

Waldorf education – a survey of empirical research

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Introduction

Today there exists a growing amount of empirical research into Waldorf education and thereby also a growing need to create an overview, especially for English-speaking audiences who cannot fully access the existing German-language ones (Peters 2020a; Böhle & Peters 2011, 2010). There are publications in English and German that provide a selected account (Dahlin 2017; Randoll & Peters 2015; Paschen 2010; Gidley 2010a) but a full survey in English focusing on empirical research has been lacking. This survey is an attempt to both give a comprehensive overview in English and to provide at least a glimpse of what the research has been about. The text is based on the third iteration of a survey done for the benefit of the students at the Waldorf University College (WLH) in Sweden.

A previous article has explored research of a more theoretical nature (Tyson 2023). This survey focuses on empirical studies including historical research from 1990 onward.

What counts as research?

In contrast to the survey of theoretical research (Tyson 2023) where especially the books to include was judged relatively generously, this one is a bit more restrictive and limits the selected studies to:

1. Doctoral dissertations
2. Research monographs published by recognized science publishers
3. Articles in peer-review journals
4. Other academic studies that are clearly on par with peer-review articles

There are a few exceptions, mostly some early studies on former Waldorf students that were not published in any scientific context but that were done with a scholarly rigor. One issue with surveys of Waldorf research available online is that they also include articles that have not been peer reviewed and master-theses. A master-thesis is, admittedly, considered research on an advanced level and it is common practice to take parts of one and turn it into an article. However, having looked at several research reviews and surveys published in peer-review journals there hasn't been one where master-theses have been included. This could, in itself, be a topic for a separate review since it would further highlight the variety of research being done.

The delineation of what counts as research in this article is, of course, entirely formal and says very little about the quality of research included here nor about the quality of that which has been left out, not an insignificant amount given the long history of publishing at eg. Verlag Freies Geistesleben.

Another issue regards where to draw the line between what counts as theoretical and what counts as empirical. This is not always clear for at least two reasons: first because a study may contain both, eg. a book where some chapters are theoretical and some empirical (these books are sometimes listed both here and in Tyson 2023); second because it is not always easy to decide where one ends and the other begins. In this survey historical studies have been considered empirical although methodologically speaking they might have been mostly done using textual analysis. Other studies such as comparative didactical research have been classified as theoretical and can thus be found in the theoretical survey (Tyson 2023). The reason for this is that historical research also includes, at times, interviews and other more classically empirical methods whereas the comparative studies, to my knowledge, do not. It makes less sense to split the historical studies into two on methodological grounds.

Earlier surveys

As noted above, this survey has been greatly helped by the ones from the journal *Research on Steiner education* (RoSE) from 2010-2011 and from 2020 (Böhle & Peters 2010, 2011; Peters 2020a). Most of the research listed in these has been included here with the exceptions of a few studies that turned out to be non-peer-review articles, preliminary reports, or master-theses. The basic categories of the earlier overviews were also, for the most part retained but it has not always been easy to sort the studies, and this has at times led to them being categorized differently here (eg. some studies regarding student biographies after school were placed by Böhle & Peters in the category “structural aspects of Waldorf schools” and these have been categorized here as studies regarding “vocational biographies and lifestyles among former students”).

Böhle & Peters (2010, 2011) identify the following areas of research:

- Studies of structural aspects of Waldorf schools
- Studies from the student-perspective
- Studies concerning teachers and teaching
- Studies focusing on the social and emotional competencies of students
- Studies about the health of students and teachers
- Vocational biographies and lifestyles among former students
- Waldorf schools and interculturality (in Böhle & Peters 2011 called minorities)

Peters (2020a) has the following categories although it should be noted that he operates with a wider definition of what counts as empirical than the one proposed here (including eg. Barz 2018, a book about reform pedagogy that in this context counts as more of a theoretical study):

- Foundations of Waldorf education and structural aspects
- Explorative surveys
- Holistic approach of Waldorf education and art
- Developmental psychology
- Achievements of schools and comparisons with regular schools
- Studies about teacher education
- Studies about early childhood education
- Learning, teaching and student-teacher relations
- Resilience and health
- Lifestyles of former students

- Interculturality and inclusion
- Dissertations

Given that Peters (2020a) has a wider scope this survey largely follows the earlier surveys of Böhle & Peters (2010, 2011) in how it categorizes the studies but comparative research has its own category and the three categories of historical studies, studies of early childhood education and studies that were odd/difficult to sort were added.

