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Developing the artistry of the teacher in Steiner/Waldorf Education (Part II)

Foreign Language Teacher Education at Freie Hochschule Stuttgart (Waldorf Teachers College)

After describing the general Steiner/Waldorf teacher education program in the previous article (Part I), this article will examine the additional courses specifically required for teaching English as a foreign language. It considers Rudolf Steiner's concept of a specific 'sense for language' as a basis for a performative approach to foreign language teaching and learning and discusses the implications of research on linguistic-kinesic behaviour for foreign language learning and for teacher education at Freie Hochschule Stuttgart (Waldorf Teachers College). It describes performative approaches to teaching poetry and prose fiction and explains the central role which both authentic literature and different forms of informal learning play in Steiner/Waldorf foreign language teaching and learning. Finally, it discusses a Steiner/Waldorf approach to teaching literature rooted in an understanding of teaching as an art.

1 Introduction

In addition to the general pedagogical and artistic courses for Steiner/Waldorf teachers of all subjects which I have described in the previous article (Part I), there are also courses in the specific pedagogy and methodology of different subjects including foreign language teaching. In this article, I will try to give an overview of this part of the program. Since these foreign language courses are most comparable and thus potentially more adaptable to other university programs, I will elaborate a few points in more detail in order to give a clearer picture of the work.

The artistic courses which are specifically required as part of pre-service foreign language teacher education include drama projects, performative approaches to poetry and prose, courses in theatre clowning, Shakespeare workshops and creative writing. These courses are taken in addition to the general artistic courses described in the first part of this article. The methodology courses are designed to give both a general background to the basic principles of L2 teaching and learning as well as a clear understanding of the specific Waldorf approach and methodology for different age groups. All students also have the opportunity to gain practical experience in Waldorf Schools in the course of their regular and lengthy internships.

Waldorf L2 teaching and learning is, to a significant degree, based on first language acquisition. This means, for instance, that the physical embodiment of language and the affective and volitional engagement of pupils in personally meaningful activities and conversation are considered to be fundamental to foreign language learning (see also the article by Martyn Rawson on L2 Learning in Waldorf Education in this issue). This underlying connection to first language acquisition leads to considering Rudolf Steiner's concept of an *innate sense for language* (Steiner, 1981).

2 The concept of an innate 'sense for language' as a basis for the Steiner/Waldorf performative approach to language teaching and learning

In Waldorf language teacher education, the hypothesis of a specific sense for language, whose sensory 'organ' Steiner considered to be the innate potentials of the human being for linguistic-kinesic behavior, is discussed as a possible basis for L2 learning. The term linguistic-kinesic refers to the extraordinary range of language-specific movements made while speaking and listening. These movements include macro-kinesic behavior which refers to those visible, non-verbal expressions of meaning through all manners of gesture, facial mimic and body attitude. Micro-kinesic behavior refers to those overlapping patterns of movements which only become visible through highly detailed study of slow-motion films which enable researchers to perceive otherwise undetectable movements made while speaking (self-synchrony) and listening (interactional synchrony). After first establishing individual units of micro-kinesic movements, it was then possible for researchers to perceive entire and overlapping organizations of movements consisting of the synchronous movements of the entire body to speech sounds and words (Birdwhistell, 1970; Condon, 1970, 1976, 1985).

It has become evident that the entire physical/gestural embodiment of language, both on macro-kinesic and micro-kinesic levels, is intrinsic to all language perception and expression (Birdwhistell, 1970; Condon, 1976; Danesi, 2021; Hall, 1973; Kendon, 2004; Lutzker, 2017; McNeill, 2005; Peveling, 2016). In his pioneering studies on linguistic-kinesic behavior, Ray Birdwhistell refers to 2,500 to 5,000 and up to 10,000 'bits of information' that are exchanged every second between two people communicating, most of which occur in the realm of overlapping micro-kinesic movements (Birdwhistell, 1970, pp. xi-xiv). Studies in linguistic-kinesic behavior have also shown that the embodiment of language through micro-kinesic reactions to *speech sounds*, which occur in interactional synchrony from infancy on and the later simultaneous and overlapping macro-kinesic 'accompaniment' of speech through gestural interaction and/or imitation can be considered as fundamental steps in language acquisition, which precede and then accompany the development of speech (Birdwhistell, 1970, pp. 3-11, 48-49; Choi et al., 2021; Condon & Sander, 1974; Ejiri & Masataka, 2001;

Goldin-Meadow, 2010; Goldin-Meadow & Alibali, 2013; Goldin-Meadow, 2014; Iverson & Goldin-Meadow, 2005; Kato et al., 1983; Lutzker, 2017, pp. 198-266; Özçalışkan & Dimitrova, 2013; Özçalışkan & Goldin-Meadow, 2016; Rowe & Goldin-Meadow, 2009).

