented, or, a decision agreed, implemented and leading then to a more complex situation as a result of the consequences of the original decision not being foreseen and catered for.

The top-heavy 'cultural' setting described here might be conceived as 'user-friendly', although this would be a misleading idea. In this unbounded 'cultural' mode, the quality and dynamics of mentoring and teacher-assessment will, in likelihood, be optional, occasional and unaccountable. Informal, partial and elective mentoring, combined with a lack of meaningful, transformative assessment does not necessarily lead directly to failing teachers, classes at risk and schools in disarray; the very opposite might be the case. The point is that under such conditions, a group of teachers is effectively disabled from taking responsibility for the teaching and learning in a school.

Freedom without responsibility, or accountability, induces a potential for chaos, not autonomy and insecurity, not benign confidence. In a spiritual sense, we may not, as 'earthly' colleagues, be capable of standing in full and objective awareness of each other and each other's teaching. It is rare for a person to be in a position to know and understand all the subtle, complex and hidden dimensions to even apparently rudimentary and fleeting human counters. However, given that we *are* incarnate, fallible beings, and because we are active in Caesar's realm in daily life, it is incumbent on us, as teachers and colleagues, to account for ourselves and affirm, question and help each other whether working with pupils, parents or the wider community.

'Hit or miss' collegial support, 'take it or leave it' mentoring and 'opt-in' evaluation constitute a recipe that may result in festering crisis and professional incompetence. In a working environment where responsibility is held as a fundamental duty *and* right, the responsibility for being responsible must be taken up consciously and not semi-consciously assumed.

All of which brings us to what might be described as a condition of 'positive pragmatism', in which

cultural and structural elements are identified, acknowledged and utilised in an on-going, developmental manner that is part and parcel of the wider pedagogical programme. Culture and structure begin to weave into and feed each other.

In this place, away from the lofty heights of ideals, can be found what is realisable. *Positive pragmatism* – the tilled ground of reality – is that which happens, as opposed to what is dreamt, theorised, or started, but not continued. Idea, intention and deed begin to coalesce into practical and effective mentoring measures that have the consent and understanding of colleagues.

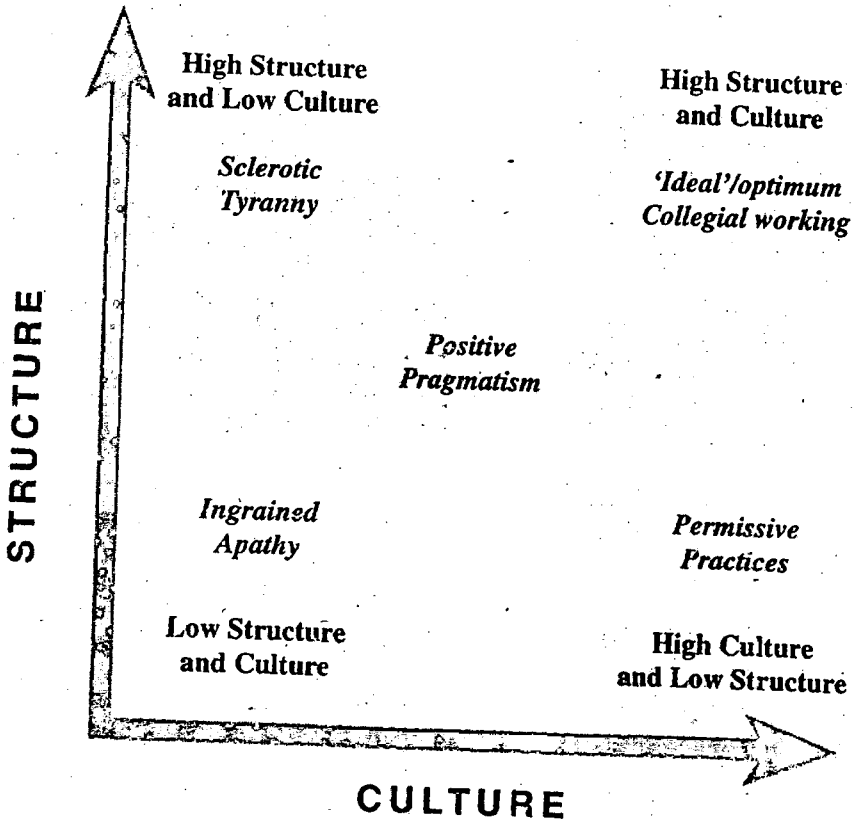
At this stage of collegial working, the guardianship of the educational health of the school is taken in hand. The steps may be small and faltering, initially, but they are mostly forward ones. Ideals have not been dispensed with; the realism and humility that Steiner advocates in his consideration of ideals have supplemented them.[29]

When mentoring and peer evaluation flow into the school's working ethos and the etheric forces of the school's being, then the entire endeavour is strengthened and enlivened by rhythm, consideration, interest and a genuine intention to research in a collaborative effort. At this point, the mentoring idea begins to be active in the will and not just the feeling. With *positive pragmatism*, the mentoring impulse is regarded as what is normal, expected and important. Urgency and crisis management are less apparent as a feature. It is the day to day work that carries on after the enthusiasm of the weekend conference has subsided. Mentoring at this level is born out of quiet professionalism, pared of both egotism and the mind-set of low self-esteem, anxiety and contraction.

On a practical level of management, mentoring and appraisal begin to find a place in the rhythm of the school year, in the timetable and in the teachers meetings. Induction of new teachers is regarded as a genuine process and threshold. Staff job descriptions include rights and requirements in the sphere of collegial working and teacher contracts incorporate and formalise these entitlements and commitments.

In terms of the 'spirit' of mentoring, *positive pragmatism* is highlighted by the human interest and enthusiasm in essential curriculum research, pedagogical innovation and teacher development work. Action research circulates through the school at different levels. Lastly, a coherent and authentic *positive pragmatism* in teacher relations sees the manifestation of a shared commitment to what Barth refers to as a 'community of learners', in place of an adherence to the complacency of the 'learned'.[30]

Figure A – Models of Collegial Working



SANDBOXES AND HONEYBEES

It is difficult to spell. Hard to pronounce. Harder to define. It's hardest still to establish in a school. *Collegiality.* After a lifetime of residence in different sorts of schools, I am convinced that the nature of the relationships among the adults who inhabit a school has more to do with the school's quality and character, and with the accomplishment of its pupils, than any other factor. The success of a school depends upon interactions between teacher and teacher, teacher and administrator, and all school people and parents.

Yet, strangely, collegiality and the ideas it connotes have seldom shown up on the effective-schools literature of the past decade. It is not listed with such factors as strong leadership, emphasis on basic skills, a clear sense of purpose, monitoring of academic progress, and an orderly school environment. Nor is collegiality part of the vocabulary of recent national studies of American education. It is recognised as neither part of the problem or part of the solution.

I wonder why not. Most educators would probably agree that collegiality in a school is nice ... but it's a soft and fuzzy notion at a time when schools need rigor and clarity. Collegiality is nice, but it's a frill when schools need to be pared to the basics. Collegiality is an adult notion when the lesson plan for schools should be prepared with its students in mind.

I find that relationships among adults in schools – all schools, from preschools to graduate schools – take several forms.

One of them is described by a wonderful term from nursery school parlance, "parallel play". Two 3 year olds are busily engaged in opposite corners of a sandbox. One has a shovel and bucket; one has a rake and hoe. At no time do they borrow each other's toys. They may inadvertently throw sand in each other's face from time to time, but they seldom interact. Although in close proximity, and having much to offer one another, each works and plays pretty much in isolation. This description serves remarkably well as a characterisation of adult relationships in schools. Teachers and administrators develop subtle ways to influence the other group's domain, but they seldom venture there. A 3rd grade teacher on one side of the hall carefully respects the teaching space of the 3rd grade teacher on the other side. One principal in a system seldom visits the school of another. University professors, too, have been described as a group of isolated individuals connected by a common heating system and parking lot. We all seem to have implied contract: Don't bother me in my work and I won't bother you. Yet, in schools, as in sandboxes, the price of doing things the way we want to – of having personal control over what we do – is isolation from others who might take our time and have us do things differently (and, perhaps, better).

But, of course, not all adult relationships in schools are independent. I observe three different forms of interaction:

- *Adversarial Relationships.* Recently, a Boston area school principal made a sage observation: "you know, we educators have drawn our wagons into a circle and trained our guns – on each other". When adults in schools interact, all too often we attack one another. There's no dearth of enemies outside education, of course, but somehow we manage to create opponents under own roofs.

A decade ago, Harry Levinson, author of *Organisational Diagnosis,* writing about the workplace of business, used the phrase "emotional toxicity" to describe unhealthy businesses. He observed that "psychotic" organisations, like many psychotic individuals, are characterised by a siege mentality, a feeling of being under constant attack. This mentality is also marked by preoccupation with self-preservation, constant scanning of the environment in search of potential threats, and a desire to avoid any close contact with others. It may be that adversarial relationships among adults in school make "parallel play" a welcome alternative.

- *Competitive Relationships.* The competition among adults in schools stems perhaps from a wish for all those in the school to succeed, or for the school to become better than others, but mostly it comes from a desire for *me* to excel.

Typically, competition takes the form of *withholding.* Most school people carry around extraordinary insights about their important work – about discipline, parental involvement, budgeting, child development, leadership and curriculum. These hard-won insights certainly have as much value to the field as elegant research studies and national reports but adults in schools have a strong reluctance to make these insights available to those who may be competitors for scarce resources and recognition – that it, to almost everyone else. Nor does anyone want to be considered pretentious by professing this knowledge. Few teachers, for example, want to subject themselves to the criticism of their peers by standing up in a faculty meeting and sharing a good idea about grouping children or involving parents. Consequently, all the talk each day among teachers and parents and administrators

notwithstanding, a taboo prevails in schools against school people sharing what they know with others. Kevin Ryan, author of *Don't Smile Until Christmas*, has referred to work in schools as an adult's "second most private activity." John I. Goodlad puts it more soberly in *A Place Called School.*

> *The classroom cells in which teachers spend much of their time appear to be symbolic and predictive of their relative isolation from one another and from sources of ideas beyond their own background of experience.*

How can a profession survive, let alone flourish, when its members are cut off from others and from the rich knowledge which success and excellence depend? Not very well.

A day after watching the Boston Marathon from the top of Heartbreak Hill, I had the good fortune to sit on a place beside one of the top finishers. I asked this young man how he did it. "How do you run and run fast for more than two hours, up and down hills, in the fact of such extraordinary difficulties?" I expected him to emphasise competition or the pursuit of personal glory; instead, he observed thoughtfully "I do it because of the crowds. The people along the side of the course. For 26 miles, everyone is cheering, giving me water, support not interfering, keeping others from interfering, so I can run. I do it because everyone wants me to do it. I don't want to let them down."

Competition has its place, but we school people could well use some of these same *supportive* conditions as we struggle up our own hills. Instead, all too often we find along our course a society that values and supports the *product* of education far more than those committed to providing it.

- *Collegial Relationships.* The least common form of relationship among adults in schools and universities is one that is collegial, cooperative, and interdependent. Judith Warren Little, a researcher at the Far West Regional Laboratory in San Francisco, offers a good working definition of collegiality in schools. Collegiality, she says is the presence of four specific behaviours. First, adults in schools *talk about the practice of teaching and learning* frequently, continuously, and in concrete and precise terms. Second, they observe each other teaching and administrating. These observations become the "practice" they can reflect upon and talk about. Third, they *work on the curriculum together* by planning, designing, researching, and evaluating it. Finally, they teach each other what they know about teaching, learning, and leading.

As obvious and logical and compelling as these ideas are, they find all too little following in schools.

We are all familiar with the enormous risks and costs associated with observing, communicating, sharing knowledge, and talking openly about the work we do. Yet somehow most good school's I've been in are ones where parallel play and adversarial and competitive relationships among adults have been transformed into cooperative, collegial ones. It is possible.

I am a beekeeper. I am looking out a window of a farmhouse in coastal Maine at three hives of Italian honeybees draped with a generous cloak of snow. Last summer, I robbed over a hundred pounds of honey from each of those colonies – more than enough to get family and friends (and bees) through the winter. I remember looking through this same window in August, pondering these remarkable little creatures and their complex social organisation. In a hive of 60,000 insects, there are scouts always on the lookout in the fields for a new source of nectar. Fanners stand on the landing board during a hot day for hours at a time, beating their winds in order to circulate fresh air through the colony. Water carriers find a pond or stream and bring water back to help cool the hive and produce the honey. Nectar carriers bring in the raw material for the honey.

Cappers seal the honeycomb in wax and others mate with the queen and sustain the hive.

Observing these astonishing levels and examples of communication, sharing, and interdependence, I cannot help but compare the bees' little society with schools. Perhaps it is unfair to compare "lower order" creatures with "higher" forms of life, but the comparison suggests to me just how much adversarial and competitive behaviour dominates or schools, how little collegiality we see, and how much our schools suffer because of it.

