Assessment for learning and development in Waldorf education

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The etymology of the word assessment links it with the Latin verb (*Swaffield 2011*), 434) meaning 'to sit beside'. It therefore suggest someone sitting beside a learner, in dialogue about a piece of work. Carlina Rinaldi of the early years' programme Reggio Emilia in Italy defines assessment as 'deciding what to give value to' (Rinaldi 2006), 70).

The Swiss Waldorf teacher Robert Thomas (Thomas 2005) wrote, "for as long as schools have existed...one of the teacher's main tasks has been to observe, evaluate, judge and classify the work of their students." These are the main aspects of pedagogical evaluation. Waldorf schools have practiced a range of methods of pedagogical assessment since the founding of the first school in Stuttgart in 1919, though the activity has rarely been documented in a coherent way. A short chapter was included in the *Educational tasks and Content of the Waldorf Curriculum* (Rawson & Richter, 2000) and then followed up with a small booklet on the subject (Mepham & Rawson 2001). David Mitchell (Mitchell 2005) published a collection of articles related to pedagogical evaluation in Waldorf education, including a paper I wrote and have since updated several times, outlining some basic principles and practices of pedagogical evaluation of assessment. For such an important theme, this is very little. To my knowledge, it is also not a topic that gets much 'air-time' in Waldorf teacher education. In this paper I wish to build on my earlier work on what I have learned through practicing various forms of assessment for many years.

In their classic book on assessment, Black and Wiliam (Black & Wiliam 1998), 15-16) commented that teachers do not take up even good ideas supported by research (such as assessment for learning) if these are presented as general principles if they are not translated into everyday practice. The reason for this is not their obtuseness or resistance to change but the situated nature of classroom practice. There is no effective theory of teacher action.

Therefore in this paper I have chosen to outline some principles, refer to some research, offer some practical examples from my own work and offer all this as a basis for cooperation at collegial levels of working. As Wiliam and colleagues (Wiliam, Lee, Harrison, & Black 2004) note in another paper, it is also not a question of expecting teachers to discover by doing, what the ideal model for assessment is on the grounds that this is better than telling them what to do. Outlining other people's theoretical and practical experiences may be the only way of getting the topic on the agenda in schools. Unless assessment is externally require, it is rare in my experience that it is a topic of discussion among Waldorf teachers.

What do we mean by assessment?

In general terms, pedagogical assessment means noticing how pupils progress over time. Professor Mary-Jane Drummond (Drummond 2003) of the Cambridge University School of Education argues that every child has the right to a satisfying and fulfilling education and that this right generates the responsibility of teachers to enable this. She writes, "paramount ...is the responsibility to monitor the effects of their work so as to ensure that their good intentions for children are realized. The responsibility to assess, to watch and to understand learning, is an awesome one...in exercise of this responsibility, teachers are powerful agents in children's well-being; the power of teachers to bring about progress and development through their teaching is dependent on their willingness to accept their responsibility for understanding learning" (Ibid. 10).

Let us unpack the principles implied in Drummond's statement. Children have a right to a fulfilling education. This means that they also have the right to the outcomes of intelligent assessment. Assessment is essentially concerned with understanding learning and development. It is a central tenet and basic prerequisite of Waldorf education that teachers study and understand learning and development. A central part of Waldorf teacher education is about understanding learning and development from the perspective of an anthroposophical approach (what in German this is referred to as *Menschenkunde*) This involves the study of the general principles of human development and the foundations of human experience.

Waldorf teachers are expected to be able to apply this general understanding of learning as a set of heuristic tools to understand the particular children and young people in their school. The careful observation and understanding of each individual leads us back to appreciation of the general and common processes of learning and development. Knowing this enables teachers to design and plan their teaching. It is an iterative process of doing, observing, contemplating and reflecting that informs the creation and shaping of pedagogical situations in which learning and development can occur.

Assessment therefore involves a cycle of reflecting on, in and for teaching. The first is retrospective, looking back at what has been. The second involves intuitive knowing-in-practice, the ability to act intelligently in the pedagogical situation drawing on embodied, tacit working-knowledge and then the third, reflecting for teaching involves planning, anticipating and preparing for practice.

Drummond also makes the point that assessment is a moral task because; At the heart of effective assessment, at the heart of worthwhile teaching and a proper understanding of learning, is the power of teachers to think, not just about pedagogical issues, but as moral beings. The power to make moral judgements about what is good and worthwhile is added to the power of teachers to act, in classroom practice, to bring about the learning that is judged to be good and worthwhile, the expression of the idea they are striving for. (Ibid. 151-2).

Because assessment is about making moral judgements, the effects of these judgements on the pupils is pedagogical. Pedagogy is the enactment of the educational values we hold. It reflects who we are and is what we do and the effects this has on the pupils. Each action we make as a teacher has some implicit or explicit intention and purpose. As Pestalozzi said, *Leben bildet*, life shapes the child. Life shapes who we are and who we are shapes what we do and this shapes those who we do it to.

