

Mollet Learning Academy (MLA)

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2 Structuring the Day

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 2 Structuring the Day 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 video covers Creating the Right Atmosphere, Starting the Day, The Classroom as a Workplace, The Morning Circle, Structure and Rhythm, An Organic Whole, The Act of Forgetting, The Main Lesson and Block Period, The Main Lesson and the Academic Year, Structure of the Main Lesson, Content of the Main Lesson, Quality of the Main Lesson, Norse Myths - An Example of a Main Lesson, Discipline and Punishment, Closing the Day.

A brief synopsis of the first three topics follows.

Creating the Right Atmosphere - It is the teachers' responsibility to create an appropriate environment for each child in their care. There are two aspects of this responsibility. 1) Teachers need to bring the class together into a unified whole, so that a sense of belonging is nurtured and fostered within each child; and 2) Teachers have the task of creating an atmosphere which encourages children to feel a sense of responsibility towards each other and the class as a whole. It is up to the teacher to set the tone for the day so that all the children may experience a mood that is calming, secure, caring, and conducive to learning.

Starting the Day - The first point about caring is to indicate to the other person that you acknowledge that they exist and that you relate to them as another person. The second point about caring is that children clearly look to adults to set an example which they can follow and imitate. If a teacher sets this example at the very beginning of each day the tone for the day is immediately established and it far more likely that children will respond positively during that day.

The Classroom as a Workplace - The classroom is a place for learning and in that respect it is a workplace. Wherever possible it is best to set the tone for the "working day". If this occurs in the right way children will work better and respond positively to the demands that are made on them. Teachers are able to convey this positive attitude towards work through their manner but also through the preparation of the classroom and materials before the start of the day. One factor that is important in this respect is the arrangement of the class before the children enter.