The earlier research surveys conducted have been mentioned in the introduction and do not require a separate heading below.

Methodological reflections

Apart from looking at earlier surveys this overview is based on systematic searches in several research databases using the search terms Waldorf, Steiner, Education and Pedagogy in English, German, Swedish and Norwegian. Books were also searched for at online book seller sites such as amazon and in the larger publisher's databases (Belz, Peter Lang, Springer, Routledge). As noted above, there are several studies on an academic level concerning the lives of former Waldorf students that were not published by any academic publishers, but which are nevertheless included here because their contents are relevant and dismissing them on formal grounds makes little sense. A full survey of RoSE has also been done. The large number of references has motivated a split into three: Scandinavian languages, English and German. This hopefully allows an easier overview if one is only interested in the reference-list.

As noted initially, this is the third iteration of the survey and every year when it has been updated at least a few books, dissertations or articles turn up that were overlooked in earlier ones. Books because they are not always easy to look for in a systematic way in research databases. Articles because not every database covers every journal and dissertations because especially older ones are not always listed online. Some dissertations that are listed lack published abstracts and the only thing one has is the title. This makes it impossible at times to know what they were about, and the matter is even more confused by the practice of some institutions to call master-theses dissertations meaning that it can be assumed that at least a few of the studies included here are not doctoral dissertations but in fact master-theses. This is a further limitation of some of the online databases listing research where no distinction is made between the two giving the impression that there is more research done on a doctoral level than is actually the case.

Empirical research – a survey

Structural aspects of Waldorf schools

Most of these studies are concerned with decision-making and organizational form. Enderle (2018) and Ullrich (2012) have done research into self-governance in schools. Bento (2015) has explored complexity and change and Koolmann, Nörling & Boukal (2016) and Koolmann & Nörling (2015) discuss challenges to the organizational structures in Waldorf schools. Selsfors (2019) has studied the collegium of teachers as a forum for developmental work and Rawson (2014) has discussed practices of teacher learning as well as (2011) democratic leadership in Waldorf schools.

It is possible that Roberts' (1999) and Götte's (2000) studies regarding school autonomy and self-governance belong here. Roberts compares experiences from Germany, Switzerland and Holland. Götte discusses the, at the time, 80-year long experience of school autonomy in the context of a wider German conversation on the subject.

A few studies are concerned with what happens to students who transfer from state schools to Waldorf schools or the reverse (Keller 2012, 2008; Lawton 2016). One study is concerned with the passage from preschool to school in Brazil (Guglielmo et al. 2022).

Yet another group focuses on parents in Waldorf schools. Koolmann, Petersen & Ehrler (2018) have conducted an extensive study of German Waldorf-parents and their socioeconomic status, values and view on the future and Peinelt-Jordan (1998) has studied the socioeconomic status of Waldorf-parents in Berlin. Stehlik (2003, 2001) has conducted a case study of how a Waldorf school in Australia functions as a learning community for the parents. Brodbeck (2018) has explored how parents in Switzerland and Liechtenstein view and value the schools. Weidmann (2023) has studied if there is a connection between resistance to vaccination during the pandemic, esoteric views (where Waldorf schools were one parameter among several used to define esoteric views) and sympathies for the right-wing politics of AFD in Germany. The results speak against there being a clear connection.

Finally, there are a few studies that do not belong to any of the previous groups. Conein (2000) has studied environmental issues/sustainable development and the views of teachers concerning these in Waldorf- and Montessori-schools. Schmude (1990) has studied the regional and social field of pupil-recruitment for the Waldorf school in Heidelberg (this is part of an academic study from the Department of Geography at Heidelberg University and as such one of the exceptions mentioned previously).

