



RUDOLF STEINER - *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*

Think about the importance of what the teacher represents to the growing child. Basically, we people here on earth must continually learn from life if **we are not to¹ become set²** in one of the stages in our life. But, first we must learn to learn from life. Children must learn to learn from life in school, so that, in later life, their dead ideas do not **keep them from³** learning from life; so that, as adults, they do not become set in their ways. What keeps **upsetting⁴** people today is that school gave them too little. People do not have the inner **hold on⁵** life that can come only when right material is taught at the right time in school. Life remains closed if school does not give us the strength to open it. This is only possible if, in the early school years, the teacher is the representation of life itself. The peculiarity of youth is that the gulf still exists between people and life. We must **bridge⁶** this gulf. The young senses, the young intellect, the young mind, the young will are not yet so formed that life can touch them in the right way. Children meet life through the teacher. The teacher stands **before⁷** the child as, later, life stands there. Life must be concentrated in the teacher. Thus an intensive interest in life must **imbue⁸** the teachers. Teachers must carry the life of the age in themselves. To begin with such a process, teachers must no longer be miserably confined to the **realm⁹** of the school; they must feel themselves supported by the **whole¹⁰ breadth¹¹** of modern society and its interaction with the future, a future in which teachers in particular have the greatest interest.

(From R. Facchinetti – A. Belladelli, *English for Educators*, CEDAM, Milano 2011, pp. 129-130, 133-134)

Synonyms

Basically

Stage

Right

Gulf

Carry (v.)

Gap

Bear (v.)

Appropriate

Level

Fundamentally

¹ To be to (v.): stare per

² To be/become set (v.): fermarsi, bloccarsi

³ To keep so./st. from (v.): impedire a qualcuno/ qualcosa di

⁴ > to upset (v.): sconvolgere, mettere in agitazione

⁵ Hold (on st.): presa, controllo (su qualcosa)

⁶ To bridge (v.): colmare

⁷ Before: di fronte a

⁸ To imbue (v.): permeare, intridere

⁹ Realm: regno, ambito

¹⁰ Whole: intero, totale

¹¹ Breadth: ampiezza, grandezza

Reading and understanding - Complete the following statements

1. People learn from life
 - a. As children
 - b. At any stage of life
 - c. As adults
2. People must learn to learn from life
 - a. As children
 - b. At any stage of life
 - c. As adults
3. Teachers are miserable if
 - a. They are supported by society
 - b. They are confined to the realm of the school
 - c. They think too much about the future
4. For a child, teachers are
 - a. A gulf to bridge
 - b. Too concentrated
 - c. The representation of life itself
5. Many adults complain about
 - a. The future
 - b. The poor education they received
 - c. Their past teachers

Discussion: Steiner is quite provocative when he claims that *teachers must no longer be miserably confined to the realm of the school*. What do you think he really means?

Complete the text with the following words:

As – home – more – Austrian – founded – age – school – self-instructed – worlds – his – control – founder – tutor – tutoring – education – independence – on – knowledge

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was an ¹_____ educator and ²_____ of the spiritual movement known ³_____ Anthroposophy, based ⁴_____ the assumption that the human intellect is able to contact spiritual ⁵_____, fully accessible only to the faculties of ⁶_____ latent in all humans. Owing to his father's job, ⁷_____ earliest education was intermittent and included some ⁸_____ tuition from his father. During secondary ⁹_____ he became more and ¹⁰_____ fascinated with Kantian philosophy and the works of Friedrich Herbart; he ¹¹_____ in Greek and Latin and became a ¹²_____ for younger students at the ¹³_____ of 15. The experience of ¹⁴_____ transformed his relationship to knowledge. [...] His commitment to ¹⁵_____ was all-encompassing: as a young man he advocated the ¹⁶_____ of educational institutions from governmental ¹⁶_____. [...] In 1919 Steiner ¹⁷_____ a school [...] in Stuttgart, known as the Waldorf School. [...]



SRI AUROBINDO - *On Education*

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or **task-master**¹², he is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually **train**¹³ the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not **call forth**¹⁴ the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be **habituated**¹⁵ to rise to the surface- the distinction that reserves this principle for the teaching of adolescents and adult minds and denies its application to the child, is a conservative and unintelligent doctrine. Child or man, boy or girl, there is only one sound principle of good teaching. Difference of age only serves to diminish or increase the amount of help and guidance necessary; it does not change in nature.

The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of **hammering the child into** ¹⁶the shape desired by parent or teacher is barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is he himself who must be induced to expand **in accordance with**¹⁷ his own nature. There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange **beforehand**¹⁸ that his son shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a prearranged career. To force the nature to abandon its own dharma is to do it permanent **harm**¹⁹, mutilate its growth and **deface**²⁰ its perfection.

(From R. Facchinetti – A. Belladelli, *English for Educators*, CEDAM, Milano 2011, pp. 139, 140, 141, 144, 149, 150)

Synonyms

Sound	Tool
Arrange (v.)	Cause (v.)
instrument	Stable
capacity	Prepare (v.)
Induce (v.)	Skill

¹² Task-master: chi assegna compiti duri, "schiavista"

¹³ To train (v.): allenare, esercitare

¹⁴ To call forth (v.): fare uscire fuori, richiamare

¹⁵ To habituate (v.): abituare, abituarsi

¹⁶ To hammer so. Into st. (v.): forzare qualcuno a fare/essere qualcosa

¹⁷ In accordance with: secondo, in accordo con

¹⁸ Beforehand: in anticipo

¹⁹ Harm: danno

²⁰ To deface (v.): deturpare

Reading & understanding



EXERCISE 5. Read the opening text again and find the appropriate ending to each statement.

1. Children and adults
 - a. must receive the same kind of education
 - b. should be approached differently
 - c. may be conservative and unintelligent
2. Children
 - a. do not deserve any help and guidance
 - b. deserve a greater amount of help and guidance
 - c. deserve the same amount of help and guidance adults do
3. Parents and teachers make a mistake when
 - a. they focus on their own career
 - b. they become superstitious
 - c. they force children to follow a prearranged career
4. A good teacher should
 - a. consult the parents
 - b. consult the pupil's mind as he/she grows
 - c. consult his/her own mind
5. When children's nature is forced to change
 - a. their growth becomes more difficult
 - b. they find their *dharma*
 - c. they develop new virtues

Complete the text with the following words:

Education - Indian - spiritual - wanted - up - became - never - British - adolescents - for - culture - who - most - institution - principal

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) was an ¹_____ nationalist, a poet and a yogi. His father ²_____ his children to receive a British and European ³_____ so he sent them out to Manchester and London. During those years, Aurobindo ⁴_____ more and more critical about Great Britain and decided he would ⁵_____ serve his colonizers. In 1893 he left England ⁶_____ India, where he engaged in a deep study of Indian ⁷_____. He had some troubles with the ⁸_____ government. He became one of the ⁹_____ important leaders of the Indian Independent Movement, which fought against British colonization. Activist, he decided to set up an ¹⁰_____ that would challenge British rule by offering education to the masses "on national lines and under national control". The Bengal National College was set ¹¹_____ with Aurobindo as its first ¹²_____. His life companion Mirra Alfassa ¹³_____ established and supervised the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, a school for the intellectual and ¹⁴_____ growth of children and ¹⁵_____.