

David Mitchell has been both a Waldorf class teacher and a high school teacher. He was trained in evaluation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to jury private and public schools in the Northeast. He is currently very active in the Association of Waldorf School of North America and has served as an adjunct Professor at Antioch New England Graduate School of Education. He lives in Wilton, NH, with his wife and four children.

Chapter 8

EVALUATION

The administration of every Waldorf School has a professional responsibility for implementing some form of evaluation procedure. The purpose of evaluation is to affirm that you are doing what you say you want to do as an individual, as a student, or as an organization. Evaluation provides an objective statement that can lead to growth, increased confidence, and interpersonal sharing. This chapter will explore teacher evaluation and student evaluation.

Teacher Evaluation:

To truly "e-value" (to draw out the "value" from) we must be able to work in complete consciousness out of collegueship. Evaluation is meant to solve problems and provide for professional growth; it is not intended to place blame. However, it must be recognized that in human organizations intentions and actions rarely coincide exactly. There **are always** problems to be unravelled.

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The manner in which a Waldorf School is governed represents a cultural deed through which the promise of renewal in society exists. Therefore, it is no surprise that Waldorf Teachers place such importance in expanding their level of competence. The teachers in the first Waldorf School, “felt confidence in the ‘power of ideas’. There were no external guarantees.”¹ The striving of the teacher is to constantly improve at our tasks. This is why evaluation is so important in a Waldorf School.

Assembled in the Society’s blue room in Stuttgart in 1919, the first building ever built exclusively for Anthroposophical purposes, were twenty four individuals who had assembled to listen to a pedagogical course by Dr. Rudolf Steiner. Dr. Johannes Tautz, the historian of the Waldorf School movement, reported that Steiner told the teachers that they were, “working on a mandate of the spiritual worlds.” The courses lasted until 3 or 4 A.M. He told them that, “Waldorf Teachers must become useful but conscious tools of the spiritual worlds. They must allow the impulse of the spiritual worlds to flow through them. The work of running the school could only be done as a group. They must be colleagues together!” He affirmed that it is difficult to do this today. They were told to think away everything that is physical (body, etc.) of the other. They were told to try to perceive **only the striving**, otherwise they would be overcome by the negative aspects of the other person, referred to as the Double. They were encouraged to cultivate the feeling that everyone knows something that they themselves don’t know.”²

Evaluation can serve a number of purposes. First, it can serve to help teachers to become as competent at their task as they are capable of becoming. Second, it can show all teachers a basis for knowing what is expected and what they can do to meet those expectations. Third, it can give the colleagues the means for having an overview of the entire school. Fourth, it can provide the means of identifying those individuals who are not able to meet the needs of the children at whose service the school is dedicated.

The first stage of evaluation is in the hiring process.

1. Johannes Tautz, April 9, 1982, Spring Valley, NY, notes of David Mitchell.

2. Ibid.

Hiring New Teachers:

The College usually appoints an individual to be in charge of letting the Waldorf Teacher Training Institutes and other Waldorf Schools know that positions in the school will be vacant in the next academic year. This person will also handle all correspondence between the school and candidates and subsequently will invite individuals to come for a visit. It is **very important** that schools **phone** for references to get candid statements. Letters are fine, but, if you really want to know the complete story about a person, speak with someone and ask questions!

Rudolf Steiner said:

“The term ‘Colleague’ means to read together out of the open book of karma. If we are in conflict with someone we will study his/her book of karma especially.”³.

Usually several candidates are brought before the College and discussed. Those candidates thought most likely to fit in to that particular school will be invited for an interview. In some cases the school will underwrite all or a portion of the cost of the visit.

Each individual is usually hosted by the school for two or three days. During this time the candidate will visit classes and have individual discussions with faculty members. They will be acquainted with the pay scale and the faculty benefits. One individual would speak specifically about the person’s spiritual path and their commitment to Anthroposophy would be asked about. A tour through the community would be given and the history of the school would be shared. Also, the difficulties that they might face in that particular community would be shared.

At the conclusion there would often be a tea or other social occasion with the faculty. The candidate would be invited to a faculty meeting where they would be asked to share their biography. They would be asked what they consider their strengths to be, what areas they will need to be helped with, what their special

3. Ibid.

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needs are, and whether they had any particular questions that they would like to ask the faculty?