On the one hand, it is a discouraging realisation. But these little honeybees also suggest something else. They suggest just how great may be the power of cooperative behaviour in the service of a common purpose. There is much we can learn from sandboxes and honeybees.

Report from THE FIRST MENTORING CONFERENCE Emerson College 1996 (a)

At the end of August 1996, over 40 people from half the schools in the schools movement gathered at Michael Hall to explore the issues surrounding the question of mentoring practices in our schools. Teri Ann Hornby –

a tutor from Rolle School of Education at the University of Plymouth – joined the participants and led the workshop through a series of sessions. A summary of the issues and questions looked at follows below.

Firstly, what are the reasons for wishing to develop the practice of mentoring?

There are at least four reasons: to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching in our schools, to enable 'teachers-in-the-making' to identify themselves as such, to give opportunities for colleagues to develop the art and craft of teaching, and fourthly, to provide conditions which contribute to an enriching of the experience of teachers working together, and teachers and children working together.

What might be some of the initial aims of the work into mentoring practices?

I have chosen four to mention here.

1. To have a 'mentor group' within each school, working with colleagues, teacher trainers and student teachers.
2. To establish a nation-wide group of mentors working with advisers, Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) and outside agencies, such as Rolle, under the auspices of the SWSF.
3. To have one apprentice/student on an extended practice/placement within every school each year.
4. To review interviewing procedures within schools. To review referencing of teachers and students. What are the current procedures, criteria and experiences?

Following the mentoring conference, the following points became clear regarding the current situation:

- Mentoring as a broad idea has a fair amount of currency in our movement at the moment. This currency, however, rarely converts into clear mentoring practices and agreed criteria on the group. Individual schools and the movement as a whole lack criteria for mentoring and monitoring a teacher's performance, or a student teacher's potential.
- In terms of management, finance, appointment procedures and issues surrounding 'qualified teacher status' (QTS), there is a certain tendency to formlessness and subjectivity in our schools movement. However, we should not underestimate, nor seek to diminish the indefinable, non-prescriptive elements in Waldorf education, including the complex dynamics between teacher and children and the teacher's right and duty to develop the art of teaching in an independent and creative spirit.
- A certain phenomenon – called the 'autonomous teacher' mentality, or the Robinson Crusoe syndrome – has been identified, whereby problems and difficulties are not brought out into the open and dealt with professionally. Reference is often made to 'my' class, or 'your' class, but how often do we talk about 'our' class. The class teacher does have a special relationship to fulfil with his or her children, yet the class belongs to the school and deserves to be 'owned' by colleagues.
- We do not accord high enough priority to the task of sharing our work, assessing each other and ourselves and giving and receiving help. Teaching, after all, is a process of continual in-service training.

Report from THE FIRST MENTORING CONFERENCE Emerson College 1996 (b)

1. The Task – Basic Principles

There are three areas of mentoring tasks:

1. Working with student teachers during their teaching practice and initial observation periods. This involves the 2-3 week blocks of 2nd year students and the more intensive role of mentoring 3rd year students on longer placements. (This latter role needs further discussion).
2. Induction and mentoring of new teachers in their first year.
3. On-going collegial work between teachers and staff development.

There are also three different mentoring roles:

1. Support, hosting, being a critical friend.
2. Mentoring – helping, guiding, advising.
3. Assessment and monitoring.

There are several dimensions to this work, including internal mentors within one school, specialists (e.g. school doctors, curative eurythmists, therapists, learning support etc. whose work is often with

individuals), external mentors, fellowship advisers, fellowship advisers, schools administrators and so on. In the course of time we will need to develop specific mentoring approaches for specialists. Mentors will also need mentoring – a new role for SSF advisers perhaps?

2 Good Practice and Problems

(Celebrations)

1. Many Steiner-Waldorf schools already have mentors but few have teacher assessment procedures beyond confirming new teachers. Clearly there is scope for extending this.
2. Close dialogue between Teacher Training institutions and schools already exists but needs strengthening. Mentoring procedures need to be a part of TE. There needs to be more co-ordination between TE institutions on this and on teaching practice.

(Mentoring benefits)

1. Where a culture of on-going teacher development has been established.
2. Some formalised procedures are necessary for all concerned, to provide clarity of expectation, agreement on aims and processes and objectivity. E.g. mentoring procedures should be explained at interview and be part of Terms and Conditions of Employment.
3. Mentoring is only really meaningful if there are adequate lesson visits, regular contact between mentor and teacher/student. This requires space in the school timetable, lesson cover etc. to guarantee minimum contact. Some schools put a mentor in with a new teacher in the first week.
4. A staff handbook should detail both the letter and the spirit of the school's mentoring procedures.
5. New teachers should have significantly lighter timetables in their first year.
6. Regular assessments for all staff are a good idea (perhaps every three years or even better annually).
7. Better screening of children coming into the class of a new teacher is needed by specialist or experienced staff and the new teacher appropriately advised.
8. Schools should have 'early warning systems' and prompt real support for struggling teachers – not only new ones.
9. Such mentoring procedures should be explained to parents (and in suitable terms to pupils "Mrs. So-and-so and I are helping each other"). Parents handbook is an appropriate form. This helps build confidence and support.
10. The key to mentoring is establishing trust, the ability to listen, courage for the truth, sense of responsibility, on all sides. This also requires clarity of roles e.g. assessment – mentoring – critical friend. Mentoring should enable not prescribe. Assisting self-evaluation is a key mentoring task.

What are the Problems?

1. Lack of trust, fear, insecurity, sense of threat.
2. Parental pressure to 'get rid of' staff or limit them in some way e.g. by demanding assessment of staff, or demanding to see written appraisals etc. It hardly needs stating, that mentoring needs a strong membrane of confidentiality around it.
3. Problems are often ignored covered-up, brushed under the carpet or blamed on difficult children/parents/lack of resources/the times we live in/karmic relationships etc. there may also be inadequate decision-making – the absence of someone who will take responsibility and 'bite the bullet'. Fear of being attacked in turn, prevents colleagues from tackling problems others are having. Ignorance of how other teachers' style etc. affects the children is common where classroom visits are rare or non-existent. Waldorf Individualism can tend to reject forms of evaluation, learning outcomes, school policies etc.
4. New, inexperienced teachers should not be allowed (even if they want to), to deal on their own with children with special needs or behavioural difficulties.
5. Assessments are often not formal and few schools assess staff beyond the first year. Much work needs to be done developing procedures and criteria.
6. Financial restraints in many schools mean that new teachers are often overloaded. Schools should reassess their priorities and the problem perhaps needs addressing at SSF level.
7. Staff handbooks need to be worked through, not merely given, taken and put on a shelf.

8. Again, financial limitations prevent schools from having enough staff to cover lessons to enable lesson visits by mentors. There are various models, e.g. a mentor teaching his/her own class Main Lesson after break (subject lessons in Main Lesson). Again it is a question of resources and priorities. Perhaps Steiner-Waldorf teachers on sabbatical could do a certain number of weeks as Supply Teachers with SSF co-ordination. Perhaps schools could 'buy into' a Supply Teacher service with a means-based scale of chargers.
9. Many problems arise due to lack of clarity, purpose and procedures. Things need to be written down and agreed at an early stage. Degrees of informality and formality need to be balanced. Mentors need on-going training in the necessary skills and formal procedures and criteria need regularly reviewing at school and SSF level.
10. Mentoring is an aspect of collegial working. Where bad relationships exist due to rivalry, personality clashes, hidden hierarchies, insider-outside problems, sexual harassment (milder forms of which are very common – though this will be denied by those most guilty of them) power trips, frustration, insecurity and so on – mentoring cannot work effectively. Mentoring needs a climate of honesty and professionalism – and a sense that it is genuinely useful. However, steps towards raising consciousness and establishing procedures *can* go a long way to cultivating climate of professional relationships in the interests of the children.
11. To be effective mentoring needs to be normal practice from the beginning. Regularity of contact and quality of contact are essential. Real time, however short, must be made, and where possible timetabled.
12. Mentoring of students needs to be an integral aspect of teacher training. At present this is not done – except in generalised terms – because formal procedures are not well established in schools. This requires more direct feedback between schools and TE centres. TE tutors must visit students in the classroom and where this is geographically not possible, appointed (and trained) mentors need to be adopted on the TE's behalf.
13. Mentors need training. Some generally recognised qualifications/ accreditations need to be part of this. There could be SSF criteria for recognition of mentors – including attendance at Mentoring Training Programmes. The appointment of mentors should meet with collective recognition within a school. In some schools mentors have been appointed on the advice of external advisers and against the wishes of other colleagues. This obviously doesn't further the process.

Support/Assessment of New Teachers

The work groups were given the task of drawing up criteria for the assessment of teachers in their first year.

Initially the groups drew up criteria of such comprehensiveness and high standards that it was felt that most of us present would be struggling to fulfil them. We examined the criteria, this time going for the 'bottom line', the minimum necessary to allow a teacher to go on with their class. The criteria were divided into; end of the first term and end of the second term. It was felt that an assessment would need to be complete by Easter, so that a new teacher could be sought if required.

It was felt that the key element was that the new teacher was able to understand what was needed and show clear ability to work with their weaknesses. Key phrases 'beginning to' and 'developing' a marked improvement should be noticeable to the mentor between the first and second term. A new teacher would be expected to recognise the need to work on aspects of their teaching without having to be told to do so. Likewise a willingness to accept a work with the advice of a mentor would be essential.

It was stressed that new teachers can do a lot of damage to children in the early months (weeks – days!) – damage which cannot easily be remedied in future. For this reason the following points should be borne in mind:

1. Teacher Training needs to include long enough periods of guided teaching practice to ensure that new teachers are not absolute beginners.
2. Mentoring of new teachers should start part of induction before the start of term and not wait until the new teacher has settled in... and problems become apparent.

Criteria to be fulfilled by the End of Term 1

1. *Personal development* – the new teacher will...

- have established a healthy working rhythm, get enough sleep, can get to school in good time, regular school attendance, is not tired/exhausted in the classroom, dress appropriately, recognise and respect the school ethos.
- know how to prepare and review lessons (and do it), keep records of work done, notes on children, write up lesson plans – term/year plans.
- be committed to continued artistic and pedagogical development.
- be aware of unfortunate body language, tone of voice etc.
- be enthusiastic and have reverence for the task.
- begin to be aware of mistakes, successes in planning and teaching.
- feel entitled and comfortable about asking colleagues for help and advice.

2. *Classroom Management* – the new teacher will …
   - Know all the children's names and the classroom seating plan
   - Have ordered the physical classroom in a meaningful and aesthetic way and be able to maintain that order (plants watered, wastebins clean, cupboards tidy, desks and furniture ordered etc.)
   - Be able to establish moments of silence in the classroom and can ensure that all the children listen to essential instructions etc.
   - Be able to hold the children's attention during story-telling
   - Have established good classroom habits e.g. how children hang up their coats, outdoor shoes, take their seats, put up their hands, look after their crayons, listen when others are speaking, care for their environment, appropriate rhythms and rituals, establish boundaries etc.
   - Begin to recognise and understand and work with the different temperamental tendencies within the class.
   - Be able to make the children feel secure in the classroom, belong to the group
   - Be the focal point for the children and the class, be an established presence in the classroom and have the authority to hold the children's attention
   - Be able to listen to the children and begin to be aware of their individual needs
   - Be able to explain tasks to the children in such a way that each child can understand and respond
   - Be able to manage transitions from one activity to another, pace the tempo of the lesson so that the children can 'breath' i.e. a balance of concentration and relaxation, listening and speaking, working together and individually etc.
   - Begin to recognise individual difficulties and specific needs.

3. *Working with the Curriculum*

The new teacher will:
- Teach with imagination and living pictures that 'speak' to the children
- Be able to pitch his/her approach at the appropriate level for the age of the child
- Understand the curriculum requirements for the year
- Be developing the ability to work artistically with curriculum indications.

Specific attainment targets in arithmetic and literacy skills, co-ordination etc. can be found in Avison's *Handbook for Class Teachers.*

The Children

The children in a new teacher's class should:
- Feel that they are learning
- Be able to respond to appropriate tasks
- Relate in an open way to their teacher and identify the teacher as a loving authority.

Parents and the School Community

The new teacher will:
- Have had at least one parents evening (with support) from the host/critical friend, or College member
- Have made a number of home visits.

End of Term 2

There should be a qualitative difference from the end of the first term. Not only should there be a definite improvement in the mastery of weaknesses, but most of the criteria for term 1 should now be fulfilled. Where in term 1 the new teacher showed he/she was working with all those aspects, some level of independent competence should now be apparent. Specific targets set by the mentor at the end of term 1 should have been achieved. There should be a self-motivated ability to recognise and tackle problems. A new teacher should now be 'in the saddle' and in command of the class. Furthermore the new teacher should now be able to see where the curriculum is going and be able already to plan ahead for the following year.

