



Waldorf English Week e.V.
www.english-week.de

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To the English Teachers at the European Rudolf Steiner Schools / Waldorf Schools

Dear Colleagues,

Spring has finally arrived, which means that the time has come to invite you to this year's



from **Sunday, November 10th – Friday, November 15th , 2019**

in the beautiful, historic and now wonderfully renovated **Haus Altenberg** not too far from Cologne. For those of you who are not familiar with the concept of the *English Week*, here is a brief description of what you can expect:

The concept of the *English Week* is based on our conviction that intensive artistic work with actors, directors, story-tellers, poets and clowns, can be of immeasurable benefit for foreign language teachers. Thus, we view the daily three-hour artistic workshops as the keystone of the entire *English Week*. In addition, there are morning lectures based on the general conference theme and a wide variety of working groups addressing different methodological issues and questions, as well as a 'Market Place' offering an exchange of materials and ideas. The evenings are full of the "Spirit of English" in the forms of songs, dances and artistic presentations.

The theme of this year's conference will be
**100 Years of Waldorf Language Teaching:
What have we learned? Where do we go from here?**

Celebrating 100 years of Waldorf Education in 2019 is naturally also a celebration of the centenary of Waldorf foreign language teaching! Undoubtedly, the idea of instituting a curriculum in which two foreign languages would be taught from Class 1 on, with all pupils having six hours a week devoted exclusively to language learning, was among the most radical new educational concepts which Rudolf Steiner introduced in 1919. It was rooted in his conviction that learning foreign languages was an essential part of what it means to realize one's potentials of becoming fully human: "The richness of one's inner life and soul should be enhanced through foreign language lessons..." because "...the different languages of the world penetrate a human being in very different ways und thereby reveal what is universally human."

In 1919, there was neither a precedent nor a methodology that existed for doing this. Based on his encompassing view of the human being, together with his initial suggestions regarding how foreign languages could be taught in concord with the needs and capabilities of the developing child, a wholly new approach to language teaching began. Building upon this basis, a rich and living body of experience has been created in the course of the last hundred years from which we are able to draw upon and put into practice.

At the same time, the fundamental question which we need to address is:

Where do we go from here?

In considering the world in 2019 and what it means for children today to grow up in a digital age and in teaching for a future which will be increasingly dominated by digitalization and robotization, it is clearly necessary for us to further develop Waldorf teaching practices in order to creatively and fruitfully address the manifold challenges our pupils face. For foreign language teachers working in an age in which, for example, the use of Google Translator will undoubtedly play an increasingly crucial role in communication between languages and cultures, it is inevitable that new and fundamental questions regarding the purpose of learning foreign languages need to be addressed. In this and other contexts, the question/s of how we perceive and understand what it means to develop one's own humanity through learning foreign languages and how one views the nature of language and human interaction itself will be decisive.

Hence, one of the central themes underlying our Waldorf centennial conference will be deepening our understanding of the meaning of language learning for the developing child and young person in the 21st century and thereby also working towards incorporating new pedagogical insights and intuitions into our daily practice.

The lectures and seminars of the English Week will aim to address these questions and, at the same time, try to offer and inspire impulses and ideas which can help us to realize these goals in our classrooms. Parallel to this, it is also our deep-seated conviction that it is the artistic workshops, which constitute the 'heart' of each *English Week*, and which offer teachers unique chances to go substantially further in developing both the entire range of their perceptual and expressive capabilities, as well as a higher degree of self-awareness; all within a highly supportive environment full of warmth, humour and trust.

The entire English Week Team 2019 will naturally be

a great help in enabling us to realize such goals and ideals. We are delighted to have **Sarah Kane**, one of the leading Chekov drama specialists in Europe and the U.S.A., back with us again. We are very happy that two very appreciated colleagues **Catherine Bryden** for theatre clowning and **Paul Matthews**, England's leading specialist for creative writing, will be present. **Norman Skillen**, one of our co-founders, will be able to join us for drama courses, as will **Richard Ramsbotham** from England/Stuttgart, who will be back with us after a long interval. **Michael Rose** from York will be back to teach us songs for the classroom and work with the *English Week Choir*. Once again **Erhard Dahl** from Stuttgart will be sharing his expertise with us. **Susan Wehner** from Hamburg, **Mario Radisic** from Haan-Gruiten will be giving courses again. We are also delighted to announce that a number of long-time participants at the English Week will be giving their own courses this year: **Conrad Kellett** from Lublijana, **Kristina Döring** from Düsseldorf, **Miriam Watson-Kastell** from Marburg, **Thorsten Hakansson** from Hamburg/Sweden.

Finally, we have been able to get **Claus-Peter Röh, the co-leader of the Pedagogical Section in Dornach** to speak to us about the conference theme. And naturally, Silvia Albert-Jahn (*Mülheim*), Christoph Jaffke (*Stuttgart*), Doris Schlott (*Frankfurt*), Peter Lutzker (*Stuttgart*), Duncan Macintosh (*Forest Row/GB*), Robert McNeer (*Ostuni, Italy*), Martyn Rawson (*Elmshorn*), Ulrike Sievers (*Elmshorn*), Alec Templeton (*Basel*), and Tessa Westlake (*Bochum*) will all be back.

We will also offer

an open '**Market Place**', designed to facilitate the exchange of teaching materials and ideas for all grade levels. This space is intended to enable teachers to directly offer and explain resource material and ideas they have developed. **Thus, please bring copies to exhibit and share, examples of students' work, and/or books you wish to recommend - even the smallest contribution like a tongue twister or a poem that worked well is welcome.**

We are very glad to be in the fully renovated facilities of *Haus Altenberg*. Whereas the rooms will be brand-new, that beautiful old Gothic cathedral in the courtyard is still standing there and for those of you who don't know it and the immediate area, it's a wonderful place to spend what will certainly be an inspiring week.

The amount of places and rooms is limited, so we strongly suggest that you register soon. See you in Altenberg!

Peter Lutzker Silvia Albert-Jahn Doris Schlott-Lüdicke Martyn Rawson Christoph Jaffke