



Section for Agriculture  
Sektion für Landwirtschaft  
Section d'Agriculture  
Sección de Agricultura



# Unfolding potential

building capacity for a common  
development in biodynamics

Documentation Biodynamic Trainer & Teacher Conference 2019

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Dear Conference Participants, Dear Friends,

Around 80 participants from 27 countries assembled for three days in November 2019 in the Schreinerei at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. Following the first workshop in 2016, this training event, jointly organised by the Section for Agriculture and Demeter International (now: Biodynamic Federation – Demeter International), was the second international meeting to discuss the various issues in biodynamic training and to work on a common future.

A conference opens up a multidimensional space that develops its own character through the interaction of the different participants. A unique individual atmosphere develops within and from this. During this conference a dynamic, constantly changing social sculpture also formed, nourished by meaningful moments in conversations, working groups, impulses, sketches from experience and artistic workshops.

Under the heading "Developing potential – building capacities for a common development in biodynamics" we aimed not only to provide answers and plans for the future, but also to enable fruitful encounters and unexpected inspiration by providing space and rhythm. While

an overview of training initiatives via the world map and the different contributions from the initiatives provided us with an idea of the breadth of the movement, we were able to go into depth through the work in the international working groups.

The mutual understanding and trust gained during the conference forms an important basis for future cooperation. In addition, some specific projects emerged which have already been put into practice, are in the process of implementation or are being planned. The international involvement and active participation of so many motivated people leave us with confidence and the feeling of being a diverse and powerful movement and one which can meet the challenges.

This conference report is a compilation of the impulse contributions and the reports from the working groups plus methodological guidelines for the conference. We hope that it can provide you with inspiration for your work. Enjoy the read!

Sarah Sommer  
For the steering group

# Conference programme

## Thursday – 07. November 2019

- 14:00 – 14:15 Welcome & Introduction
- 14:15 – 15:15 The global education and training landscape I and voices on biodynamic training
- 15:15 – 16:00 Impulse - *Jean-Michel Florin*
- 16:00 – 16:30 – *short break*
- 16:30 – 18:15 Presentation working group and the global education and training landscape II
- 18:30 – 20:00 – *evening break / Eat & Meet Dinner*
- 20:00 – 21:30 World Café

## Friday – 08. November 2019

- 08:00 – 08:30 Start the day - Calendar of the Soul and voices on biodynamic training
- 08:30 – 09:30 Impulse - *Florian Osswald*
- 09:30 – 10:00 – *short break*
- 10:00 – 11:45 Thematic work in small groups
- 12:00 – 13:15 – *lunch break*
- 13:15 – 14:15 Experiencing art
- 14:15 – 16:00 Thematic work in small groups
- 16:00 – 16:30 – *short break*
- 16:30 – 18:15 Open Space and market place
- 18:30 – 20:00 – *evening break / Eat & Meet Dinner*
- 20:15 – 21:00 Cultural Evening Program - *Freie Musikschule Basel*

## Saturday – 09. November 2019

- 08:00 – 08:30 Start the day - Calendar of the Soul and voices on biodynamic training
- 08:30 – 09:30 Impulse - *Helen Van Zyl*
- 09:30 – 10:00 – *short break*
- 10:00 – 11:45 Thematic work in small groups
- 11:45 – 13:00 Summary and conclusion

# Impulse

## Jean-Michel Florin – Experiencing learning

*Fine art is that in which the hand, the head,  
and the heart of man go together.*

John Ruskin (1819-1900)

I believe that education is primarily bringing together and connecting entities and elements. Education or training is also a journey that addresses me as a whole person and where I learn as a whole person, just as I ought to be involving myself as a whole person in agriculture: with hand, heart and head, not just with my cognitive faculties. (see quote by John Ruskin). This approach invites the students to discover or rediscover the outer world (soil, plants, animals, farmers, institutions) and the inner world (new ideas, familiar methods, unknown dimensions of life, etc.). This also means that I should let myself be "touched" by the new that I will encounter, so that I will change myself.

How can we recognise and experience our own abilities and obstacles, not just with our heads but also with our hearts through feeling and our hands through doing? How can we support these kind of discoveries and encounters in education and training and encourage the students to embark on an individual learning and self-transformation process?

*Where is the wisdom we have lost in  
knowledge? Where is the knowledge  
we have lost in information?*

T. S. Eliot, critic, dramatist & poet (1888 - 1965)

I would like now to go further and ask: what does a farmer need in our difficult and challenging times (climate discontinuity, epidemics, etc.) in order to be a good biodynamic farmer? Wisdom? Knowledge? Information?



Draft Jean-Michel Florin, 2020

### What is education?

To start with I would like to ask you to remember a good training situation where you had the feeling of really learning.

I will start with a few memories from my own studies. During my agricultural degree, especially when I was preparing for an exam, I often had the impression that I was simply filling my head with ready-made ideas, thoughts and numbers. And I also felt that I only needed to know these "things" for the exam and "regurgitate" them there.

I was only really able to connect to a few of the subjects. All the others remained "outside" for me. So I always had the peculiar feeling that learning in school did not happen in real life, but in a parallel world.

Environmental education has shown that information and knowledge are not sufficient to influence action. All the information campaigns, all the knowledge has not helped to change people's behaviour... What is the reason for these "action gaps" as they are called, these gaps between head and hands?

Maybe it is because we are not machines? Because the generally accepted image of the human being is wrong?

Head and intellect = computer and information centre

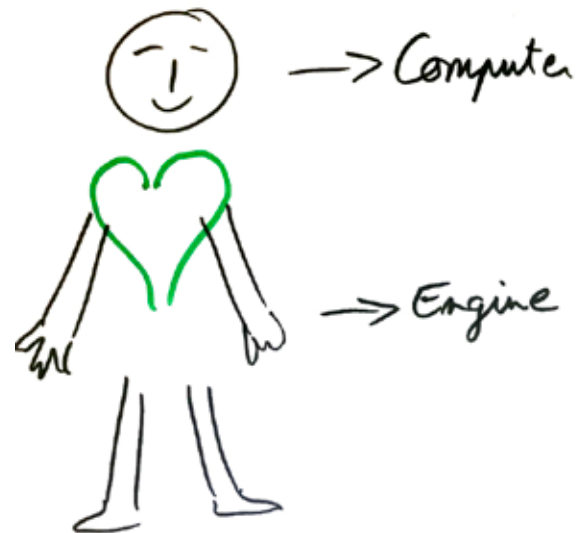
Hands and will = engine and wheels

In this image the computer-head is meant to send the information to the engine-limbs which then execute the information.

In order to avoid this and to support learning in practice, apprenticeship training was developed (especially in biodynamic agriculture). But the danger remains of a separation between theory on one side and practice on the other. Then practice becomes the application of a finished theory and the middle part between the computer and the engine is missing.

If we think that learning consists of discovering new things, integrating new things and changing ourselves, or that education is a mixing where two things come together – the person or student and the material to be learned i.e. soil, plants, animals, etc., what actual steps and methods might we then use?

Here I am referring on the one hand to adult education which is often aimed at a (new) professional direction in life and on the other to self-development in order to pursue a path of individualisation and to work responsibly, to



Draft, Jean-Michel Florin, 2020

act ethically. This includes developing the ability of self-directed learning – learning how to learn.

What is missing in the picture of the human being with head and hands (theory and practice) is the heart quality. This is necessary in order to develop interest and then make a connection to the entity.

	<b>1</b> <b>Downloading:</b> Talking nice	<b>Speaking from what <u>they</u> want to hear</b> <b>Polite routines/empty phrases</b> <i>Autistic system</i> (not saying what you think)
	<b>2</b> <b>Debate:</b> Talking tough	<b>Speaking from what <u>I</u> think</b> <b>Diverging views: I am my point of view</b> <i>Adaptive system</i> (saying what you think)
	<b>3</b> <b>Dialogue:</b> Reflective inquiry	<b>Speaking from seeing myself as part of the whole</b> <b>From defending to inquiry of viewpoints</b> <i>Self reflective system</i> (seeing yourself/collective)
	<b>4</b> <b>Presencing:</b> Generative flow	<b>Speaking from what is moving through</b> <b>Silence, Presencing the future flow. Collective creativity.</b> <i>Generative system</i> (authentic self)

The 4 types of conversion from the Presencing Institute can help us to understand these steps. In my studies mentioned above, I often had the feeling of being at the level of downloading. Sometimes, with the best teachers, we arrived at the level of "factual listening" and a debate took place in the classroom, for example in the philosophy lesson. But in order to have a real encounter which changes us, we need to reach the third level, that of "empathic listening", which enables a real dialogue.