The new teacher should by now have established themselves in the school, attend all appropriate staff meetings, be able to work with subject teachers and colleagues and show a willingness and capacity to take on some modest responsibilities outside of their own class.

From now on the new teacher will have the confidence of the parents and be able to hold parents evenings without the support of an experienced colleague.

The new teacher will be able to lead a child study on one of their class children.

The new teachers will be able to say something meaningful in characterising all their children and be able to write a school report for each.

The new teacher will be able to self-evaluate himself or herself to some degree.

Excerpts from THE SECOND MENTORING CONFERENCE, Emerson College, 1997

Making an Early Start

Regarding 'beginnings' a point was made that met with widespread agreement. It was stressed that adequate and *early* mentoring – visiting the first or second main lesson – is essential, even if it means the Class 1 or the new teacher's class starting a couple of days early to allow this to happen. Three weeks after the beginning of term can be too late. A few basic mistakes – due, at least partly, to lack of experience and lack of information – on the first day or two, can result in early setbacks that are subsequently very hard to overhaul. Loss of confidence, loss of control, confusion and anxiety can 'lead' a teacher to fail in the first year – a teacher who may otherwise have become a 'good' or even 'great' teacher.

It was said, again to the accompaniment of nodding heads – in agreement rather than sleep – that there are few 'born' teachers nowadays and that many of our 'failed' teachers could perhaps have been 'rescued' by early mentoring and support.

Congeniality or Collegiality

Teri Anne Hornby suggested that at a level of congeniality teachers might talk about things and complain about how bad things are. The discussion does not generally proceed further than agreeing how well or how awful matters are. In the state system there is arguably too much congeniality.

Research carried out in mainstream schools indicates that at schools where staff morale and job satisfaction are high the following factors are identifiable:

1. People shared ideas, not just stories
2. People observed each other in their craft
3. People helped each other get better

On a level of collegiality teacher regard 'caring' for each other more highly than being 'nice' to each other. Collegiality is a quality that has as its purpose professional development. Such development is enhanced by a working mood in which openness and discretion combine with a wish to care for and inspire each other. A willingness to engage in the interests of pupils and colleagues is a characteristic of collegiality.

A mentor working with a new teacher in a collegial manner may propose that the new colleague watch the mentor teaching first and give comments and advice, including criticism. The mentor, as a more experienced teacher, will know which comments or criticisms are helpful and which come from lack of experience. In addition, the mentor will learn something about the colleague's skills of observation. By opening one's own teaching to comment and critique the mentor will, in all likelihood, be more credible

and more acceptable in the eyes of the new colleague. In order to encourage engagement, the student or new teacher could be asked to observe a specific problem, for example difficulties with a particular child, and then offer observations to the mentor teacher. If, on the other hand, the mentor comes across as a pure 'spectator', this can lead to an experience of loneliness on the part of the teacher observed who, in turn, may find it harder to accept the comments of the 'expect who watches'.

Memories, Fears and Impressions

Around twenty five teachers – mostly with many years teaching experience – from a dozen different schools, reflected on the theme: *My First Year as a Teacher.* Participants were asked to reflect on their memories, the fears and anxieties and their lasting impressions of the first year, as part of a more general theme concerning the mentoring of new teachers. In addition the participants thought about the things and the people that helped, the things that, with hindsight, could have been helpful, had they been in place. A summary of the issues raised is included below:

Memories

- I didn't understand the prevailing, yet often implied school 'ethos'. I didn't know the rules and rituals – the spoken and the unspoken – and I didn't have the courage to apply them anyway.
- My confidence was low.
- I was terrified of being asked to teach outside my area of direct concern.
- I felt that I mis-read 'difficult' children and constantly expected phone calls and criticism from parents.
- I was often exhausted.
- There was a growing sense of apprehension on Sunday evenings.
- I wondered how my colleagues would perceive, or know, if I wasn't doing very well.
- I had the certain feeling that I was under-trained, under-prepared and doubtless lacking in talent.
- There was a realisation of how strong the 'group soul' or 'class being' could be, despite needy, and in some cases, unbalanced children.
- A recurring dream, that often surfaced towards the end of a school holiday. *"Suddenly, I find myself in the classroom. I didn't know that I was going to be there. My pupils are there too, waiting expectantly. I have nothing prepared. I have no material. I don't have so much as an idea. It dawns that the lesson is about to begin and I stand there with nothing."* One person elaborated a little further, recalling that in the dream one did not even have clothes on – literally a case of being sent naked into the conference chamber!

Fears and Anxieties

- of being seen through, or laughed at by the children (except when I am making a joke)
- of not being able to elicit the children's co-operation
- of the degree of responsibility of being a class teacher
- of not being 'anthroposophical enough'
- of being found wanting before colleagues and parents
- of not being artistic enough
- of not being able to sing
- of forgetting what I am trying to teach
- of running out of things to do
- of losing control in class
- of boring the children

The next two questions are of a different nature – more forward-looking, less introverted and more concerned with development:

Who, or What Enabled You to Survive?

- Friendly colleagues – I began to feel part of a group; someone had confidence in me, someone asked for my help. I began to get to know colleagues socially. I was able to moan about things with another new colleague.
- Personal resilience – being in at the 'deep end' brought out the best in me.
- Inspiring teachers as role models – watching experienced teachers at work.
- Taking the dog for long walks.

- My life experiences.
- The enthusiasm of the pupils – realising what the pupils needed became more significant and powerful than my fear of losing control.
- The insights and inspiration contained in the education.
- A conviction that this was my 'path'.
- The artistic 'emphasis' in the training prepared me for continuous learning.
- 'Negative encouragement' – I saw a school that was worse than mine!
- 'Shining by comparison' – someone was having a tougher time than me. I thought I was feeling bad, but when I look at you, I feel better!
- Pure, simple trust.

In retrospect, what might have been helpful, had it been in place?

- a clear discipline policy that colleagues worked with.
- practical help on how to keep records
- a staff handbook – information, procedures, expectations, an overview – an awareness of what I had to aware of
- a better quality of teachers meetings: more child study, more pedagogy, "less time pontificating on trivial points", an ability to distinguish the important from the merely urgent
- more sharing and more honesty between colleagues about their work, "we have a tendency to wear 'masks', we try to pretend to be perfect and sometimes we are scornful, in a subtle way, of the mistakes of others, assuming, wrongly, that we are immune from the problems of others, or that we are better
- to have read *The Rainbow* by D H Lawrence
- observation of, and by colleagues, and constructive feedback
- a mentor, a trusted colleague.

MENTORING THE NEW TEACHER – SOME THOUGHTS

The following is simply a discussion paper outlining some ideas which I consider important in a number of areas pertinent to mentoring. What follows is not a checklist, final statement, or technical guide but rather a starting point which I hope teachers who may take up this task, will find useful.

1. Listen to the new teacher. Listening is perhaps the most important thing you can do. Let the new teacher tell his story and encourage him in the telling. This is the story of preparation, questions, new ideas, struggles, concerns, worries. Be genuinely interested and try and resist the urge to tell him how you handled these problems or the temptation to sort it all out for him. And when you listen, listen; don't take notes.

   Give the person your time freely and enthusiastically even though you may be more tired and stressed. Remember not to patronise. The new teacher is intelligent, skilled, inventive, sensitive and he may have something to teach you. At the very least he has something to say. Draw ideas and possibilities out of him through questions and observations and don't give easy (for you at least) answers. Have the tact the let him discover his own answers.

2. Be conscious of all that you would take for granted, for example, chalk supply; has the blackboard been cleaned for him. The latter is important because if a new teacher enters the class and the board is not clean he must turn his back to the class to clean the board after having to decide whether he is allowed to do it. Facing a finely drawn Main Lesson piece may well put him in a difficult position and he may not know where the second board is kept. Furthermore, does he have a seating plan, has he been introduced to the class. A certain 'ritual' could be made of this introduction. Let the children see that this is a special occasion and here is a special person. This is *our* new staff member. This same 'special' quality could be evident in introductions in the staff room and at meetings. We should warmly receive and acknowledge our new colleague. This warmth and recognition should be evenly distributed. Often it is concentrated on certain people and certain tasks and others are left out. This gives a clear and not helpful message.

3. Lessons need to be observed in a systematic, well-structured, and open manner right from the beginning, by a supportive colleague (see 1 and 2).

It may be helpful to use the planetary qualities as a guide to observation and support. These qualities which form the character traits of every person, his astral body, his thinking, feeling and willing are useful for observation in both lower and upper school. In the lower school the astral of the teacher is brought to bear on the etheric of the pupil. The teacher must keep his own character traits (planetary qualities) in balance for a healthy work with his pupils. If the teacher is very mercurial, the Jupiter qualities may need development. Conscious work in this manner will greatly strengthen the children. A well-balanced character is a fine vessel within which the children's etheric can develop.

In the upper school the pupil's astral is 'born' and is worked with. Here the teacher must, by using ego insight, keep the astral, character traits of the pupil in balance (as well as his own!). Again understanding the planetary forces and how they work can be invaluable as would be their introduction to a new teacher. The support teacher could use the planetary qualities as part of his observation and support technique.

It is important that before a teacher is hired, the school knows that he can teach, that is, hold a class, instruct clearly and with interest. The school should also have an idea of what areas of teaching still need development. In a Waldorf school where teachers must carry so much, having to carry an individual who cannot teach adequately is a heavy burden.

If the new teacher shows the makings of a good teacher and colleague the right steps need to be taken to help and encourage this development. As a matter of principle the support teacher should constantly have in mind that he is guiding/supporting the growing *will* of the new teacher. Most importantly therefore it is one step at a time. Through the interview, meeting and observation processes, the first step needs to be isolated and brought to the teacher's attention in a tactful but clear manner. And frankness is essential. Shielding a teacher from what he needs to hear is a nonsense serving no-one. But this is frankness, about the *first* step not the first 25 all at once. The latter is not support, but rather ego building or just plain incompetence on the part of the support teacher.

When this first step is mentioned to the new teacher make sure it is in the context of several good things you have observed, for example, how well he stood; how clearly he spoke (even though the class was ever so noisy); how well the lesson ended (even though the lesson was a flop). Don't just rain on his little parade. In Waldorf schools we are ever so good at nicely raining or even worse getting the person wet through without raining at all! Do you know what I mean?

One step at a time and this needs to be well structured and very transparent. Relevant colleagues and meetings need to be properly and regularly informed. A clearly set out programme of expectations/tasks needs to be in place for the first term with a review at the half term and for the first year with a formal appraisal by an 'outside' teacher at the end or near the end of the second term. The teachers who will find themselves in a support/appraisal role need to confer and agree on the parameters for such a programme of support, review and appraisal. This should be a clear College directive, recognised and supported.

The above-mentioned tasks must include the normal, professional, day-to-day work of a teacher, that is, lesson planning, the beginning and ending of lessons, clarity of voice, clarity of directions, meeting attendance etc. In this realm we often quickly become very esoteric discussing the deeper 'qualities'? Whatever they are? Let us begin at the beginning with a new teacher, is he on time for lessons; has he prepared; has he attended the teachers' meetings; does he participate in the reading of the morning verse. If we look to these we may find the new teacher streets ahead. Perhaps this is why we judge on things like 'relationship to pupils' and such like. It is important to mention the so-called little things. It is so easy to be critical because it takes no *will* to do so. It takes a will to be positive, to search out and see or hear the little achievements. You must truly look and listen for all that is taken for granted. This is hard. It is boring. It is easier by far to meander, chat, and judge around the 'important' issues.

Try always to cultivate with pupils and staff the attitude of: "This is *our* teacher" and "we are working together" to see that the curriculum is well taught.

4. If a problem arises, quickly ascertain its nature:
   a) Technique of teacher/inexperience/competence
   b) Attitude to subject
   c) Commitment of teacher
   d) Lack of challenge/challenge too great/too soon
   e) Behaviour of children in lessons

f) Time of day of lesson
g) Personal questions
h) Other

Remember that in a Waldorf school (perhaps every school!) where the teacher's task is heavy and stressful, the prevailing attitude can often be: "My lessons are fine and I've got so much on that I hope your lessons are fine because if not I won't cope". The new teacher finds himself on his own and the more so if help is given grudgingly. The keen attention of the new teacher will more easily read body language than hear nice words. Furthermore, with the above-quoted attitude, the children will quickly sense the lack of a generally accepted expectation of behaviour. Behaviour, classroom manners etc. with the new teacher can be appalling. Experienced teachers are unaware because the children do not behave like that with them. As 'old hands' we know how to entertain, charm and spoonfeed the pupils. The new teacher can't measure up. How can he follow the experienced teacher especially if there is no common ground of behaviour? Experience has also allowed teachers of long standing to form close and very personalised relationships with the pupils. This is accentuated in the close knit community of a Waldorf school. Pupils and indeed teachers too easily assume the new teacher can instantly establish this. Our memories magically fail us in recalling lessons aborted, or utterly unsatisfactory. Do we unconsciously base our expectations of the new teacher on our own present ones built up over ten, fifteen or more years?