Studies from the student-perspective

This category collects studies that examine various matters from the perspective of students. It is noticeably smaller than the following where the perspective of teachers and teaching are the focus. This suggests that the field covering the experiences, learning-development and achievements of students is somewhat understudied.

Suggate (2013) has studied if early reading instruction helps reading in the long term. Bruhn, Seifert & Aschermann (2007) have studied the influence that musical activities have on the successful completion of education at a Waldorf school. Wallner-Paschon (2009) has written a comparative study about Austrian Waldorf students, their PISA competencies and individual characteristics. Rohde (2022) has studied the Abitur-results of German Waldorf students in comparison with state school students in the Bundesland of Hessen. Brater et al. (2010) discusses how portfolio-documentation as a method can work to surface the competencies of students.

There are three studies that could be classified as studies about the relationship of students to a subject or part of it. Nordlund (2006) has written a dissertation about the subject of art, Heinritz (2012) about a pioneer musical project at the Waldorf school in Dortmund and Montenegro (2017) about the subject of foreign languages.

Finally, there are some studies that discuss the effects and experiences of attending a Waldorf school. Liebenwein, Barz & Randoll (2012) have conducted a large study of the educational experiences of Waldorf students and Peters (2021), Randoll & Peters (2020) and Beaven (2011) have all studied how former students think about their time in Waldorf schools. Idel (2007) has reconstructed three student biographies with the aim of exploring the biographical relevance of Waldorf education. Höblich (2010) has examined the relationship between biography, schooling and sexual identity in a Waldorf school and Rawson (2018, 2019) has studied the process of subjectification at a Waldorf school using Biesta's concept of *subjectification*.

Studies concerning teachers and teaching

A comparatively large number of studies focus on the perspectives of teachers regarding Waldorf education and teaching. There are four sub-themes:

- Subject-studies
- Studies in general didactics and curriculum inquiry
- Studies of teacher-student interactions
- Other studies

Subject-studies

Hougham (2013) has studied the class 8 play as a rite of passage, Willmann (2014) religion as subject in non-Christian contexts (Egypt, Israel) and Hoffmann (2016) festivals in two non-European Waldorf schools. Ruhnau (2017) and Peters (2020b) have looked at the teaching of mathematics in age-integrated classes, grades 1-5. Breaux (2004) has written a dissertation about the art of teaching mathematics in 3rd grade but it is unclear if this is more from the point of theory or more of an empirical inquiry. Sharpe (2022) has studied the views on mathematics held by three Waldorf students and their teacher (this overlaps with the theme of student-teacher interactions). Stene (2018) has conducted a qualitative study on music education and Hoyer & Schiefer (2019) as well as Hallam et al. (2016) have made studies on the subject of art. Kimberly & Brouillette (2021) have studied experiential learning in a first grade classroom. Prendergast has written a dissertation on how painting contributes to the education of the feeling life.

Zech (2012) has written a dissertation on the development of the history subject from 1919 to 2009 and compared it to contemporary history didactics and Nicholson (2000) has explored different representational forms of the history subject in a Waldorf classroom. Ullrich (2008) and Ullrich et al. (2006) have published a case study of a physics-period in a 10th grade and Jelinek & Sun (2003) have written an academic survey about the literature on natural science used in Waldorf education. Urbantat (2017) has studied the practice of surveying as a subject in 10th grade. Rohde (2003) has written a dissertation in the context of *Lehrkunstdidaktik* (“the art of teaching”, a school of didactics in German-speaking contexts, cf. www.lehrkunst.org) focusing on a couple of periods dealing with Faraday’s *Chemical history of a candle* and Goethe’s teaching on plant metamorphosis. Beck et al. (2016) have studied eurythmy-pedagogy. Erasmus (2015) has written a dissertation on the geographical knowledge that Waldorf students develop. Handwerk (2011) has written a dissertation on the educational value of poetry in 8th grade. Bair (2004) has written a dissertation about establishing a school garden and Grella (2015) one about learning to care for the environment through the nurturing of the aesthetic. Lutzker (2007) has studied both students and teacher-students in relation to foreign language education in *The art of foreign language teaching: Improvisation and drama in teacher development and language learning* and Navascues (1997) has written about early foreign language education in Waldorf schools from an historical perspective. Tsortanidou, et al. (2021) have written about the development of new media literacies from a Waldorf educational perspective.