### The threefold human being

The threefold nature of the human being is a wonderful phenomenological discovery by Rudolf Steiner which helps us to understand the different soul faculties necessary to reach the essence of an entity.

Physiological processes	Psychological processes	Qualities
Head, Nerve and senses system	Thinking, perceiving	Light, precision, cold, distance, conscious
Heart, Rhythmic system	Feeling, breathing	
Hands, Metabolic system	Willpower, action	Darkness, diffuse, warm, fully connected, unconscious

This picture offers an understanding of the different types of teaching. There are two main dangers:

1. The teacher brings too much will into their way of designing the lesson. This produces an atmosphere of warmth and some participants will engage very enthusiastically but others will be completely against the contribution. There is a danger that the participants become too connected to the content and are unable to process it properly. This is the danger of the guru. I will do what I was told very enthusiastically, sometimes simply by copying, but without much reflection.
2. The teacher is too much "in their head", so that the atmosphere is cold, not enough enthusiasm can develop. The participants do not connect with the content. They are too "far away". The knowledge remains external and will not have the power needed for the students to be able to actually use it. I know what I am supposed to do, but I fail to do it or I do it without empathy, simply because I am supposed to do it. This is a major problem, especially if we are working with living creatures that can sense my attitude.

So we need to find a middle way between these two extremes:

- Learning only with the head, on the cognitive path, and reducing wisdom to knowledge or even to information,
- Learning too much out of the will, like small children who copy, means we will not be free in our learning.

### Bringing breathing into education

How can the central (heart) quality be incorporated into learning? This rhythmic level can be integrated in a number of ways:

1. In the way that a topic is handled. Start by creating surprise, opening the minds and hearts step by step. For example, the following steps could be used in a course sequence:
  - Surprise (opening) and attention (focussing). Prepare a surprise and then concentrate on one aspect. This avoids the students' prejudices and preconceptions.
  - Deepen the experience, e.g. through observation using art such as drawing, sculpture, etc. This helps to deepen the feeling and experience during the sequence.
  - Do not explain straight after the observation, but create a situation in which the explanation is connected to a real experience.
  - Only afterwards should there be an attempt by everyone to develop the idea of the phenomenon. Not as a definition but as a characterisation.
2. In the time sequence. Alternation between units that appeal more to the head, more to the heart or more to action. For example, understanding horn manure. First observe the cow horn, draw or model it in clay, then make horn ma-



Knowledge/ Intelligence	K1 Non-reflective knowledge: <i>knowledge without self-reflection</i>	K2 Self-reflective knowledge: <i>reflection-on-action</i>	K3 Self-transcending knowledge: <i>reflection-in-action</i>
Open Mind IQ Explicit Dynamic complexity	<i>Lecturing:</i> explicit knowledge learning is to fill a barrel	<i>Training:</i> Practice+feedback Reflection on exercise	<i>Creative Practice</i> Improv, Theater Imagination-in- action
Open Heart EQ Embodied Social complexity	Experiential action, projects, immersion, empathy walk, tacit- embodied knowledge	Case Clinics, action- reflection papers, dialogue walk, reflection-on-embodied knowledge	Embodied Presence Performing authentic speech Aikido, inspiration- in-action
Open Will SQ Not-yet-embodied Emerging complexity	Deep immersion practice: existential storytelling, total immersion journeys	Deep inversion practice: Guided journaling, Generative dialogue	Deep presence practice: room of silence, contempla- tive practices

Nine Learning Environment. Claus Otto Scharmer, 2009. Theorie U. Carl Auer Verlag

nure and afterwards work on the ideas of the whole in relation to Rudolf Steiner's Agricultural Course.

- 3 In the spatial design of the course. Alternate between inside (inside yourself, concentrated = winter quality) and outside (outside yourself = summer quality).
- 4 In the group dynamics. Alternate between learning sequences where the students work individually, in small groups and all together. This is also a breathing, because those people who prefer to learn on their own have to force themselves to a social breathing out in group work. Conversely, there are people who always like doing things in groups. They have to practice breathing in by being alone.

### Learning is also reflection

Use a variety of methods in your teaching with different qualities, depending on the situation (see above).

### Example of a one-week course: Landscape and farm organism

- *Introduction to the concept of landscape.* First ask every student to present their own (native) landscape to the group. It is helpful to work from a specific experience.
- *Perception exercises.* Each sense perception should become an inner living picture that can be shared with others. The process of internalising through thinking should enable an integration of all the perceptions into a picture of the whole (the concept or the idea of the landscape). We go beyond the mere description of facts to grasp the character of the place. Drawing is a good tool to intensify this observation stage in order to "present what has been perceived in a new way" and so make it conscious.

Example of an exercise: observe the same landscape from the distance (bird's-eye view and drawing with various



techniques) and from inside (cow perspective). We suggest the exercise of creating "maps of the surroundings". After going on a quiet walk for an hour through the countryside, in small groups (of 4 or 5) we attempt to reconstruct the moods perceived during the walk by making use of "elemental polarities": hot/cold, dry/wet, dark/light, windy/calm, etc. Some farmers use this method to develop the landscape on their farms.

Following this, other exercises are used to observe the landscape from different perspectives by considering the different realms of nature. For example, we set exercises (drawing, sketching, writing, etc.) to encounter the soil, the vegetation and the animals in the landscape. First we identify and describe the characteristics of the different entities.

- *Make the connections: understanding.* Using the different observations we try to find relationships e.g. to understand the quality of the vegetation as a mirror of the environment and the animals' ability to bring life to the landscape (to give it a feeling quality), in which understanding does not mean explaining, but allowing the "inner relationships" to arise.
- *Concentration and internalisation exercises.* Make a symbolic picture of the Genius loci. We suggest an exercise in which we try to draw the Genius loci in order to concentrate all the different impressions.
- *Reproduce the place.* Make a collective performance in order to present the landscape you have discovered. In order to discover the global character of a specific place, we ask the students to create an "artistic" performance (such as a small play) from their observations and their work. This is often a very special moment with



Photo: Jean-Michel Florin

original ideas and performances to which we invite the farmers and neighbours.

- *Thanking the people and the place.* At the end it is also good to thank the farmers and help them with some practical work. For example, stir a biodynamic preparation together and spray it on the fields as a group.

This course on landscape and the farm as an organism lasts five days. During this time the students go to the same place every day and discover it with new perspectives and from new angles. This enables them to gradually build up a relationship to the place and the people on the farm.

# Florian Osswald - learning

## Attention space

Early in the morning the children go into the woods. They are wearing waterproof clothing. It has been raining all night long. The ground is damp and the autumn coloured leaves are covered in raindrops. The kindergarten teacher greets the colourful flock in the kindergarten, which is an open space. The familiar walls are missing. Over the course of the day I get to know the secrets of this special space. Although it is a specific location in the woods, it lacks fixed contours. The seasons pass through it and leave behind their traces. In winter the children can be seen from far away. But this undergoes a fundamental change as soon as spring comes and the trees are in leaf. The kindergarten teachers learn to "hear" the children. They need to use what they hear to know where the children are and how they are doing. The children want to be seen and heard. The kindergarten teachers learn the art of creating an attention space which embraces all the children.

The classroom is an attention space – how does that sound? It is not bounded by walls, but created by attention.

*This is the first challenge: to create an attention space.*

## Learning

We are accustomed to defining goals. These are broken down into teaching plans and these result in learning processes. The current fashion is to structure these in terms of competences. These can be taken seriously as long as the issue of how the human being is to be enabled to use the competences is addressed at the same time. Because learning is a self-educating activity and always has an enigmatic element.

We can distinguish three elements in a learning process: learning content, learning relationship and learning intention. The learning content is always specific, in that something particular is always learned. Learning occurs in the framework of a relationship and there is always a reason for learning.

This means the inclusion of the whole person in the activity.

As soon as learning is seen in this context, the self-educative aspect is integrated and the adult can also identify themselves with it.

If we look at the forms of learning, I will attempt a classification which is associated with the development of the human being. These forms of learning create the basis for later ones and are available to adults as a complete range of possibilities.