We all know that the onus of responsibility falls on the teacher. Correct. If there is a problem the teacher must pick it up. But when I say teacher id o not mean the one teacher. This is where we constantly error. The problem in the new teacher's class is *our* problem. We are the teacher.

5. When a difficulty becomes clear, support need to follow. The support teacher needs to observe in a non-judgemental manner. What does he see and hear. What does he feel? When he observes what he sees and feels objectively and clearly his thinking is actively engaged. This thinking can then distil the essential which needs addressing. You can then work with the teacher to address this and the rest will fall into place.

If it is a problem with behaviour, which it can easily be (see 4), the support teacher could have a word with relevant pupils outside the classroom. The new teacher cannot be expected to handle all this, as well as new lessons, new people etc.

Direct help could be given in the classroom once a good relationship has been established and the children know that both teachers want a good working lesson for the sake of the children and their education.

6. The new teacher needs protection. Certain pupils may not be willing to give the teacher a chance. It does happen. And if the teacher is struggling and making some mistakes, certain parents may be somewhat over-protective of their little darlings. And parents can be all too willing to believe what the little darlings say. I well remember an experienced colleague who used to say at parent evening: "If you don't judge us on what they tell you at home, we won't judge you on what they tell us at school!" However I remember, still with fear, attending one of my first parent evenings during which a new colleague was torn to shreds by a few parents. This was a public humiliation for which he was totally unprepared. No one had spoken to him beforehand! Experienced colleagues and parents sat in silence, I in trepidation wondering when my turn would come. It did too. These parents returned home and spoke to their sons and daughter. Pupils were given power, power they were unable to handle.

7. The new teacher can be helped to be a good colleague by showing him the ropes, explaining the hidden assumptions and eccentricities. Little challenges rightly given, for example, a part in a Christmas Play, speaking the verse at a meeting can give confidence, recognition and a sense of belonging.

The new teacher needs to feel secure physically, that is, the financial arrangements need to be clear and fair, housing adequate etc. He also needs to feel safe and protected, enclosed, sheltered, for example, he is not immediately asked to be on College. The above outline contains many points which if followed would encourage his sense of belonging and self-esteem. Within this atmosphere the new colleague may successfully learn to be a teacher and soon develop his art to a high aesthetic level.

RECEIVING AND SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS

This is an article from the February 1992 Lehrerrundbrief, a periodical from the Bund. The author, Martin Keller, is from the Stuttgart School and I imagine him to be a teacher of long experience.

The supporting of a new colleague is of the utmost importance. The teacher understandably feels that he/she would prefer not to be visited in the first few weeks until he has developed a good personal relationship to the children. If he has, well and good. But if he's having problems it would have been much more successful if he had been helped in the first few days than if as a result of unskilful management he has already let the children get into bad habits. In a few painful cases, I was asked to help when it was far too late and the teachers had lost authority to such an extent that it was not possible to get it back. It should not be said: "That shows he was not a born teacher". We know that 'born teachers' are becoming increasingly rare and that we are paying a high price for our freedom in that we have lost our natural instincts, i.e. that we have to work on ourselves consciously to achieve what earlier generations could get right instinctively. As in any other profession, the teacher must bring with him certain basic qualities:

- The firm resolve to be a teacher
- A 'suit of armour' – at least a measure of basic knowledge of the methods of pedagogy and
- A certain 'something' which renders it possible that something weaves between him and the children, maybe a life of soul, trust, love, a deep contact – hard-to-describe-something – it streams out, a kind of fluidity, and without this the lesson does not breathe. Thus, if we visit a new teacher in his first week we will be able to recognise at once whether we can leave him on his own or if he needs help.

Already at this stage it is most important to see how he receives the children at the door and what can be done to see that they don't run wild round the classroom but sit down in their places until all have been greeted. It is also important how latecomers are dealt with so that the start of the lesson is not disturbed and the mood spoilt. There are some techniques which can easily be learnt for helping towards a good start. For the little ones, rhythm, gestures and little verses lead up to the mood we need for the morning verse – (the older classes need a suitable preparation as well, so that the morning verse does not become an empty routine). For example the Class 1 children should start to learn from the beginning that for the morning verse they should have their feet together and keep the hands still, since during the verse the hands are not 'working'.

Then comes the rhythmic part of the Main Lesson. One of the aims of this is to harmonise the class and make individual children so healthy that they can learn. And the children are keen to learn. You need to have a feeling for how long this rhythmic part can be. If it is too short or doesn't grip all the children in the class, then they will be restless, and if it's too long there will be no concentration in the next part of the lesson as the children are tired and bored.

Now we know that the discipline in the class and the authority of the teacher depends on whether the children go home satisfied, and with the feeling: today we have learnt something. So the aim is not to create a long transition process from the kindergarten to Class 1 (See *"Methodisch/Didaktisch" lecture 24.9.27 on lesson 1).*

Rather that from day one the children should feel how important every lesson is and how seriously, thoroughly and conscientiously everything is to be done. I have encountered nice classes which were totally undisciplined simply because they were not learning enough or working enough. So: from 15-30 minutes according to age there should be rhythmic music and speech work and then comes the thinking part – not more than half and hour after the start of the main lesson. The teacher should have prepared this thoroughly. The first sentence he utters, the first question he asks must be such that each child feels: "that concerns me, I want to hear, I'm interested", the banal, boring question: "now then, what were we doing yesterday?" isn't good enough. Better would be: "What was new, what was special that we learnt yesterday?" if you say vague things like: "today we want to go a little further with what we started yesterday", this "a little" is not enough for the children. According to the age and the material, the teacher should have prepared six to twelve good, difficult, interesting questions, that lead forward. They should be clearly formulated to link on to yesterday's work and lead into the new.

Then the writer describes how (as a new teacher) he once had to take over a weak and difficult Class 8 and invited a certain Herr R. to help and advise and to show how to do the thinking part of the Main Lesson.

The Main Lesson was Physiology. Herr R. had authority – the 'something' that is needed and the class were quiet. Herr R. asked a question re. nourishment and how it's taken in from mouth to stomach – very

challenging but prepared clearly. Silence. Then one hand went up. Herr R. indicated with a look that he had seen the hand and when five others had gone up he asked the first child. He made no comment, then asked the others. Herr R. said nothing but asked a second question which took in all that had been said but led onwards. The next quarter of an hour's work was very concentrated.

After this concentrated thinking and picturing session the children are burning to write in their Main Lesson books, for half an hour or longer. A Class 1 child is happy filling a whole page with a letter, making it better and more beautiful with care and effort. We adults are satisfied when we have understood something once; this is alright for thinking. But with the children we reach the will through repetition, repetition with beauty. (Many young teachers have a fear of repetition; we have all become strongly intellectualised). Naturally we tell the children that the mouth is not allowed to chatter whilst the hand and eye are trying to write beautifully.

Any teacher who has not managed to get the class completely quiet, at least for a time during the lesson while working or listening, will find he will hardly ever get silence in the future. The worst situation is if the teacher has got used to the noise and does not notice it any more. We should be clear that in aiming for this quiet state we are going right against the spirit (or non-spirit) of the times in our insistence that everyone listens when the teacher asks a question or is telling a story and yet we are working on one of the most important social tasks. It is also very important that the others listen when a child speaks. Then the teacher does not have to repeat in a loud voice what the child has said. If he does the class gets into the habit of paying no attention to what a child is saying, because the teacher speaks far more clearly.

After the work in the Main Lesson book we finish the lesson with a story. Everything must be packed away; nothing left on the table. A new teacher will sometimes begin when the children are still talking, packing up or running around. By doing this he is devaluing his own words and he is unlikely ever to gain the quiet and peace he needs. Others walk continuously up and down the classroom. For fairy stories this is too restless. I once saw in England a teacher sitting on a high, throne-like chair when she was telling her story; and peace, nobility and a sense of mystery streamed from her.

How long should a story last? A class needs at least five minutes to really get into a story. You don't grip the children in less than 15 minutes. Rudolf Steiner mentioned half an hour. This story time develops as well as the content which we want to impart, a sense for speech, vocabulary, a feeling for style – in short the whole richness of the mother tongue provided we take the trouble to go beyond everyday speech to a genuinely mobile (plastic) and epic way of speaking. So this part of the lesson should not be cut short or squeezed out. This should actually be able to be taken as a matter of course; in practice unfortunately it often isn't. And those things can be so much more easily set in the right direction when they are addressed from the start.

It can be a great help to a new teacher if after a few months he is given the opportunity to visit another class, even for one day. Supply teaching should be organised for this as for illness.

One more thing: it would be good if the College of one of its members were to speak to the teacher-to-be stating quite clearly that as a new teacher he would be having a mentor or tutor who would be visiting his class during the probation year even if the new teacher does not want it. Of course this mentor would say when he was visiting and if possible share his impressions on the same day. It should also be clear when a decision would be made on the result of the probationary year: before Easter, for instance; between Easter and the summer would be too late if a new direction were called for. If a new teacher, even one from another Waldorf school, is unwilling to accept the probationary year and the visits by him and to the class it should be made clear to him: "if the teaching is going well, there's no problem," but if there are problems then College is obliged, in responsibility to the school, the children and the parents, to give help and to deal with the matter.

SUPPORT FOR THE FIRST GRADE TEACHER

It is important to establish clearly how the teacher will begin to develop the habit life and the memory of the children. There must be a clear idea of the transition from the imitation by the child to the doing by the child, not out of imitation. Out of a mental picture or imagination the teacher at first shows the child how to do something. Then the teacher withdraws and watches while the child does it, on its own. Out of the watching, the teacher looks for what is being done incorrectly. Then, out of a mental picture, whenever possible, the teacher tries to correct the child. The child needs to learn to use the memory and so must make the effort alone. Later, he comes to understand. We must be sure that the children are expected to learn. The teacher should never do anything that the children can do themselves.

List of Good Habits

To be established from the first day of school

- how to enter the classroom properly
- 'walking only' in the classroom
- using an 'indoor' voice and an 'outdoor' voice
- how to lift the chair and put it under the desk (not drag it)
- care for the materials from the moment when they are given (resulting from the careful instructions given by the teacher about the way to handle each of the materials)
- there is a place for everything – order is important
- touching the chalkboard, only with permission
- the teacher's table or desk is private
- late comers must knock at the door (not during the morning verse – perhaps there could be an indicator outside during the verse)
- on the first day, speak about the morning verse which will come on the second day
- we raise hands and wait to be called on when we want to speak
- we remain seated during snack time
- gestures (rather than words) are used by the teacher for discipline

To be established by the end of the first term

- how to stand when speaking the morning verse
- how to stand still at the end of the Main Lesson with perhaps a song, a thought, a poem, or silence (and not necessarily a verse) so that the children have time to internalise what they have learned
- in common activities, every child is meant to join in
- how we tidy up the room before we leave it
- how we leave the room
- the staff room is only for teachers
- eating habits, with serviette or place mat
- cleaning up after themselves
- establishing a method of taking out crayons, books etc. and putting them away
- going to the loo – perhaps a chain by the door, worn by one at a time, to indicate that someone is out of the room
- that the teacher visualises each situation, so that it is already in the habit life of the teacher beforehand.