General didactics and curriculum studies

Tjärnstig (2020) has written a dissertation about the didactical practice of a group of Waldorf teachers and Binetti (2020) has done something similar in a case study about how teachers transform Waldorf educational theory and philosophy into practice. Attfield (2022) has studied questions of inclusive citizenship education. Reece (2007) has written a dissertation about Waldorf-inspired education and at-risk students. Ciborski & Ireland (2015) have written about how Waldorf teachers measure student progress toward lifelong goals. Green (2020) has studied narrative teaching and Rader (2004) has written a dissertation about developing informational materials that feature stories as teaching tools in the early grades of the Waldorf school. Nielsen (2006, 2004) has written a dissertation and an article on Waldorf education as a pedagogy of the imagination. Nielsen & Smith (2007) have written about the historical origins of how imagination is conceptualized in Waldorf education. Freitag, Gabriel & Peters (2020) and Author (2019) discuss and compare the inclusion of vocational education in various Waldorf upper secondary schools and Author (2021) discusses variations of the standard Waldorf curriculum. Uhrmacher (1993) has studied the educational practice of four Waldorf schools in order to document its forms and Easton (1995) has written a dissertation about Waldorf education based on both studies of literature and observations of practice. Schmelzer (2014) has explored the practical importance of some concepts from Steiner’s lectures *Foundations of human experience*. Jensen et al. (2012) have conducted a didactical analysis of teaching practice in grades 9-12 at Waldorf schools in Denmark. It was published at Aarhus University but it is unclear what kind of academic text it is. Schieren (2008) has edited a series of presentations from a symposium at the Alanus University regarding quality of teaching in Waldorf schools (this is a departure from the choice here of excluding conference papers because they were published with an academic publisher).

Teacher-student interactions

Burrows (2013) has explored mindfulness and reflection in Waldorf education, Silverman (2015) has discussed navigating moments of tension in a Waldorf classroom and Moore (2016) how to create authenticity in the classroom. Graßhoff et al. (2005, 2006) and Ullrich (2003) have studied teacher-student relations at Waldorf schools and Helsper et al. (2007) as well as Ahsley (2008) have done so focusing on authority. Randoll (2006) has conducted a larger comparative study about how students view their teachers. Randoll, et al. (2014) have engaged in an explorative study regarding the views of students about their time with a class teacher in grades 1-8. Kunze (2007) has studied the oral evaluations of students.

Other studies

Fiedler (2012) has studied the biographical profiles of East German Waldorf teachers and Kunze (2013, 2011) has studied the vocational biographies of Waldorf teachers. Prager (2001) has written a dissertation studying three teachers in a Waldorf inspired US public school and Oberski & McNelly (2007) have written about holism in teacher development. Randoll (2013) has studied the values of Waldorf teachers. Randoll (2004, 1999) has conducted a larger comparative study about former students and their views about their schools. Harslem & Randoll (2013) have studied Waldorf educational attempts to explore student-centered educational practices (similar to those of Montessori and free alternative schools). Heinritz & Krautz (2012) have studied the factors that make art teachers still enjoy teaching art. Oberski (2006) has studied the views of teachers regarding the development of thinking in children/students. Höblich & Graßhoff (2008) have conducted a critical study about the 8-year long class teacher practice and Graßhoff (2008) has studied the relationship between class teacher, student and the student's family. Barz (2013) has collected a number of studies, in part empirical, about the specific characteristics of being a Waldorf teacher.

Studies focusing on the social and emotional competencies of students

Rivers & Soutter (1996) have studied bullying in Waldorf schools. Baier (2008) and Baier & Pfeiffer (2005) have conducted comparative studies about crime among youth where Waldorf schools are included. Baier et al. (2006) has also studied the views of Waldorf students regarding racism and right-wing extremism compared to students from other German school forms. Idel (2013, 2007, 2004) has reconstructed student biographies and how they reflect Waldorf educational school culture. Mayer (2006) has conducted a comparison of socio-moral competencies between Waldorf- and state-school students. Dahlin, Liljeröth & Nobel (2006) have studied the degree to which Waldorf students are supported in the development of social and other interactional competencies needed to be an active citizen in a democratic society. Siu (2012) has written a dissertation about student engagement at a Waldorf-inspired community school.