- Imitative learning
- Authority-based learning
- Self-determined learning and
- Life learning

A short explanation of this:

- The small child is a master of imitation. The first years of life are marked by a wealth of learning never again achieved in later life. But imitation takes place throughout life. Phenomena associated with this are wonder and curiosity.
- The early school years are the prototype for authority-based learning. This type of learning also continues later in life. Later on it is often qualified experts who offer further training and teach through their professional authority.
- Self-determined learning is appropriate for the adult. They set themselves goals and choose the appropriate form of learning. One example of self-determined learning is a personal training path.
- Life learning deserves special attention. It is not so common, though in fact the most everyday thing. Steiner wanted all lessons in Waldorf Schools to be life skills. Children should become familiar with the art of living, because life is the greatest teacher. The human being constantly encounters himself and the world. The continuous flow is so obvious, that it is usually not even noticed. If we turn our attention to it, it reveals itself as an almost inexhaustible learning field.

*The second challenge is: to find the appropriate kind of learning.*

## Who are the students?

Adults choose the form of learning that suits them more or less consciously, depending on the subject matter.

What role do the teachers and trainers play in the act of mediating the learning? Their task is to observe, understand and evaluate the training situation. Clear judgement involves the need for reflection and becoming aware of one's own conditioning. Every person has received an education that has left its marks on them. It is helpful to know one's own values and patterns. This is essential for an objective view of the educational situation. Something of great help here is biography work

How and what individuals learn under differing conditions depends in part on how the attitudes to learning of teachers and students combine and to what extent a pedagogical discussion is possible. So the assumption that, "in an educational programme there are intellectually educated people" can mean that the academic disposition is not encouraged but already assumed. Teachers then expect that students already have their questions ready, while this is the point at which uneducated students require the help of the teaching staff. A similar effect can be seen in self-directed learning. It can also be shown that only specific groups of students benefit from this type of learning. The exact knowledge of which "self" should be self-determining is necessary in order to establish a meaningful teaching and learning situation. This produces the challenge for those teaching to become aware of their own patterns of perception and judgement. Vester\* points out that members of the educational milieu tend to divide the world into "opposite pairs". This means that they "always distance themselves from the masses".

Whatever form you choose will not be universally valid. The diversity of forms of learning is an opportunity to better address individual situations. So it is important for teachers and trainers to understand that life demands valid judgements for individual situations. The capacity for such judgements should not be viewed as a competence nor replaced by scientific evidence.

*The third challenge is: to be able to make valid judgements for individual situations.*

## The support

In kindergarten we are dealing with small children; in school with children and young people; in university with adults. At all these levels we need to create an attention

space. For this to happen we need detailed knowledge of the people who are attending the training course. There can surely be very few educators and teachers who are unaware of the importance of the relationship to their children and young people. Things are apparently not the same in adult education. We like to assume that we are dealing with adults who are independent and fully responsible for their actions. So the relationship is one based purely on the subject material.

However, questions are increasingly being asked about the design of learning provisions. Do we know how the young people of today learn?

How do the current conditions impact their learning behaviour?

We have already seen above how the attitude of lecturers influences the design of their teaching matter. But even in a university course it is not just a matter of imparting knowledge. So do students need support and, if that is the case, what form should this take?

At this level the discussion is between those learning. This is an encounter from one ego to another. This can result in an appropriate attention space.

There are already a wide range of forms of support for students which can vary from a purely formal conveying of information to learning tandems where both the teacher and student view themselves as being in a process of learning. Developing a self-managed training in which the students take on responsibility for their education has created a model which is designed completely from the needs of the students.

However, technical achievements must naturally not be ignored. These have had a great influence on the acquisition of knowledge in recent decades. Online learning has increased and requires appropriate forms of exchange because many students become isolated in front of their screens. Studies show\*\* that this learning path does not bring any significant progress.

*This is the fourth challenge: to be in communication with the students – support them.*

## Learning again

As already mentioned, the learning process is enigmatic. There is accordingly an intense debate in educational science on the concept. Despite a wealth of attempts at an explanation and suggestions of definitions, there is no

\* Vester, Michael et al.: Soziale Milieus im gesellschaftlichen Strukturwandel. Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 2001.

\*\* See for example: Zierer; Klaus. Lernen 4.0: Pädagogik vor Technik. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Digitalisierung im Bildungsbereich. 2018



agreement on the use of the concept. Every description of learning rests on assumptions that enable a conceptual model.

We could for instance make the following statement:

1. The human being is endowed with a spirit and
2. The rhythm of day and night is important for learning.

Attention is directed to particular areas of learning and also favours particular research directions.

Many studies rest on observation from "outside". For example, we watch how a stone falls, measure brainwaves or study the reaction of a large number of substances on a particular other substance and then evaluate this statistically.

Another perspective is observation from "inside". Researchers observe themselves. Speaking of the results that he presented in the "Philosophy of Freedom", Rudolf Steiner said that they were "...results of introspective observation following the methods of Natural Science".

A good mix of both approaches is desirable, where possible. Studies dealing with human beings can often include the inside view. Sleep research is an obvious case. The change in states of consciousness from conscious to unconscious and vice versa can be studied through the phenomena of falling asleep and waking up. The unconscious realm of sleep lying between these events is currently being studied intensively from outside. An inner view, based on "introspective observation following the methods of Natural Science", can also produce results. A starting point for this can be made by observing the two moments of transition in an unconstrained manner. The two questions, "how do I fall asleep?", "how do I wake up?" can be described in detail from our own experience. The interval between falling asleep and waking will then become more comprehensible. Sleep can be seen as a kind of "digester" of the day's experiences and this assumption is often as far as it goes. What is seldom discussed is whether there are authentic sleep events corresponding to the day's events. There are no memories and therefore no material for discussion.

However, if we assume that this material nevertheless exists, we can formulate the following working hypothesis: "The experiences of the day are processed in sleep. The experiences in sleep are processed during the day."

There are many indications of the existence of a "night world", such as angels, demons, etc. The present-day scientific community does not acknowledge them so far. The night or spiritual level is "lost in sleep". But there is now an

awakening. The intensive sleep research and interest in the unconscious point clearly to this.

Are there any indications about sleep experiences in the experience of the day? Sleep contains not just a review of the previous day, but a kind of preview of the next one. Like working through the day, the preview also remains unconscious, meaning that there is no direct knowledge of what will happen during the day. The part of the world which a person encounters during the day is unique. One research method for getting closer to sleep events is to be attentive to the things that meet us in daily life.

This method is also the basis for life learning. This raises the question of what we can learn from the things that life shows us.

Our ego consciousness is suspended during sleep. We fail to perceive the relationship to our ego in the things that daily life shows us. This is an enigma which Steiner addressed often.

*"Our ego, you know, is still very much asleep in the majority of people. If one thinks the ego is very wide awake, then one is in error. For in the will, as I have already explained, man is really asleep, and inasmuch as the ego busies itself in will, we have to do not with something that confronts us as ego, but with something that really stands before us as the night does. You see, we reckon with the night, too – do we not – in our life, although the night is dark. For life does not only consist of what is clear as day, but it consists also of the nights. [...]"*

*[...] This ego is bound up with each perception and with all that is basically, actually, outside you. It is only active within because it sends into you the forces from your perceptions. And, furthermore, the ego is connected with something else as well. You only need to walk – in other words to unfold your will. [...] In everything which arises in you as movement the ego enters too. But this, as you know, is not strictly within you, it takes you with it. If you dance a round dance, do you think the dance is within you? It would certainly have no room in you. How would it have room? But the ego is there, too. The ego goes through the dance, too. So in your perceptions, in your actions, there lies the ego. But that is not being really within you in the full sense of the word, as your stomach is within you; there is always something of this ego which is fundamentally outside you.\**

*The fifth challenge: work as equals*

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\* GA 205, Chapter 6. Taken from: Rudolf Steiner Medicine, an Introductory Reader, Rudolf Steiner Press 2012

## Teaching

The challenge lies in finding the best form of teaching. The adults who are involved have different biographical backgrounds. They have to take responsibility for their own learning and so are part of the teaching process. The day/night phenomenon described above can be helpful for the structure and communication of the material, and for the learning ability of the participants. It is helpful to cultivate an active forgetting, to incorporate sleep as a constructive partner.