Things to work with throughout the first term

- children learn to put up the chairs, keep the cupboards tidy, sweep the floor etc.
- develop a plan for 'jobs' leaving room for 'remedial' tasks to be assigned to particular children
- how to manage the painting lesson, the modelling lesson etc.
- handling transitions
- dismissal procedure
- organising transition to another classroom
- passing out supplies
- where to put shoes, coats, toys
- what to do with flowers
- notes to and from home

Working together with a new teacher in clearly establishing ways to build good habits in the children is as essential as going over detailed *instructions of our Waldorf methods of teaching reading and number skills.*

Hints for Inexperienced Waldorf Teachers in the Early Grades

1. How you yourself STAND before the children is very important. ... make yourself very straight and upright.

2. PLEASE have the children standing to say "Good Morning" to you. This is the first stage of their learning to have a certain respect for you, which you will need very much in the higher grades.
3. For the most part, have the children standing up when the sing, recite poetry, play recorders ... they will be able to breathe much more freely in this position (as against sitting) and so develop a better posture. Also, alternating between sitting down and sanding up can be a great help towards discipline, and is something the class must all do together.
4. Learn to work with the attentive children and give them due praise. Every child needs encouragement; try to ignore as much of the inevitable naughtiness as you can.
5. Try to avoid saying OK in the classroom. Cultivate a beautiful, pictorial language; this will show very much in their later compositions.
6. Have much repetition, doing the same thing again but in a slightly different way. Do the times tables in short speech exercises both forwards and backwards (in the tables do not repeat 36 = 12x3 but go straight back into 33 = 11x3). It is good when the children also read their early written work both forwards and backwards. This is a great help in learning to read.
7. Be very particular about the truth of the terms you use in Maths e.g. when subtracting we often use the term "borrowing" when we have not the slightest intention of paying back! Surely "take" would be more truthful. In fractions the term "cancel" is equally incorrect, if it were you would be left with a nought and not with 1. In decimals, it is not the point which moves, but the numbers. So, be aware!
8. It is wise to invite an experienced class teacher and colleague into your first main lesson.
9. Be particular about having the children sitting up straight and attentive for the story telling. Also see they are sitting properly when they write, with feet together on the floor. Right size of desk/table to chair is important. See that the child holds the crayon/pencil correctly as it is necessary to cultivate these good habits from the very beginning.
10. You should try to cultivate a very special and beautiful writing for the blackboard; it should be other than your every day writing. It is better if the children do not use the yellow crayon for writing in their books, it shows up well on the blackboard but not on white paper, and we write so that others may read it easily. For the same reason it is better that the children do not do shading over their writing.
11. Be sure to do your special Meditation, as well as briefly reviewing each child, before doing your preparation in the evening, and again first thing in the morning when it is good also to recall your colleagues.
12. The initial interview with parents and child is very important. Be sure to have a colleague share the interview with you. Find out all you can about the child's early development and try to prepare the parents, tactfully, about the later reading etc. Have an evening for your parents at least once a term and stress the importance of attending regularly. It can be helpful to have a few books on view, e.g. Harwood's *Way of a Child*, Edmunds' *Rudolf Steiner Education* and others, and where it seems propitious, you might even suggest they buy one!
13. Start a study group with your parents. The support and understanding of your parents is vital for the sake of children and teacher alike. A weekly study group can bring the greatest blessing into your classroom for the following morning, and onwards. Be sure to visit the parents in their home once a year; if they do not invite you (for sometimes they are shy) then invite yourself, the parents are generally delighted to have you for a meal! Make a point of being shown the child's bedroom; it is helpful to see the child's environment and toys.
14. In these days it is necessary to teach the children to say "please" and "thank you", so use those words yourself often.
15. See that the child starts the day with clean hands, you may have to teach them to wash them properly to begin with. Suitable clothing and tidy hair are also important.
16. When helping a child individually with his work it is better not to squat down beside the desk, but rather to bend over the child in a protective gesture. You thus surround the child with warmth, rather, than having the child, all lonely, looking downwards onto you.
17. Ask the parents to forgo clapping when the children demonstrate from their schoolwork at a more intimate class festival. In this way, a very special mood can be endangered, a blessing alike for both children and parents.
18. It could be made more meaningful when the first day of the school year can begin on a Thursday, when possible. Each day of the week has its special character, and Thursday lends itself to being a festival day (a little Sunday) in a way that Monday does not.
19. It can be a very special and beautiful moment when the end of year reports (hand-written, of course) are

handed out to the children in the classroom by the class teacher on the last morning of the school year, accompanied by a few appropriate words for each child.

HEALTHY SIGNS IN A CLASS, END OF YEAR ONE

(Arising out of group work at the First Mentoring Conference. These 'indicators' are concerned with where the children are in terms of *being*. Where the children are in terms of *doing* was not discussed).

The pupils:

- Feel safe
- Feel cared for
- Have self-esteem
- Are learning
- Can listen to each other
- Can work as individuals
- Can work as a group
- Feel part of the class – *'belonging'*
- Are confident about making mistakes
- Are confident about taking risks
- Can respond appropriately to well-set tasks
- Have a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment
- Are eager to learn and have enthusiasm
- Feel recognised and held by the teachers
- Feel love for their teachers
- Come to school in a healthy and positive mood
- 'Breathe' healthily in the lesson
- Are able to laugh together

SYMPTOMS OF A NEW TEACHER IN DIFFICULTY

These profiles are not descriptions of individual teachers, although the accounts are based on composite pictures of real situations observed. These 'pictures' are not definitive; they can be added to, subtracted from, or challenged. The 'construction' of these two profiles was prompted by an article written by Alison Soutter, which appeared in *Paideia* 10, entitled 'When a Class Teacher is Unable to Manage'. The article by Soutter is included below.

Profile 1

- A teacher is appointed to Class One, or a class in the middle of the school. The appointment is made rather late in the year. Prior to the appointment, the applicant has a brief meeting with the class, and perhaps has even taught a 'good' lesson
- The references are based on character, rather than an informed picture of the applicant's teaching ability. In fact, the new colleague arrives with little teaching experience in Waldorf schools and insufficient Waldorf school experience
- The new teacher may have an eagerness for anthroposophical 'ideals' and an enthusiasm for the intellectual content. However, Waldorf teaching and anthroposophy have not been grasped by the teacher's will and do not arise through the will
- There may be a telling divergence between the individual's attitudes, beliefs and values and the school's traditions, body of habits and working ethos. One-sided, untransformed tendencies in the new teacher may be unrecognised, and this will become an unhealthy and counter-productive factor in the teacher's struggle
- At a relatively early point in the new year, the new teacher blames the children's behaviour. The children's apparently poor standard of work and level of knowledge is criticised, or unnoticed
- After a few weeks of the first term, the new colleague feels shocked, vulnerable, overwhelmed, ill informed and exhausted. The teacher may wonder, "Is it me or is it them? My training didn't prepare

me for this." An inability to perceive and reflect objectively means the new teacher cannot make head or tail of matters. Conversely, the teacher may attempt to cope by trying to accept the prevailing situation as the norm

- Shortly after this, the perceived, or actual, lack of agreed and consistently applied forms, policies and procedures within the school is pointed out, or blamed. This may be a fair criticism, or the outcome of a lack of self-reflection. At the same time, the commitment and level of understanding of the parents of some of the pupils is questioned. The new teacher's enthusiasm and commitment to Steiner Waldorf education, as a practice, rather than purely as an ideal, begins to surface as a question. "Perhaps I have misunderstood, or perhaps I wasn't told."
- The new colleague becomes tired, distracted, defensive and miserable. There is no time to think or do anything else except school. The teaching suffers from an absence of economy and efficiency and an enjoyment of life. Confidence drains away, common sense may also recede. Criticism, including self-criticism grows. The areas of mentoring (if it has been in place), and assessment are now becoming blurred, or are about to become entwined. Emotional scenes in the staff room, or absence from the staff room are observed. The teacher may be feeling undermined, bewildered and hounded by the pupils, colleagues, parents and him or herself. The teacher neither feels, nor is, regarded as *primus inter pares* by the children
- Half way through the year the adviser is called in and is likely to be following a 'dual-track' approach, by force of circumstances: firstly, trying to help, advise, inspire and probe the teacher; secondly, making 'confidential' reports to the College of Teachers, alerting them to the situation, while outlining a series of options
- Time races on. Suddenly, Easter looms and then the final term of the school year. What to do? Does the school institute a formal evaluation of the teacher, ask the teacher to leave, continue the induction period, send the teacher to observe experienced colleagues in other schools, or do nothing and hope that the problems and difficulties are, at the end of the day, teething problems, temporary, or, even, imagined

Profile 2

The new teacher is a 'mature' person with experience in mainstream education. The teacher has no Steiner Waldorf training, or a training with very little experience – teaching or otherwise, in Waldorf schools. She or he takes over a class, rather than beginning in class one. The appointment is made late in the year. There are few applicants for the post. The teacher has good references – professionally and character-wise. There is an intellectual connection to Steiner Waldorf pedagogy.

The new teacher comes with the baggage of mainstream methods and experiences – the positive and the negative. The teaching approach tends to be subject-led and information-based. The method is intellectual and abstract. The teacher is accustomed to discipline being sought and imposed primarily through outer structures and institutional hierarchies. Such structures and hierarchies do not figure prominently in many Steiner Waldorf schools. The incoming teacher arrives with pre-conceived notions about school, the teacher's role in it and his / her strengths and weaknesses. Early on the teacher is likely to experience a 'culture shock', when the individual's beliefs, attitudes and professional 'ways of being' meet the school 'ethos' and the reality of 'republican-style' working practices. The children's behaviour astonishes the teacher. The quality of imagination needed for Waldorf teaching is beyond the new colleague's reach and aspiration.

After a few weeks, complaints – many of which are legitimate are fairly put – begin to be articulated by the new teacher. The list might include the following: the children's behaviour – Why are so many of the children in the class apparently 'disturbed', or manifesting 'special needs'? the school's policy on discipline – either it is difficult to detect one, or, such as it is, it lacks form, consistency and consequences; the parents' lifestyle appears in some cases to cut across the grain of school life; there is a perceived lack of support from colleagues, or too much support that is not welcome or desired. Questions and doubts about the pedagogical method and ethos, as practised by the school, may begin to surface.

In the parent body there is a division brewing. Two 'factions' are identified: a) a group of parents who are strongly supportive; the new teacher has arrived promising to 'sort things out'. These parents may be fairly new to Waldorf pedagogy and unsure of what it really is. Nonetheless, these parents want what the teacher is offering; b) a group of parents who are concerned and will soon be writing letters and calling for meetings. These parents appear to have a grasp of Waldorf education and may consist of teachers, committed parents who have been at the school for some time, Camphill workers and anthroposophists.

In the class, some of the children are unsettled, others are antagonistic, challenging or subdued. Before long the some pupils leave and the class shrinks in size. There is a lack of humour in the class mood. The quality of artistic work appears to decline, while in terms of and technique, the class seems to be going backwards. The College of Teachers registers the first flickers of doubt, reluctantly. The College fields the first letters, frets, refers to the mentor and requests a visit from an outside consultant.

The new teacher believes that things could be sorted out, if the school would change aspects of its approach and throw its weight behind the teacher and his / her ideas. The teacher may be afflicted by a 'rescue fantasy', or simply lots of frustration: "Given the backing I could sort out what I perceive is a combination of sloppiness, lack of know-how and policy, bad habits and an excess of sympathy and excuses for poorly-disciplined children."

As the year reaches the mid-point, or later, the College has a problem and collegial discomfort is apparent. The adviser has laid out the options. The messenger and the message may have been dismissed or ignored by the teacher. Some colleagues may be prompted to speak out, especially if they are parents of the class, others are tongue-tied, partly out of a feeling of relief and gratitude that the class has a teacher who, as a person, is reasonable and friendly. Divisions may appear among colleagues The upshot may be that the teacher stays and the colleagues keep quiet. There is a mixed response from the parents, including some more withdrawals from the class. Another outcome may be that the new teacher resigns after a painful and acrimonious parting of the ways. Some of the parents are angry and bewildered; others are anxious and relieved.

The class has been unsettled and depending on the outcome, may now be further destabilised. They may have learned important things, yet educationally, they have not been fed. What has been resolved, or left undone karmically, is a question that is rather difficult to answer. If the teacher has left, one of the burning questions is: "Who will now pick up this gauntlet?" If the teacher stays, the situation may now be that the 'reduced' class and the parents settle down to what may be a 'non-Waldorf' education. The children may be compliant, or suppressed, for a time, or perhaps amenable in a low-key manner. Either overtly, or more likely, in an implicit way, the teacher determines to plough on, with little intention of working to become a Waldorf teacher. In this instance, difficult questions remain: What is the responsibility of the College of Teachers? Is there 'courage for the truth'? What criteria and procedures have guided the school in working with this situation?

WHEN A CLASS TEACHER IS UNABLE TO MANAGE

It is an unpalatable truth that every school goes through the painful process of persuading a class teacher to leave about once every four or five years, yet this is an issue which is rarely talked about when Waldorf teachers exchange ideas. This is understandable, since the process is so painful for the entire school community it is easier to believe that it is a freak occurrence which cannot be prevented. An alternative view is that it is a weakness inherent in the role of class teacher, because if it could be prevented from happening, with all the good will and effort which exists in the Waldorf Movement, some school somewhere would have had no experience of this in a seven year period. If there is such a school they should share their methods of selecting and supporting new teachers at a conference, or in this journal, but if there is not then each college, at a time of relative calm, should discuss the issue. The process of changing class teachers involves a number of well-defined stages:

It probably starts at the initial interview when one distinguishing characteristic of the teacher who will not be able to cope is an inability to communicate clearly and concisely. Such a problem may be overlooked by a College, which is too impressed by the profundity of the teacher's statements and does not focus on the inordinate time that s/he takes to give them. It may be that s/he is a deep thinker, but children will not wait for a teacher to formulate ideas; they want immediate answers. A teacher has to be a quick decision-maker and a warm and interesting speaker. Any teacher who bores the College at interview will not cope with a class of lively youngsters. Even if they have good references and no other teacher has presented themselves they should not be taken on as teachers. There are teachers who fail who do not fall into this category, but these slow and serious people seem to be the largest group. Before interviewing prospective teachers Colleges need to take the time to consider the qualities needed for the demanding position of class teacher. It cannot be assumed that everyone knows what they are.