Steiner's hypothesis of an innate sense for language, whose 'organ' is the all-encompassing range of linguistic-kinesic behavior, is thus considered as part of a larger integrated sensory organization of perception and behavior. From this perspective, the perception of language, comparable to all forms of sensory perception, is dependent on the simultaneous physiological/neurological integration of stimuli processed by different senses, i.e., hearing, seeing, proprioception, together with a specific sense for the perception of language (Lutzker, 1997, 2002a, 2017; Peveling, 2016).

The potential for the further enhancement and refinement of inborn human sensory capabilities can be seen as intrinsic to sensory organs and all forms of sensory perception. The further development of a given sense is dependent on the range and richness of sense-specific forms of experience; whether in a painter's heightened and differentiated perception of forms and colors, a musician's of tonal nuances, a chef's of smell and taste, a dancer's of proprioception and balance, the development of each sense is inextricably tied to the ways and extent it has been used. Viewing a sense for language as the underlying basis for language perception opens up fundamentally new perspectives both with respect to understanding the processes underlying first language acquisition as well as regarding the further development of this sense, including through experiencing and learning a foreign language.

The concept of a specific sense for language thus offers a theoretical perspective for an approach to foreign language learning in which the embodiment of language is integrated into the entire physical organism through the medium of the senses. Finding age-appropriate ways to incorporate those linguistic-kinesic dimensions of language which are viewed as the physiological/neurological basis of first language acquisition into L2 learning becomes a paramount methodological consideration. Viewed from this perspective, performative approaches to teaching and learning can be considered as highly effective, insofar as they are closely related to those integrated sensory and embodied processes which underlie first language acquisition.

From this understanding of the holistic nature of language integrated and embodied in the entire sensory-motor system, the emphasis in mainstream foreign language teaching on a lexical/cognitive approach focused on learning vocabulary and grammar is a striking reduction of the richness of actual communication. It also bears little or no relation to first language acquisition. The significance and relevance for foreign language teachers of research in both linguistic-kinesic behavior and in the neurological/physiological processing and embodiment

of language has been addressed in a wide range of publications (Lutzker, 2002b, 2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017, pp. 267-305; 2018, 2019; McCafferty & Stam, 2008; Piazzoli, 2018; Quinlisk, 2008; Sambanis, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Sambanis & Walter 2019; Sime, 2009; Walter 2020).

Both the artistic and the methodology courses are designed to help students develop an awareness of these dimensions of language and to support them in learning to incorporate them into L2 teaching. This means acquiring both a well-grounded understanding of the relevant scientific background to this approach, as well as being given ample opportunities to acquire those skills which this understanding of language calls for. How the foreign language can be taught in school needs not only to be understood and 'learned' but, most importantly, also practiced and both the artistic and methodology classes are designed to incorporate different types of practice which will then be fruitful for language teaching (See Lutzker's part I in this issue for a more extensive discussion of the specific role of practice in Steiner/Waldorf teacher education.)

The different and concrete forms that this approach can take in Waldorf foreign language teacher education will be explored in the following sections of this article. I will attempt to do this by giving an overview of those courses which are part of the Bachelor's and Master's Programs at Freie Hochschule Stuttgart.

3 Bachelor of Arts in Waldorf education with English as a second subject[1]

For students in the Bachelor's program who along with studying to become Waldorf class teachers also intend to teach English as their second subject, their entire second year is an intensive "English year". This year is conceived as an immersion course taught entirely in English, with the primary focus being the daily study of the English language, including the study of literature, the histories of different English-speaking cultures, the history and development of the English language (see Norman Skillen's article in this issue). It also includes a 4-6 week cultural-historical program in the United Kingdom or Ireland. A central element of the "English year" is an intensive 6-8-week drama project.

[1] All of those students in the Bachelor's Program are studying to be class teachers which means they will teach the same class over the course of grades 1 to 8 (in some schools from grades 1 to 6), in a wide range of subjects. In Waldorf schools they do this in the daily main lesson which begins the school day and lasts between 90 and 120 minutes depending on the school timetable. The main lessons are taught in subject blocks of 3-4 weeks. In addition to their role as a class teacher they will also teach a separate second subject which they often teach in their own class and in other classes as well. The possible second subjects at the Freie Hochschule from which students can choose include music, art, physical education/sports, handicrafts, media pedagogy, and English as a foreign language. It is only after the completion of the Master's Program that they are fully qualified to be class teachers and teachers in their second subject.

In the third Bachelor's year there is a general introduction to the underlying principles of language acquisition and language learning, as well as a general introduction to the pedagogy and methodology of L2 teaching. There are also two artistic-performative courses which are generally given in this year if they have not already been offered as part of the "English year". The first is a course in *lyrical theatre* and the second is a course in chamber theatre. They can be considered as essential elements in the artistic development of Waldorf language teachers. As each of these courses have proved to be easily and fruitfully adapted to other programs, I will explain them in more detail.