Learning activities often have a clear purpose. They are either for a qualification or for a social or personality development process. A strict separation of these would appear

questionable. Acquiring a qualification can best be done when the social dimension is known and the person is aware of their own responsibility.

The five challenges are signposts for how to provide training support for the individually and socially active person.

- *create an attention space*
- *find the appropriate learning form*
- *be able to make valid judgements for individual situations*
- *be in communication with the students – support them*
- *work as equals*

# Helen Van Zyl – unfolding learning

## Unfolding Practice

Thank you for inviting me to share my experiences of the unfolding of biodynamic practice in the South African region, with specific reference to youth training.

I will begin with two brief stories to assist me in describing a quality of observational experience that I encountered in South Africans and which I continue to study and expand upon to deepen my unfolding practice as a trainer of South African youth.

Over 25 years ago when I was working on our farm, busy building a compost heap and fully aware that the day was fast coming to a close, I noticed my husband's tree care team nearby and called over to invite them to help me. On completing the heap I began – without explaining to anyone assisting me – to insert the biodynamic compost preparations. Although I had expected the team to head off so as not miss a lift home, I noticed half of them standing in reverence, with awe that was based on an experience as though they were “moved”, more of a seeing awareness ... others stood around unaware, perhaps like me acting more functionally and practically to “get the job done” ... time was the commander for us. But for others time was not the boss and a different aspect was engaging them.

Another example not related directly to my training, was when my husband Riaan gave friends who run a retreat in the Langeberg Mountains a gift of biodynamic preparations, after we had spent a wilderness retreat on the mountain. There is no agricultural practise there but an honouring of the South African mountainous landscape with its unique and abundant indigenous flora and fauna. After we left, the trustees related that they sprayed the preparations and then headed back to Cape Town.

As there was building going on at the retreat by skilled local craftsmen, the manager called in on Monday afternoon to check up on the progress of their work. They told him that they could not work that morning. When they arrived they had felt that the place was different. They sat and watched: they said it felt “as though they were in church”.

My name is Helen van Zyl, I live in South Africa, Western Cape, and I have been training a group of South African young people in an accredited and non-accredited programme in organic and biodynamic agriculture since Oc-



Presentation Helen Van Zyl, Trainer&Teacher Conference 2019

tober 2013. With the exception of two students, all those who qualified have remained in agriculture.

I would now like to relate another two examples that I believe connect to the two other stories but where something else is also going on.

1. As part of our training we visit a variety of farms that include a mix of large- and small-scale farms so that the students get a picture of different practices. On one such occasion the students were asked by the farmer if they thought that hydroponics could be organic especially if all the inputs were organic etc. The question challenged the students to be awake and think. One student, however, brought the debate to a conclusion by replying, “how can it be organic or healthy when none of the four elements, earth, water, light and warmth are involved? The farmer immediately stopped his line of questioning, although that was not the answer he was looking for.
2. On another occasion when we were workshoping and having a group discussion on soil health, one student asked, “why do we say we put oak bark (plant material) in the cow's skull but we are actually putting earth in the skull?”

Although for many of the trainers here today these answers or discoveries may be obvious or not unusual, I ask you to note and discover that there is a subtle development from the first two stories to those two I have described now. In our training I notice that the students are becoming aware and awake to their picturing perceptions.



So my personal and ongoing enquiry is, what is the nature of the students' picturing and the subtlety of their awakening and unfolding? Coming from diverse cultures, that picturing will reflect the richness of their culture, and contribute to the development of organic and biodynamic agriculture as a whole.

Of course I do not experience the picturing that happens in the stories, I am not "inside", but I observe others experiencing or having experiences. I am moved by it, I am surprised, I note that I have witnessed another's discovery.

As a trainer I also unfold because the stories speak to me of an unfolding. Hence as a trainer I also unfold.

## "How do we balance ecological aspirations with social upliftment?"

Serge Raemekers

### What makes the Southern African context shed a different light on biodynamic training?

The context related here is rooted in the continent's history and the social challenges that young people find themselves in today. This context at times appears political in its narrative, but my intention is to describe a context that influences not only the lack of significant organic and biodynamic development in South Africa but also to show that the challenges inform a context that needs to be acknowledged but also sets the scene for new and creative approaches to solutions.

In South Africa, nature itself is magnificent with its varied and vibrant flora and fauna. Historically southern Africa was one of the last regions in the world to practice hunting and gathering and so the development of agriculture also happened later. Even today the development of the various tribal cultures is not restricted to the colonial and political boundaries. In South Africa we have 11 different languages, and these languages are also spoken in neighbouring countries.

### Aspirations of young people in Africa

A study by Sosina Bezu and Stein Holden (2014) looked at why young people in Ethiopia are leaving traditional rural communities and concluded that a significant reason was that they had no access to land. They say that young people "are abandoning the farms due to access and market restrictions".

Providing modern technology as an attraction to aspiring farmers is not the only answer as was found in Zambia in a 2019 study by Thomas Daum (agricultural researcher). His study "suggests that policymakers and development practitioners need to pay more attention to the actual aspirations of young people in rural areas to avoid well-intended but misguided policies".

Daum also suggests that "young people also value and want to expand rural values". "Social life and networks, which are still an asset in villages compared to cities, were also cited as important. This included: networks of neighbours, relatives and friends and the communal celebration of traditions." The young people need and want to be involved in the direction of their involvement in agriculture. So the direction and nature of their involvement will inform their role in agriculture.

Of course, in the South African agriculture sector where the history of labour rights in rural farms has seen little reform in practice, the attraction for young people to return to the land for employment faces many challenges not common in other countries. And according to a study by Luke Metelerkamp: "Young people are ready to farm. But the sector isn't geared to absorbing them...".

The youth employment crisis indicates a rate of 62% unemployed, where 60% of that figure have never been employed. The young people who I speak to feel let down by land reform and struggle to get a foothold in land ownership. This has of course sparked off new conversations on creatively finding innovative solutions to land ownership, e.g. cooperatives are being developed where farmers are allowing young people with entrepreneurial drive access to their land to work together and profit share.

How do I as a trainer assist young people to navigate their history with its legacy of colonialism, institutionalised racism and lack of land? The social problems that I take into account include:

- wider financial family responsibility
- gaps in their own education
- traditional communities view the drive for a career radically differently
- farmers see students as labourers
- difficult to know if their work and training is valued by their farmers
- guidance is more subtle with diverse groups as culture and values differ
- perceptions of agroecology can vary

- little common ground / bridge between small-scale farmer and industrial farmer

I cannot ignore the fact that, as they go through their own development, the above context is also the basis of this development. As a result there is both a richness and also impossible and unsurmountable challenges. The question for me is no longer how many biodynamic farms are there in South Africa but what is the nature of the unfolding of biodynamic practice in South Africa? I ask that trainers, advisors, consultants and visitors bear in mind that there is a consciousness in the young people emerging today that is finding expression and showing resilience to the challenges and concern for the environment. Including the wider community, especially the young people, involves acknowledging their own development in the rich context that I have just described. Nationally there is a demand for the de-colonisation of all school and university knowledge. De-colonising a curriculum is not just political but is also a request by the youth of South African to empower their own knowledge and to have an input into how it is taught and developed. We need to include this intention in our training so that the riches of all cultures as well as conflicts are transformed. Then the unfolding will be different and unique for each student, farmer and country. In order to de-colonise and to avoid bringing rigid ideas, as trainers and consultants we acknowledge that there is an interface with what was there from the past but also that the student brings their own cultural past and their own being to expression in multiple ways, just as a plant brings their

environment to expression in different ways. In acknowledging the past and being in the present, what is the future asking for? Just as biodynamics is a new impulse in most of Africa, so also is our meeting with what wants to find its own unique expression as a new impulse from the heart of Africa. Then together we can bring new impulses into African farming and not just what we want. In my training and experience the students have to change, and the most noticeable change is early in the second year of training. This change is an unfolding and is evidenced for me by the student perceiving in new ways. As trainers we facilitate this change. We constantly develop creative spaces for the students to unfold through facilitating learning presences and moments for the students. This type of unfolding is delicate and must be nurtured. Deep presencing moments connect to the source and origin of the students' own development. Goethean observation allows and invites them to become inwardly mobile. Three weeks ago, during an observation exercise studying the process of death and decay in plants, the students fed back descriptions to the group that showed a deeper and expanding awareness. And as the plant goes through seed formation which is the last stage of decay and also a beginning, so our students also gained new insights that germinate new ideas for inquiry and action. As participants in a stream of evolving time our thinking must not be static when we teach, just as our thinking is freed up when we observe plants.