Of course what we experience is not the only force that shapes us. Who we uniquely are, determines how we engage with and deal with what we experience. It is an interactive and individual process for the learner and for the teacher. So what we do (and who we are) in relation to assessment pedagogically shapes the experience that the pupils have. Pedagogy is always located within a discourse or set of shared assumptions, understandings and intentions that. In order to understand the effect of our pedagogical action son the pupils, if we need fully understand what we are doing and why. Pedagogical assessment has an effect on the pupils and it may be what we intended. There are unconscious results of what we do, which may be different from what we say and think. Giving grades, for example, involves passing a judgement on a person and this has an effect on her that we may not intend. It signals what we value, what is most important to us. Often our messages are mixed and even contradictory.

Just as the rewarding of performance in tests sends a moral message, so too does understanding learning, showing interest in the person, being respectful, not responding to outer reactions of pupils but listening to the hidden message in their behaviour or appearance-all of which are also possible results of pedagogical assessment. By sending the signal that we are interested in a pupil's learning and person, we are valuing both the learning and the person.

That is why assessment requires the Aristotelian virtue of practical wisdom, *phronesis*, the art of living that makes us good. Professsor Gert Biesta, one of the most influential academics in education today, has described this ability of educational judgement as a form of practical wisdom, (Biesta 2012). He suggests that this is more important than mastery of techniques for teachers. Teaching is a skilled craft involving the mastery of many techniques but relies on the ability to make wise judgements in practical life in the classroom. Biesta calls this skill virtuosity. Virtuosity is applied virtue.

Pedagogical assessment is a process that involves judgement based on accurate observation, weighing of evidence, critical thinking, care, interest and according to Drummond, appreciation of people and processes of learning. Assessment is an ongoing process that rarely requires a final or ultimate judgement. It is careful, respectful and tentative, provisional and iterative. It can have an enriching effect. It can opens doors, rather than closing them. Assessment can have the interests of the child or young person at heart or it can be response to external requirements, quotas, targets and so on. At its best it is the act of understanding what children can and need to learn next. It can shape our curriculum and lesson planning (Swaffield 2008).

Assessment involves a complex set of skills that are referred to as *assessment literacy* (not assessment of literacy), which means the ability to practice assessment, the ability to critically understand the issues related to assessment (e.g. the nature of performance, the validity of assessment data such as grades etc.) and the ability to communicate about assessment (Swaffield & Dudley 2011).

As Thomas (Thomas 2005) points out, in assessment there "is a 'what', a 'how' and a 'who'. The 'what' consists of measurable facts, the 'how' contains a relationship between the learner and the teacher, and the 'who' indicates something that is unique, but not immediately tangible but is rather future-orientated, a kind of message from the future" (Ibid. 22). We generally assess the past, what has already happened. This means we have to create space for the person's potential future development. Assessment can be an anticipation of the future and can help to bring a certain future about. It has influence over the future.

Therefore we need to give space for the voice of the person we are assessing and perhaps for something that hints at what they may become, the distinctive signature of that person in her deeds, gestures, and what they create. We have to learn to 'read' something of the unique emergent quality of the person. We have their words, written and spoken, we have their deeds, what thy do and make, but we need to be sensitive to the particular impact this person has on us, on other people and on the world. We can call this *assessment for the future*.

This may sound esoteric and in a way it is, but I believe we can take account of this element practically in our approach to assessment in ways that are distinct to Waldorf education.

Purposes and forms of assessment

Assessment has different functions. These can be briefly outlined as follows: Formative assessment

Formative assessment is process-orientated. It includes the monitoring of the ongoing learning process of individuals and groups and it is used to make adjustments to the learning process. It is concerned with how learning occurs and is either informally or formally noted by the teacher or is used to provide feedback to students.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment makes judgements about whether outcomes have been achieved. This kind of assessment can be used to establish if a student has completed a task successfully, has learned what was required. It usually occurs at the end of a period or block of learning before a new stage or phase starts. It is often formalized by tests with clear criteria for achievement. It requires a judgement based on evidence as to whether a pupil has achieved what they set out to achieve. This assumes that there is baseline of criteria defining what pupils are supposed to achieve. In state schools, summative assessment is most commonly used for purposes of accountability to external bodies, e.g. by highlighting how many students pass exams at certain levels. This often affects the status of the school. Summative assessment can be based on the outcomes of a series of episodes of learning collected in a portfolio. Black and colleagues (Black, Harrison, Hodgen, Marshall, & Serret 2011) make the point that collegial collaboration is important in designing appropriate tests and assessment arrangements.

The tasks should be carefully designed to include tasks that are as realistic as possible and which provide opportunity for creativity and encourage richness of language. Pupils need to have access to all the relevant information to answer the questions and the techniques required. If work is assessed that is done in groups or outside the classroom (e.g. homework), one has to aware of the extent of coaching and support. The alternative is not necessarily a high pressure situation like an exam and the learning should produce 'natural evidence'.

