

## Clowning and the Heart of Teaching

### Exploring the Self that Teaches

Catherine Bryden, Germany

In this article, Catherine Bryden who works as a language teacher at a Rudolf Steiner school in Germany, looks at the links between Clowning and the art of teaching.

She describes how clowning has enabled her to accept and live with the responsibilities of being a teacher, to find lightness, to embrace conflict and to build a balance between her inner and outer world.

"The overall objective of language teaching in a Waldorf school, is to give pupils individual experience of the reality of language in the psychological sense intended by Steiner. This means that the essence is neither conceptual, nor literary, nor utilitarian, but sensory. J. Kiersch goes on to explain that while language students are generating a rich store of inner experience, they are at the same time "learning to identify with the perceptions and feelings of others. Thus,

ideally speaking, Waldorf language teaching is a schooling of empathy. It is education for peace which 'raises consciousness' not through discussion or the spreading of information, but through improving the faculty of perception." Johannes Kiersch (Language Teaching in Steiner Waldorf Schools, p. 22)

"Can you refrain from moving until the right action arises?"

Tao

The teacher is within,  
So you have to learn to be still.  
You have to live your life  
So that you are listening within  
No matter what you are doing.

Bartholomew

"We must continue to open in the face of tremendous opposition. No one is encouraging us to open and still we must peel away the layers of the heart." Chogyam Trungpa

In The Courage to Teach Parker J. Palmer shares his inspiring vision of teachers who refuse to

harden their hearts because they love learners, learning, and the teaching life. He speaks of the importance of exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life through reflection, discussion and brainstorming and explains how this is done through the creation of community where complex truths can be observed and investigated, where the inner life of teachers is supported to grow and change. He states that good teachers have one trait in common: "they are truly present in the classroom, deeply engaged with their students and their subject." Above all, good teachers "are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts - the place where