



2023\_04\_21 SEA submission to the Teacher Expert Panel.docx

## STEINER EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

### RESPONSE TO THE TEACHER EDUCATION EXPERT PANEL DISCUSSION PAPER 2023

Steiner Education Australia

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21<sup>st</sup> April 2023

Steiner Education Australia (SEA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper.

SEA is the peak body comprising 51 member schools and 16 Associate Members across Australia. We represent nearly 10,000 students and their families, in all states and territories. Steiner education is an integrated and holistic education designed to provide for the balanced development of human intellectual and cognitive faculties, artistic and imaginative capacities, socio- emotional development and practical life skills. Parents consciously choose to enrol their children in Steiner/Waldorf schools for the pedagogy underpinning the ACARA recognised Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework (ASCF).

This submission focuses on reform area 1: **Strengthen ITE programs to deliver effective, classroom ready graduates.**

#### **Introduction**

We were pleased to read of the many positive and effective steps outlined in the Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper (TEEPDP) 2023.

The TEEPDP Reform Area 1 contains many identified strengths and reforms that Steiner Education Australia would support as included in best practice in teaching and learning. We particularly acknowledge the importance of the following *Effective Pedagogical Practices*<sup>1</sup>, which have also been incorporated into Steiner /Waldorf pedagogical practice and Steiner Teacher Education programs:

- Spacing and retrieval practice across two or more lessons and routines that embed retrieval.

This is known as a 3-fold rhythm over at least two days in Steiner education and incorporates steps of teacher artistic presentation of the overview and steps, followed by student recall and creative expression and then application of new conceptual understanding.

- Explicit teaching, breaking down learning into smaller outcomes and modelling of each step.

We fully support the teacher modelling skills through arts-based modalities as well as experiential practices. Students are able to see the skills, strategies or new understandings unfold within an holistic overview and in small steps.

- Purpose and relevance are important as introductory components for new material. In Steiner education this can occur through the initial descriptive or narrative presentation that brings the whole picture and its meaning in context. This motivates students as they see the skills or understanding in a whole-of-life context. They experience the presentation of the learning overview and goals at the initial phase of the lesson.

- Steiner Education Australia also supports: Formative assessment, effective questioning and tailored feedback as well as multi-tiered systems of support.

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<sup>1</sup> TEEPDP 2023

**In the section on Classroom Management <sup>2</sup> we support the inclusion of ITE programs that have proactive practices around many of the strategies mentioned.**

Rules and routines are also a focus in Steiner initial teacher education where recall of the previous day's work at the beginning of lessons and a brief end of lesson review in pictures or examples promotes learning and active engagement.

Clear expectations, a predictable physical environment, modelling of expected behaviours and a positive teaching and learning environment are also included in current initial teacher education programs in Steiner education.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Broadening the evidence-base of teaching practices**

The initial focus on the most rigorous and relevant evidence- based practices in education from meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and literature reviews is defined in the discussion paper as having:

*broad consensus from rigorously conducted evaluations that they work in many cases across various contexts, for different subgroups of students and in various locations.<sup>3</sup>*

Steiner Education Australia strongly believes that other evidence-based teacher education and teaching practices should be considered which hold crucial keys to effective student learning.

Steiner education in Australia has research to evidence <sup>4</sup> successful Steiner graduate outcomes, and our pedagogy including arts integration, imagination, teacher learning dispositions and agency all find resonance in much educational research and in SEA's own

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid pp16-18

<sup>3</sup> Ibid p5

<sup>4</sup> Haralambous, B., & Carey, M. (2021). Australian Steiner Graduate Outcomes Research Project Report. Chatswood: SEA

growing body of research<sup>5</sup>. Embracing the arts and social-emotional learning as pedagogical tools employed across curricula and as integrated into the whole education experience, opens opportunities for diversity, creativity, genuine enquiry, and risk taking for both school students and teachers alike.