There need to be a range of tasks since no one task is likely to involve all the skills, knowledge and attitudes being assessed. These should be collected in a portfolio. The criteria for marking tasks need to be clear to all involved and broken down into concrete steps or stages if necessary. Where holistic assessment is used, for example to judge creative writing and the quality of writing in essays. Thus there needs to be a balance of 'hard' and 'soft' criteria.

Finally having tasks moderated by teachers who don't know the student or who are not currently teaching them is useful in the dialogue between first and second marker. The fact that the first marker knows the pupil well is both an advantage and a disadvantage. However by using evidence from the text and taking other recent work into account, it is possible to

affirm a first marker's judgement. Once more, it is ideal when subjects teachers get together and discuss assessments in a concrete way using examples.

Ipsative-referenced assessment

Ipse is Latin for self, therefore ipsative means self-referenced. That means a pupil's performance is evaluated against her own prior performance. This means assessment is relative to the person. The same summative achievement might mean a great improvement and effort for one person or the result of little effort and no improvement for another. Ipsative assessment is a way of individualizing feedback to the person, taking that person's whole situation into account. In effect, this is the Waldorf way of assessing and it is certainly the most relevant way to assess individuals in classes with a wide range of abilities and even including children with learning disabilities. It means the student is not competing against others but with herself. The pupil asks, "can I do better than last time? Can I improve on what I have achieved so far?" Ipsative assessment gives the individual an answer to this question.

An example of this in my school is the use of feedback sheets after each main lesson block (or half-term or project). The students gather their feedback sheets in a folder. In a tutorial conversation the student and tutor look back over the sheets and discuss trends and tendencies. Here the comparison is between subjects over time by the same person, rather with comparisons with any one else or standardized criteria.

Diagnostic assessment This can be used to identity whether individual pupils need support and as a basis for a judgement what kind of help is necessary and available. Diagnostic assessment is sometimes associated with a focus on problems and deficits.

Assessment for learning This approach seeks to interpret evidence for the use of learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. It involves sharing learning goals with pupils. It involves them in self-assessment and provides them with feedback, which leads them to recognize the next step. It assumes that every student can improve (Assessment Reform Group, (Group, 2002). Assessment for learning *can* be instrumentalised to monitor how students attain specified learning outcomes, as Swaffield (Swaffield 2011) points out. It is often presented as an effective way of achieving targets, though if the aim is the overall well-being of the pupil, then it combines the best aspects of assessment. However, the basic process if it is linked to a

notion of learning that understands it as the development of the whole person (and not just of exam grades and specified cognitive learning outcomes).

Evaluative assessment

This is used by teachers to evaluate whether methods of learning were as effective as hoped. Here the teaching is evaluated, not the pupils.

Peer-assessment and self-assessment

Firstly pupils should be involved in designing assessment procedures as much as possible. Among other things this helps them appreciate the nature of assessment. When pupils are invited to assess each other's work, performance and presentations, they learn to do so in a considerate, fair, sensitive, tactful but honest manner. They learn how to frame and then apply criteria and the experience what it means to make judgements of assessment. This strengthens their own ability to assess themselves. Above all the range of feedback given by peers, by class mates is always astonishingly diverse and rich. This is one way of approaching the future-quality of achievements and the potential of the person. It is a human and non-bureaucratic way of valuing the uniqueness of a person- the actual anti-dote to standardization.

A complete assessment would involve a self-assessment, the peer-assessment and that of the teacher, whose greater experience is very important. These three dimensions also encompass the social context the learner is embedded within, and is a process that as Thomas suggests, enriches the cultural climate of the school.

The key to assessment is framing learning outcomes in the first place, for which concrete evidence can be found. Learning outcomes have to be transparent, comprehensible to the students and teacher and concrete enough that we can show evidence supporting their attainment. If something is evident, it is evident to all involved who understand and are involved in the actual situation. Students and other teachers must be able to recognize.

It is necessary that all teachers of the same subject agree what learning outcomes are appropriate for subject-based competencies and all teachers should agree what key or general competencies are deemed as outcomes and what evidence can be collected.

Assessment can be used to identify what outcomes are possible and desirable for a particular group and thus can be a basis for judging the progress of individual learners. Evaluative assessment can be used to judge whether a particular approach, particular curriculum activity or material is as effective as hoped or intended. It can of course be used to judge the quality of the teaching and the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher.

The following table shows typical types of assessment in a Waldorf upper school setting (modified from a model by Swaffield and Dudley(Swaffield & Dudley 2011).

