

Mollet Learning Academy (MLA)

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1 Introduction

Five videos describe various areas of pedagogy that we recommend. Our approach is eclectic in nature; partly based on over forty years of experience by its author who has worked in education on three continents; partly based on a Waldorf-inspired curriculum relevant to the state sector; partly based on content and methodology used in Finland and New Zealand (students in both these countries outperform UK and USA students); and partly based on current research.

Video 1 Introduction was created many years ago when Dr. David Mollet was involved with Waldorf Education in New Zealand. Because of his considerable reservations with private Waldorf education he now has no contact with any Waldorf institution or person. Descriptions of his experience with Waldorf/Steiner people are available. After negative experiences covering forty years it is understandable that David no longer wishes to have contact.

However, he does believe that many aspects of the Waldorf approach are relevant and appropriate for any education process and indeed Steiner himself explicitly stated that this was the case, *"Moreover, I should like to point out to you that the real aim and object of our Anthroposophical education is not to found as many Anthroposophical schools as possible. It is, of course, necessary that there should be certain model schools where the methods are carried out in detail. It is a crying need of our days that there should be such schools. But our education concerns itself with the methods of teaching, and is essentially a new way and art of education, so every teacher can bring it into this work, in whatever kind of school he/she happens to be. There can be no question of creating revolutions in existing institutions. Our task is rather to give indications of a way of teaching arising out of our anthroposophical knowledge of man."*

As his followers, in many cases, are implementing the opposite to what Steiner recommends, David authors his own approach and gives reference to sources where relevant. As stated above, David has over forty years experience on three continents and the approach he recommends includes content and methodology from such involvement and the results of his considerable research and his experience with education in New Zealand where he was able to make a significant contribution.

The curriculum we recommend possesses unique structures that offer child-centred content and methodology. In essence, the main aims of the elementary school curricula are to encourage:

- a. breadth in learning rather than narrow and specialized subject matter;
- b. the involvement of all facets of children's inner experience, so that different types of thinking can be developed (for this to happen the content should be attractive to as many of these facets as possible);
- c. an emphasis on the needs and interest of children rather than the needs and interest of society;
- d. the linking of all content matter to childrens' stage of development.

The video covers History and Biographical Detail, A Model to Examine Waldorf Methods, An Illustration of the Theory, Heroes and Heroines, The Main Lesson, A Thematic Approach, Research on Methods, Steiner and State Education, Reading: the Waldorf Approach, Chemistry: an Example of the Waldorf Approach, Conclusion, Left and Right Hand Brain Activity.

Left and Right Hand Brain Activity - It is unfortunate that Western man makes an unconscious assumption that knowledge is intellectual by nature. The application of balanced hemispheric development is fundamental to education and in particular the teaching process. Educators must, at the very least, not violate the fundamental principle of cerebral functioning and should wherever possible optimise children's thinking along integrative patterns. Carl Sagan makes the point, *"critical thinking, without creative and intuitive insights, without the search for new patterns, is sterile and doomed. To solve complex problems requires the activity of both cerebral hemispheres; the path to the future lies through the corpus callosum"*.

Educators have a responsibility of some magnitude to research and create the balance in the teaching process; our future generations depend on it. The author, Peter Spink, describes how there is some evidence to suggest that many more children today need *"an entirely new approach to learning"* and he adds that a methodology which does not relate to the intuitive faculties should be rejected. In any case the importance of educating the creative side of our nature is crucial for the wellbeing of any society. As the historian Toynbee points out, *"Civilisations decline, not so much because of invasions or other external forces, but because of an internal hardening of ideas."*