In most schools the candidate is asked to think about his/her experiences for a few days after the visit. Is the group of teachers that they met a group that they feel karmically connected with? Can they envision going into the future with them? They are then asked to write or phone the contact person and inform them whether or not they would still like to be a candidate. If the reply is negative then they are candidly asked to respond why. This is then shared with the College. It is very important for the school to know how it is seen by people from the outside, so growth can take place.

If the candidate is an especially desired one they may be asked to call the school if they have any other offers that they are considering before they make a final decision. This insures that the school maintains control and is not inadvertently handicapped in its decision making process by a long list of candidates.

Once a candidate is confirmed by the consensus of the College, then some schools write a letter inviting the teacher to join the school. It is important that the decision to hire someone is made with full consensus because this makes everyone responsible for the success of the new teacher. In the hiring letter the school would write a detailed description of the position and other duties that would be expected, the pay level, and a response in writing would be requested. This is considered a legal contract.

Some schools prefer to send a formal legal contract (see Appendix) to be signed. This contract would have a detailed description of the job being offered, rate of pay, and reasons for dismissal.

Hiring New Staff:

In the case of a person being hired by the school for a non-teaching position, a complete **job description** would be written and the person would be informed whether they were responsible to the Board of Trustees, the College, the Executive Committee, or the Administrator. A timely review of their work would be planned, say within the first three months of employment.

After the hiring of a staff member or a teacher is confirmed an announcement would be made to the parents and the candidate would be invited to a social gathering where they would be welcomed and introduced to the greater community.

New Teachers Load:

The new teacher is usually given a minimum of extra responsibilities in the first year. Their class load is as small as practical, and in the case of a first grade teacher, most of their time is spent with their own class. This extra time allows the new teacher to make contact with the parents and to put down roots in the community. The faculty extends itself to help make the transition as smooth as possible and the College assigns the new teacher a mentor.

Mentoring:

The more experienced Waldorf teacher has the responsibility to assist incoming teachers by becoming a mentor. This new teacher might be a complete novice, a teacher right out of one of the training institutes, or an experienced teacher coming from another school. However, mentorship is most effective when a partnership is created – both individuals acknowledge that they can learn from each other and that they both are on a path of development.

The mentor would establish regularly scheduled weekly meetings to discuss the new teacher's work, to answer questions, to be their friend, to explain school policy, and to try to anticipate areas where they might require help. This mentor should be sure to make early class visitations, and should be acquainted with the teacher's spouse and children. The mentor represents the new teacher to the College and gives reports as necessary. The mentor would also express any perceived need of the new teacher to the College.

Colleague Support:

Some Waldorf Schools have borrowed a good idea from the Quaker Schools that is called the "Buddy system". At the beginning of the academic year each faculty member is paired off with a colleague to whom special attention and support are pledged.

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This colleague acts as an individual “care group” for the other and vice-versa. He or she would be attentive to those areas of concern that we need to know about before they become a crisis. A mutual understanding of helpfulness is encouraged between both parties and one can represent the other to the colleagues in areas such as unforeseen economic hardship, etc., where it is better to have someone speak for you than to speak for yourself.

On Going Teacher Training:

As previously discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this book the College and Faculty meetings are times of study and growth. These are times when we get to know one another and to exercise ourselves in artistic deepening.

Before the beginning of each academic year many faculties set aside 3-4 days for professional days. During this time the new faculty for the school meets to take up practical business, to study, to do speech work, sing, do modeling, painting, Eurythmy and other artistic work together. All of this warms up the faculty prior to the arrival of the children. These meetings are also the time to do biographical sharing. For example, space can be set aside for each faculty member to speak for 10 minutes about some figure in their biography to whom they feel **gratitude**. Everyone would share on the same topic spending about an hour a day each day, until everyone has had a turn. Other topics one might choose are: everyone could speak about an event around the 9 year change that they recall, or everyone could speak about a suffering and a joy from the past year — the possibilities are endless. I have found these exercises to be invaluable in getting to know my colleagues!

Other activities regularly included in faculty meetings that allow for evaluation are:

class reports where teachers speak briefly about each child in their class and give an overview on how they are meeting the challenges of the curriculum;

parent meetings where the class teacher and a College member meet with the parents of a class to discuss the children and the activities of the class;

child studies where a teacher will bring to the faculty a specific child to be discussed. The teacher would first present a de-

tailed physical picture of the child, then move to his or her soul strengths and needs, building up a picture for the other teachers to share;

pedagogical presentations where the teacher will metamorphose a prepared study that the faculty is undertaken and make it come alive;

special subject reports where the language, handwork, manual arts, and gym teachers speak about their classes and program;

office reports where the administrator or office personnel report to the faculty on their struggles, joys and work load.