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4. A teacher plans a	End of a main	Summative	Evidence that learning
focused assessment at the	lesson block		outcomes have been
end of a block, in which			achieved.
the pupils are to apply	Teacher's records,	Diagnostic	Identifying students that need
their recent learning. This	feedback sheet		learning support
can take the form of a		Evaluative	Planning next block.
written test or homework			Teacher self-evaluates
with tasks requiring the			teaching
application of new and			
old learning.			
5. Portfolio of work done	End of a main	Formative	Giving formative
over the block.	lesson block		differentiated feedback about
			gaps in learning, mapping out
	Teacher's records		next steps (feedback sheet).
	Feedback sheet	Summative	Evidence that learning
			outcomes have been met.
	End of year/half-	Diagnostic	Identifying needs for learning
	year written report		support
		Evaluative	Planning for next block
			Teacher self-evaluates
			teaching
6. Sitting an exam	End of year	Summative	Gaining a qualification

Hattie on assessment

It must be fairly obvious after this short introduction, why assessment in education is important. There is overwhelming evidence that assessment is the most significant factor in improving the quality of learning, in particular when assessment for learning is used (AssessmentReformGroup, 1999; Swaffield & Dudley 2011). Assessment can provide feedback to students and teachers, thus leading to better teaching and learning.

The New Zealand academic John Hattie has investigated the educational literature for evidence of what supports learning. He published the results and the implications for teachers in his famous book *Visible Learning* (Hattie, 2012). Hattie has been publishing on the theme of assessment for many years, stressing the importance of feedback for learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

The fundamental claim of his study is, as he put it in a recent interview (Fernstrom 2015), "know thy impact". This means that teachers who are able to assess the impact of their teaching on the actual learning behaviour of their pupils have the most beneficial effect on learning. This is particularly effective when they do this within the community of teachers in their school. He states that there are many ways of being an excellent teacher and we should learn to discern how these work. The relevant debate about what makes good teaching and learning should be between teachers within a school culture. Good teachers are those who seek and work with evidence of their impact.

Hattie also points out that the teachers should ensure "that students are aware of what success in a series of lessons looks like, near the start of the lessons, and having transparent (to the students) and defensible decisions about the best proportion of surface and deep learning (in their teaching and in their assessments)". That means, students should know what a successful piece of work looks like, what a completed task is, what words like 'good' and 'well done' mean in concrete terms. That means the pupils should be aware what the minimum learning outcomes look like. If they wish to do better, the assessment should inform them what they would have to do to attain a better result.

Hattie also stresses the importance of school culture. A culture of assessment is as important as teacher-student and student-student relationships. Central to this school culture is an atmosphere of trust; "you need a culture of high trust for teachers and students to discuss their impact, what is working, and as critically what is not working. All learning feeds on error, mistakes and misunderstanding. High trust is necessary for this learning to progress. Also most of us are wary of progressing if there is unfairness, fear of failure, and criticism for "not knowing". Absolutely we need high trust to explore, to make mistakes, to learn, and to have fun in learning."

On the subject of giving pupils grades, Hattie has an interesting perspective. He suggests that the only reason for giving students grades is to enable them to learn what they can do next. In his words, "grades can be beneficial to students WHEN they are accompanied with information that the student understands about "where to next". Without this kind of feedback, grades are of little use at any age. I would be asking about the nature and quality of feedback at every age, asking about how and what students understand when they are given feedback (such as grades), and teach students and teachers to optimize the "where to next" feedback. Debates about grades alone are not helpful."

This is a very helpful perspective on grades for Waldorf teachers. Grades only make sense if they are accompanied by feedback telling the student what she has to do to achieve the aim of the next task, or in the case of failure, what she needs to do to achieve what is required. This means giving a note or grade with formative feedback that highlights the next learning step.

This question as to the effect of giving even young children grades and notes has been sharply put into focus recently in Germany by Ulrike Keller (Keller, 2012) who has written about the injustice of grading children's work and how grades take away children's interest in learning. Sabine Czerny (Czerny 2010) has criticized how many bureaucratic aspects of schooling, including the dependence on a grading system of notes, is used to enforce compliance and control children and teachers. She argues that forcing children to attain standardized learning goals has gained dominance over the interest in children's development and prevents children getting the individual support they need. She notes that the prescribed outcomes take no account of children's developmental processes, let alone make allowances for personal circumstances and individual crises. She argues that the current system in Germany is more concerned *when* attainment occurs rather than *how* and she criticizes the fact that task are set in which only a percentage of the children will be able to achieve themit is neither foreseen nor desire that all children perform well, thus making it inevitable that their will be many losers, and that from an early age (a point also made forcibly by Verhaeghe (Verhaeghe 2013), as I discuss later).

Her conclusion is that children are increasingly de-motivated and alienated by the grading system. She concludes that "there is an evil in the fact that we continuously have the need to measure children, another in the fact that we don't even distinguish between different kinds of achievement, nor do we provide adequate circumstances under which this measurement occurs" (Ibid. 345)

Assessment for learning: Implications for practice

If we take the points made by John Hattie above and what I have outlined above about the nature of assessment for learning, we can identify several key points. I will illustrate these points using a example from my own practice, which is reproduced at the end of this paper. At the beginning of each main lesson block, my colleagues (in the subjects of English, Biology, Chemistry and Art History) and I give the student a sheet that outlines the content and aimed for learning outcomes of the block as well as advice on methods and information they need for the work. The learning outcomes form the criteria for the assessment of the block. An example of a feedback sheet is attached at the end of the paper.