## 2. Incorporating a wider definition of learning

The definition of learning explicit in the Core Content (page 7) is related to **retention of information** and is mentioned in many contexts, for example:

*Understanding the function of the human brain as it **learns and retains information** gives teachers a foundational understanding of **why** specific instructional practices work, and how to implement them.*

*Research shows that an understanding of these principles to support effective instructional methods has a real effect on rates of learning and **retention of information** in the classroom.*

Rather than the narrow focus mentioned above we suggest that identifying three aspects of a good education<sup>6</sup> include: qualification (encompassing acquisition of knowledge, skills and

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<sup>5</sup> For example: Lee, B. K., Enciso, P., & Brown, M. R. (2020). The effect of drama-based pedagogies on K-12 literacy-related outcomes: A meta-analysis of 30 years of research. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 21(30). Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea21n30>

Barton, G., Baguley, M., & MacDonald, A. (2013). Seeing the bigger picture: investigating the state of the arts in teacher education programs in Australia. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(7), 75-90; Martin, A., Mansour, M., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., & Leim, G. (2013).

The role of arts participation in students' academic and non-academic outcomes: A longitudinal study of school, home and community factors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 709-727;

Carey, M. D., Davidow, S., & Williams, P. (2022); Re-imagining narrative writing and assessment: a post-NAPLAN craft-based rubric for creative writing. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 45(1), 33-48

<sup>6</sup> Biesta, G. J. J. 2015 What is Education for? On Good Education, Teacher Judgment, and Educational Professionalism. In *European Journal of Education*, Vol 50. No 1,

disposition), socialisation (ways of being and doing, cultural life) and subjectification (active initiative, taking of responsibility). The emphasis on academic achievement, and also therefore on accountability of teachers through academic scores of students, limits the scope of what a good education encompasses.

Further, while culturally responsive learning is included as a current priority, the background values, interpersonal and communication skills and initiative required in all areas of life are not highlighted in the ITE program.

Consideration of other definitions of learning are also seen as essential from the perspective of the goals of the Alice Springs ( Mparntwe) Education Declaration.

For example:

**Goal 1: Australian education system promotes excellence and equity.**

This goal describes responsibilities of the Australian government and education community and teachers, as part of the education community, need diverse skills including those to:

- Recognise the individual needs of all young Australians, identify barriers that can be addressed, and empower learners to overcome barriers.
- Ensure that education promotes and contributes to a socially cohesive society that values respects and appreciates different points of view and cultural social, linguistic and religious diversity.

Teachers will need more than cultural responsiveness. They will need to have experienced transformative learning, have reconstructed their own unconscious learning dispositions and biases and know how to develop artistic, hermeneutic learning experiences and to support such learning in safe and caring spaces in schools.

**Goal 2: All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.**

This goal incorporates much more than successful retention of information. The following descriptions of capacities of confident and creative individuals require development of life-long learning dispositions through transformative learning. The teachers who lead this learning must themselves have been through a process of development of both foundational and higher-level dispositions for life, for learning and for their profession.

As well as arts-based integrated pedagogies mentioned above, it is therefore vital for the development of strong learning dispositions in the student teachers themselves. This is not strictly to do with the types of core conduct to support meeting the teaching standards, but explicit building of dispositions in teachers will enhance resilience, building of teacher identity, and sense of self-efficacy which are strongly correlated to improved student learning outcomes in the broadest sense<sup>7</sup>. Further, the development of learning dispositions develops into sustainable professional dispositions through participation in practice.<sup>8 9 10 11</sup>

Dispositions are different to individual competencies in that they form a coherent whole including qualities, ideals, self-identity and beliefs. They need to be seen holistically and understood as

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<sup>7</sup> Achurra, C., & Villardón, L. (2012). Teacher's self-efficacy and student learning. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences*.

<sup>8</sup> Rawson, M. (2020). A Theory of Waldorf teacher Education Part 1: learning dispositions. *RoSE—Research on Steiner Education*, 11(2).

<sup>9</sup> Dahlin, B. (2017). *Rudolf Steiner: The relevance of waldorf education*. Cham: Springer.