The above reports in faculty meeting allow for interaction from one's colleagues and provide space for ongoing evaluative discussion.

Finally, at the closure of every faculty meeting, I have found it invaluable to have 5 minutes of **open time** where anecdotes can be shared followed by 5 -10 minutes entitled **meeting evaluation**. During this time any colleague would be free to comment on anything that occurred in the meeting. Comments might be made on how the agenda was formed; if one was offended by something that was said; if someone felt that someone else had too much to say; if someone was grateful for something that someone said, etc. This is a time to let the steam off or to express appreciation. It is not a time for debate and responses are not allowed. It is a time for colleagues to review their time together and to make any comments to the entire group. This can help to avoid backbiting outside the meeting and can insure that every issue involving colleagues is addressed in the proper forum — that is with the fully assembled colleagues themselves.

Waldorf teachers have the foundation for working together in a still deeper way, based on the work done in the Faculty meeting, as described above.

As schools expand and develop in maturity it is necessary to adopt policies that formalize a process of evaluation that may have been formerly haphazard or nonexistent.

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As Waldorf teachers we must insure that the quality of our education continues to improve. It is easy to become professionally isolated — to be spun in our own cocoon. We have the possibility to generate interest in our colleagues and in what they are doing. We can become aware of the spiritual essence of each other! We can make time to get to know each other, as we make time to get to know the children. Peer and self-evaluation are the means by which we can accomplish this.

Teacher Evaluation:

As a school matures the teachers will recognize the need for rhythmical teacher evaluations for three reasons: to help the school set its goals, to support individual development, and to uphold the quality of the school as a whole.

Many public schools use evaluation as the means of determining merit-pay. These evaluations have not always been seen as constructive. However, in the Waldorf Schools, evaluation is used solely as the means to improve oneself and the quality of the school. In reading the pedagogical works of Rudolf Steiner one recognizes that there is an objective archetypal picture of the teacher toward which we are all working. It becomes specific when you enter the classroom and see how a teacher copes with the expectations that the school has set forth.

The aim of evaluation is to confirm and acknowledge.

Self Evaluation:

Most Waldorf Schools have a self-evaluation procedure. This means that each teacher and staff member would evaluate themselves each year in both a written and an oral form. Usually the Chairman of the College of Teachers oversees the evaluation process which is an ongoing one. Every teacher would agree to following this procedure when they were hired. (See Appendix)

All teachers would appear yearly before the College and would share how their classroom management and discipline are going. They would be asked to comment on their speech, self presence, authority, give and take and rapport with the children. They would also be asked to address their teaching methods,

form, order and content of their lessons. The children's work would be spoken about, the achievement of the class, their care for materials, etc. The aesthetics and the hygiene in the classroom would also be referred to as would the teacher's relationship with parents and colleagues. (See Appendix for sample forms)

Everyone in the College would be free to comment on these presentations in the spirit of mutual growth. Strengths would be affirmed and areas of concern would be noted. The one difficulty I have experienced is that it takes true courage to be honest and frank. This must be practiced. If the self-evaluation response from the colleagues is allowed to evolve to backslapping and unbridled praise it will lose its effectiveness. The task is to be frank, honest, to use soul tact, and to speak with loving kindness.

Classroom Visitation:

Every teacher in the school would be required, as part of their schedule, to make time to visit other teacher's classrooms, at least three times over the course of the academic year. A short report of each visit should be included in that person's personnel folder. It would also be encouraged that teachers attend conferences as well as visit other Waldorf Schools.

Master Teacher Visits:

Periodically the school would invite a recognized "Master Teacher" who would visit and observe classes. They would be asked to evaluate the teachers and discuss their findings with them based on at least two visitations to each class. The Master Teacher would write a report (see Appendix) and pass it onto the teacher for him or her to read and sign. These records would be kept as part of the teacher's personnel files.

The Master teacher would be invited to the faculty meeting to give his or her impression of the school to all the teachers.