This outline enables the students to understand what is expected of them. It does not prescribe what each individual will learn, that is open-ended, but it does describe the minimum that is expected of each pupil. Since we give these blocks each year we need only modify them, rather then inventing them anew each time. In fact we learn by doing this, and modify them accordingly. The student must know what the aims of the unit of learning (e.g. a main lesson block) are at the start. This includes an overview of the content and the criteria and mode for the assessment (i.e. what they have to do by the end of the block to have achieved the aims and learning outcomes of the block). This is briefly outlined in the Shakespeare block paper at the end.

- 1. The marking of the work and the feedback must show the student how the learning outcomes were achieved and what the next learning step is. If the outcomes are not or only partly achieved, I must tell the student in terms she can understand, what she has to do to achieve this and how to go about it. This should be done soon, preferably whilst this subject is still being taught, so that the work is done in context and with the support of the teacher if necessary. If the feedback is too long after the block, it makes no sense and is usually not done. The example feedback sheet lists the criteria already mentioned in the overview of the block. The level is indicated on a continuum from weak to strong (from - to +) by putting a cross between these two positions. This is not an exact measurement but a judgement of the predominant direction (i.e. getting better or worse). Not everything is assessed. Here, the self-assessment is not assessed (but I note if it is present or not). Since in my school this main lesson block contributes to the *Realschul* note/grade for the year, this rubric is given, according the official criteria. At the end I comment on what the student can realistically improve. Thus the feedback has formative, summative elements and contributes to assessment for learning.
- 2. The student should be able to self-assess whether she has achieved the learning outcomes and will be able to understand why she achieved them or not. It is not shown here, but the students have an identical feedback sheet for their own self-assessment. This can be compared with the teacher's feedback and if necessary a conversation can be held about the implications.

This approach is not dissimilar to the requirements of the *New Zealand Steiner School Certificate* Learning Outcomes form of assessing learning.

I have long since abandoned the primitive method of correcting students' tests or homework and handing it back simply with a grade (e.g. 15 out 20 correct). This has almost

no learning effect. The teacher spends hours marking endless papers. The students get the results back, look at them for about 5 seconds and that is the end of the learning effect. Yet everyone demands that the teacher does her work in doing the marking. When the student gets home, the parents may ask, "what grade did you get in the test?" The student answers with a number. End of meaningful conversation.

It is far more effective is to sets tasks that the students themselves can mark. If it is a vocabulary test or a test about any other information that the students have been given, they can compare it with their own records. It is a basic principle of assessment for learning that that students cannot be assessed on specific information that hasn't been provided by the teacher. Checking one's own work against the original information and getting students to mark each other's work, is a far more effective and interesting process for students because it enables them to take control over their learning.

When the assignment is more complex, such as writing thoughtful comments and interpretations, the teacher's feedback is important. For practical reasons, I try not to get the whole class to hand in an essay at the same time, otherwise I have no time left for lesson preparation and other tasks. I prefer to see plans and drafts of essays and give feedback in the lesson promptly. Thus students have the chance to alter and improve the essay, thus learning far more than doing all the work and then discovering that it was not very good. The motivation to re-work a completed task is very limited, compared to the motivation of preparing something really good.

When I get the finished essay I offer general advice for the next essay. The most important thing about mistakes (either content or form) is to take an interest in them and understand why it is wrong and what would make it better or more complete. I tend to use the word improvements rather than mistakes and correction- after all a 'house of correction' is a jail! These are just a few examples (a fuller text about corrections is in preparation).

The feedback sheet has summative character in that it sums up the attainments of the whole main lesson block. During the block, student's work is continuously seen, corrected and given back with feedback. The students are also required to write a reflection on the block. Since they are used to doing this, it requires no further explanation here. However, the students are aware that they can write about what they found interesting or not, what was difficult, how their work changed over the block and looking, back what they felt had been helpful. They do not shy away from offering constructive criticism of the lessons, class-mates and teachers.

There are several points about this approach that are important; firstly, the emphasis is on the learner, not the teacher or the curriculum- these serve the learner. That means in assessment the learner has to be involved, informed in terms she can understand and be the recipient of useful feedback. One could say the Waldorf aspect of the curriculum is what comes out in terms of transformation of the people involved. Learning and development go hand in hand, with the learning process driving the development. Many aspects of emotional, cognitive, social, linguistic development arise in and through learning. It is the purpose of the Waldorf curriculum, to provide experiences that enable learning and development to occur.

A second point is that if we describe learning outcomes, these represent a minimum that we expect every learner to be able to achieve. If it is worth teaching, it is worth learning and our job is to ensure that the learner can do just that. That does not cap learning- far from it. My students always surprise me what some of them learn and can do. I wouldn't be able to, nor would I want to, define that. I repeat, the learning outcomes mentioned are a minimum and I give a scale of attainment from strong to weak to indicate if more than the minimum has been achieved.

