

Developing Practice Through a Project

In Waldorf/Steiner schools people engage in projects of all kinds. A glance at a magazine like *Erziehungskunst* gives you some insight into what others have been trying out. This task of the MA-programme will help you to come up with an appropriate project, work through it, document it and -what is crucial- reflect on it.

This task is intended to be grounded in your professional practice in which you as a researcher are involved in. The project is envisaged as in some way linked to your work place. It can therefore engage students, pupils from your own school or other schools, colleagues from your own school or from a broader area, possibly parents, even other staff; and of course you as a researcher are an engaged participant.

The following thoughts describe why we appreciate this task and feel that it is very valuable for a Waldorf/Steiner School practitioner:

- The whole process of planning and carrying through the project should engage you in imagining beforehand the difficulties and challenges that may arise. Thinking ahead is crucial, as well as making provision for responding to difficulties arising en route. A quality of flexibility will need to be exercised.
- You will need to think afresh as you go. A quality of openness is called for: openness to evaluating the project en route and altering it if necessary. This ability is of great value in any teaching situation, and also in the context of co-operative work with colleagues.
- The project should exercise your ability to work openly, ethically, co-operatively and attentively with colleagues and pupils.
- The project encourages you to be inventive and take risks, but always in an ethically responsible manner.
- You are encouraged to locate your project within its appropriate framework. This means examining the existing conceptual, historical or curricular frameworks that relate to your project. Critical reflection upon existing practices and the reasons behind them plays a part here; and your project will hopefully illuminate these.
- It goes without saying that the whole tenor of this task engages you strongly and actively in self-reflection and self-evaluation, to the point that you may even conclude that your project was not fully successful. Equally, recognising the successes in the project is also important.
- Obviously successful outcomes in the project can lead to valuable new methods or practises in your future work (and that of colleagues too).

As you work on this task, it might be helpful to use the methods that are described in the context of *action research*. Some helpful information on how to work with action research methods within a Waldorf/Steiner context, is to be found in the materials of the ipf/ipr.

We hope that the actual guidelines (set out in 10 subsections) are self-explanatory and expressed clearly enough.

(472 words)