Questions of Teacher Competence:

The College of Teachers is the forum for evaluating teacher competence. Problems in this regard should be directed to this body in the presence of the teacher concerned. An evaluative discussion would follow. Whether or not the concerned teacher remains for this discussion should be left to the free decision

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of all. Either the teacher may decide to leave, or a College member may ask that they leave; otherwise, they will be part of the discussion. A written record should be kept of recommendations and decisions, and these should be communicated to the teacher within 24 hours if they were not present for the discussion, by the mentor or the designated College member.

It is important not to let an evaluation instrument grow stale. Any evaluation system is only as effective as the evaluators and what they do with it.

In her book, **Teacher's at Work**, Susan Johnson points out the following pitfalls of evaluation. Some teachers complained about: "evaluators feeling obliged to find areas for improvement" for nit-picking and "picking inconsequential problems." Others complained that evaluations were "infrequent and ritualistic." A middle school teacher complaining about evaluation said that he observed teachers keeping their best classes for the evaluation; "It's more like a staged production."⁴

Questions from Parents:

Parents or teachers wanting to raise questions about a teacher's competence should address them to the College Chairperson or to a College member, who will arrange for a discussion to take place. All Parents should be informed through the Parent Handbook, or through normal school information channels, that they have this avenue to raise questions.

Dismissal of Colleagues:

There comes a point in the process where it is understood that, for the sake of the children, a teacher cannot be retained. Hopefully, the processes above will have been successful and the teacher in question will come to his or her own awareness that they must terminate their relationship with the school. If this is not the case then a group of teachers should sit with the teacher and explain that the "confidence of the collegueship" in them has eroded. Every possibility should be extended for the teacher to withdraw him or herself. This

⁴. Susan Moore Johnson, **Teachers At Work**, Basic Books, NY, 1990, p 270-5.

karmic responsibility is something we all take upon ourselves when we join the school.

If the teacher does not resign then the College may have to dismiss them. If this is done and the above procedures have been followed, then there should exist a written record of evaluations stating the reasons and the failure of the individual to institute change. Severance pay should be decided and everything should be as clear and as factual as possible. It should be clearly expressed that the judgment is not being made that the individual is a “bad” person or incapable in other areas, however, for the sake of the children the relationship with the school has been judged unworkable. The Board should be informed of the firing and a lawyer should be notified.

When the difficulties of firing a colleague were discussed at the first Waldorf School, one teacher commented that the teacher would be sure to cause trouble in the community to which Rudolf Steiner replied: “In my opinion it is better that it suffers from without than from within!”⁵.

One particular teacher was seen by Steiner as needing to be dismissed from the school. Speaking about it with the College he said,

“It is always a problem when a colleague works more out of personality than out of spiritual striving. . .there is always trouble when someone . . . brings a certain personal tone into the affairs of the school. (This individual) brings a personal tone into everything. He finds it difficult to get down to essentials. He would like to have succeeded in becoming a Waldorf Teacher. He would like to be a poet. He would like the children to have confidence in him. The particular qualities he has make one sorry for him. We must see to it that we offer him something else instead. But he will always be difficult. For certain things that belong to the spirit of the School he will simply not understand at all, especially in the teaching of manual skills. It is very difficult to allow sympathy to play in where objectivity is essential. It is often misguided. I don’t think he has it in him to find his way into the whole spirit of the school!”⁶.

5. Rudolf Steiner, **Conferences, 1919-1920, Volume 1**, Steiner Schools Fellowship, 1986, p114.

6. Rudolf Steiner, **Conferences, 1919-1920, Volume 1**, Steiner Schools Fellowship, 1986, p112.

Care Group:

Many schools have found that a committee of experienced and caring teachers can constitute a **care group**. The care group pays attention to relationships and hardships amongst the colleagues of a particular school. These individuals can take on specific problems, and can meet with a teacher in their home or at some point outside the school. Usually the care group works under the auspices of the College of teachers and reports directly to the College Chairperson, although in some schools it is a the faculty chairperson who will bring a name to the College if someone is falling apart. In some schools the entire College serves as the “Care Group.”

Evaluating the Children:

Usually we are required to keep academic records for the children by the state. These records are to keep the parents informed as to the child’s progress and to be available to the next school in case the child transfers.

The Elementary Age Child

Waldorf School teachers are so active with their students that in the younger elementary grades a grading system is unnecessary. Rather, the teacher writes a flowing report about the child’s progress to the parents and a verse encapsulating the report is written to the child.