Once the teacher has begun to work with Class 1 the danger sign is a lack of boundaries. The children do not seem to have a sense that they may go so far and no further. This does often happen to inexperienced teachers who can usually accept the help of an older teacher/mentor to establish rules within which the

6. **Homework**
Those children who have not completed whatever they have been asked to do can be given 'homework'. This principle provides ample opportunity for creative use of all that paper left over from Main Lesson books that were not fully filled. The art is to forget about homework until the next piece of work is given and then either the child will have "left the book at home" or will "need to leave some pages" in order to "catch up". Meanwhile the teacher is having a short nap (negative inspiration) in readiness for the next meeting.

There are of course an infinite number of complexities to the Frodlaw method into which this short account cannot enter. The above six principles are, however, the fundamental ones and applied with the requisite inconsistency recommended by their founder will be found to have a profound effect upon all our teaching.

CAUSES OF INDISCIPLINE IN WALDORF SCHOOLS

Over the past 18 months it has been my privilege to be a guest in many Waldorf schools in many parts of the world. Beside giving courses to teachers, lectures to parents, etc. and also teaching various lessons to children from Class 1 to Class 12, I have sat in upon many lessons and observed the work, the attitudes, achievements and shortcomings of the boys and girls in them. Also, of course, it has been possible to have conversations afterwards with the teachers and sometimes make suggestions on how to improve or develop the lessons. I know how valuable I have found it over very many years of teaching in Waldorf schools to have other teachers as guests in my own lessons and to receive their comments and suggestions afterwards. Much more of this sort of thing needs to be done in all Waldorf schools, not least in Great Britain and Ireland. Visitors (teachers) from Waldorf schools on the European Continent – or further afield – can be of considerable help, but I believe that teachers from schools in our own country and particularly from our very own schools can help even more. This only needs arranging (timetabling).

This is not only of great general help to individual teachers in specific areas, such as the rhythmic health in lessons, subject development and helping particular children. Most of all it can help to show the children and young people that it is not only their Class Teacher who is concerned with what and how they learn, but the whole body of teachers has a warm interest. Moreover this can help especially where problems of discipline (or if you wish, of good order and harmony) are needing solution.

Everywhere I have been one particular and extremely important cause of indiscipline has been brought to my notice. I will illustrate this by describing an experience in a fairly large and well-established Australian Waldorf school, where there is a splendid hard-working teaching staff and a very supportive body of parents. I was approached by four parents one morning and asked if I would be willing to meet their Parents' Committee that evening as there was a wish to know how British schools dealt with the matter of school rules and classroom behaviour. I thought I would be meeting a committee of ten or so parents, but when I arrived I found myself facing a packed room of fifty or more people with more coming in behind me. "O ho!" says I to myself, "Here's where you're going to have to draw upon all your resources of tact."

After giving a brief 20-minute address on how the schools of the Fellowship deal with such matters (one is always tempted to be somewhat too positive!) I was proffered a whole host of questions. They were all naturally, about their own school. Examples were given about their own children being given too much latitude in class, in time of arrival in school and in taking days off. Where the last two examples were concerned I had no problem (I haven't played such good tennis for years!) most interesting however, were comments from a few parents with clever children, who had told them that they were often bored with school. Why? When these cleverer ones had finished the work set in class and done it well, the teacher had suggested they read a book, draw a picture or something else (of a relaxed nature, please note!). Here lies the essential key to the whole problem.

So often we do not challenge our boys and girls anything like enough. This is a worldwide truth in our Steiner schools. It is particularly so where our brighter children are concerned. If you are teaching arithmetic, for instance, you must have a set of harder problems up your sleeve for those who finish the work that has been set to the class as a whole. (Don't make the opposite mistake of setting different work to start with to the cleverer ones – they need to do the simpler questions first – quickly but correctly). I always reckon to set one question at the end of my list which I know that no one will manage without help. Children thrive on challenge – right from Class 1. And then the cleverer ones are not bored. And then the weaker ones want to make more effort. And then the 'discipline' problems will begin to evaporate. Every

successful teacher knows all this. Unfortunately we get new teachers – yes, even out of our own training course – who do not seem to be aware of these things. These new teachers are not helped indeed we are criminally guilty – if we allow older teachers (who really ought to know better) to over emphasise the Dreadful Ahrimanic dangers of the human intellect. 'Intellectual' is still, even in the nineteen nineties, regarded as an anthroposophical four letter word in certain circles. If only such folk had taken the trouble to read the first book Steiner ever wrote: ***Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception***... Intellect is an essential part of Thinking Activity, even at the age of three. The Ahrimanic danger is that we do not go on to develop feeling judgement and especially that we fail to develop reason. The Christ Being first shines into us through our thinking (true, a thinking permeated with love), but we will not recognise Him if we do not develop it in them. Children enjoy thinking hard, just as they enjoy useful practical work and the deep experiences roused in their feeling life by a good storyteller.

"NOW, IF I WERE YOU..." *Comments from the 'advisory service'*

'Advisers' are most often asked to work with the new class teacher/s. The term 'advising' has a certain connotation: "... if you do it this way..." which can appear removed and disengaged. The term 'consulting' places the work more in the realm of a partnership; a teacher consults with a visiting colleague and the outcome is 'in the hands' of the teacher. When the consulting work started a few years ago there were very few in-house mentors or mentoring practices. However, informal, *ad hoc* means have always existed for colleagues to help each other. Nowadays it could be argued that the consultant's work with new teachers is not nearly so effective in the absence of on-going mentoring. Where such a process is missing the consultant's work is frequently limited to one-off crisis-managing in a school, although this is not always so.

A long list of detailed points and suggestions is sometimes less helpful for a new teacher than one essential, well-chosen point which can work homoeopathically, or act like a lever. Discussing one aspect of a lesson or a teacher's approach can improve the whole lesson, or method. It is, perhaps, most useful if the new teacher can identify such a 'turning point' him or herself.

The visiting consultant is not a peripatetic priest seeking to hear confessions, neither is he or she an alternative to speaking to one's colleagues. The outside consultant visits the school by request of the school. The consultant is employed by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF). The school is either a member of the SWSF or affiliated to it. The consultant comes to the school to work with certain teachers and faces varied, but not conflicting, responsibilities: to the pupils, the teacher, the school, the SWSF and, not least, the education.

On arriving at a school, the consultant may find a mentoring system in place, or not, a period of probation may be in process, or not, a system of assessment and evaluation may be set up, or not. In the light of the varying and variable conditions that may exist from school to school, and bearing in mind that the consultant is not an assessor, the question arose as to whether the principal of confidentiality between consultant and teacher is universal and inviolable. Sometimes the most appropriate advice which the consultant may be able to offer is "Stop", for the sake of the children, or for the sake of the teacher's health. How can such advice remain confidential? While the consultant's discussions with a teacher are private, they should not necessarily be confidential, especially if a process of mentoring and evaluation is not alive within the school. When the visiting consultant has discussions with the teacher is it appropriate for the mentor to be present?

Sometimes the adviser/consultant is asked to wear the hat of assessor, on behalf of a hard-pressed College of Teachers. While this is an understandable request it is suggested that the work of the consultant can be compromised in such scenarios, and good intentions can be transformed into uncomfortable and complicated realities, which are best avoided.

THE PRICE OF PEACE

There are few things in professional life more unpleasant than being (effectively) locked in a room with 30 children who are not fully under your control. The working atmosphere in the classroom – the extent to which you are able to create and sustain a relaxed, purposeful, controlled and co-operative environment for learning will be a major factor in your quality of life as a newly qualified teacher.

The idea of my 10-point scale (set out below) is to help teachers think carefully about the working

atmosphere in the classroom and reflect on the factors which influence it. The emphasis on self-assessment is essential if staff are not to feel threatened and defensive about the levels of control in their lessons. The model is based on the belief that it can be helpful to have some idea of where one stands on the continuum between relaxed and assured control, and anarchy. It also gives some idea of levels to be aspired to.

Used constructively and thoughtfully, it could help to reduce the disruption, chaos and noise which limit the effectiveness of the educational process and professional satisfaction which teachers can derive from their work. Thinking carefully about what levels you are working at is obviously only the first stage in this process, albeit an important one. Hopefully, this will lead to reflection on the factors influencing the working atmosphere, casual observation of colleagues' strategies, the sharing of ideas and good practice, and even the development of concerted action to support colleagues working with difficult teaching groups.

If you are at level 9 or 10 with your classes, working together towards shared objectiveness, teaching can seem a very rewarding and enjoyable job; anything below level 7 and you will be counting the minutes to the end of the lesson, and structuring the lesson around control factors rather than learning objectives. The working atmosphere is also important for pupils, who learn most effectively in a calm and ordered atmosphere. Anything below level 5 and it is difficult to see how any meaningful educational objectives could be achieved; it might be as well for all concerned to just go home.

Like the 10-point Task Group on Assessment and Testing scale which it mimics, this model is an artificial construct; though levels 1 to 5 to not occur at many schools, I have seen lessons which would fall even below level 1.

It should be stressed that the model measures the working atmosphere in the lesson, not the quality of the classroom management skills of the teacher. An unsatisfactory working atmosphere can be caused by a group of difficult and disruptive pupils, an inappropriate curriculum, a playground fight before the lesson, a badly planned lesson, poor school support systems, unclear hierarchies of sanctions or snow falling outside.

It is important for new teachers to gain an honest and realistic grasp of the extent to which deficiencies and problems are due to their own failings and the extent to which failure to reach level 10 is due to factors beyond their control. A key factor here is looking at the working atmosphere in colleagues' classrooms; why are some people better at this than others? What are they doing which you aren't? It is important to remember that if someone is a deputy head or long serving head of department, with established reputations for good discipline, this confers some unfair advantages.

Like many other factors of teaching, classroom management is an area where the reflective practitioner is more likely to develop and improve than a teacher who does not continue to look at, and think carefully about teaching skills. Some people have taught for 30 years and not attained even reasonable levels of competence, and others have quickly got to levels 7 and 8 with their classes, but not progressed beyond. After qualifying, it is important to carry on developing classroom management skills.

Having myself taught at a difficult inner-city school for many years, and witnessed hundreds of colleagues grappling with the problems posed by reluctant and disruptive scholars, there are three factors marking out more successful colleagues.

First, the manner in which you address pupils makes a difference. Some teachers gratuitously antagonise pupils by talking in a hostile way, without specifying sanctions or giving a clear warning. Accomplished teachers seem able to be firm/strict in a calm and polite manner.

Second, new teachers can underestimate the prosaic virtues of remorsefulness, patience and determination. Successful teachers are generally those who are prepared to put in enormous amounts of time, between lessons, and outside the classroom, in following things up. Getting in contact with other teachers or parents, writing things down, tracking pupils down the next day. The temptation to just get out of the room and not even think about a difficult teaching group until the next time you teach them is understandable, but needs to be resisted. It is important to develop a reputation for being someone who will follow things up and do whatever is necessary to get the standards they want in the classroom, even though this makes life very hard in the short term. It doesn't reform pupils, but eventually they will learn to pick on someone else who can't be bothered.

Third, there has recently been some debate about the lengths which teachers should go to make their lessons enjoyable, interesting and relevant to pupils. I can only say that in my experience, teachers who could do this at least some of the time, and who generally arrived at the classroom with a conscientiously prepared lesson where some thought had been given to relating it to the children to whom it would be inflicted, are most successful at earning respect from their pupils.

Teaching, though, is not like playing a backhand slice volley in squash, with one correct way of playing the shot. The most successful teachers are those who keep on learning, learn from their mistakes and improve

on their percentages through reflection and trial and error. You don't necessarily get more money for being good a maximising the working atmosphere in the classroom, but makes it much easier to enjoy teaching.

TEN STEPS BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL

Level 10
Teacher completely relaxed and comfortable; able to undertake any form of lesson activity without concern. Control not an issue – teacher and pupils working together, enjoying the experiences involved.

Level 9
Teacher completely in control of the class, can undertake any sort of classroom activity, but needs to exercise some control/authority at times to maintain a calm and purposeful working atmosphere, in a friendly and relaxed manner.

Level 8
Teacher can establish and maintain a relaxed and co-operative working atmosphere and undertake any form of classroom activity, but with considerable thought and effort at times. Some forms of lesson activity may be less under control than others.

Level 7
Teacher can undertake any form of lesson activity, but the class may well be rather 'bubbly' and rowdy; there may be minor instances of a few pupils messing around on the fringes of the lesson, but they desist on request. No challenges to authority. Class listens in silence, straight away.

Level 6
Teacher may need major effort to establish and maintain calm atmosphere. Several pupils will not remain on task without persistent surveillance, exhortation or threats. Lessons may be draining. Pupil activity may be limited by teacher to maintain control. Pupils sometimes are noisy, call out, or talk to each other at will across the room, but still no direct challenge to authority, refusal or major disruption.