Then our students will find new impulses to action.

# Working Groups

## Maja Kolar and Reto Ingold

### How can we build know-how capacity in small biodynamic associations?

#### Experience of developing training in Slovenia

The goal of the working group was to present the training and development model in a small biodynamic association (Demeter Slovenia) and to encourage other small organisations to start with this kind of development.

In the introduction Maja Kolar described how Slovenia decided to offer trainings to advisors, teachers, inspectors and leading farmers together because of a lack of funds, and successfully installed a four module seminar that now offers the basis for producing trained staff in different co-operating organisations, like the board of Demeter SI, regional associations of farmers and home gardeners, state advisory and teaching bodies and organic inspection bodies. It is a unique feature in Slovenia that the leaders of local biodynamic associations (Ajda organisations) are responsible for organising joint preparation work to provide enough biodynamic preparations for all the members.

We then wanted to provide an open and listening atmosphere in the working group, to try to find suitable solutions for different situations on the basis of experiences from participants with more or less biodynamic development. Each of the participants evaluated the situation in his/her country and tried to find out the potentials of training de-

velopment on the one hand and the fields that could be improved on the other.

How can we build know-how capacity in small biodynamic associations? The experience of training development in Slovenia

We have worked on different questions:

1. Which target groups need training in my country?
  - Each of us tried to identify a target group and find an appropriate training and we all agreed that an inclusive gesture is of great importance in this situation.
  - Clarity about the needs of different stakeholders such as consumers, ambassadors, retailers, etc.
2. How to create support at an international level?
  - Share training programmes
  - Accreditation of trainings at international level would be appreciated
  - Developing tools, methods for didactics and content of biodynamic training fields
  - Train the trainers
3. What kind of international cooperation would be needed?



Photo: Simone Helmle, 2019



- Common curricula for: farmers, consumers, retailers, young people, etc. with national notes
- International work inspires the work at national level

Ideas for future cooperation work emerged during the workshop in terms of:

1. Finding an EU project to apply for and start cooperation on an international level
2. Each of the countries tries to find out what the essential needs are at the first level
3. Each country finds out what its potentials are and what it could offer another country to help its further development
4. It was clear to all the participants that we need practical experience and that we need to avoid being too abstract at the first level

We realised we are a fairly homogenous group willing to cooperate in the future. On that basis we continued our work with a meeting just after the end of the conference where we tried to find out how we will further develop our project, which countries have an interest in cooperation, and which country will apply for the project and be the leading partner. The most likely constellation will be that Poland will be the leading organisation with the participation of Lichtenstein, Latvia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia, with the planned participation of Germany and Switzerland as expert countries.

We are planning our next meeting during the agriculture conference in February to define the project in more detail as we would like to apply for an Erasmus project in spring 2020. We will also invite Croatia and Hungary to join the project as they were not able to participate at the last conference in Dornach.

## Laura Bertzbach and Jakob Ganten

### Learning materials for biodynamic farming – What do we have? What are we missing?

In our presentation, we admitted that we had come to the workshop with rather empty hands. It was not our aim to present anyone's beautiful learning materials, but instead to jointly develop the core of biodynamic materials and if (as we expected), something is missing, what we could develop for the future.

We met with 10 people from the following countries:

- Sweden
- Germany
- Brazil
- China
- Switzerland
- Egypt
- Italy (South Tyrol)

After getting to know each other, we made the first inventory of what exists in each region. The documents we found could be sorted into the following four categories:

1. **Internal documents** (concepts, curricula, handbooks, assessment criteria)
2. **Literature** (books, booklets, handouts, sheets on organic and biodynamic topics)
3. **Methodology** (teachers guides, Goethean science approach, adult education methods)
4. **Working materials** (materials for helping the students gain knowledge, checklists, portfolio)

The title "*learning materials*" now became more concrete and clear and we found it easier to find our bearings in what we were discussing. Each of the participants had many things in each category, but nobody was satisfied with the totality of what he or she had. That was our inventory for the first day.

When we met on the Saturday morning, we created a vision of the future:

- *What would be wonderful to have in a couple of years? What would be really helpful?*

We first visualised this individually, then discussed it in pairs and finally collected the visions in the whole group. And next came the interesting step:

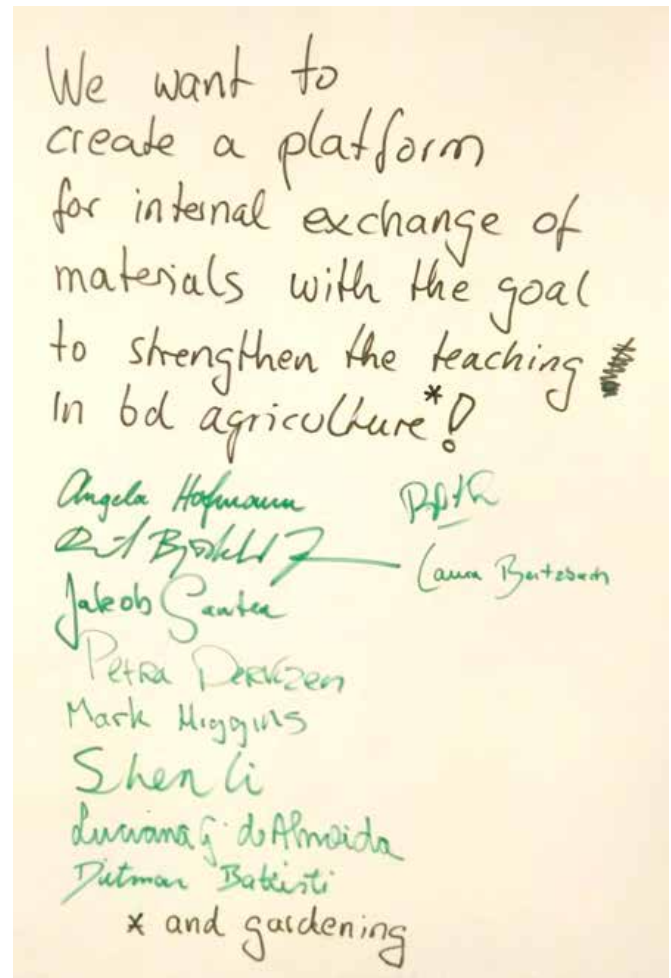
- *Which of these visions are realistic? What is not just a vision but a necessity? What needs to be realised in the near future?*

Here are the project ideas which we defined:

- Production of a video collection on all aspects of biodynamic farming and teaching. Inspiring lessons and content. Preserve the knowledge of inspiring teachers and make it available. This would be a cooperative project for which finance has to be found.
- Creation of an internal platform for the exchange of materials with the aim of improving the teaching.
- Initiate and write "the book" on biodynamic agriculture for students.
- Set up a mutual recognition system, in which training organisations visit each other regularly and reflect on each other's quality. This would include training ambassadors, so that each organisation has an ambassador who keeps in contact with the others.
- International teacher trainings (for example on the Goetheanistic approach to landscape).
- Biodynamic training newsletter or even a journal on biodynamic training.

We then wanted to become even more specific and really get down to earth. Which projects are we actually going to implement? Which one should we start with?

That was difficult because it meant that the others come second. But we made the decision. The project we want to see implemented first is:



Signatures for the chosen project

"Creation of an internal platform for the exchange of materials with the aim of improving teaching". It is reproduced here with the signatures of most of the participants.

Important note: the other project ideas are not less important. The book is also a necessity and teacher trainings will also have to be developed as well.

# Soazig Cornu and Vincent Geerts

## Working Group - Training of Trainers

Our initial project was for the work of this group to enable us to build a clear vision of the training of trainers that we want to develop in biodynamics.

Our group, led in French and Spanish, was very rich and varied, with people involved in biodynamic training from Spain, Italy, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, France, Germany and Brazil.