Studies about the health of teachers and students

Peters (2013a, b) and Graudenz, Peters & Randoll (2013) have studied the work-conditions of Waldorf teachers. Fischer et al. (2013) have studied the effect of attending Waldorf schools during childhood on health in adulthood, Flöistrup et al. (2006) allergies and sensitivities among children in Waldorf schools and Alm et al. (1999) as well as Schram-Bijkerk et al. (2005) the frequency of allergies among families with an anthroposophical lifestyle. Sobo (2015a) has studied anti-vaccination views among American Waldorf-parents and Brennan et al. (2017) have done a comparative study about the choice by parents to not vaccinate their children in California from 2000-2014. Zdrzil (2000) has researched Antonovsky's concept of salutogenesis and Waldorf education and Marti (2013, 2012) has studied the effect of mental activities and choir-singing on the cardiovascular system. Steiner (2013) has conducted a case study on Adhd and Majorek et al. (2004) has explored how curative eurythmy can have a positive effect on Adhd. Cyzartz et al. (2004) has studied the influence of poetry-reciting on heart- and breathing-rhythm and Honkonen

(2018) has explored how Finnish youth view the influence of music on their psycho-physical well-being. Stiefel (2000) has conducted a case study at a Stuttgart Waldorf school about when girls lose their milk teeth.

Vocational biographies and lifestyles among former students

This category contains two comparatively distinct themes. Studies about the values and views regarding the future among former Waldorf students (Gidley 2010b, 1998; Goldshmidt 2013; Föllner-Mancini, Heusser & Büssing 2010).

Studies that document what Waldorf students become after school (this group contains some early studies that were not done in a formal academic context but where the results are academically relevant):

North America (Baldwin et al. 2005; Mitchell & Gerwin 2008, 2007).

Australia and New Zealand (Haralambous & Carey 2022).

Denmark (Hansen 2003; Thuesen 1992).

Switzerland (Thomas 2007; Barz & Randoll 2007a; Holderegger 2001).

Germany (Barz & Randoll 2007b; Brater & Wehle 1982; Gessler 1988; Hofmann, Prümmer & Weidner 1981; Leber 1982; Schopf-Beige 2004).

Sweden: Dahlin, Liljeroth & Nobel (2006) have explored how frequently Waldorf students continue on to academic studies after school and how well they do. Arvas & Öhman (1994) have explored the Kristoffer-school specifically and what the students do after attending the school.

Waldorf education, intercultural education and inclusion

It is perhaps a sign that this was considered a category of such importance that it was given its own heading in the surveys of 2010/2011 even though it was almost empty at the time. Since then, a lot has happened, and several more extensive studies have been conducted.

The lack of studies partly obscures actual practice. In a non-academic format Abouleish & Kirchgessner (2005) have written about the foundation of Sekem in Egypt, Craemer (1980, 1987) about favela Monte Azul in Sao Paulo and Geraets (1993) about Inkanyezi Waldorf school in the township of Alexandra in Johannesburg. Oberman (2007) has published a conference presentation about Waldorf education in American public schools in socially marginalized neighborhoods. Ruf (2014) has outlined the development and practice of emergency pedagogy and Author (2016) presents a case study of eurythmy teacher Wilfried Kessler and the developmental project he has initiated in the village of Masloc in Romania.

Dahlin, Liljeroth & Nobel (2006, the same study referenced above) have studied if and how Waldorf schools might contribute to segregation by exploring the social and cultural homogeneity of Waldorf-parents. They have also studied what Waldorf schools do to support students with learning- and other disabilities. Barth (2020, 2008) has done review studies of inclusion in Waldorf schools and Adam & Schmelzer (2019) have done one on intercultural education and Waldorf education. Handwerk (2019) has studied inclusion focusing on student biographies. Maschke (2018) has written a dissertation on Waldorf education and inclusive learning.