“A Waldorf elementary teacher stating joint spiritual and academic goals for education said: ‘We deal with the whole child — the spiritual, physical, and intellectual parts of the child, seeking to reunite these.’ In other words we as Waldorf teachers have a common goal.”^{7, 8.}

Standardized testing does not have a lot of use in Waldorf Schools and recent studies find that this might be just fine.

“. . . Edward Deci and others have demonstrated in a variety of experiments (Deci & Ryan), external accountability systems tend to undercut the intrinsic motivation of teachers and students alike and thus distort the learning process. In testing . . . the direct at-

^{7.} Susan Moore Johnson, **Teachers At Work**, Basic Books, NY, 1990, p224.

tention to low-level skills and facts . . . drive teachers and students alike to attend to (only) what is tested.”⁸.

Another study showed that there are

“. . . serious problems with so-called objective forms of testing can no longer be ignored. Many reduce learning to multiple choice test items that trivialize knowledge and learning. Many are written by educational test experts remote from classroom practice and students, and who are uneducated in the subject fields . . . The development of effective evaluations requires a recognition of the enormous potential and range of the human mind, a respect for the diversity and complexity of human cultures, and a recognition of the limitations of current pencil and paper objective testing techniques for assessing such qualities and traits with much subtlety or precision.”⁹.

On the evaluation of children, Rudolf Steiner had the following to say,

“We could give two reports, one in the middle of the year as an interim report, and another one at the end of the school year. As far as the powers-that-be permit it, just write general information about the pupils in these reports. Characterize the pupil, and only mention a particular subject if it is specifically outstanding. Be as positive as you can, and when the pupils come into the higher classes do not grade them more than absolutely necessary.”¹⁰.

The teacher will have constant contact with the parents through class evenings, home visits, the telephone, and during after school pick-up. Usually there is a parent interview conducted at mid-year where the child’s progress in all aspects of his/her school life is discussed with the parent. Then at the end of the year there are written reports by all the teachers on each child.

8. Ann Lieberman, ed., **Building a Professional Culture in Schools**, Colombia Teachers College Press, NY, 1988, p 18.

9. Beatrice and Ronald Gross, ed., **The Great School Debate, Which Way for American Education?**, Touchstone, NY, 1985, p 382.

10. **Rudolf Steiner, Conferences, 1919-1920, Volume 1**, Steiner Schools Fellowship, 1986, p67.

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In the Middle School, grades 6-8, it is necessary to have more frequently written reports to keep the parents informed of where they can help to insure good habits, or provide tutorial help. (See Appendix for example of a middle school science report form.)

It is very important that all evaluative reports are proofread by the school for grammar and spelling errors, and that each class teacher is aware of what the special lesson teachers will say so that the reports are consistent.

An example of evaluation for young children in a Waldorf School involves teacher observation. How can we observe the children better so that we can more adequately serve their needs? When we observe the children we are actively involved in a process that has our interest. Later when we are contemplating a child in the solitude of our homes we can summon up these observations as we build an objective picture of his/her being. The effort that we put into this activity calls upon the angel of the child to come to us with inspiration that can help us meet the child's particular needs.

The following are some questions we might ask ourselves to school our observations for pedagogical evaluation¹¹:

Physiological:

- Is he/she large headed or small?
- What is the color of the hair?
- What is the pallor of the skin?
- What is the shape of his/her feet, and hands?
- What is the shape of the ear?
- What is the spacing of the eyes?
- How is the body proportioned?
- Is the white moon in the fingernail distinguishable?

Movement:

- Is he/she well-coordinated, or awkward?
- Does he/she walk on toes, heels or flat-footed?
- Do his/her feet turn inward or outward?

¹¹. For background information on the relevance of these questions see the following: **NEWSLETTER, Association For A Healing Education, Volume 5**, Winter 1991; **The Study of Man**, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophical Press, 1919; **The Bridge Between Universal Spirituality and the Physical Constitution of Man**, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophical Press, 1920; **The Foot**, Norbert Glas, Anthroposophical Library; **The Ear**, Norbert Glas, Anthroposophical Library; **Curative Education**, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophical Press, 1924; **Occult Physiology**, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophical Press, 1911.