Level 5
Teacher's control of the class is limited. Atmosphere at times rather chaotic, with several pupils manifestly not listening. Some of the pupils are challenging authority. Lesson format is constrained by these factors but still no open refusal, no major atrocities, just a lack of purposefulness and calm. Pupils who wanted to work could get on with it, albeit in a rather noisy atmosphere.

Level 4
Teacher takes time and effort to get the class to listen. Teacher tries "to get their heads down" on to written work as soon as possible. Lesson preparation is influenced more by control than by education. Pupils talk, minor transgressions (no pen, no exercise book, distracting others by talking) go unpunished. Teacher reluctant to sort out ringleaders, tries to "keep the lid on things" and concentrate on those pupils trying to get on with their work.

Level 3
Teacher dreads the thought of the lesson. There will be major disruption. Even pupils who want to work will have difficulty doing so. Swearwords may go unchecked; pupils will walk round the room at will. When teacher writes on the board, objects will be thrown around. Teacher can't wait for the lesson to end and be out of the room.

Level 2
Pupils largely determine what will go on in the lesson. Teacher takes materials into the lesson, but once distributed they will be ignored, drawn on or made into paper aeroplanes. Objects will be thrown at teacher rather than round the room. Teacher goes into the room hoping they will be in a good mood, that they will leave you alone and just chat to each other.

Level 1

Teacher's entry into the classroom is greeted by jeers and abuse. So many transgressions of the rules and what constitutes reasonable behaviour that teacher may turn a blind eye to atrocities to avoid confrontation, refusal or escalation. Some pupils deliberately commit atrocities under teacher's nose, for amusement. Teacher wishes he or she had not gone into teaching.

TEN WAYS TO AVOID STRESS

The final weeks of training are crunch times for many student teachers – will they pass? Will they get a job? Will they survive till the end of day, let alone the end of teaching practice? Stressful times but some ways of coping with the situation are better than others.

It is really too late to be reading books on stress reduction and, to be honest, while they may be full of sensible suggestions are they really geared to you, in your situation and, more importantly, do they work?

At the beginning of this term I gave 37 of my early years PGCE students a short questionnaire listing some of the many recommended ways of reducing the negative effects of stress during the working day.

Of the 52 suggestions the 10 most effective tried and tested strategies in their opinion were:

1st Thorough lesson preparation. It may be part of the job but it actually seems to markedly reduced anxiety, according to 95% of my respondents.

2nd Ensuring that you understand the work you are about to teach. Ditto in the view of 89% of students.

3rd Keeping the paperwork up-to-date. The bane of the profession but worth keeping under control.

4th Making an effort to get to know your pupils as individuals. Although it is tremendously important I was surprised that 86% people found this helped reduced their stress.

5th Asking teachers for advice. Many (84%) found this had a calming effect but it can be hard if you do not get along with your teacher.

6th Asking friends for advice, but choose your friends carefully!

7th Making lists. This can be very helpful in taking the strain from your overloaded brain.

8th Encouraging your pupils to be more independent. It is probably too late for you to do much about this now but it could be helpful in the future.

9th Chatting about recreation interests to colleagues. There are other things to talk about than school!

10th Learning from your mistakes and forgiving yourself. This may not be easy but 73 per cent said it was worth the effort.

It may also be reassuring that 46% did not find working harder reduced their stress while only 24% claimed it was an effective means of decreasing their anxiety.

Obviously what works for PGCE students at University of East Anglia might not work for you for reasons of personality, gender (34/37 of my respondents were female), age, situation and so on but they may be worth a try in these difficult days ... Good luck!

THE 'DEVIANCE-INSULATIVE' TEACHER[31]

From a study carried out in a comprehensive school of interactions between teachers and children. The 'deviance insulative' teacher...

Assumed that children wished to work, and if they did not work they could provide conditions in classrooms which would motivate them to work

- Had clear rules and could make them explicit
- Were firm
- Did not have favourites
- Avoided confrontations
- Rarely made negative evaluative comments on deviant children (or children they perceived as deviant)
- When they punished children, allowed them opportunities to 'save face'
- Did not denigrate children publicly in classrooms or privately to colleagues
- Were optimistic, assuming that all children would behave and cooperate
- Perceived all children as potential contributors to class activities
- Did not assume that deviant children were unlikely to alter their behaviour
- Liked and respected all children
- Cared about deviants and told them they did
- Were good-humoured and trusting
- Enjoyed meeting children outside the classroom.

THE 'DEVIANCE-PROVOCATIVE' TEACHER[32]

- Assumes that children whom they define as deviant do not wish to work, and will avoid it whenever possible
- Believes that it is not reasonable for them to provide conditions under which they (deviant children), will work, if these are different from the conditions under which other children work successfully
- Believes that discipline is a contest between teachers and children that the teacher must win
- Is unable to defuse tense situations
- Frequently issues ultimatums
- Believes in the value of confrontations and becoming involved in them
- Considers children as being anti-authority and anti-school rules
- Neglects deviant children in interactions in the classroom
- Punishes inconsistently
- Expects children, especially deviant children (or those whom they perceive as deviant) to behave badly
- Makes many negative evaluations on deviant children – to them and to colleagues
- Is sarcastic
- Believes that children, on the whole, are not to be trusted, and deviant children certainly are not
- Avoids informal contacts with children outside the classroom

NB *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1974) defines the verb 'to deviate' as "to turn aside, diverge (from the course, rule, truth, etc.)".

TEACHERS WHOM CHILDREN RESPECT[33]

Arising out of conversations with groups of secondary school children...

Yes, it is true – children do respect teachers who can control them. However children also respect teachers who:

- Do not "bore" them – in the children's eyes, good discipline goes with interest and achievement
- Are not "very strict" disciplinarians
- Do not put on acts but are themselves
- Can express genuine anger, when this is appropriate
- Do not waste time in insisting on unreal standards of quietness and conformity
- Do not shout at them and are not rude to them
- Are conscientious in setting and making homework.
- Do not attempt to be as friendly in class as they are in social situations away from the classroom
- Are humorous
- Can admit they are wrong
- Are not prepared to see school rules broken with impunity, but do not make an inordinate amount of fuss about incidents that do occur

- Continually involve children in the activities and learning experiences in their lessons
- Show that they are concerned that children attend their lessons
- Do not "treat us like kids"
- Shown their concern by taking the trouble to find out the children's names
- Are fair and treat pupils as individuals

PRACTICAL MEASURES

- A mentoring facility is developed which provides for the people involved to teach each other's class and to observe each other teaching at regular, timetabled intervals. A 'main lesson block swap' once a year is one way in which doors can be opened and experiences diversified. A mentor working with a new teacher may propose that the new colleague watch the mentor teaching first and then give comments, observations and impressions. Ideally, the mentor, as a more experienced teacher, will be able to discern which comments are helpful and which are coloured by inexperience. In addition, the mentor will learn something about the colleague's observation skills. By opening one's teaching to comment and critique, the mentor is likely to be more credible in the eyes of the new colleague. In order to encourage engagement, the student or new teacher might be directed to observe a specific problem, for example, the teacher's way of handling a particular child. If, on the other hand, the mentor comes across as a pure 'spectator', this can lead to an experience of loneliness on the part of the teacher observed who may find it harder to accept the comments of the 'expert who watches'
- The mandating of a Mentor Co-ordinator from Classes 6 - 8 to be 'main lesson free' once a week enables a whole series of permutations to open up for inter-collegial visits to be made. (See: Appendix No. 4)
- For larger staffs (numerically) and more experienced colleagues, regular mutual appraisal in groups of three or four is an alternative to the 'pairings' implied above
- The regular attendance and expectation of attendance by all colleagues at a Teachers Verse first thing in the morning
- Class Teacher invites subject teacher to observe main lesson and vice versa
- A foreign language teacher undertakes a short main lesson block – one or two weeks – in the language, on a theme such as geography or man and animal
- Each class teacher visits the next class up and prepares a report of observations for the Teachers Meeting (Class 8 teacher visits Class One)
- Where practicable, class teachers and subject teachers visit parallel teachers in another Waldorf school.
- The weekly Teachers Meeting becomes a moveable feast located in classrooms around the school. Observations and comments relating to an exhibition of the on-going work – the books, the layout of the classroom, the blackboard, the artefacts! – are a regular item on the Meeting agenda
- Main lesson block previews and reviews are a regular feature in Teachers Meetings
- Periodic 'class meetings' are held in which all teachers who teach a particular class come together to share their work and experiences
- The fostering of cross-class contact between younger and older to provide help in areas such as reading and handwork.
- Colleagues develop the habit of saying and thinking and acting "our class seven", not "my class", or "your children"
- The development of sensitive and discreet open channels of communication in which pupils can voice their joys and frustrations in an appropriate format, perhaps at the end of a working week
- Colleagues attend each other's parent evenings and parent interviews as observers and, on occasion, as participants
- Weekly assemblies or monthly festivals with a prepared and thoughtful programme of presentations, story content and themes
- A blackboard is placed in the staff room, to inform colleagues, in brief, of the variety and wealth of main lesson themes alive in the school at any particular time
- The setting up and provision of regional, one-day workshops and seminars on specific themes, for example – Reading in classes 1 - 4.
- The holding of annual staff retreats with the aim of undertaking a programme of study, artistic and social activities

QUALITIES FOR MENTORING

It is not possible, or desirable, to reduce the qualities for mentoring into a composite picture or a systematised profile. This would be a reductionist process, relying heavily on the synthesis of a collection of attributes. If such a process were to be conducted, it could take no account of the imponderable, intangible elements that lie at the very heart of human relations and, therefore, the mentoring process. As Alexander puts it, mentoring, by its very nature, cannot be institutionalised. Mentoring depends, ultimately, *"on human relationships and these have to be learned afresh and sustained by individuals."*[34] Having recognised that effective mentoring cannot be 'listed' or prescribed, it is nonetheless possible to identify a series of landmarks on the mentoring landscape, which can provide a catalyst for discussion, reflection:

Broadly speaking, the mentor needs:

- **quality** of **experience** and breadth
- to develop **observation skills**
- to be not so much a help as a **guide to self-help**
- **knowledge** content and technique
- to **refrain** absolutely from trying to create the teacher in his/her own image
- to be able to **appreciate** different approaches, different methods and different temperaments
- to be able to **unite** appreciation and criticism, open-ness and discretion
- to **listen** and be able to make sense of what is heard
- to be effective in **communicating** perceptions, observations and ideas
- to get on with colleague – to have an underlying **credibility** before the other person
- to be **unintimidating**
- to be able to **reflect** constantly on his/her own motives, reasons, strengths and weaknesses – to be a reflective practitioner
- to be able to perceive, distil and focus on the **essence** of a situation
- to be able to be **invisible and unremarkable** in the classroom
- to be **fallible**, not simply adept at self-disclosure

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

I would like to suggest that the most important job description for each of us is to discover and provide the conditions under which learning curves go off the chart. Whether we are called teachers, principals, professors, or parents, our primary responsibility is to promote learning in others and in ourselves. That's what it means to be an educator.

What sets human beings apart from all other forms of life is the ability to learn prodigiously from birth to death. The business of schools and universities is to unlock, release, and foster this wonderful capability. For me, the fundamental mandate of school reform is to examine every decision, practice, and policy, and to ask of it the question: "What, if anything, is anyone learning as a consequence of this? Who learns what from the presence of ability groups within the schools? Who learns what from the time-consuming, annual evaluation of teachers and principals?"

One definition of an 'at-risk' student, which has special meaning for me, is: "Any student who leaves school before or after graduation with little possibility of continuing learning." Schools teach many things well and other things not so well. One behaviour schools succeed in imparting is dependency training. We learn to ask, "What am I supposed to do?" superintendents ask it of state departments of education; principals ask it of superintendents; teachers of principals; and students of teachers. We read, we write, we learn when we are expected to or told to do so. All too often, when we are not told to do so, we don't. At high school commencement time, it is common for graduating seniors to burn their books and notes. In this sense, *most* students are 'at-risk', for they leave school with little possibility of continuing learning when no one is there to make sure that they do.

We might also invent the concept of an 'at-risk educator' – "any teacher or principal who leaves school at the end of the day or year with little possibility of continuing learning about the important work they do!" The perilous place of 'learning' in the life of school practitioners is confirmed by staff developers with whom I speak. Most observe that the voracious learners are the beginning, first year teachers who care desperately to learn their new craft. The learning curve remains high for three or four years at which time the life of the teacher becomes highly routine and repetitive. The learning curve flattens. Next September, the same as last

they had no trouble at all in breaking them. "There, my sons," said he. "You can see that when you are united you will be more than a match for your enemies, but if you quarrel and separate, your weakness will put you at the mercy of those who would attack you."

... we have a problem here which by its nature can never be solved once and for all, because partnership, however institution-alised, ultimately depends on human relationships and these have to be learned afresh and sustained by individuals.

R. Alexander[38]

Many thanks to all those who contributed their thoughts and words to this 'working pack'.

