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Paul Worrell

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PAUL WORRELL

INTRODUCTION

We all know that "crickets" moment in our teaching. You ask a question and the room goes quiet. Adequate wait time is given, and one brave student finally speaks up to answer the query. Other students visibly relax, but then the glazed expressions begin. For many teaching librarians, "losing the room" is a common occurrence. In my own teaching, this is a common frustration, and not one unique to library instruction. As a former elementary educator, I recalled ways that helped engage and spark interest in my students. It was always the days when students had a hands-on, creative activity where the most learning occurred. This reminded me of a particularly creative course in my LIS program where the instructor used an unusual teaching pedagogy: Waldorf education. The goal of this paper is to share a brief background of this pedagogy, discuss its application to library teaching, and include hands-on classroom techniques.

HISTORY OF WALDORF EDUCATION

Perhaps appropriately so, Waldorf pedagogy is named not for its founder, but for the first school based upon this teaching philosophy. Rudolf Steiner founded the first Waldorf School in 1919, for the children of the workers at the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory (Ullrich, 2014, p. 33). It is from this factory that the pedagogy takes its name, and while Steiner originally founded the school based upon his anthroposophical teachings, the education has continued to grow and transform over time to become a distinctive pedagogy of its own.

Anthroposophical Foundations

In a detailed biography of Rudolf Steiner's life, Ullrich describes anthroposophy as a philosophy wherein individuals are freely capable of accessing and understanding the spiritual world (2014, p. 23). Steiner defines spiritual discovery broadly and followers of anthroposophy engage in art and other sensory experiences to develop their comprehension (Selg, 2010, p. 11). Steiner first wrote about applying this philosophy to schooling in 1907 in his publication *The Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science* (Ullrich, 2014, p. 32). It is because of these spiritual foundations that many modern educators are unaware of or unfamiliar with the pedagogy. However, Waldorf education does not implicitly teach students to follow any specific religion or spiritual cause, rather Steiner believed in the spiritual nature of all human beings. The core idea behind anthroposophy-inspired schooling is simply the idea of developing "free, independent, moral, and creative human beings" who realize the inherent spirituality in the world and themselves (Goral, 2009, p. 4).

First Waldorf School

At the first Waldorf School, Steiner was able to apply his philosophy to the classroom, and fulfill his dream of developing creativities and spiritual understanding in students. This was also the first unified school in Germany to allow students from all social classes to attend (Ullrich, 2014, p. 81). Ullrich describes how revolutionary this was, stating: "In this school all children have the same right to the development of their personality, irrespective of their sex, social background and the demands of the state or economy" (2014, p. 81). Many of the aspects that have come to define Waldorf pedagogy began in this first school, including the

practice of governance by cooperating teachers and parents, having no grades or failing students, and having a classroom teacher stay with the same class for multiple years. This latter practice was according to Steiner's philosophy of teachers serving as a guiding personality to cultivate students' personalities, creativity, and wonderment of the world around them (Goral, 2009; Ullrich, 2014). The original Waldorf School proved to be so successful due to its openness and celebration of student individuality that over time, many other schools following the tradition have opened.

Growth and Expansion

According to a study of Waldorf education, Paschen estimates there are over 1000 Waldorf schools all over the world (2013, p. 191). They are most active in regions near Germany like Austria, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands. Many Waldorf schools exist in the United States, appealing as an alternative to traditional schooling (Boland & Demirbag, 2017). As recently as 2015, even China has had advocacy and support for incorporating Waldorf Educational practices into their schooling (Mu Peihua, 2015).

Rudolf Steiner therefore began a revolutionary type of schooling, which has since expanded to become its own entity. While still founded upon anthroposophical beliefs and theories, Waldorf teachers today have created an educational pedagogy that continues to grow and engages learners in myriad ways.

WALDORF PEDAGOGY

Waldorf education broke ground in its acceptance of people from all social strata, but it also took a radical approach to how learning and teaching take place in the classroom. As the primary goal of Waldorf pedagogy is to develop creative people with a strong sense of morality and spirituality, learning becomes more than knowledge acquisition. A common description of Waldorf schooling includes the threefold goal of developing head, heart, and hands (Goral, 2009; Woodard, 2005). Accordingly, this means that while Waldorf teachers spend class time covering curricular content, they also promote emotionally affective teaching and develop observational and experiential skills in students. Waldorf education outlines distinctive roles for the teacher as well as an emphasis on student developmental stages and learning domains.