Tang (2011) has written a dissertation on Waldorf education as intercultural education with examples from Taiwanese schools, Munoz (2016) one about integrating Waldorf education with critical pedagogy and indigenous epistemologies and Mor (2017) one about combining traditional knowledge forms and Waldorf education in Nepal. Boland (2015) has written about the globalization of Waldorf education based on a study of Waldorf teachers with Maori-background. Boland & Demirbag (2017) have written about Waldorf teachers at the Waldorf school on Honolulu and their work with integrating the Waldorf curriculum with indigenous traditions.

Brater et al. (2009) and Schmelzer (2012) have done evaluations of the intercultural Waldorf school in Mannheim. Blaeser et al. (2013) have written about the Windrather Talschule and their inclusive form of education. Beckel (2022, 2021) has studied newly arrived refugees and their inclusion at a Waldorf school. Powers (2020) has written a dissertation about public Waldorf schools in the US and equal access to them for minorities. Winther (2022) has studied diversity and the role of art-education.

Comparative studies between Waldorf- and state/regular schools

This category has been somewhat difficult to define given that some comparative studies fit better in other categories and have been placed there.

Comparative subject- and didactics studies

Wright (2013) compares geography as a subject in state schools and Waldorf schools and Erasmus & Obermaier (2010) compare the interest that students have in geography. van Norden & Schürenberg (2019) compare the narrative competence that students in regular and Waldorf schools exhibit in relation to the subject of history. Dorfman & Fortus (2019) have compared students' self-efficacy for science in different school systems. Sommer (2014) compares the didactics of Waldorf education with Klafki's didactical theory. Goral (2010) explores the use of Waldorf methods in regular schools in the USA and Buddemeier & Schneider (2005) the inclusion of Waldorf elements in state schools in Germany. Solhaug (2007) compares the democratic education of Waldorf- and Norwegian state schools at the secondary level. Rose & Jolley (2016) and Rose et al. (2012) compare the development of students' drawing and painting skills in Waldorf and regular schools in England. Cox & Rowlands (2000) compare Waldorf, Montessori and traditional education and their effect on the drawing skills of children. dos Anjos, Abreu & Melo (2012) have compared the natural science aspects of the Waldorf curriculum with Brazil's national curriculum. Rios & Menezes (2017) have compared the views on nature among children in some ecologically oriented schools (among them a Waldorf school).

Other comparative studies

Ward (2002) has compared narrative meaning making and personal development among teachers in Montessori-, Waldorf-, and other primary schools. Pätzold (2011) discusses differences in views regarding learning between Waldorf- and state school students. Diefenbach et al. (2020) has studied children with special medical needs and their development at Waldorf and state schools. Suggate, Schaughency & Reese (2013, 2011) compare the effect of beginning to learn reading and writing at 5 and 7 years of age in New Zealand, Cunningham & Carroll (2011) have carried out a similar study in Britain. Dahlin (2010) compares the values of Waldorf and state school students regarding civic and moral issues. Turós (2023) has compared the moral judgment of Hungarian Waldorf-, Catholic-, and state school students. Kirkham (2017) compares the effect of Waldorf-, Montessori-, and state curricula on children's pretence and creativity. DeLuca & Hughes (2014) have compared views on assessment in early primary education among several alternative pedagogies. Ogletree (1996) has compared the creativity of Waldorf-, and state school students in Scotland, Germany, and England. Besançon et al. (2015) compare French school environments and their influence on the creativity, motivation, and well-being of students. de Bilde et al. (2013) explore if alternative pedagogies (Waldorf & Freinet) increase early school engagement. Henry (1992) has compared the meaning of rituals in a Waldorf and a college prep school. Armon (1997) has compared teachers as moral educators and how they express caring in Waldorf and public-school classrooms. Weary (2000) has compared how looping addresses the academic and social needs of children. Woods, O'Neill & Woods (1997) have discussed spiritual values in education and what British public schools could learn from Waldorf schools. Dahlin, Liljeroth & Nobel (2006, again in the same study as referenced above) have compared the achievements of Waldorf and state school students in Sweden. Sillion et al. (2016) have conducted a psychological study of Romanian

Waldorf students in comparison with students from regular schools focusing on the frequency of impostor phenomenon and test anxiety.