3.1 *Lyrical theatre*: The performance of poetry

The term *lyrical theatre* refers to a way of dramatizing poetry in small groups.[2] Usually working in groups of three, students are given a choice of poems with the general instruction to 'take the poem off the page' and into the realm of performance. The poems from which they can choose are in most cases a selection of 20th or 21st century poems of a manageable length which seem to fit well to a performative approach. Some examples are Mary Oliver 's poems "When Death Comes", "the spirit likes to dress up", "Wild Geese"; Billy Collins' "On Turning Ten", "Questions about Angels"; e.e. cummings' "anyone lived in a pretty how town", "what is". The students are asked to experiment with different possibilities of dramatizing the poem as a group with the final aim of performing for an audience. The one stipulation is that while they can decide to repeat or cut lines, they cannot change any of the words.

On the first day I read a selection of poems to the students and, after they make their choices, ask them to form groups of three to work on the poems they have chosen (in some cases, they choose to do this in pairs or in groups of four). Afterwards, and on all the following days, the sessions begin with 15-20 minutes of different drama warm-ups for everyone before they go to work in their respective groups. The time framework they are given to do this varies but generally they will have about three sessions of at least an hour apiece to rehearse their poems.

They are strongly encouraged not to spend too much time talking *about* the poem, but, as soon as possible, to begin experimenting with how it can be transformed into movement, speech and different forms of interaction within the group. During the course of the first session, I briefly visit the different groups to answer any questions that may have arisen. In the course of the next sessions, I will observe the work of each group and give them feedback

[2] I am indebted to my former student and now Waldorf teacher Theresa Hermanns who wrote about this approach to working on poetry in an excellent Master's thesis and who suggested this term. Both her thesis and my own understanding of this artistic form have profited greatly from the work of director-actor Robert McNeer, who has contributed an article to this issue in which he also discusses this approach to working with poetry.

on what I am seeing and offer possible suggestions as to how what they have already come up with could be made more accessible and moving for an audience. This feedback almost invariably involves helping them to realize that even when they are not speaking, they are still a vital part of the performance and that their active listening or responding to whoever is speaking and to what is being said is essential to holding the performative 'space' of the poem.

Having done this for over thirty years, first in schools in 12th grade classes, and then in pre-service and in-service teacher education, I have never ceased to be amazed how pupils, students and teachers are able to discover ways to creatively and movingly embody their poems, which are then performed for an audience consisting of the students in the other groups and invited guests. After each performance there is a short feedback session in which the audience is given the opportunity to respond to what they have seen: The audience's appreciation of both the poetry and how the group has managed to bring it to life is an essential part of this work. After all the groups have performed, there is a final session reviewing the entire process. Students often express that through this work they have not only developed a very different connection to the poem they worked on, but to poetry in general. They also frequently say that both through their own experience of working on a poem, as well as having had the chance to see the poems of others, they have been given new impulses and ideas for working with poetry in school.

3.2 Chamber theatre: Performing prose fiction

Chamber theatre is a term which embraces a large spectrum of possibilities of theatrical performance, often of material not specifically written for the theatre. It is an approach to theatre and performance which is strongly connected to the pioneering work of Robert Breen and Wallace Bacon at Northwestern University (Bacon, 1972; Breen, 1978). I have often worked with a particular form of chamber theatre in high school classes, as well as in pre-service and in-service teacher education, which involves transforming prose literature – a short story, or an excerpt from a novel – into a dramatic mode.

It belongs to the richest possibilities of prose fiction that it enables the author to subtly and 'invisibly' shift back and forth between internal and external perspectives through a third person narrative voice. Thus, a third person narrator can be both 'within' the characters, disclosing their intimate thoughts and feelings to the reader, as well as an objective observer describing, for example, the necessary background regarding what has already taken place, or the particulars of the setting and what needs to be 'seen'. It is this broad spectrum of possibilities which prose fiction offers that chamber theatre seeks to adapt into a corresponding dramatic form. In comparison to typical theatrical (or film) adaptions of a prose work, in chamber theatre the third person narrative 'voice' is transformed into the actual 'role'

of a narrator who as a narrator-character takes an active part in the drama, embodying those different roles and perspectives which a third person narrator can have. In chamber theatre the nature of the relationship and interaction between the narrator and the other characters becomes an essential part of its dramatization. For both the performers and the audience the nature of these interactions can offer fascinating insights into the story.