<sup>10</sup> Jefferson, M., & Anderson, M. (2021). *Transforming education: Reimagining learning, pedagogy and curriculum*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, M. (2018, July). Our schools need to take a mighty leap into the future: let's dump outmoded practices and mindsets. *EduResearchMatters*.  
<https://www.aare.edu.au/blog/?tag=learning-disposition-wheel>

integrated into the whole person in context. A recent set of evidence -informed teacher dispositions created by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship in the UK<sup>12</sup> includes being disposed to:

- Observing and understanding their practice and their pupils
- Create powerful learning environments in ways that are health creating and foster a sense of coherence.
- Create original lesson plans rather than use standardized materials; teaching creatively with enthusiasm to inspire students.
- Practice professional reflection, participate in ongoing teacher learning and self-development.
- Pedagogical tact in interaction with students – of an improvisational and ethical character, including sensitive insights, active thoughtfulness, and the creative ability to act caringly and appropriately in the immediacy of the moment.
- Enable students to develop learning dispositions such as resilience, creative playfulness, interest in the world, narrative empathy, democratic capabilities, ability to form judgements, ethical dispositions.

These have been developed as part of guidelines for Steiner/Waldorf Teacher Standards in the UK with the underlying premise that teacher education involves transformative learning<sup>13</sup>.

### **3. Study of Alternate Pedagogies**

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<sup>12</sup> Bransby, K., & Rawson, M. (2020). *Waldorf Education for the Future. A framework for curriculum practice.* London: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

<sup>13</sup> Bransby, K., & Rawson, M. (2020). *Waldorf Education for the Future. A framework for curriculum practice.* London: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

Steiner Education Australia recommends an approach that deepens study of diverse pedagogies during ITE. Alternate recognised curricula such as Steiner and Montessori and their foundational pedagogy bring multi-perspectival learning.

A focus beyond summaries of evidence-based practices, which looks at child development in relation to deeper pedagogical understandings will create generative principles beyond fixed methods.

This will allow innovation in practice developed in response to diverse contexts, rather than relying on meta-studies and assuming that application will be largely universal<sup>14</sup>.

Deep learning for the student teacher is possible when fixed knowledge interplays with possibilities in these multi-perspectival contexts. This relates to the concept of *Bildung*<sup>15</sup> in which new horizons of understanding and steps in self-formation result from remaining open to other perspectives. Through such hermeneutic processes the teacher develops a sense for understanding the pedagogical context<sup>16</sup>.

This links to the concept of teacher agency:

*teacher professional agency as a resource of cognitional, motivational and attitudinal resources is continually constructed and re-constructed dependent on context, object of activity and prior experience*<sup>17</sup>

The teacher will develop through a *pedagogy of interruption* in which pre-existing concepts have to change and a higher perspective is contemplated, allowing new ways of seeing and being<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Ladwig, J. G. (2010). Beyond academic outcomes. *Review of Research in Education*, 34(1), 113-141; Ladwig, J. G. (2018). CRITIQUE: On the Limits to Evidence-Based Learning of Educational Science. *The Wiley handbook of teaching and learning*, 639-659.

<sup>15</sup> Gadamer, H.G. (2013). *Truth and Method* (J.W. a, DG Marshall, Trans. revised second edition ed.)

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> Toom, A., Pietarinen, J., Soini, T., & Pyhältö, K. (2017). How does the learning environment in teacher education cultivate first year student teachers' sense of professional agency in the professional community?. *Teaching and teacher education*, 63, 126-136.

<sup>18</sup> Biesta, G.J.J. (2013) *The beautiful risk of education*. Boulder, CO. Paradigm Publishers.



Development of *pedagogical tact*<sup>19</sup>, as characterised by moral intuitiveness and the ability to gain insight into the student's inner processes of learning emerge as active knowledge in practice.

#### 4. Artistic practice

Artistic practice within initial teacher education integrated into pedagogical units allows transformative learning<sup>20</sup> in which understandings and dispositions are developed.

