

Announcing a part-time course in 2006-2007 for practicing Waldorf educators on the teaching of science in the 6th-8th grades

TEACHING SENSIBLE SCIENCE

sponsored by
**Research Institute for Waldorf Education,
SENSRI, and the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs**

Of the many subjects taught in the eight-year cycle of a class teacher, few are more challenging than the science main lessons of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. These main lessons arise at a time when pupils are developing a much stronger ability to perceive the world as being separate from themselves; this capacity is crucial for scientific enquiry.

To help cultivate in their pupils these powers of perception in a healthy way, Waldorf teachers approach science by means of a method different from what is typically used in more traditional schools. Said simply, this method is “phenomena centered” rather than based on the testing and application of theories. While most Waldorf teachers will have heard of this approach, few will have experienced this method themselves as school children, and many may have made only fleeting acquaintance with this approach during their teacher training. As a result, teaching science in Waldorf grade school classes is not always sufficiently strong or rigorous to satisfy the needs of young adolescents.

Once again a part-time course -- entitled “Teaching Sensible Science” -- will be offered during this coming school year to help teachers develop a deeper understanding and experience of phenomena-based science so that they can feel more confident using this method in their own classrooms. Course work will consist of:

- * Workshops and discussions on the foundations of a phenomenological approach to science (primarily the physical sciences)
- * Practical sessions with experienced class teachers who will demonstrate these methods and help participants prepare class experiments and demonstrations for use in their own classrooms
- * Artistic classes: drawing for the main lesson book, eurythmy

- * Daily question and answer sessions to review the day's work

The intention of this course is to give the teacher a living connection to science so that this same enthusiasm, understanding, and interest can be shared when the teacher is working with the students in the classroom. All practicing grade school teachers or those who are slated to teach upper grade school science are strongly encouraged to attend this program.

Comments by participants in the first cycle of this course:

“Although I’ve taught junior high science before, it was exciting to participate in this science course. Often we found ourselves surprised at our discoveries, particularly when observing things we thought we already understood! I taught a 6th grade physics block directly following the first week of this course and found the process of discovery to be very alive in my students.” -- *Katie Schwerin, Monadnock Waldorf School*

“This course plumbs the depths and implications of the phenomenological approach to science. It has provided me with a valuable foundation for teaching science in grades 6,7, and 8, but it has also been highly provocative and helpful in my own personal search to understand better the world and my relationship with it.” -- *Bob Amis, City of Lakes Waldorf School*

For descriptions of “phenomena centered science” see Michael D’Aleo’s “What Is Phenomenology?” and David Mitchell’s “The Teaching of Science” at www.waldorflibrary.org. For a more detailed description of this course, see the article by Gary Banks in the November 2005 issue of *Research Bulletin* or at www.waldorfresearch.org.

The course will be divided into three sessions, beginning in the spring of 2006:

SESSION 1: Saturday 24 June - Friday 30 June

SESSION 2: Wednesday 4 October - Monday 9 October
(Columbus Day Weekend/Canadian Thanksgiving)

SESSION 3: Saturday 24 February - Friday 2 March 2007
(provisional dates)

All sessions will take place at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs, located 30 minutes north of Albany, NY. The airport in Albany is served by most major airlines including Southwest Airlines.

Presenters:

Lylli Anthon has been a grades teacher at the Halton Waldorf School near Toronto, Canada for over 20 years. She has taken one class from grades 1 to 8, but now concentrates on grades 6, 7, and 8, having graduated three such groups. Currently she is teaching grade 7, while also offering chemistry blocks in grades 7 and 8. Lylli's professional interest is focused on the art of teaching, especially in mathematics and the sciences.

Gary Banks worked as a research engineer on the NASA Space Station project before entering teaching. He took a class through eight grades at the Denver Waldorf School and also taught high school science at High Mowing. He is presently teaching grade 2 at the Pine Hill Waldorf School.

Michael D'Aleo left a career in engineering to become an upper grades class teacher before helping to found the high school at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs, where he teaches physics. Co-author of *Sensible Physics Teaching*, a guide for teaching physics in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, Michael is Director of Research at the Saratoga Experiential Natural Science Research Institute (SENSRI); he is also on the faculty of the Center for Anthroposophy's Waldorf High School Teacher Education Program and co-director of foundation studies at Sunbridge College.

Barbara Richardson, who specializes in eurythmy in the workplace, has led artistic classes for many different adult professionals including chemists, doctors, nurses, farmers, and teachers. A former faculty member of the Arturus Rudolf Steiner Education Program in Chicago, Barbara is now a teacher and Coordinator of Foundation Studies for the Center for Anthroposophy.

Registration

Prompt registration is crucial since sign-up for the first cycle of this course will be limited to 20 people to ensure sufficient individual attention.

Registration deadline: 30 March 2006

Cost

Registration fee for entire three weeks of the program (payable to "SENSRI")	\$1,200
(Non-refundable deposit of \$250 due by 30 March)	
Late registration fee after 30 March: \$150	
Housing in a private room: 16 nights@\$25/night (Other options are available)	\$ 400
Meal plan: 3 meals/day available for	\$ 495

Limited financial aid is available to those who send letter of request before the registration deadline.

For further information or to register, contact:

Michael D'Aleo
SENSRI
23 Hutchins Street
Saratoga Springs
NY 12866-2601

Phone: (518) 587-0457

e-mail: *spalight@verizon.net*

*To register, complete form below and submit with \$250 deposit,
payable to "SENSRI", to address above.*

Name: _____ Your School : _____

Home address: _____

Home phone number: _____ E-mail address: _____

Housing:

Private room _____ Send hotel options _____ None needed _____

Meals:

Meal plan (circle one) Yes No Special dietary needs _____