An essential part of the creative and artistic work in transforming prose literature into chamber theatre is writing the script. It is with this task that the students begin. In most chamber theatre scripts the language of the original work remains unchanged. This means, for instance, that characters can actually refer to themselves in the third person when they are speaking 'their' lines. Line for line the decision has to be made whether 'the voice' or thoughts of a character are expressed in such a way that they should speak those lines themselves or whether the 'voice' is that of the narrator whose own recognizable way of 'speaking' becomes apparent in the language and tone of what is said. The process of dividing up the lines according to whether a character or the narrator should speak a line requires a sensitive process of 'listening' carefully to what is written and then often trying out different variations before deciding what seems most convincing. For high school and university students (as well as for teachers attending in-service workshops) it becomes an intensive lesson in 'close reading'; sensing and feeling of what is revealed in (or within) a single line or passage, deciding who that line could 'belong to' and then critically listening to the different choices that can be made.

To give a more concrete picture of this work, a short description of how this process unfolds in practice follows. The following excerpt is taken from the beginning of James Joyce's short story "The Dead" from *Dubliners*.

> Lily, the caretaker's daughter, was literally run off her feet. Hardly had she brought one gentleman into the little pantry behind the office on the ground floor and helped him off with his overcoat, then the wheezy hall-door bell clanged again and she had to scamper along the bare hallway to let in another guest. It was well for her she had not to attend to the ladies also. But Miss Kate and Miss Julia had thought of that and had converted the bathroom upstairs into a ladies' dressing-room. Miss Kate and Miss Julia were there, gossiping and laughing and fussing, walking after each other to the head of the stairs, peering down over the banisters and calling down to Lily to ask her who had come.
>
> It was always a great affair, the Misses Morkan's annual dance. Everybody who knew them came to it, members of the family, old friends of the family, the members of Julia's choir, any of Kate's pupils that were grown up enough, and even some of Mary Jane's pupils too. Never once had it fallen

> flat. For years and years, it had gone oft in splendid style, as long as anyone could remember; ever since Kate and Julia, after the death of their brother Pat, had left the house in Stoney Batter and taken Mary Jane, their only niece, to live with them in the dark, gaunt house on Usher's Island, the upper part of which they had rented from Mr. Fullham, the corn-factor on the ground floor. That was a good thirty years ago if it was a day (Joyce, 2006, pp. 151-152).

When students begin to address the question of who should speak the first lines of the story, the complexity and subtlety of Joyce's writing already becomes apparent. The fact that the name of the character and the description of her position are established right away is necessary for the reader's orientation. However, in deciding how to divide up the text, they will need to listen closely to the 'voice' that is speaking here. Hearing the first two sentences spoken aloud (and they need to be spoken aloud), they can begin to sense that we are hearing the breathless voice of the maid who has to run back and forth through the long hallway attending to the guests. The short first sentence is followed by the extremely long second sentence; speaking it aloud allows us to sense both what Lily is doing and feeling. Through speaking aloud and listening closely they might also discover more, for instance, the alliteration in the first line. They might come to notice that the word "literally" in the first line is actually (and literally speaking) a word that is used incorrectly in the sense of its actual meaning. However, when one looks for an alternative, the ingeniousness of Joyce's choice becomes evident. These first two lines can be convincingly spoken by Lily herself. The next lines in this paragraph offer different possibilities which can be tried out. What can be dramatically effective is something like the following:

> Kate: But Miss Kate,
>
> Julia: and Miss Julia
>
> Kate: had thought of that and had converted the bathroom upstairs
>
> Julia: into a ladies' dressing-room.
>
> Kate: Miss Kate
>
> Julia: and Miss Julia
>
> Kate: were there
>
> Julia: gossiping,
>
> Kate: and laughing
>
> Julia: and fussing

Kate: walking after each other to the head of the stairs,

Julia: peering down over the banisters and

Kate and Julia: calling down to Lily to ask her who had come.

There are, of course, different ways of dividing up these lines, including using the narrator as well.

When one listens to the beginning of the next paragraph, it becomes quickly apparent that another voice can be heard. The entire background to the party is given and many relevant details are mentioned. It is an engaged, yet objective recounting of the past. All this speaks for this passage being spoken by the narrator. And yet, when listening closely to the last line of the given excerpt: "That was a good thirty years ago if it was a day", they can perhaps sense that another voice may have suddenly joined in. The language and tone of this line stands out. It does not exactly fit to the previous ones. Could it possibly be spoken by Kate and/or Julia?

The process of going through a text in this manner creates a number of challenges. First, students are called upon to read the text exactly, trying to perceive the nuances of what is expressed both in the lines and between the lines. They need to actively engage in the felt experience of 'entering into' both the content of the story and the language of the author. Since this work is done in small groups, an openness and flexibility to try out different ideas about how to divide up the text is also required. The entire process of arriving at a consensus, which is often revised during the rehearsal process, can be seen as a further form of practice; learning to more clearly sense what can be revealed and expressed through dividing up and speaking the lines in different ways, and experiencing the unique joys of a collective creative process. The initial work on the script seamlessly leads into the rehearsal phase in which passages and scenes can then be acted out and further theatrical elements regarding movement, gesture, blocking a scene etc. can be worked on. The role of the teacher during this process can be to visit the different groups and give feedback on what she is seeing from the perspective of the audience.