Skills in storytelling, drama, music, movement and visual and sculptural arts are also an important part of the teachers' toolkit in enacting lesson presentations which engage and move the students through the teacher becoming a *performer* in the field of classroom pedagogy<sup>21</sup>.

These skills require development over time in the initial teacher education years and practice in professional experience blocks.

Further, arts integration into the academic curriculum enhances student learning outcomes as a large body of research confirms<sup>22</sup>. Developing imaginative thinking<sup>23</sup> as a core focus in the

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<sup>19</sup> Van Manen, M. (2008) *Pedagogical Sensitivity and Teachers Practical Knowing-in-Action*, Peking University Education Review (1), 2-20.

<sup>20</sup> Jefferson, M., & Anderson, M. (2021). *Transforming education: Reimagining learning, pedagogy and curriculum*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

<sup>21</sup> Lutzker, P. (2022). Developing the artistry of the teacher in Steiner/Waldorf Education (Part I). Scenario: A *Journal for Performative Teaching, Learning, Research*, 16(1), 56-67.

<sup>22</sup> Ewing, R. (2018). Making a difference in learning through arts-rich pedagogy.

Lee, B. K., Enciso, P., & Brown, M. R. (2020). The effect of drama-based pedagogies on K-12 literacy-related outcomes: A meta-analysis of 30 years of research. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 21(30).

Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea21n30>

Barton, G., Baguley, M., & MacDonald, A. (2013). Seeing the bigger picture: investigating the state of the arts in teacher education programs in Australia. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(7), 75-90; Martin, A., Mansour, M., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., & Leim, G. (2013). The role of arts participation in students' academic and non-academic outcomes: A longitudinal study of school, home and community factors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 709-727.

<sup>23</sup> Wang, B., Ginns, P., & Mockler, N. (2022). Sequencing tracing with imagination. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(1), 421-449.

primary years is a key foundation for development of higher order conceptual thinking in high school<sup>24</sup>.

#### **5. More explicit recognition of teacher capacities needed to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills <sup>25</sup>**

An international framework that carries importance for the future of education is the OECD Learning Framework (2018) which identifies skills and capacities needed in students, and therefore in their teachers to meet the rapid change and irreconcilable tensions within the economic, environmental and social spheres.

The OECD Learning Framework 2030, in an attempt to understand how best to meet the rapid forces of change at work in the world economy, environment and social sphere, 'offers a vision and some underpinning principles for the future of education systems.' OECD global education policy directions and commentaries, identify that the world needs a new kind of learner to meet profound technological and societal change. Thus a new kind of teacher is also needed and a teacher education course that recognises how to develop teacher agency and a positive empowered vision of the future.

The 21st century needs teachers and student graduates with new qualities: a blend of professional rigour with creativity, imagination, flexible thinking that embraces complexity; emotional intelligence and a compassionate sense of what it is to be human in this increasingly digital age. Teachers need to develop students who can become the future story tellers, change agents, empathisers, and carers. These are the skills that can't be automated or outsourced

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<sup>24</sup> Nielsen, T. (2006). Towards a pedagogy of imagination: A phenomenological case study of holistic education. *Ethnography and Education*, 1(2), 247-264.

<sup>25</sup> OECD Learning Framework 2030)  
[https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20\(05.04.2018\).pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf)

easily. Within this landscape, the future is also asking for teachers who can share a capacity to see a positive future which young people can believe they, themselves, can create. For young people heading towards this unknown future, to possess those skills enables flexibility in options, and the ability to contribute in a meaningful way to the future society. In light of this, consequences for teacher education and curriculum design include the need for a broadly based and culturally rich experience in schools that lay the solid foundations for continued engaged, purposeful lifelong learning - within the context of this uncertain future to enable young people to live well in a world worth living in.<sup>26</sup>

Recognition needs to be given of not only disciplinary knowledge development in teachers, but also epistemic and procedural knowledge. Procedural knowledge is transferable across domains, and involves design thinking and systems thinking, for example, enabling teachers and therefore young people to apply knowledge in unpredictable circumstances<sup>27</sup>. Epistemic knowledge is a key capacity given prominence in the OECD 2030 Framework. It is achieved through learning the art of thinking like a scientist, mathematician, historian<sup>28</sup>. This is essential in teacher development.