Learning outcomes have to be concrete enough that we can show evidence of them. Much learning happens within the person and may not even be visible, though we may intuit that it is there. Apart from which, many learning outcomes only manifest much later and thus remain invisible to us. If we have an understanding of learning that sees it as the transformation of the whole person (body, soul and mind) over time, then we can't expect to be able to generate evidence for all of this process. The person who best knows what has been learned is the learner. However, it is useful and valid to assess evidence that is visible.

Forms of assessment documentation

Assessment can take different forms, depending on the type of assessment and the purpose it is put to. Informal assessment may need no documentation. The teacher simply thinks about a situation and enacts the assessment by modifying the teaching or through an informal comment to the student. However, it is useful to keep notes on the observations one makes.

These can be simple und use rubrics or symbols that the teacher herself understands. I keep a table with the class list and record whether the assignment or task was adequately fulfilled and any unusual or important aspects.

The next level of formality is to record the notes or grades given with some kind of comment for each task evaluated. Feedback sheets are the easiest form of recording assessment. By keeping a copy of the feedback sheet given to each pupil, the teacher has a

fairly comprehensive record of all assessments. I put all the feedback sheets in the photocopier and copy them in A5 booklet form. This keeps them all together and easy to store. When I have such feedback sheets, this simplifies the process of writing an annual report. The report simply puts into sentence form the criteria one has applied to the assessment.

In my school the students collect the feedback sheets from each block (or half-termly report) in a folder and use these as a basis for tutorial conversations in which the student and tutor can discuss more general aspects of school work, motivation, interests, difficulties and so on. These tutorials can be as regular as necessary and as possible. In class 9 and 10 these can be obligatory, given way to a needs basis, in which either student or tutor can request a meeting. Likewise the feedback sheets for students can be made available to the teachers' group when a pupil study is done. The feedback sheet is only one dimension of the picture the teachers form of the person and her work and relationships, but it nevertheless gives a comprehensive picture, if the feedback sheets are done well. Thus feedback sheets have a formative and summative function, but also an important diagnostic function as part of pupil studies and evaluations.

Pupil studies (case studies) are a form of formative and diagnostic assessment, in which all the teachers who teach a particular student share their experiences of the person being studies in order to understand her better. This understanding can be used to address problems or simply as a example through which the teachers can school their powers of observation, thinking and judgement about individuals. There is a wide range of literature on pupil studies (Mepham & Rawson 2001; Mitchell 2012; Wiechert, 2012), so I will detail the activity here. One point I would make however, is that, like all forms of assessment, a pupil study can have a powerful effect on the person being studied and thus needs to be done with strict adherence to ethical principles, including rigorous and critical self-reflection. As Peter Kelly of the University of Plymouth (Kelly, 2011) has pointed out, teachers have unconsidered, unconscious responses to pupils that may privilege some and disadvantage others in the way we respond to them, how we observe and judge them and their activities. Therefore, it is particularly important in pupil case studies that each teacher practices critical reflection to identify such tacit attitudes and habits of speech and action.

Assessing competencies

Most educational plans have adopted the notion of competencies, which are defined as knowledge, skills and attitudes in a particular field. This move to defining learning outcomes

in terms of competencies reflects both the lifelong learning agenda and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO policies of focusing learning on outcomes that are relevant for participation in new knowledge economies. Key or core competencies have long been defined as the preconditions for active participation in contemporary society by European and international agencies (Bjørnåvold, 2001; OECD, 2005; OJEU, 2006). Bjørnåvold (Ibid. 225) includes lifelong learning, the ability to participate in learning organizations and the ability to learn from one's biographical experiences as central key competencies.

The New Zealand Council for Education Research has modified the OECDs definition of competence by describing them as "capabilities for living and lifelong learning" (Hipkins, Bolstad, Boyd, & McDowall 2014). They point out that competencies are not specific things that one has or knows but cross-curricular capabilities such as learning to be and learning live with others, that cannot be located in a single subject. They ask teachers provocatively, "how does today's subject-based learning (e.g. in English or maths) provide opportunities for individuals to realise their potential as they live their lives, both now and in the future, however that unfolds?" (Ibid. 16). The key competencies the New Zealand curriculum seeks to promote should enable young people to:

- Know who they are, what they value and why, and where they fit in. This self-awareness includes recognising difference and appreciating diversity.
- Be willing and able to imagine what it might feel like to walk on others' shoes.
- Question knowledge claims, rather than take them at face value.
- Look beyond immediate causes to consider the joined-up nature of things and events in the world.
- Think critically, creatively and meta-cognitively.
- Cultivate curiosity and a sense o wanting to know.
- Show resilience in the face of challenges and uncertainties (Hipkins et al., 2014)

These are competencies that Waldorf teachers can closely identify with. If we examine our written Waldorf curricula (e.g. (Rawson & Richter, 2000; Richter 2006) we can find aims that resonate with these spread across the subjects. We assume that the combination of good teaching and the Waldorf curriculum will provide opportunities for these competencies to grow. But we don't assess them Assessment in Waldorf schools, as far as I can see, is restricted to annual reports, monitoring by class teachers and then formal tests within subjects. Nowhere, have I seen coherent, deliberate assessment of such competencies, except in those few school who work with competence portfolios. This is a theme I will return to later.