I have often chosen to have students work on a single short story and have had groups work on different parts of the story, so that in the end the whole story could be performed. There are a wide range of possibilities for a performance. The simplest involve speaking the text aloud in a classroom as a form of 'readers theatre' in which the characters, with their texts on music stands, try to bring the story to life solely through a dramatic reading of the text, somewhat comparable to a radio play. A second possibility is to actually enact the text in an 'empty space' without costumes or sets. Finally, a full performance with costumes, sets lighting etc. is also possible although generally more artistically challenging than performing a

play. I have usually chosen the second possibility, but naturally there can be good reasons for each variation depending on the particular situation.

3.3 Literature in performance as a foundation for teaching literature

Both lyrical theatre and chamber theatre offer pupils and students the possibility to artistically and performatively engage with and embody literature in imaginative ways. They offer new possibilities of actively discovering what lies in a poem or a work of prose fiction. Experiencing a literary work through these forms of interpretation is invariably a heightened experience of literature. Henry James refers to the "close pressure" of speaking and listening to a literary work read aloud and he goes on to say: "For it is only under such pressure that literature gives out its finest and most numerous secrets" (James, 1934, p. 346.). Bringing a poem or a story to life, letting it be heard and seen is, for most students, something completely new. They experience literary works in unexpected ways through performing them and watching the performances of others. Both through the heightened experience of the work itself and through the artistic challenges posed by embodying and performing literature, the entire process often affects students deeply. This kind of performative/artistic work in pre-service and in-service teacher education can be considered a foundation for the development of different artistic approaches to the teaching of literature in schools.

At the end of their third and final year of studies in the Bachelor's program, those students who have chosen English as a Foreign Language as an additional subject will have attained both a theoretical and an artistic basis for language teaching. What they have not yet studied is the concrete methodology for teaching pupils of different age groups in Steiner/Waldorf Schools. The specific methodology of foreign language teaching constitutes the main focus of the language teaching courses in the Master's program.

4 Master of arts in Waldorf education: Learning the methodology of Steiner/Waldorf foreign language teaching[3]

In this program the focus is on learning the specific methodology of Waldorf foreign language teaching at all age levels. The way/s in which the methodology courses are taught are strongly rooted in the concept of 'learning by doing'. Students are also given a further opportunity to put what they have learned into practice in two four-week internships during that year. In addition to the regular methodology courses taught four times a week for 90 minutes over two semesters, there are intensive methodology or artistic weeks, each usually consisting of ten 90-minute sessions. They include a week of theatre clowning. There is also a second intensive week of drama workshops focusing exclusively on rehearsing and performing scenes from Shakespeare plays (see Martyn Rawson's article on teaching Shakespeare in Waldorf schools in this issue).

The methodology courses are designed to offer future language teachers the requisite methodological skills and repertoire for teaching foreign languages from grades 1 to 12/13. Because of the central role of pedagogical anthropology in Waldorf Education, which was discussed in Part I, both the contents and methods of language teaching are inextricably tied to addressing the age-related developmental stages of children and adolescents. Although there is naturally a spectrum of ages within any single class, one of the underlying principles in Waldorf education is that a class stays together throughout their entire schooling which means that pupils are almost never required to repeat a school year and thus these age differences will tend to be considerably less than in schools where pupils can be 'left back'.

Placing a primary emphasis on common, age-related physical, emotional and intellectual developments, as opposed to a common range of language proficiency, has far-ranging implications. On the one hand, it becomes easier to find materials which can appeal to a specific age group, particularly with respect to affectively engaging pupils. On the other hand,

[3] In addition to the general education courses discussed in Part I, the Master's Program also offers regular courses specifically for foreign language teachers. These courses are for both those graduates who have completed the Bachelor's Program at the Freie Hochschule, as well as for post-graduate students who have completed their Bachelor's or Master's in English at another university and have accumulated enough credit points or their equivalents to be accepted into a three semester course of studies leading to a Master of Arts in Waldorf Education. In this group there are both students majoring as class teachers with a foreign language as their additional subject and students who bring the formal requirements to also teach a foreign language in high school and whose goal is to become exclusively foreign language teachers. For those students who completed the three year Bachelor's program at Freie Hochschule Stuttgart, there is still a full second year of the Master's program in which they have a three month internship in a school as well as the task to write their Master's thesis. In consultation with the department faculty, they are also required to deepen their studies in foreign language teaching with individual focuses.

the range of language abilities in classes is often much broader than in state schools where students are generally streamed by ability and the very weakest students may be required to repeat a year . This concept of accepting and working with considerable diversity in language abilities reflects another of the fundamental and integrative precepts of Waldorf education in which pupils with a varying abilities and talents all remain in the same class throughout their schooling.