We read a short text to put us in an appropriate mood, taken from a lecture by Rudolf Steiner, given in Berlin (GA 102):

"The individuals voluntarily allow their feelings to stream together and this again causes the forming of something which goes beyond the merely emancipated man. An emancipated human being possesses his individual soul which is never lost when it has once been attained. But when men find themselves together in voluntary associations they group themselves round centres. The feelings streaming in this way to a centre once more give beings the opportunity of working as a kind of group soul, though in quite a different sense from the early group souls. All the earlier group souls were beings who made man unfree. These new beings, however, are compatible with man's complete freedom and individuality. Indeed, in a certain respect we may say that they support their existence on human harmony; it will lie in the souls of men themselves whether or not they give as many as possible of such higher souls the opportunity of descending to man. The more that men are divided, the fewer lofty souls will descend into the human sphere. The more that associations are formed where feelings of fellowship are developed with complete freedom, the more lofty beings will descend and the more rapidly the earthly planet will be spiritualized."

During a quick presentation, each one expressed his or her needs in relation to our theme, including: proposing the most appropriate potential paths for new trainers who will support the development of biodynamics; structuring and organising a training of trainers; moving from training farmers to training trainers; defining appropriate content and approaches; creating a community of values; linking trainers; meeting the permanent challenge of imparting knowledge while respecting individualities; etc.

On the first day we worked on 2 questions:

1. As part of a training course, what promotes my personal learning? (objective: to place oneself as a learner and change one's point of view).
2. The new generations that come to biodynamics and that I meet, how do they learn, what do they need? (objective: to meet the needs of today and not those of 20 years ago or 20 years from now!).

We worked in small groups by writing our answers on sheets of paper that we then grouped on a large board according to the major themes that emerged. Here we share some of the elements with you:

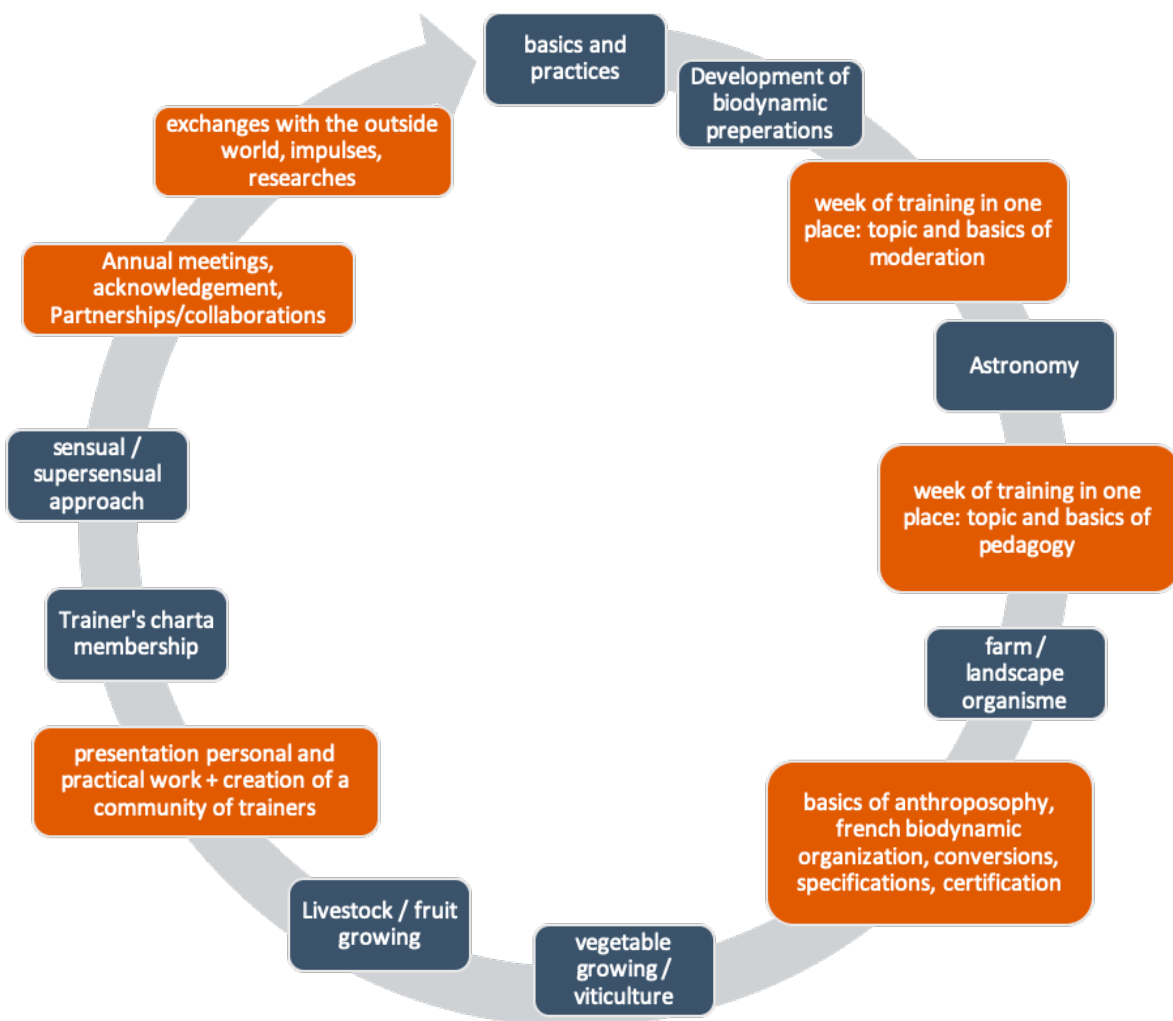
- The external conditions that must be met: arouse curiosity, favourable environment, pleasant and empathetic atmosphere, be confident, the need for calmness
- The inner conditions that I need as a trainer / participant: wanting, being present and conscious, concentrating
- The need for meaning and concept: to experience things, to acquire knowledge of them, through the senses, through meaning; to find meaning and the link between thought, a visible sense world and invisible world; to understand;
- The need for rhythms: to be in a dynamic, organic time to assimilate and learn, the rhythm between speed and calmness.
- The need to do and observe: practice! observe! experiment by yourself to integrate, internalise, feedback, see the actual results of biodynamics on a farm
- Modern methods and tools (videos) AND living methods (practice and observation) and results to be seen in practical terms.

All this should be taken into consideration in order to develop good training.

On the second day, we worked on large sheets of flipchart paper to deepen our work from the previous day. We shared ideas that emerged: the list below is not exhaustive, but it shows the spirit and the approach:

1. As a trainer, how will I be able to develop the right inner attitude?
    - Before a training session: to focus, to open up, to let go, to be free, to be benevolent; to know oneself well; to be enthusiastic
    - Methods: meditation, breathing, personal work, groups for exchange and sharing on anthroposophy, readings
    - Talk about your own experiences, prepare your subject well
    - Be at the training site in advance; know your audience, type, number
  
  2. How do I create the right external conditions?
    - For yourself: Good food, good sleep. Be open to other points of view while keeping the thread.
    - For the place: Be amazed! That the training is taking place on a biodynamic farm; being close to nature; a welcoming place. Room layout according to objective: classroom... U-shaped, round... Include the place as a tool for work and practice.
    - Leave space for relationships between participants.
    - See several different biodynamic farms to see different approaches.
  
  3. How do I set the rhythm in the training path, in a day, in a cycle?
    - Being a teacher and a student: change roles.
    - Address the same theme from different points of view.
    - Manage time between areas of concentration and expansion.
    - Work over the 4 seasons.
    - Periods inside / periods outside.
    - Have a minimum of one night in each block to digest.
    - Observe the constellations and the sky every day.
    - We can take the example of a training day in Argentina which would take place as follows: Morning: theoretical content, related to anthroposophy and then more technical; artistic activity before and after the meal. Afternoon: practical work and artistic or social activity.
  
  4. How do I create the conditions for practical experience and observation?
    - Prepare the equipment and "ingredients" beforehand
    - To be on a farm or in a corner in nature
    - Making comparisons is helpful
    - Allow participants to DO, STIR, SPRAY, OBSERVE, DRAW
    - Take time for observation moments
    - Supporting gestures
  
  5. How do I create meaning?
    - With practical work to learn
    - By developing and applying biodynamic preparations
    - By following the cycle of the year
    - By working with the head, heart and will
    - Start from what participants know, avoid concepts that you have not understood yourself
    - Visit living farm organisms!
    - Use several methods to see results: sensory, suppersensory and practical (health, performance, etc.)
- Small extras as part of a trainer training course:
- Perform personal work to be presented to peers.
  - Use interactive methods: role-play, then hear people's feedback to improve and grow together.
  - Communicate well about the goals, the purpose of each session for example
  - Practise the art of speaking: important to speak to others in a clear way
  - Everyone knows how to create spaces for exchange.
  - Share your practice without thinking it's the best. Diversity of practices / openness of thoughts. Several methods can work, even if you personally have an affinity with one or the other.
- For a complete training which addresses the head, heart and hands (thinking / feeling / willing), it is essential to mix theoretical contributions, artistic activities and practical experiences.