Waldorf Teachers

The primary aspect of Waldorf education that remains similar to traditional schooling is the focus on teacher-centered instruction (Ullrich, 2014, p. 151). Waldorf teachers are the ultimate authority and guide to facilitate students' development and creative awakening. They are also the muse and artistic example in the classroom. A recurring metaphor is the Waldorf teacher as a gardener, nurturing the students to help them blossom and grow into their own personalities (Goral, 2009; Ullrich, 2014). In her description of public school teachers adopting Waldorf methods, Goral states teachers should "continuously seek new ways of presenting information…love learning for its own sake and see gathering new skills and ideas as something that feeds their souls, helping to recharge them for their day-to-day work" (2009, p. 92). Goral goes on to cite Steiner directly, explaining that "[t]he teacher must be one who never compromises in the heart and mind what is untrue… [t]he teacher must never get stale or grow sour" (2009, p. 93). The concept of letting one's teaching become stagnant is a recurring element for why many educators decide to adopt Waldorf methods (Petrash, 2010, p. 116).

Student Development and Learning Domains

Individual growth and personal development are core aspects of how Waldorf education defines learning. Woodard (2005) explains when Waldorf educators first consider the moral needs of students, they clear away potential distractions or problems that hinder learning (p. 84). The foundational goal of Waldorf education accomplishes this through its focus on the threefold support for head, hands, and heart, incorporating space for students to explore curricular content as well as develop emotional awareness and skills. Nordlund (2013) builds on the Waldorf threefold approach, describing the stages of development in students: willing, feeling, and thinking (p. 14). Stage one is willing and doing when children ages 0-7 learn through play, exploration and mimicking the adults around them. Stage two is feeling, when 7-14 year olds develop their imagination and creativity through artistic expression and physical experiences. Lastly, stage three is thinking and judging from adolescence on, where students begin to become reflective, self-sufficient problem solvers (Nordlund, 2013, p. 14; Ullrich, 2014, p. 74).

Creativity and expression are the common threads that weave throughout the stages and learning domains within Waldorf education. There are of course many more aspects and subtleties to the theoretical underpinnings of the pedagogy, but instilling a sense of creativity and freedom of thought in students is the foundation for teachers to inspire, lead, and facilitate learning in the Waldorf classroom.

WALDORF METHODS & LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

Teaching librarians also must inspire and lead in the classroom, and as such often seek out effective teaching strategies. Within the LIS field, many articles describe the latest teaching technique or foundational theory to support student learning and effective instruction (Gilchrist, 2016; Mestre, 2010). However, I have yet to encounter the intersection of Waldorf education and library instruction. This may stem from the lack of awareness due to the spiritual aspect to the pedagogy's origins, or could be from the field's tendency to stick to what works. Regardless, Waldorf methods dovetail remarkably well with information literacy instruction, due to several commonalities between the fields and their respective pedagogies' inherent goals and beliefs.

Shared Educational Beliefs and Goals

The primary educational shared goals of both Waldorf education and library instruction are an emphasis on lifelong learning, de-specialized knowledge, and a commitment to critical thinking. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education provides frames and dispositions that support the development of lifelong learners (American Library Association, 2015). Specifically, the frames "Research as Inquiry" and "Information Creation as a Process" include descriptions of preparing students to think beyond higher education and consider the impacts of information creation on society (American Library Association, 2015). Waldorf pedagogy mirrors this commitment in its development of individuality and morality in students. According to Petrash (2010), "Educators should prepare children for life, not just graduate school or future employment" (p. 21). Ullrich (2014) and Selg (2010) further share how Waldorf graduates believe their education instilled in them this curiosity for lifelong wonderment.