4.1 Informal and formal language learning

The most obvious consequence of the abovementioned understanding of a specific sense for language lies in the different ways in which drama and theatrical elements are integrated into the methodology of foreign language teaching in Waldorf schools and correspondingly the prominent role which drama and speech play in the entire teacher education program. However, engaging pupils emotionally, physically and cognitively in different types of activities is by no means limited to drama, but can be seen as a *leitmotif* going through the entire Waldorf foreign language curriculum in which different possibilities of enabling pupils to experience 'knowledge in action' are integrated into language learning.

In the different games of first graders, in the regular reciting of poems or singing songs at the beginnings of lessons in the lower school, middle school and high school, in creative writing, in storytelling, in the abovementioned performative adaption of a short story, in performing poetry and in extensive reading projects, pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to engage in activities in which the target language is used extensively with the primary focus on the activity itself (see also Ulrike Sievers' article in this issue).

Thus, studying the methodology of Waldorf L2 teaching implies also learning ways of drawing upon different forms of *informal or incidental language learning* in which through taking part in a broad range of activities the foreign language is actively used, but the primary focus is not on language learning per se. Although each of these activities also requires different types of cognitive and intellectual engagement, they differ from much mainstream language learning insofar as there is a primary emphasis placed on the emotional, imaginative and physical involvement of the learner. The intellectual processes that are called upon are not generally focused on conscious language learning, but rather on what the activity itself requires.

For instance, creative writing in Waldorf foreign language learning is not designed with the intention of having pupils work on improving their grammar or expanding their vocabulary, but rather on having them enjoyably engage in the activity itself. Of course, this is also the case in different contexts and courses outside of Waldorf education! Through this process, pupils have the opportunity to express themselves in a creative and individual manner while

also developing their aesthetic sensibility and critical thinking. At the same time, they are given a broad range of opportunities to significantly improve their language skills. Creative writing understood and practiced in this manner has increasingly become a core element of the Waldorf approach to language learning (Denjean, 2016; Lutzker, 2016; Sievers, 2017). It has also proved to be one of the most effective approaches in confronting the challenges of teaching very heterogeneous classes insofar as both weak and strong students are often inspired to do their best and most sustained writing (Denjean, 2016; Lutzker, 2015; Kiersch et. al, 2016; Sievers, 2017). After completing large-scale projects, such as writing their own short stores, pupils receive an extensive written and/or oral feedback from their teacher, along with a corrected version of their work which is then rewritten, and often becomes part of a final portfolio for that school year.

Naturally, there are contexts and areas in which conscious language learning also plays an important role, most notably in the study and practice of grammar. Learning the grammar of a foreign language in age-appropriate ways and with methods based on a specific Waldorf approach, is also an important element of the Waldorf foreign language curriculum, most prominently in grades 7, 8 and 9, but in comparison to much traditional language learning it does not play a dominant role in the general curriculum.[4] (Regarding the Waldorf methodology for teaching grammar, see the interview with Silvia Albert-Jahn in this issue.)

4.2 Literature or course books? A decisive choice

Course books continue to remain the most decisive factor in shaping the contents and methodology of most foreign language teaching worldwide (Richards 2014; 2019; Benevides 2016). They are traditionally based on a grammar syllabus which determines the sequence of language forms to be taught (Tomlinson & Masuhara 2013, 2018). One of the most far-ranging consequences of an approach strongly rooted in the processes of first language acquisition and emphasizing different forms of artistic-performative activities and informal language learning, is the decision not to use traditional course books. Renouncing the clear structure and well-designed progression of a good course book presents obvious and significant challenges for language teachers and correspondingly for teacher education. At the same time, it is evident that the underlying principles upon which they are generally based – the careful progression of vocabulary and grammar, along with their corresponding materials and activities – bear little or no relation to the processes of first language acquisition. It is also

[4] This is a topic which for reasons of space cannot be addressed in detail here. The reader is referred to the following works in German: Denjean (2000); Kiersch, Dahl & Lutzker (2016), and Kiersch (1992) in English. There are also differences with respect to the more prominent role which the study of grammar plays in learning foreign languages such as French or Russian.

evident that an approach to foreign language learning emphasizing the embodiment of language and the affective engagement of pupils will not be served well by traditional course books.

The pivotal role of course books in most traditional language learning can, in many respects, be compared to the role of *authentic literature* in Waldorf foreign language teaching at all levels. Although in the first three grades foreign language lessons are taught exclusively orally – writing and reading generally begin in the 4th grade – the poems, stories, games, songs they are actively 'doing' can also be considered as forms of literature, insofar as their origins lie in the different cultures and traditions from which they come, as exemplified by English nursery rhymes (see Christoph Jaffke's article in this issue). They were not created for L2 learning, but for enjoyment. The same is true of the first readers, followed by children's and young people's books in the middle school (see the interview with Silvia Albert-Jahn in this issue). These texts are, in most cases, authentic literature from the different cultures of the target language, and different forms and genres of literature remain the essential thread going through the entire foreign language curriculum from the early grades on, and up through high school. There are clear advantages of working with literature in terms of awakening genuine interest and engagement and thus the methodology which is required to do this in very heterogeneous classes becomes a primary focus in Waldorf language teacher education.