Training Cycle for biodynamic trainer in France

Blue: what already exists, in connection with the producer participants  
 Red: what is missing and needs to be developed: specific modules for trainers

Not to be forgotten in a training for trainers:

- personal work
- knowledge and practice in pedagogy
- concepts and ideas about anthroposophy
- training in group facilitation, for more interactivity, practice, rhythm
- the practice and development of preparations
- the creation of a community, common tools, information transfer, a value charter, clear contracts

During the 3rd session, we shared our experiences, in particular the specific cases of France and Argentina, and reflected on what could be improved:

#### France:

A project for a training cycle to become a biodynamics trainer -The main principles:

- See different places and different trainers
- Alternate theory / rhythm / practice

Course: follow X training sessions over 1 or 2 years, with mandatory sessions and sessions of your choice

#### In Argentina:

The leader of the training projects for farmers and advisors is the Biodynamic Association of Argentina (Asociación para la Agricultura Biológico-dinámica de Argentina, AABDA).

For both farmers and advisors there are four training modules organised around the four elements:

- Earth element: takes place on a farm in arid conditions
- Water element: takes place on a farm in a tropical area
- Air element
- Heat element

The development of soils, plants, animals and humans is studied in each of these situations.

The trained advisors undertake more in-depth training related to the tripartite human being with metabolic, rhythmic and neurosensory poles.

Each session lasts one week with ongoing discussions and feedback, a self-evaluation process and evaluation by teachers and participants.

Training sessions are held on farms in transition to biodynamics, first to carry out the different steps for reaching the goal we have set ourselves and second by involving local people.

There is feedback between what advisors do where they work and the training process: there are meetings, a charter, training enhancements, and a link to knowledge of the specifications and certification.

#### In Mexico:

The development of biodynamic agriculture is in its infancy and training has so far been carried out on an individual basis in the form of a diploma, which is obtained by following a series of modules of 2 to 3 days quarterly

over 2 years. This is of course insufficient. We are in the process of supplementing these modules with work as a consultant on a farm supervised by the teacher(s). There are also a few freelance "advisors" whose training is questionable and this is precisely why we want to formalise the training provision in collaboration with Demeter International and the movements for biodynamic agriculture of France (MABD) and Argentina (AABDA).

#### Conclusion

We can grasp the spiritual background, the common core of the diversity of experiences according to countries and contexts. We must be attentive to the freedom of thought of those we teach.

Training benefits from being continuously nurtured by exchanges between people with more or less experience, farmers and trainers, just like an agricultural field that maintains its fertility.

There is no need to separate the training of trainers and the training of farmers: the mixture can be very enriching. On the other hand, it is important to plan specific times and sessions for future trainers, in order to address issues related to pedagogy and interactive seminars in particular.

The training process must be continuously strengthened.

The general framework to be established will need to be adapted for each country, structure and situation.

We will go home with the spirit in which we have worked.

## Maaianne Knuth and Rolf Bucher

### What are key aspects to build the capacity and infrastructure of young biodynamic initiatives (in the global south)?

A group of 10 people explored how we can support young biodynamic initiatives.

In the first session people checked in by sharing who they were, where they were from and why they had chosen to come to this group. We then separated into two groups to go a little deeper into the topic

People journaled their reflections on two questions, then they shared their reflections in the small groups:

- "What brought me here?"
- What do I need in my situation?"

From this listening and sharing the groups explored what common questions and themes were emerging.



Group Photo by Simone Helmle, 2019

The following topics emerged:

1. How to work together between so-called experts and the new initiatives, this often being a north-south collaboration. Several sub-themes or questions arose in this:

- How to build connections as colleagues?
- How to meet each other with openness and wonder?
- When and how does it become WE – as opposed to us and them?
- How to go beyond a Eurocentric encounter – that is upheld from both sides?
- How to create spaces where the interaction can eventually *evolve*?
- How to re-awaken joint responsibility for each other? To become a global connected movement?

1. How to find each other as young initiatives? There was a sense that we have so much to exchange being young initiatives but there is no way to find each other.

2. What is the role of young initiatives in spreading biodynamics in their context? We realised that those of us present were already ahead. We are connected to the global movement. There are other small impulses that do not have the benefit of connection. There could be others who might wish to engage in something like biodynamics but do not have any access. What is then the role of a connected young initiative in moving the learning and access beyond their own boundaries?

3. How can we localise the work and connect with local roots?

4. For the advisors who travel a lot the question was: “How do I find and keep my rhythm?”

5. What is the next stage in the evolution of young initiatives? This was a question from someone who has already been pioneering for some years. How can we take it to the next level?

6. How can we develop local certification? What are we able to present to the world?

7. How do we build relationships between the professional commercial certified farms and the living network of grassroots initiatives? Many stories were shared of there not being any relationship between these worlds.

8. How do we find resources to support this work of growing young initiatives?

9. How do we connect young initiatives and small-scale farmers to the market?

10. How can we answer the call of the land?

We did not manage to work on all these topics.

During the second session we focused on two of the topics identified:

1. How do we find each other? As young initiatives and with potential contributors.

2. How do we work together in a respectful way between advisors and initiatives?

## 1. How do we find each other and build relationships?

### Creation of an initiative map

Currently it is easy to find Demeter certified farms, but not new initiatives. We spoke of the benefit of an initiative map where new initiatives can register and share their journeys, learning edges and requests for support. In this way they can find each other to share learning and people with experience can also connect to them.

Exploring online connections: Facebook, WhatsApp etc. We did not develop this further, but it could perhaps connect with the initiative map.

### Accessible learning events

Regional gathering: We spoke of the importance of regional gatherings, rather than primarily having events in Switzerland. Gatherings that would be more accessible to people from the region but open globally. We started exploring a regional gathering for Southern Africa.

Study tours/learning journeys: to develop learning opportunities with farm visits.

## 2. How do we work together in a respectful way?

The group explored methods to create an open space. For example, instead of doing an introduction I can ask: "Show me the place you love most. Show me a place where you are happy. Create a mood map."

From there we can move forward.

### Learning through specific cases

In the third session we reflected on the challenge of developing these ideas in an abstract manner. We decided to focus on two cases of young biodynamic initiatives that would benefit from support using the case dialogue (or case clinic) of the Presencing Institute\* approach.

We worked with one case from Israel and one from Nepal.

Both case holders and their coaches expressed appreciation for the approach, and for the learning and deepening that they experienced. Out of this we returned once again to our meta-question: how can we support young initiatives?

We realised the following:

- An approach that brings together new initiatives and people with a high level of expertise and which integrates heart listening can be very powerful. Thus case dialogue (or case clinics) with a diverse group of people can be a strong platform for strengthening young initiatives. This could even become a structured part of some gatherings where old and new BD farmers come together.
- There is a great need for young initiatives to embrace their uniqueness and their own power, and not to give it away to the outside expert. Both cases demonstrated that although there may be a need for relationship to and learning from outside, there is strong local capacity – but this cannot be fully harnessed when the young initiative is focused primarily on what they do not know and on what they need from outside. It is also very important for the advisor to affirm and amplify the local capacity, as well as bringing their support and knowledge.
- Young Initiatives need to be aware of the importance of ongoing communication and feedback to advisors. It is a two-way relationship.
- It is important to develop Participatory Guarantee Systems\*\* to enable more decentral formalisation of the BD process.
- We need to do much more work and sharing on how to organise farmers to get to market locally. There are places (e.g. India) where they have done a great deal of work on this, and others (e.g. Nepal, Zimbabwe) where there is a need and desire to learn.

\* [www.presencing.org/resource/tools/case-clinic-desc](http://www.presencing.org/resource/tools/case-clinic-desc)

\*\* <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-policy-guarantee/participatory-guarantee-systems-pgs>



# Ambra Sedlmayr and Jean-Michel Florin

## Using Goetheanism in biodynamic education: Inspiration and support for stretching beyond my current know-how

The main goal of this dialogical workshop was to help the participants to develop their approaches to Goetheanism through dialogical methods.