SUGGESTED READING

More Precious than Light	Margreet Van den Brink (Hawthorn Press, 1996)
The Good Mentor Guide	Val Brooks and Pat Sikes (Open University Press, 1997)
Republican Academies	Francis Gladstone (ed.) (SSF Pubs. 1997)
Confronting Conflict	Friedrich Glasl (Hawthorn Press 1999)
When Teachers Face Themselves	Arthur T. Jersild (Columbia University 1963)
Class Teacher Survey 1996-1997	Trevor Mepham (SWSF, 1997)
The Occult Significance of Forgiveness	Sergei Prokofiev (Temple Lodge Press, 1991)
The Waldorf Teacher's Survival Guide	Eugene Schwartz (Rudolf Steiner College Press, 1992)
Effective Classroom Management	Colin J. Smith & Robert Laslett (Routledge, 1993)
Critical Discourse on Teacher Development	John Smyth (ed.), (Cassell, 1995)
'The Problem of Teacher Training' in *The Renewal of Education*	Rudolf Steiner (SSF Pubs. 1981)
A Philosophy of Freedom	Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophic Press, 1995)
Knowledge of the Higher Worlds	Rudolf Steiner (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1993)
Social and Antisocial Forces in the Human Being	Rudolf Steiner (Mercury Press, New York, 1992)
Empathy	Baruch Urieli, Afterword in *Kaspar Hauser Speaks for Himself* (TWT Publications Ltd., Botton Village, 1993)
Finding the Sources of Rejuvenation In Teaching	Heinz Zimmermann, *Rundbrief No. 1* Winter 1995/96
Speaking, Listening, Understanding	Heinz Zimmermann (Lindisfarne Press, 1996)
Reports from meetings of the Mentors Circle in North America	Available from the SWSF Office

APPENDICES

(a) Points to Consider When Preparing Lessons – Els Gottgens

1. (a) What real **image(s)** did I bring today as opposed to **judgements** or concepts?
   (b) What images can I prepare for tomorrow's lesson?
2. (a) What **new** skill or knowledge did I offer the children today? Or a new way to do something they had already started learning? A variation on a theme? Did I find an image to bring the new thing?
   (b) What new thing(s) shall I bring tomorrow?
3. (a) Did I use the **night**? Did things from yesterday come back in a different way? For instance did they give back in the **will** today what went in through the **senses** yesterday? (Free rendering etc.)
   (b) How shall I let today's lesson come back tomorrow?
4. (a) Has every child made at least **some effort** somewhere? If not, why not?
   (b) How shall I stimulate that child tomorrow?
5. (a) Where in my lesson did I address myself to one or two temperaments? Have I treated them homoeopathically?
   (b) Where can I find one small instance to practise two opposite temperaments?
6. (a) Have I used **every** opportunity in my teaching to make them **move**? (**Do** first, **understand** later).
   (b) Where can I transiate the learning matter into movement tomorrow?
7. (a) When have I made them laugh? (A lesson where they did not laugh is a lost lesson).
   (b) Where can I make them laugh tomorrow?

(b) Questions for Lesson Review and Preview

1. Lesson plan – did you achieve your objectives?
2. What **images** did you bring?
3. Did you teach with **self-evident authority?**
4. What was **practised** in the main lesson?
5. What **new** things were in the lesson?
6. Were the different elements **related** to the main lesson theme?
7. **Recall** – the 'harvest of sleep' – did the children have opportunities to express **their** thoughts and feelings in actions and/or words?
8. Which leads/seeds will you follow/cultivate tomorrow?
9. Were you able to provide or suggest other tasks for those who had finished? E.g. helping others, reading, improving a picture, doubling the answers to a set of sums etc.
10. Timing. Are you a 'master of time'?
11. Movement and breathing – was there a rhythmical quality to the whole lesson?
12. Did you provide a variety of moods? – To enliven the pupils' life forces.
13. Did you improvise in places?
14. Did you get stuck? Let activities flow? Do too much? Too little?
15. Did each child work on his or her own at some point?
16. Did the class work as a cohesive group at times?
17. Did each child achieve something?
18. Did you address the **temperaments**? How?
19. Was there **humour**? Did they laugh? Did you?
20. Were you able to step back and observe them for periods?
21. What observations were you able to make about which children, **including** 'assessment'? Do you record these observations?
22. What did you learn? E.g. a dictation of 300 words for Class 4 is too long. I must not ask the 27

members of Class 5 to do life-size models of lions in 'plaster of Paris' in the recently carpeted classroom again. Leaving the presentation of new material to the end and then squashing it into three minutes is unhygienic and unsatisfactory. Finishing main lesson half an hour early is bad practice and means I must review my lesson plan urgently.

23. Did I teach content **and** technique? Content (learning something) can feed and stir the thinking and the feeling; technique (learning how to do something) confers independence, calls on the will and equips a pupil with skills.
24. Did you share something of yourself with the pupils?
25. Am I learning from my colleagues and asking for help, and giving help as part of my normal professional development, or only in the manner of 'crisis-management'?

(c) **An In-House Mentoring System – a Proposal**
(from a Mentoring Seminar, held in Findhoven, 1997)

- There is a clear mentoring 'policy statement' from the College of Teachers
- There are 2-3 mentors covering the eight classes of the lower/middle school
- A mentor is not a sponsor, nor an assessor
- Mentors are 'chosen'; they do not choose themselves
- A new teacher is visited by the mentor in the first week. There are weekly visits for the first 3-4 weeks. Weekly, **timetabled** discussions are held between the two colleagues. After the initial visits, further visits take place as appropriate
- There is a 'co-ordinating' mentor who oversees 'pairing' arrangements
- The College appoints the 'co-ordinating' mentor. It is a delegated position, not a mandate
- The position of co-ordinating mentor is an appointment for two years initially
- The work of the co-ordinator is seen as a 'function' and the hours are 'timetabled'. This is not a task which a colleague assumes as an 'extra' and as an addition to the timetable
- The co-ordinator is often a class teacher from the last three years: 6, 7 or 8
- The co-ordinator is 'free' from teaching the scheduled main lesson one day **every week**, perhaps Wednesday, or Thursday. This creates an opportunity for teachers to visit each other and for various permutations of 'swapping', observing, mentoring, evaluating and so forth. The co-ordinating mentor is **not** available to cover for absent colleagues. The co-ordinator's class, perhaps Class 7, has an adjusted timetable on a Wednesday morning. The morning might begin with a 'mini' French or German main lesson, followed perhaps by handwork/woodwork, or black and white drawing. After break, the class have main lesson, which might be slightly shorter than usual
- Mentoring is a 'specialisation' and mentor training is an item which is funded in the annual budget.

(d) **A Mentoring Structure – a Proposal**
(from a Mentoring Seminar, held in Findhoven, 1997)

- **The school year is approximately 36 weeks.**
- End of term and end of year events will eliminate some 'mentoring weeks'.
- 32 weeks are left in which to do mentoring work.
- The priorities for the time being are: 1) new class teachers, 2) class teachers.
- One day a week is timetabled for mentoring visits.
- This allows, for example, 32 Wednesday main lessons.
- 12-16 Wednesdays are allotted to the one or two new colleagues.
- 16-20 Wednesdays are available for 6 or 7 remaining class teachers. If each remaining class teacher (including the co-ordinator) is allotted two weeks then there are about 5 weeks left over for 'emergencies', or other contingencies.
- A mentoring structure might also benefit from other arrangements existing within a school, such as the presence of 'one week' foreign language main lessons, upper school colleagues coming 'down' to teach a main lesson in the middle school.
- As the mentoring structure develops other elements can be included: visiting class teachers in other lessons – painting, modelling, form drawing etc., mentoring of subject teachers, class teachers visiting their 'parallels' in 'nearby' schools and so forth.

(e) Pointers for Monitoring a Student-Teacher / New Teacher

Key phrases in working with many of the criteria listed below are: **'beginning to...'** and **'developing...'**

- Punctuality
- Voice – musicality, volume, clarity
- Health
- Bearing – posture, position in class
- Timing – sense of timing, timing of lesson elements
- Beginning, ending, transitions
- Planning and preparation
- Record-keeping – ability to keep records and to make use of
- Aesthetics – classroom environment
- Ability to bring humour
- Ability to tell a story, extemporise creatively, work with images 'in the moment'
- Ability to listen to the children and to help them listen to each other
- Developing technique of teaching the 2 day / 3 day rhythm
- Developing technique of working creatively with recall
- Clarity and appropriateness of instructions
- The class recognise and work with certain habits and expectations
- Blackboard skills – development of
- Growing awareness of curriculum content and relevant application of
- Holding the group, awareness of the whole (authority)
- Holding the individuals, awareness of the parts
- Gives work and sets tasks that begin to take account of different levels of ability
- Developing awareness of individual needs and difficulties
- Beginning to recognise and work with the temperaments
- Recognising and working with one's own temperaments
- The ability to ask colleagues for help
- Ability to recognise mistakes, triumphs, bad days and the way forward
- Starting to assume tasks in the school that go beyond the classroom's confines
- A growing awareness of school policies and practices
- Communicating clearly and openly with parents

(f) Guidelines for Self-Assessment (Student Teacher)

- *Structure of Lessons:* Balance of soul forces – feeling, willing and thinking activity; balance of elements: 'combustion *and* crystallisation', 'blood *and* nerve'; relation and connection to previous lessons.
- *Content of Lessons:* Appropriate for the age? Image-content? Too much material? Too little? Teacher's mastery of subject material?
- *Presentation of Lessons:* Imagination; Artistry; Enthusiasm; Clarity; Timing; catering for ability-range and age-group.
- *Work assigned:* Use of resources appropriate? planning, lay-out, follow-up; encouraging initiative; individual and collective tasks.

  Is the class working hard as a whole?
  Are the pupils performing at 'class level'?
  Are the children eager to acquire new knowledge?
  Does the teacher promote academic standards?
  What is the quality of the work like?
  Does the teacher follow through on homework, corrections etc.?
  Are the lessons thoroughly and thoughtfully prepared?
  Is the curriculum researched and explored by the teacher?
- *Care of Classroom:* tidiness, organisation, seating plan, relevance and quality of displays, adequacy and state of equipment etc.

- *Teacher's Manner and Appearance:* Tone of voice, choice of words, diction, posture and body language, choice and state of clothing.
- *Children's behaviour, attentiveness and participation:* general mood of the class, individual problems.
- *Discipline:* Teacher's awareness of situations, handling of problems, methods of creating discipline, consistency.
- *Teacher's Relationship with Pupils:* Warm and encouraging? Over-familiar? Distant? Quality of dialogue; involvement with and response to pupils, handling of class dynamics. Does the teacher enjoy working with the pupils?
- *Relations* with members of staff, pupils from other classes and, where appropriate, parents.

(g) **Teacher Evaluation – Frameworks for Criteria**

Model (a)

- *Classroom management* and discipline
- *Teaching style*: voice, self-presence, authority, children's reception
- *Teaching methods* – form, order, lesson content (healthy rhythms, content for age-groups, artistic handling of material)
- *Children's work and behaviour* – care for materials, order and form of workbooks, displays etc.)
- *Aesthetics and hygiene* in class – order, neatness, dress, room temperature, air circulation
- *Parent inter-action* – quality of communication
- *Colleague inter-action* – co-operation, participation in carrying overall organism of the school
- *Assessment* – ability to make and record relevant observations and meaningful assessments of pupils

Model (b)

- Ego presence
- Quality of Speech, gesture
- Preparation and planning
- Ability to form
- Ability to work with image, idea and practical material
- Ability to relate to children
- Ability to work with colleagues
- Ability to work with parents
- Ability to self-perceive, self-reflect
- Ability to observe, notice/assess and make meaningful adjustments

Model (c)

- To bear authority
- To work with image content
- To prepare and plan
- To select and convey essential material
- To take initiative
- To manage
- To administer
- To care
- To listen
- To relate
- To be interested
- To enthuse and show enthusiasm
- To express and appreciate humour
- To observe
- To reflect and transform

(h) *Pro-forma:* **Main Lesson Block Plan**

Academic Year.....

School Year ..... **Class Teacher** .....

Number of Hours ..... **Number of Days** .....

Brief Description of the Main Lesson Block

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Content

.....
.....
.....
.....

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this main-lesson pupils in the 'normal ability range' will be able to:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Assessment and Record-Keeping:

How will you monitor the learning and development made by the pupils and the class, set against the learning outcomes you have set? How will you assess the pupils' learning? What criteria will you use in determining your assessment?

.....
.....

Signed: ..... **Date:** .....

(i) ***Pro-forma*: Daily Main Lesson Plan**

- Date – Class – Lesson –
- Objectives of Lesson:

  What is to be *recalled?*

  practised?

  learnt?
- Components and Timings:
- Tasks / Assignments:
- Pupils to observe:
- Review of lesson:
- Pointers for the next lesson:
- Observations of Pupils:
- Self-evaluation:

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