5 The art of teaching literature in a foreign language

It is an experience I imagine that everyone working in teacher education has encountered: While trying to learn new and unfamiliar ways of teaching, those methods that students had previously experienced in their own school times, although often not consciously remembered, re-emerge as unreflected behavior. In my experience, it is particularly in working with literature that many students in teacher education (and practicing teachers) have considerable difficulties in transforming the underlying principles of Waldorf foreign language teaching into their own teaching practice.

What commonly stands in the way is a focus on explicit language learning as part of a tacit understanding of how literature in a foreign language needs to be taught. Such unquestioned beliefs show up in both obvious and subtle ways: for instance, in the types of questions that are asked, in the tempo of a lesson and in the entire pedagogical atmosphere which is created when a literary text is treated as a means of language learning. An approach to teaching a work of literature which 'interrupts' the affective and imaginative connection to the work for the sake of improving language skills, has, at that moment, prioritized language learning over deepening the experience of the work itself. It is invariably an act of 'distancing' – a stepping outside of the story, play or poem – in order to learn (and perhaps write down) vocabulary

and/or to draw attention to a grammatical structure with the aim of improving grammar skills. The affective and cognitive experience of a work of literature on its own terms is being disturbed, and it is my conviction that such interruptions reduce and, in the long run, very much diminish the experience and enjoyment of the work itself, sometimes beyond repair.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty offers a radically different understanding of what can happen in an encounter with a literary text:

> If someone – whether an author or a friend – understands how to express himself, then the 'symbols' of language are immediately forgotten – and what remains is the meaning. The perfection of language lies apparently in its invisibility. *Therein lies the power of language*. It is what leads us to meaning; it hides itself from our sight through its own activity – its triumph is to extinguish itself, and beyond the words, to offer us a chance to enter the realm of the author's thoughts – so that, afterwards, we believe that we have communicated with him without words, from mind to mind, spirit to spirit. (…) Only in this sense can the reader or author say with Paulhan "*At least for this fleeting moment, I was you"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1984, p. 34, emphases in original)

Helping pupils who are reading literature in a foreign language to forget the "symbols of language" and to experience that "what remains is the meaning", to enable them "to enter the realm of the author's thoughts" and communicate with the author "from mind to mind, spirit to spirit" clearly calls for a very different approach than focusing on enhancing language skills. The decisive methodological question is evident: How can such experiences be made possible in a foreign language in which many pupils may not understand many of the words which the author has used? Clearly, many of those same attributes which have been described as being essential to the art of foreign language teaching are called for (Lutzker, 2022).

In preparing students to teach the lower grades, in which the lessons are conducted entirely orally, the focus in teacher education is on both artistically practicing and learning an extensive repertoire of songs, games, poems, and stories which are appropriate for those classes, and on learning how to coherently and artistically integrate them into teaching practice. In the methodology classes for the lower grades this is primarily a 'learning by doing' (see Christoph Jaffke's article in this issue). From the point at which the first readers appear in the 4th grade, new methodological questions are considered. It would not be feasible in the context of this article to attempt to explore in any depth or detail how literature at different age levels is taught in Waldorf schools and how the methodology for doing this is practiced in teacher education. (The article by Christoph Jaffke on grades 1-3, the interview with Silvia Albert-Jahn focusing on the middle school, the article by Martyn Rawson on teaching Shakespeare in high

school and Ulrike Sievers' article, all offer concrete examples of school practices.) What I will try to do below is to elucidate some general considerations.

As discussed above in the descriptions of lyrical theatre and chamber theatre, the pupils' *felt experience* of the work itself is paramount. The artistic and methodological demands placed on the teacher include introducing and then 'accompanying' a text, while simultaneously trying to create the appropriate pedagogical atmosphere for a particular literary work in that particular class. As Silvia Albert-Jahn explains in her interview, in the middle grades (5 – 8), this often calls for a kind of brief artistic/performative introduction to what will be read that day which will already convey enough of the meaning and emotions to facilitate the encounter with the written text. Particularly for the less advanced pupils such 'preludes' to the work will make it significantly easier to understand and connect to what will then be read afterwards.