3 main goals:

1. Empowerment of the trainers to apply Goetheanism transversally, to courageously try out exercises;
2. Stimulation for the further development of their own Goetheanistically-oriented work;
3. Apply and learn methods that are adequate for adult education. This means that we will use a variety of dialogical methods (world café, journaling, case clinics, etc.) in the 3 sequences\*.

We then discussed these methods and reflected on the meta-level.

On the first day we started from personal experiences of Goetheanism: "What is the new that came into my life through Goetheanism?" "What has Goetheanism made possible for me personally?"

Afterwards we worked with the world café method with two questions:

1. Where do I apply Goetheanism?
2. What do I want to develop further? This question was to be reflected on overnight in order to come with a personal project the following day.

On the second day we started with guided journaling. With questions like: "Where do I want to use the Goethean method more", "Where do I want to further educate myself", etc. =Project? (more questions? – open is good, does not have to be too detailed)

We then worked with the case clinics method in groups of four. This method for self-help allowed everyone to reflect and develop their own project. Holding back judgments and expressing the emerging images has helped the givers of case clinics to better understand their own path.

On the third day we continued working with the case clinics method. At the end of the session each person was to answer the following questions for themselves: "How do I proceed with my new insights?" "What is my next step?"

The final round was a meta-reflection on the workshop:

"What do I take with me regarding Goetheanism?" "What do I take with me regarding the methods used?"

Some quotes from the participants' feedback give an impression of the work:

"The conscious and intensified perception was practiced in conversation. Through withholding judgements, emerging images could be described. This experience was special because it noticeably deepened the conversation without asking for detailed facts."

"... I could experience the common thread between the questions and my daily practice. It was helpful for me. Moreover the whole workplace was really full of important ideas."

"It inspired me a lot – the way it was organised, the exchange, the feedback. Also the harvesting and from time to time a view at a meta-level. It gave me some new tools but also the opportunity to work and exchange views on current questions I have in my work. And it's always good to hear the questions and experiences of other people."

"The facilitators held the group very sensitively and professionally. The exercises were well structured and built upon each other to move in a focused and well-guided direction. As well as enjoying the work immensely I found that it was also practical and I learnt some useful techniques to use in my own work and had invaluable insights. Very importantly, I was able to make strong connections to individuals with whom I can continue to grow in the work. The only thing that didn't work for me was that someone joined our group on the 3rd day. Whilst I was open to receiving someone new to the group in theory, it didn't work in practice as they joined the journey too far down the path and interrupted the flow. In a work group with a more directly practical theme, this would not have been a problem."

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\* Download Theory U tools free at [www.presencing.org](http://www.presencing.org)

# Methodological guide

Simone Helmle

*A conference is joint work and encounter, It is a coming together and dispersing, It is networking, which only after the conference ends shows its effectiveness and which, in the end, arises from the initiative of each individual.*

## Methodological modules of the training and trainer conference

This paper emphasises the methodological side of the conference by looking at the preliminary considerations for the conference and their implementation in the programme design. The aim is to bring back into consciousness the methodological spectrum of the conference, the different guiding questions and considerations on the intentions of the individual methods.

### Basic gesture: rhythm, breath, togetherness

What basic gesture do we want to give to the conference? Who and what should be the focus? What do we want to achieve with the conference? These questions can be guiding questions for any design of a learning space. The conference days were finally oriented towards the rhythm-giving poles in the design process:

- Listening and coming to one's own linguistic expression
- Following individual questions and working with one's own expertise, as well as bringing this into the cooperation and considering it as a partnership
- Harmonising head, heart and body work or consciously switching between the levels
- Becoming aware of the diversity and variety of educational activities worldwide and at the same time working out what this carries as a movement

Depending on the educational event, the respective course team may come to quite different answers to the key questions. Dealing with this helps the course team to grow together, it helps to use the individual method modules in a balanced way, it helps to guide the individual methods and it helps to create the gaps that arise when the transition is made from the welcome, to the weekly verse, to a lecture, to a conversation with a neighbour, to a working group etc.

## Short description of the individual method modules

Goal: to create individual space in the community and global connectedness

- **“Weekly verse”** from the Soul Calendar as a sounding, multilingual morning meditation
- **World Map I** of educational initiatives as a physical map. Each initiative puts a sticker on the world map with name, place and training form. The map will be continued over the years and constantly expanded.
- **World Map II** of the educational initiatives as a moving element to welcome the participants. The points of the compass are fixed in the room and everyone looks for his or her place in the room. The installation enables a first mutual perception of about 80 people from 27 countries in the room. With a kind of world trip each one introduces himself. Above all, this made the wide spectrum of the educational focus of the individual initiatives visible. These ranged from farm pedagogy with children, via student internships, vocational training, university courses, introductory courses, in-depth biodynamic courses, courses for processors, traders and consumers and courses for course leaders to running online courses, etc. This moving picture made it clear: educational work covers almost all topics and people who are active in biodynamics. Educational work presents social and cultural impulses. Educational work presents the perspective of "beginning/learning" a topic to devotion and skill, across all age and educational phases. The aim of mapping is to make the diversity, individuality and attention to the individual person visible, to perceive each voice and each person.

## Goal: individual exchange and own focus

- **“One-to-one conversation”** with the neighbour with the guiding questions, "What is my motivation here?" and "What do I expect from the conference?"
- 
- **Blue notebook** as a notebook and diary: a notebook with white pages for one's own notes, thoughts and questions in the form of a diary; as a kind of "recording". Notebooks are exchanged, someone else notes down what the person who owns the notebook says (dimension: trust, entrust, give and receive attention); record of individual methods with notes on how something

was done: how were the verses from the Soul Calendar guided? How are impulse presentations used? How far can a World Café be inspiring and what do I need for it? Needs time slots and the brief suggestions / guidance from the conference team to take a few minutes to take notes to realise the potential of this tool. Side effect: moment of personal reflection and shared silence.

- **Artistic workshops** of 90 minutes each, to give space to your own topic in an artistic working method.

**Goal: learning from the differences, getting involved in a different perception**

- **World Café:** In the World Café, people meet in groups at tables and regroup for each question. The aim is to hear from each other, to form one's own thoughts when speaking, to inspire each other and to go from one table to the next, to be stimulated, to be constantly open to new questions and new perspectives and at the same time to be in touch with one's own questions. No common result is achieved, but rather a wide space of thoughts is created, which is quite free.

It is helpful to guide the participants to the goal of the respective world café and to moderate it; write the questions on a blackboard; give impulses for empathic or creative listening; determine the owners of the table; encourage everyone who is not speaking to take notes; define the speaking time per person and make sure that everyone gets their turn.

**The guiding questions of the World Café were**

1. How do I teach the practical side of biodynamics?
2. Which biodynamic subject is most challenging to teach?
3. Which methods have you found that work best to make sense of practical experiences?

- **Voices / Biodynamic Initiatives:** 7 minutes of prepared contributions, live or via video message, woven into the conference over the three days, so that it was also possible to connect and participate from a location outside the conference. These are short, authentic snapshots, which show in a condensed form through pictures and words the actual situations and challenges in which individual initiatives find themselves.

**Goal: working on common questions, taking up impulses together, working individually**

- **Working groups,** 3 x 90 minutes. The working groups were conceived as expert groups, with the intention that everyone should have considerable experience and work on a topic in a results-oriented manner. The working group blocks should enable the work to proceed in a continuous process, with the aim of stimulating and strengthening their own work, or with the option of changing direction. It should be possible to perceive each other both as experts and at the same time as learning, sensitive and proactive people, so that something can take shape from the joint work. The results of the working groups were presented to the plenary at the end of the conference and were entertaining, creative and touching.
- **Impulse presentations** of 45 minutes each. The keynote speeches were not the core of the conference, but rather the common framework. Keynote speeches change the focus from many speakers, e.g. in the world map, the dialogues or the World Café, to one speaker. Keynote speeches are a longer period of listening together. The topics reflected the concerns of the conference: rhythm, breathing out and breathing in, methodological reflections on the night and the morning, day or night review, and maturing processes and experiences from learning practice, which are an appreciation and acknowledgement of the people we work with.



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