**Masterclass in Steiner High School Education**

*Exploring education as “an encounter with something that is radically new ...”* (Biesta, 2015, p.241).

In celebration of the opening of the centennial year of Steiner-Waldorf Education, in this Master Class we will consider underlying philosophical aspects, which have come to fruition and are now aligned with current research and educational perspectives. We will also inquire into core ‘revolutionary’ elements of Steiner education and question – which are still novel and dynamically different – from mainstream education and how can we best enact them today?

Whether you are a newcomer to High School teaching in Steiner-Waldorf schools or whether you already have experience and understanding of what Steiner education is like, if you would like to explore a range of ideas that inform teaching practices in the classroom and develop your skills and knowledge around years 9 to 12 then this course might be for you.

You do not need to know the Australian Steiner 'high school' curriculum already to participate in this course, nor do you need to be teaching in it already. But if you are a high school subject or specialist teacher, or educational administrator and if you are interested in exploring ways of modifying your practice to meet the rapidly changing demands of the adolescent and to ensure that high school students are ready to find their place in the world when they leave school, then this course is likely to suit you.

**Why is it called a Master class?**

In calling this a master class we are not focusing on the fundamentals of Steiner teaching practice and what to teach in classes 9 to 12. Rather, we have designed this master class to support you to develop your professional skills and repertoire as a teacher, one who strives towards becoming a responsible person, filled with heart-warmth and interest in the world and students, and able to take initiative.

In our view a master teacher is one who:

- Understands that it’s not just how you teach, it’s who you teach that matters – a master teacher is therefore one who focusses on the development of students’ capacities.
- Enacts inclusivity and who therefore creates expansive and flexible learning opportunities to suit individual students.
- Practices the art of education and therefore creatively applies different approaches to suit student, subject and purpose.
- Commits to inner growth and the ongoing development of professional capacities – on the understanding that it’s not just what you know, it’s who you are as a person that has a profound influence on the students.
- Designs authentic assessment tasks – based on an ever deepening understanding of students’ needs and the attainment of their learning goals.
Course Facilitator:
This course is being facilitated by Bronwen Haralambous who has experience teaching in mainstream high schools and who has been studying and working in Steiner education for over forty years. Bronwen was one of the pioneer teachers in the High School at Orana where she taught for ten years after which she completed a Masters in Educational Leadership in 2006, an Advanced Diploma in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy in 2008, and in November 2016 a PhD. In her doctoral dissertation Bronwen re-imagines Steiner’s vision for teachers’ research and professional learning. One of the major projects associated with this research involved the implementation and evaluation of a Masters program in Steiner education and a second project focused on the facilitation of teachers’ research projects in a Steiner primary school. Bronwen is currently teaching in the Graduate Certificate in Steiner Education at University of the Sunshine Coast.

Day 1:
Know students and how they learn.
*Something tremendous is about to happen: Understanding and supporting adolescents to unfold the “powers of the heart.”*
We will start with an overview of the course and then turn to the first day’s leading theme which focusses on the contrasting vulnerability and idealism of students in the high school. Research in neuroscience indicates that a new window of opportunity for moral growth opens at this time (OECD, 2018, p.6). Linking this development with a spurt in the growth of “heart intelligence” Chilton Pearce (2002) observes that “if no nurturing or modelling is given,” then this potential development will not unfold but “will be dormant for life” (p.54). We will explore ways to meet the adolescent’s “great expectation” that “something tremendous is about to happen” (ibid.) so that this favourable circumstance is not lost.

Day 2:
Know content and how to teach it.
*Capsizing curriculum choices: Selecting and designing lesson content to meet students’ learning needs.*
Faced with an overcrowded curriculum (Yates, 2017) we need to make choices which – Steiner (1921) advises us – should be guided by how content and skills associated with the discipline areas and specialist subjects can best meet the needs of students: “We cannot simply teach with the object of seeing how soon we can get across to the children some subject matter that we have in hand and be done with it. The life of children, their whole way of being in body, soul and spirit – that must take first place” (p.39).

Day 3:
Plan for and implement effective teaching & learning.
*Unlocking hidden greatness: Methods and strategies for building student capacities.*
If we are focused on building students’ capacities (rather than filling them with subject content), then students will be well equipped to find their place in the world: “And we do not in that case need to trouble ourselves so much as to whether the right conditions are going to prevail in human
affairs in the future. If the boys and girls of today are educated to be true human beings, they will themselves create the right conditions” (Steiner, 1921, p.40). To undertake this task we need to know how to support them to grow their knowledge, skills and understanding in a way that is developmentally appropriate and individualised. Adapting the idea of “learning progressions” and “rubrics” we will consider the various components that make up lessons in different subject and specialist areas and how skills associated with them unfold in a developmental sequence that can potentially align with the growth of students in “body, soul and spirit.” We will also explore strategies for setting up individual and collaborative learning opportunities that meet the needs of each student.

Day 4:
Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environment.
Teaching with Heart: Methods and strategies for building teacher capacities.
Steiner placed strong emphasis on the inner development of educators and in particular the growth of their initiative and sense of responsibility and the firing of their interest in students: “When the spirit of education we want to nurture here has entered the teacher – I should like to say as a genuine soul habit – a result will be that teachers facing a class will be enormously fascinated by what takes place in the individual children” (Steiner, 1920/2007, p.53). In the light of this indication, and given our intention to build student capacities based on our understanding of them, we will briefly investigate Zajonc’s (2009) Contemplative Inquiry as a method that we can use for inner work, “child (or student) study” (Wiechert, 2014) and teacher research.

Day 5:
Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning.
Turning the tide of assessment strategies around: Designing authentic learning tasks.
In these sessions we will tie together the various thematic strands that we have been developing over the past four days. Building on the “learning progressions” and “rubrics” that we have mapped out we will now consider how to design assessment tasks that help us to gauge how students move through these continua. The focus here is not on supporting students to score “high marks or grades,” but on diagnosing and discerning how best to address students’ needs in relation to their cognitive, socio-emotional and moral development. If we do not want the door of opportunity for the unfolding of the “powers of the heart” (Chilton Pearce, 2002; Steiner, 1943/2007) to close for the students we teach, then it is vital that we find a creative and meaningful way to meet the policy constraints that relate to assessment: “The educator is to feel his or her responsibility and, while making compromises in the outer sense, is to make none in the inner sense” (Steiner, 1919/2000, p.193).

AFTERNOON ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION SESSIONS ON BIG ISSUES
At the close of each day we will have an open forum conversation on one of the common issues facing middle school teachers where participants can share stories and propose options on these topics. The topics proposed
include, for example: ICT in Steiner education, behaviour management, the role of the main lesson book, the teaching of life skills.

**RECOMMENDED PREPARATORY READING**


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Upon completion of the masterclass participants will receive a USC Certificate of Participation worth 25 hours of Professional Development.