While reading the text, the ongoing attempt to awaken and deepen interest, to create and sustain the 'atmosphere' of a literary work can be evoked by giving different students the opportunity of simply reading passages aloud while the others are following the text, or by giving pupils the opportunity to briefly prepare and then 'perform' parts of it. In a first encounter with a work of literature in a foreign language, clarifications of meaning at some points are usually inevitable, but, ideally, they remain within the feeling, mood and 'rhythm' of the text, heightening and not disturbing the experience of what has just been read and heard. Thus, one of the crucial skills that students studying to become Waldorf foreign language teachers are learning is how to identify what truly needs to be clarified (which is certainly not every unfamiliar word) and then support their pupils by doing this in ways that do not interrupt the flow of reading the work itself.

What remains for teachers and pupils to accomplish together is to go deeper into the work itself, to illuminate more clearly and thus sense more fully what lies in the words and between the lines. In reading and listening to a work of literature, the reader's imagination is continually called upon and the teacher can very much support such imaginative processes by asking questions which draw attention to those aspects which can heighten the imaginative and felt experience of the work. Naturally, this occurs in very different ways depending on the age of the pupils and on what is being read.

Particularly for older pupils a delicate balance between subjectivity and objectivity, nearness and distance will increasingly be sought. Vladimir Nabokov has described his understanding of the underlying relation between the inner experience of the reader and her actually learning to 'see' and experience what the author has written:

> What should be established, I think, is an artistic, harmonious balance between the reader's mind and the author's mind. We ought to remain a little aloof and take pleasure in aloofness while at the same time we keenly enjoy – passionately enjoy, enjoy with tears and shivers – the inner weave of a given masterpiece. To be quite objective in these matters is of course impossible. Everything that is worthwhile is to some extent subjective… But what I mean is that the reader must know when and where to curb his imagination and this he does by trying to get clear the specific world the author places at his disposal. We must see things and hear things, we must visualize the rooms, the clothes, the manners of an author's people (Nabokov, 1980, p. 3).

It has been my experience that the most decisive element in attaining this level of engagement with a literary text *is the nature and quality of the questions which are asked*. Asking the right question at the right moment hinges on the teacher's sensing of what is called for in a given situation. Closely akin to all artistic processes that occur in time it is dependent on a dynamic and continually changing perception of what will best serve one's pupils at that moment. There are, first of all, those types of questions whose intention is to enable those pupils who have not understood what has just been read to follow the thread of meaning through listening to the answers of their classmates. At the same time, for those pupils who have more or less understood what was read, such questions can also serve to draw closer attention to aspects or details which have not been fully realized or felt. These are questions and answers which should proceed as quickly and 'seamlessly' as possible, so as to not interrupt the flow of the work more than necessary and to enable pupils to remain in the 'mood' of the work. Questions such as "What words did you not understand" are not helpful in this respect and, in fact, create a distance to what has just been read. In contrast, after reading the above-mentioned first paragraphs of "The Dead", questions such as "What are your first impressions of Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia?" "What have we just found out about their lives?" "What do we now know about their annual dance?" enable pupils to remain in the story and, at the same time, will help pupils to gain a clearer impression of what they have just read.

There are other types of questions which can lead to discussions with neighbors, groups, or with the whole class. These questions are generally open questions, without a clearly defined or expected answer. In that sense, they can also be considered to be authentic questions and not 'teachers' questions' in which the teacher already knows the 'right' answer to the question she asked. Finally, there are homework questions designed for individual reflection that require more time and effort. Providing pupils with a range of different homework questions and thus giving them the opportunity to choose those questions *they* want to address is an essential part of working on literature in an individual manner. The kinds of questions should take into account the different types of pupils in a class and each question, in its own way,

should offer pupils a chance to deepen and express their own personal understanding and experience of what has been read. It has been my experience that designing an interesting range of homework questions is one of the most essential tasks in a teacher's preparation. One of the important considerations in teacher education thus becomes having students discuss possible homework questions that could serve these goals. Naturally, the approach to the different types and roles of questions in teaching literature which has been advanced here is not specific to Steiner/Waldorf L2 pedagogy. Undoubtedly, there are practitioners in very different contexts working with similar goals and methods.

The methodology classes on teaching literature attempt to deeply engage the students in works of literature themselves while, at the same time, also continually considering how this could be accomplished in language teaching. Whether teaching (or performing) an Alice Munro short story, a Mary Oliver poem, a Shakespeare scene, it is the spirit of the work itself that one continually attempts to evoke and the ways of doing this require the requisite artistry of the teacher. Like any art, this needs to be practiced, and like any true artist a teacher will then need to continually re-create it anew in her classes. Attentiveness, enthusiasm and joy in teaching and performing literature are called for. When students have had chances to fully experience this for themselves in their teacher education, it will later serve them well in their classrooms. This direct relation between the goals and methods of Waldorf teacher education and the goals and methods of Waldorf teaching can be seen as both fundamental to Waldorf pedagogy and as intrinsic to its understanding of the study and pursuit of teaching as an art.

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