Warmth Organism:

Are his/her hands moist, cool, warm?
Is he/she usually well dressed for the temperature?
Any complaints of high fevers or headaches?
How does he/she react to being touched?

Fluid Organism:

What is his/her heart rhythm?
Notice his/her speed, endurance, strength?
Does he/she perspire a lot or a little?
Does he/she need to urinate frequently?
Does he/she drink a great deal of water?
Does he/she have a strong body odor?

Physical Breathing:

Does the child breathe deeply or with shallow breaths?
Does the child breathe through the nose or mouth?
Is the out-breath or the in-breath more pronounced?
What is the quality of his/her speech?
Does he/she snore?

Soul Breathing:

Is the child introverted or extroverted?
Is the child a cosmic or earthly child?
Is the child fantasy rich or fantasy poor?
How (and how often) does he/she laugh, cry?
What are his/her sleeping, waking rhythms?
Is his/her thinking focussed or dreamy?
How is the interaction with his/her peers?

School Work:

What is his/her reaction to discipline?
Is he/she artistic?
Is he/she adept at remembering detail?
Is he/she neat?
What is the usual condition of his/her desk?
How does he/she hold a pencil?
What kind of attention span does he/she have?
Does he/she establish eye contact?
How does he/she sit in his/her chair?

Children in Need of Special Care

There exists in most Waldorf Schools a care group which looks out specifically for those children that need extra help and attention. Ideally this group has within it an Anthroposophical doctor, a curative Eurythmist, a Bothmer gymnast, a curative painter, a Hauschka massage specialist, the school's reading/math tutor, and several Class or specialty teachers. Of course, the budget

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defines (unfortunately) what we are able to provide , but no one can deny the desperate need that exists in most of our modern children for these therapies!

How can we observe that there might be a problem when we look at the children? There are four levels of medical complexity which travel inward beginning with the physical body, going to the etheric, the astral and finally the ego. Each has a corresponding therapy, and each is more complex to deal with.¹².

The first level of deformities can be observed in the physical body. The Anthroposophical doctor might recommend such therapies as: **modeling, Bothmer gym, Feldenkreis, Rhythmic massage, lymphatic massage, or neuromuscular massage**. Indications that the physical body, or home, of the child is not as harmonized as might be are:

- Physical deformities
- Posture problems
- Poor circulation
- Clumsiness or poor coordination
- Dizziness
- Disorientation
- Nervousness
- Poor attention span

The second level can be found in the etheric body. The Anthroposophic doctor would use **curative eurythmy** as a therapy for the etheric body. Here we might observe the following:

- Poor circulation
- Spatial disorientation, including mixed dominance
- Bedwetting

The third level concerns the astral body which can be treated with **curative painting, artistic therapy and music**. These soul problems may include:

- Emotional problems

¹². Acknowledgement to Dr. Thomas Cowan, school doctor at the Pine Hill Waldorf School, who has guided my colleagues and myself in this area.

Polarity problems (expansive behavior –hyperactivity or contracted behavior – involuted)
Emotional transitions . . . life crisis – 9 year change
Asthma (soul posture of rigidity often becomes asthma)
Epilepsy . . . the soul and spirit dive down into the body and can't get out. There is a feeling of being dammed up, so a seizure results.
Problems with sleeping and waking – there are problems within the soul and astral body, children could use expansion and contraction exercises

The fourth level involves the ego. This is the integrating level. The Anthroposophical doctor might recommend intensive **speech work** and **counselling**. Recognized symptoms might be:

Problems of self esteem/self image –
Juvenile diabetes (weakness of the ego)
Problems with honesty or truth

The High School Student

The High School student needs individual and active evaluation. Besides the regular meetings with teachers and sponsors, the adolescent needs constant feedback form his/her teachers on their progress.

On the other hand, the high school teacher needs to be constantly evaluating his/her own teaching. Susan Moore Johnson writes about,

“. . . a high School teacher who was head of peer evaluations in his school explained that when a teacher was slated for review, a committee would be formed, including the teacher's department head and two colleagues of his or her choosing. After the teacher had completed a written self-assessment and the group had met to review the teacher's goals and concerns, each committee member observed one of that teacher's classes for an entire week. In addition students completed written evaluation of the teacher's work. Finally the committee reconvened to review the materials; report on their observations, and discuss opportunities for improvement.”¹³.

¹³. Susan Moore Johnson, **Teachers At Work**, Basic Books, NY, 1990, p275.