Studies about early childhood education

Early childhood education and Waldorf preschools have seen dramatically less research than schools have even though Waldorf schools are numerically fewer than preschools. As a consequence, there are few common denominators among the studies that exist apart from a cluster of studies on play and movement.

Play and movement

Sobo (2014a, 2015b) has studied the relationship between health and play. Mei-Ju (2014) has studied creativity play, Waite & Rees (2014) have studied play and its relevance for developing empathy and Frödén & Rosell (2019) have explored toys and toy-play in relation to the children's imagination. Darian (2012) has studied movement-based learning. Kodsi (2022) has compared children in Waldorf and Normative Israeli preschools and how technological thinking and design process develop during free play.

Other studies

Parker-Rees (2011) has edited a series of chapters that are part theory, part empirical studies, on beliefs, values and practices in Waldorf early childhood education. Föller-Mancini & Peters (2018, 2015) have done evaluations of the Waldorf preschools in Berlin. Gelitz (2018) has done research on the transition from baby-to child-groups and (2022) on what constitutes pedagogical quality in Waldorf preschools. Frödén (2019, 2012) has studied the environment of Waldorf preschools and how it relates to gender roles. Wilson (2011) has done research into the connection of language, power and gender-socialization at a Waldorf daycare and then (2014) about constructing childhood and teacher-authority at a Waldorf daycare as well as (2022) problematizing the concept of child-centeredness. Knight (2022a, 2022b) has written a dissertation and an article based on it that critically explore Eurocentric or colonial entanglements in Waldorf educational views on childhood. Diefenbach et al. (2018) have developed a test for measuring school-readiness among children in preschool. Lawson (2018) has written a dissertation about how various European alternative pedagogies view early literacy skill development. Boland (2019) has explored Rudolf Steiner's ideas about writing music for young children through his own compositions in a dissertation. Sylwyn (2019) has written an article about generational learning. Astley & Jackson (2000) have studied rituals in Waldorf early childhood education and Bone (2008) has studied how spirituality contributes to the healing of trauma. Lim (2004) has studied painting in early childhood settings. Østergaard (2016) has interviewed six Waldorf preschool teachers about their work. Busch (1998) has written a dissertation about the inclusion of children with special needs in a Waldorf preschool. Drummond & Jenkinson (2009) have studied observation and evaluation of children in Waldorf early childhood education. Arslan & Kartal (2022) have studied: "The effect of the Waldorf approach applied with the collaborative method on the early assessment skills of 48-60 months-old children."

Historical studies

Uhrmacher (1995) provides a brief historical review of the development of Waldorf education and Frielingsdorf (2019) has written a more elaborate history from 1919 to 2019. Dhondt et al. (2015) discuss the possibility of writing an objective history of Waldorf education. Paull & Hennig (2020) have done a survey of the geographical distribution of Waldorf schools and preschools globally in 2019. Paull (2011) has written about the first presentation of Waldorf pedagogy in England at a conference in Oxford 1922 and Burnett (2009) writes about the first Waldorf Academy in England (Academy Hereford). Bak (2018, 2021a, 2021b) describes the founding of Melbourne Rudolf Steiner school in the 70s (2018), two Waldorf schools

in Victoria, Australia in the 80s (2021a) and the spread of Waldorf educational ideas in public schools 1990-2011 (2021b). Stabel (2014) has written a dissertation on the development of the Norwegian Waldorf school movement between 1926 and 2004 and Oberman (1999) has written one about the American development 1919-1998. Priestman (2009) has written a dissertation about the German Waldorf schools during the Third Reich. Wessling (2005) has written a dissertation with the title: *A case study of the life history of a Waldorf school through the lens of parental participation*. This sounds like a historical study, but I haven't been able to review an abstract in order to find out. Myers (2004) has written about the German fin-de-siècle Bildungstradition as it was taken up by Rudolf Steiner and Max Weber.