Competencies are needed to transform society and shape our future through developing student agency. The transformative competencies need to be developed in teachers: creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, taking responsibility. These need to be seen as inter-related, developmental in nature and thus learnable . So that these competencies can be embedded practically into initial teacher education and curriculum design, they have been translated by the

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<sup>26</sup> Kemmis, S., Wilkinson, J., Edwards-Groves, C., Hardy, I., Grootenboer, P., & Bristol, L. (2014a). *Changing practices, changing education*. Singapore: Springer.

<sup>27</sup> Haralambous, B. (2018). *Steiner educational and academic foundations*. Chatswood: Steiner Education Australia.

<sup>28</sup> Eisner, E. (1985). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs*. New York: Macmillan

OECD into a set of constructs such as creativity, critical thinking, responsibility, resilience, collaboration.

In creating new value, it is imperative conceptual thinking is not compartmentalised and worked with individually on a purely intellectual level but that learning is through creative engagement within collaborative groups to spark new ideas and thoughts not yet existing in the world.

The example given previously of teacher dispositions<sup>29</sup> incorporated into teaching standards for Steiner/Waldorf teachers in the UK is an example of the higher order skills (such as in the OECD Learning Framework) and capacities which have become learning dispositions.

## **6. Study of High-Quality Curriculum Content in Initial Teacher Education**

It is the case that current high school graduates entering initial teacher education may not have a study of the riches of the cultures of the world, that arts, literature and philosophies. The first two years of teacher education need to fill these gaps by student teachers engaging with this content in, for example, their literacy, literature, dramatic arts studies so they can use quality resources for meaningful content in teaching.

In our schools, students must experience the heights of culture and teachers must have developed an appreciation of the artistic heritage of our great civilisations and cultures. We are otherwise in danger of losing the riches of these civilisations which are our heritage.

## **7. Teacher agency in transforming curriculum**

The current situation is such that politicians have a far greater say than practising educators in curriculum design.<sup>30</sup> It is recommended that more recognition and attention be given to

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<sup>29</sup> Bransby, K., & Rawson, M. (2020). *Waldorf Education for the Future. A framework for curriculum practice*. London: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

<sup>30</sup> Klenowski, V., & Carter, M. (2016). *Curriculum reform in testing and accountability contexts. Handbook of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment*. London: Sage.

accountabilities which are more coherent with what we know about the importance of teacher led school-based curriculum development. As Mockler (2017) states:

*...where teachers understand curriculum work as a complex process involving prioritisation, translation, and transformation of knowledge into appropriate conditions for learning. It is about understanding curriculum work as a deeply creative and productive process that relies on confidence with and command of content; deep pedagogical expertise; and a good understanding of the learners in question. It is understanding teaching as scholarly work, as intellectual work, as knowledge work<sup>31</sup>.*

This requires initial teacher development of teaching as an art in all subject areas, to epistemic as well as to procedural knowledge. For teachers to enact this pedagogical art they need to strive to understand human development, nurture their own artistic abilities, creatively apply artistic materials and teaching strategies in lessons, and cultivate an aesthetic classroom and school environment<sup>32</sup>. In this way, there is cohesion of the curriculum, its underpinnings and the methodology itself.

There is much at stake for the future of humanity. Education and the teachers dedicated to this task carry the foundation for unfoldment of future human capacities and dispositions which will lead to a positive, creative and as yet unrealised outcome.

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<sup>31</sup> Mockler, N. (2017). Classroom ready teachers? Some reflections on teacher education in Australia in an age of compliance. *Teacher education and practice*, 30(2), 335-339.

<sup>32</sup> Haralambous, B. (2018). *Steiner educational and academic foundations*. Chatswood: Steiner Education Australia.