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The teacher in a Waldorf High School can use evaluation as part of a threefold process with his/her students:

- to reinforce and solidify what the student has already learned.
- to stretch the student beyond what he/she has learned.
- to activate the students' ability to think analytically and synthetically and to use discrimination. The students should be trained to be able to view problems from different points of view.

The teacher could ask the question: "How will I know the students have achieved my predetermined goal for the class?" Some criteria should be set to determine if the student has performed adequately, keeping in mind that each student will respond out of his or her individuality. Therefore, when evaluation begins the teacher must make sure the expectations are appropriate for each individual student.

When devising your own personal evaluation the following points could be considered:¹⁴.

1. Do the students have the **knowledge** to recall the material covered in the class?
2. Do the students have the ability to **comprehend** and make use of the material which was covered. Can they communicate using points they have learned?
3. Can the students **apply** the ideas that they have learned to other situations in their life?
4. Can the students **analyze** the knowledge that they have comprehended and applied and can they organize it into a totality?
5. Can the students **synthesize** the material? Can they take parts and pieces and formulate the whole?

¹⁴. David Mitchell, and Douglas Gerwin, **The Creative Learning Process**, Advance Learning, 1988, privately published work.

6. Can the students **discriminate** or judge the value of the ideas they have learned and can they **communicate** their relationship to those ideas in an independent manner?

Testing can **solidify** what the student has been taught. It should highlight the important aspects of a lesson and **be a learning experience in itself**.

To be comprehensive and fair, evaluation must recognize the students' different learning styles, and it must draw upon both their "left" and "right" modes of thinking.

Evaluations can be as varied as the lessons they test. Following are just a few general and specific ways of evaluating high school students.

In general (adaptable to virtually any subject) students are called to:

- make presentations to the class
- write block books containing notes, essays, charts, maps, illustrations, etc.
- answer unseen essay questions based upon preparatory questions given out ahead of time in a previous class period.
- take oral examinations.
- do independent projects related to the subject.

More specifically by course, the teacher can consider the following:

English

- have students write a piece in the style of an author they have studied.
- insert punctuation in an ambiguous passage
- complete sentences, saying whether the verb in transitive or intransitive.
- recognize previously unseen passages from authors they have read.

Foreign Languages

- have students write and perform skits, scenes from plays, puppet shows etc. to show fluency.
- spot the "deliberate errors" (testing recognition skills)

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- write down words and add their own synonyms (testing vocabulary)
- do oral exercises “against the clock” (testing speed and fluency)

History

- have the students “write a description in the day of _____,”
- describe typical market scene in a given historical period.
- write letters, diary entries, or newspaper articles set in the period being studied.
- make written (or oral) portraits of a historical figure.

Science

- write reports on the biographies of famous scientists, then reconstruct the report to give a short oral presentation to the class.
- prepare projects for an extra-curricular science fair.
- imagine that they have been recognized as experts on a subject being studied. Give the students 20 minutes to develop questions for the producer of the radio show to use in an interview.
- after studying starches, sugars and cellulose in Chemistry give the students 5 unknown powders in the lab and have them identify them using tests of solubility, melting and boiling points, reaction to Fehling solution, Molisch reagent, iodine, etc.

Evaluating the School:

It can be a great help for schools to have a vision into the future. This can be formalized through the writing of a **Mission Statement** and a **five year plan**. The Mission Statement is a concise statement about the goal of the school that all faculty help formulate. The five year plan has three components: an economic forecast, a plan for the physical building of the school, and a pedagogical plan showing development of the curricula offerings.

The Association of Waldorf School of North America has written **A GUIDE FOR SELF-STUDY, EVALUATION, AND ACCREDITATION FOR WALDORF SCHOOLS**. This vehicle is now being tested for suitability, so I will not go further into this subject. A copy of this guide can be obtained from the Chairman of A.W.S.N.A.

Conclusion:

It is a challenge to teach and administer in today's world. There is much present today in our society which causes obstacles both in the children and in ourselves. What we need is to cultivate an inner joy, a sense of adventure and a good sense of humor. What we are really doing is practicing new forms which will **always** be in process and will probably **never** be perfect. It is in our human striving that we make the forms come alive.

It is everyone's task to be responsible and wakeful — this is the challenge of today, and the goal of a good evaluation, for teachers, for our students and for our school!