Other studies

Brater (2000) has evaluated the regional upper secondary school in Jurasüdfuss. Wood (1996) has written a dissertation about the urban public Waldorf school in Milwaukee and Easton (1997) continues the discussion. Boland (2017), using action research, has explored the development of his values over time. Whedon (2007) has written a dissertation about the relationship between Waldorf education and anthroposophy in daily practice. de Souza (2000) has written a dissertation about holistic education. Rittelmeyer (2010) has discussed the compatibility between psychological research and the concept of the four temperaments and Grant (1999) has studied how the conceptualization is used in Waldorf schools. Marti (2011) has studied movement in children between 10-14 and its relation to the development of judgment. Sauer (2014) has studied transitions from special- (Förderschule) to regular Waldorf schools. Oberman (2008) and Abigail et al. (2012) have done surveys of the spread of Waldorf education in American public schools. Schindler Rangvid (2008) has studied private school diversity in Denmark. Hutchingson & Hutchingson (1993) have studied the introduction of Waldorf educational elements in a school in Toronto for gifted children. Woods, Ashley & Woods (2005) have presented an extensive review of the Waldorf schools in England. Kolmos (2019a, 2019b, 2019c) has explored contemplative practices in school.

Finally, there are three studies that consider the role of architecture. Bjørnholt (2014) discusses spatiality, Geier (2018) lighting and Bradley (2022) the design of spaces to support childhood development.

Mulica (2005) has written a dissertation with the title *"An architecture of resistance: an urban Waldorf High School."* My guess is that this is not an architectural study, but I have been unable to find any further information about it. Similarly, Sturbaum (1997) has written a dissertation called *"Transformational possibilities of schooling: a study of Waldorf education"* and here, too, I have been unable to find out more about what this entails.

Concluding discussion

The largest and internationally most well-coordinated empirical research projects seem to be those focusing on former students in Waldorf schools. These are summarized in Dahlin (2017). Other than this the survey highlights the great variety of topics that have been explored.

The great variety of studies and topics is a sign of a young field of research still in the process of exploration. This doesn't mean that the explorative phase is over, there are many conceivable issues that could be raised for the first or close to first time. But, as stated in the survey of theoretical research (Tyson, 2023), the amount of research already done allows for valuable inquiries that deepen and test many of the singular studies that have been made in order to explore if they are replicable or in need of revisions and additions. A lot of the empirical research is qualitative and small scale and does not fully take into account differences between regions and countries in how education is organized. Simply repeating a study in a different country or with a different selection of schools, students or teachers would often yield important further knowledge. In many cases it is also both possible and relevant to do more in-depth comparative reviews of particular topics, eg. studies regarding play in early childhood education.

As noted initially, this survey is based on the third iteration of a survey for students at the Waldorf University College in Sweden. Each time the review has been updated a number of previously unknown studies have been found. This then should be taken for what it is, a systematic survey that with certainty will have missed a few relevant studies, miscategorized others and misunderstood some as well. Future surveys and revisions will hopefully remedy this at least somewhat.

Summary of scholarly research

Roughly speaking there are presently about 50 dissertations,¹ 140 articles, 45 books (of which about 40 are in German) and 35 miscellaneous studies that present empirical research into Waldorf education. All in all, about 270. If one adds to this the studies from the theoretical survey (Tyson, 2023): about 10 dissertations, 160 articles, 105 books and 15 book chapters/miscellaneous it becomes a significant number (even if one reduces the number of articles by 20-30 to account for the mistaken, and sometimes intentional counting of non- or semi- peer-review texts and subtracts maybe 40-50 books from the theoretical survey that were not published by an external scholarly publisher). In all it amounts to:

- Doctoral dissertations, at least about 60
- Articles, about 270
- Books, about 100
- Book chapters and miscellaneous, about 50

Clearly just the amount of scholarly writing regarding Waldorf education is so extensive that it is hardly possible for a single researcher to be familiar with all of it creating a situation where the need for specific more in-depth reviews of various topics has become much more relevant than it was just ten years ago.

1. Several books, eg. Zech (2012) were initially published as dissertations. When I have been certain of this I have counted the book as a dissertation but it can be assumed that several of the books counted here should in fact be counted towards the dissertations instead.

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