Library instruction also crosses disciplines in a way that reflects Waldorf education's commitment to de-specialized content knowledge. Waldorf educators view teaching as an art, presenting all subjects creatively and artistically, often intertwining (Petrash, 2010, p. 74; Goral, 2009, p. 120). Ullrich takes this further, criticizing universities for relying on siloed experts so much so that students cannot connect the content knowledge to everyday reality (2014, p. 177). The ACRL framework provides support for de-specialized knowledge, outlining how students need to understand and recognize information creation and the construction of authority across varied disciplines (American Library Association, 2015). Librarians and Waldorf educators alike actively blur the lines between academic disciplines, helping students understand that content knowledge is not isolated.

Both library instructors and Waldorf teachers also recognize that effective education is more than knowledge acquisition. Petrash (2010) identifies the folly of fact-based instruction as new information supersedes old beliefs on a regular basis. In contrast, experts state how Waldorf teachers prepare students who are perceptive, critical, and understand the world in a more intimate way (Petrash, 2010, p. 26; Selg, 2010, p. 12). This resonates with how library instructors are increasingly distancing themselves from "teaching to the tool" or using demonstrations. Instead, librarians help students to be critical interpreters of information, determining bias and intent while unpacking authority. Waldorf educators, who constantly work towards helping students to question the world around them and reimagine a better society, share this trend towards a more critical pedagogy (Goral, 2009, p. 96).

Waldorf Techniques in the Library Classroom

These shared beliefs and goals explain why many techniques used in Waldorf classrooms are a natural fit for library instruction. One technique I include in almost all of my library instruction sessions is creative storytelling (Goral, 2009, p. 72; Petrash, 2010, p. 48). Instead of outlining the peer-review process for an English composition class, for example, I share the "storyline" of an article I want to publish, embellishing its journey from start to finish using colorful and descriptive language. Injecting open-ended questions throughout stories also increases engagement and allows students to unpack specifics. I modulate my voice and facial expressions, performing the story and emotions to engage with students.

After more teacher-centric activities like storytelling, I like to change the classroom dynamic and invite students to work either individually or in groups. A common Waldorf practice is to allow students to create an artistic interpretation of a concept (Nordlund, 2013, p.18; Petrash, 2010, p. 29). Invite students to mind map their topics on construction paper using markers and other coloring utensils. Students can also use sculpting clay to create a representation of an abstract idea. Sometimes it is important to add a few rules such as no timelines, or no use of written words in their depictions to encourage creativity.

Waldorf students write daily, creating their own lesson books rather than using a content textbook (Petrash, 2010, p. 92). This can be an effective way to engage students in for-credit library classes, having them create a journal logging daily lessons and activities through reflective writing. In one shot instruction sessions, I use writing to have students either start or finish a lesson. We often do "chalk-talks" at the outset where students all have a writing utensil and answer a shared question on a whiteboard or chalkboard (Brookfield, n.d.). This group activity allows multiple conversations to happen simultaneously, with the only rule being you cannot speak aloud. Writing is also an excellent way to make space for wondering (Nordlund, 2013, p. 15). I often begin or end

a session by passing out quarter or half sheets of paper and ask students to write down what questions or wonderings they have. We then center our current or follow-up library session on their specific questions and concerns.

Another Waldorf practice I commonly include in instruction is empowering students to discover and play with library resources and concepts (Nordlund, 2013, p. 16; Petrash, p. 23). Instead of demonstration, which eats up a lot of class time and invites glazed eyes, I task students with exploring a specific database or topic, either identifying effective search strategies or preparing a brief presentation for their peers. We also try to "break" tools by seeing what they can and cannot do, allowing students to test the limits of what the library can offer.

Waldorf pedagogy is a natural fit for library instruction because of their shared goals and educational beliefs. I pulled the teaching techniques described here directly from Waldorf educators and experts, but they are by no means exhaustive. I encourage librarians to try out these activities and also adapt and discover their own.

CONCLUSION

Grounding our library teaching in educational theory and pedagogy is increasingly important for our continued growth in the field. It is my hope to introduce others to the fun and creative practices of Waldorf education. From its origins in Rudolf Steiner's spiritual anthroposophy to the creative approaches of K-12 teachers today, Waldorf education continues to evolve and push the boundaries of traditional education. I challenge you to apply Waldorf methods in your information literacy instruction and engage your students' creativity. By offering them time and space to wonder and question, we come closer to the goal of developing individuals with a well-rounded appreciation and understanding of the world around them.

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