In Germany competencies are assessed in schools primarily within the context of subject-based learning (i.e. in maths, in biology, in German as mother tongue or in English as a foreign language), especially at the upper levels of school graduation qualifications, such as the Abitur (Pepper, 2011),338). Because of the restrictions imposed on Waldorf schools in many Bundesländer Germany, the assessment of key competencies is almost exclusively based on subject-based knowledge and skills and assessed in formal exams and measured against standardized learning outcomes and levels.

I believe this influences Waldorf teachers in how they assess the work of students in the upper school. Subject knowledge and skill dominates in all forms of formal assessment. Very little awareness is shown of key competencies, which are implicit in much teaching and learning, but rather explicitly highlighted. Even interdisciplinary aspects of key competencies are neglected since most subject teachers focus on the knowledge and skills related to their subject. Subject learning however is only a small part of competencies, even if we take to somewhat dated approach of identifying subject, method, social and self-competencies.

Waldorf education is of course interested in enabling young people to develop the full range of competencies. In fact, in Germany, a whole book was published explaining what these are (Götte, Loebell, & Maurer, 2009). I don't believe this publication has great influence on practice, which is a pity since it contains a very well-argued case for what Waldorf understands by the term competence.

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The problem with subject-based perspectives of competence and formal, summative assessment methods (written tests) is that this approach ignores a number of basic facts about learning. Key competencies are deeper level skills than subject knowledge and the components of knowledge, skills and attitude can only be identified and assessed in interaction rather than in isolation. As Pepper (Pepper, 2011) notes,

Knowledge cannot be applied without skills, skills cannot be applied without knowledge and neither will be applied without supporting attitudes (based on underlying values). Furthermore, information about one component cannot be accessed by simply assessing another component by proxy; the relationships between knowledge, skills and attitudes are neither uniform nor linear. Since the key

competences are intended to be motivating and to prepare learners for lifelong learning, they need to be applied in a range of relevant and real or authentic contexts. (Ibid. 344)

He concludes that assessing key competences means accessing students' knowledge, skills and attitudes through their application in a range of relevant, real and authentic contexts.

Furthermore, we know from research that much learning is social and associated with social practices (Billet, 2009) and that using only assessment forms that involve individuals isolated from others because we valorize individuality rather than sociality, is a very limited perspective.

It is necessary to tease out what the problems are with our conventional way of understanding competences. Firstly, the conventional view sees knowledge, skills and attitudes as fixed, permanent properties of a person, once acquired the person has them always. An assessment that takes this view based on a single situation (e.g. an exam) does not take into account the possibility that this competence could be expanded given the right opportunities or it might decrease over time, if not used. The level achieved in a single exam does not tell us what that person can do in 6 months. It overlooks that fact that competences are bound closely to specific situations in which they were learned. The idea that competences can be transferred is unproven.

Therefore it makes sense only to make judgements about a person on the basis of demonstrated knowledge, skill and attitude over time and in different situations. The way we get students to demonstrate competences must be open enough to allow the student to demonstrate what they can do, rather than try to isolate what they can't yet do. Changes in performance may indicate that the person is learning. In certain phases of learning that which has been learned has to be opened up, challenged, deconstructed so that it can be but again at a new level. We see this naturally occurring when students in puberty go through phases when they become inarticulate, unable to concentrate, or forget what they have known. They are undergoing processes of restructuring that neurologists have identified.

How many teachers would agree with Gordon Wells who writes that knowledge is not something people possess but an activity we engage in. He wrote, "knowing can thus be most adequately understood as the intentional activity of individuals who, as members of a community, make use of and produce representations in the collaborative attempt to better understand and transform their shared world" (Wells 1999). If this is the case, at least even partially, it has significance for assessment. As Delandshere (Delandshere 2002), 1479) puts it, "If what we know cannot be separated from how we know

and from the experiences and activities that shape it, then the assessment questions have to be framed in such a way as to be consistent with this theoretical perspective..."

One of the key problems with assessment is that it poses the question, "what do the pupils know?" without answering the question, "what do we mean by 'know'?". Although we may have a working theory about knowledge (i.e. it is what I know), in fact we generally don't know what it means to know something, or at least we have one-sided and partial understanding of what knowledge is. Many teachers don't really distinguish between propositional, theoretical knowledge and tacit, implicit and embodied knowledge, practical know-how, knowledge of something (i.e. knowledge of its existence), knowledge for something (applied knowledge in order to do something) and knowing-in-doing. These are all valid but different kinds of knowledge. Without getting too philosophical, it should be clear that the question of knowledge and knowing relates to our understanding of learning on the one hand, and our understanding of the nature of reality on the other.

Thus assessment requires an adequate theory of knowledge and knowing that account for what knowledge is and how it is generated. Is knowledge acquired through internalization or is it constructed? Is learning a process of acquisition, participation, input-output, transformation of the person, or all of these? On the other this requires us to choose between a notion of reality (that which we are learning about) as something pre-existent in the world just waiting for us to become aware of it, or is reality constructed socially (i.e. people in a certain cultures have the following explanations for phenomena), or is knowledge of reality created by the person internally, or what? How many Waldorf teachers could explain what the theory of knowledge and learning is that underpins Waldorf education? I suspect a survey would come up with a wide range of answers, usually subject-specific.

Possibilities for Assessing Competences

Given that evidence of competencies can generally be found in real or authentic situations involving complex problems and groups of people, we have to look first at how dispositions to competencies can be developed. This means that the teaching primarily has to provide opportunities for work on problems that are real to a group, a class, a community or the world ((Hipkins et al., 2014), 137). The teaching has to make use of different modes of learning and engage in collective knowledge building and collective action. There needs to be support in critically reflecting and taking multiple perspectives.

Secondly we need to be aware of the reasons we are assessing key competencies. These can be summarized briefly in a table.

Purpose	Appropriate assessment tasks and tools
Accountability, reporting and	
qualifying	
Summative assessment results are	This method has traditionally been met by exams.
shared with students, parents, the	Key competencies can be evidenced through
wider community, used for	learning outcomes that are appropriate to the
applications to further and higher	complexity of the skills involved and documented on
education.	a unit by unit basis (punctuated ongoing assessment)
	rather than only at the end of the period of study.
	Assessment for learning can also be used for
	summative purposes in units.
Improving teaching and learning	
This includes formative, ipsative,	Tasks can be given that are open, creative and that
diagnostic and evaluative assessment	provide evidence of learning and development.
for learning and the assessment of	Students know what the aims are and get regular
teaching	feedback. Teachers evaluate their own and others'
	teaching and teaching concepts and make
	improvements. Practice-based inquiry is used to
	research practice.
Further lifelong learning	
Here the focus extends assessment for	Students are involved in self-assessment and upper
learning to dispositions and actions. It	school students are given support in structured
involves students in decision-making	reflection. Students are given support through
and reviewing. It involves elements of	conversations with teachers about strengthening
biographical learning and informal	learning, identities, personal goals and careers.
learning (including outside of school).	Methods are used to encourage self-directed
	learning, team work, negotiating, research,
	presentation of learning outcomes to empower them
	to continue learning after the minimum has been
	achieved. This encourages expansive, self-motivated
	learning based on interest in the interconnectedness
	of social life and nature and in the will to solve
	complex problems in the world.

Following Hipkins (Hipkins 2007; Hipkins, Boyd, & Joyce 2007), tasks that support and enable the assessment of key competencies have the following characteristics:

- The learning that can be done if the task is clear to students and teachers.
- The task must afford opportunities to use the competence appropriately.
- The task involves some kind of performance, that is a real task is fulfilled that is located in a meaningful context and doing something that the students experience as relevant. Assessment should be in a context that is meaningful to the student and draws on dispositional components. In Waldorf terms, this means that the task must engage the pupil's will and feel meaningful.
- The assessment should occur over time, preferably across multiple contexts in which each context afford the use of the competence in different ways.
- Both the learner and the assessing teacher are clear about what kinds of evidence are required and thus the assessment should be based on clearly formulated criteria and evidence that is evident to all concerned.
- The process of assessment is also formative and empowers the learners by helping them to understand their learning better.
- There needs to be clear feedback based on the evidence that make the achievements and the next steps clear to the students.
- When making an overall judgement about competency, several episodes over a period of time are included and several assessments are taken into account.
- Ideally more than one person is involved in the judgement.
- If the students are old enough, they should be involved in the assessment process, which should be collaborative.

Other factors that need to be taken into account include the fact that students and teachers need to know about knowing and how knowledge is generated, at least at a practical level. It is necessary to foster dispositions to learning. This can be done be encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning (e.g. by not doing everything for them, not telling them the outcome before they have understood the process, by not giving the definition before the experience- in other words following the principles of Waldorf education!). In Waldorf terms it means strengthening the will to learn and then providing examples of how to go about it. Students need to know how they learn best, what works for them. As Hipkins puts it, "we assessment needs to help them to build coherent narratives about their identities as people

who practice, persist, and overcome obstacles to immediate learning success." And of course we need to offer rich learning contexts both in school and out of school.

Group work can be the focus for dual assessment. As in a drama production, the whole work is the product of many people working together, though individual contributions can be singled out within this context and valued in themselves. In other words, the project can be assessed, the participation in the project can be assessed and the individual achievement can be assessed. It means that tasks can integrate learning, knowledge and skills from different fields. Below I give an example how projects can be assessed.

Other methods include <u>learning logs</u> or journals (in Elmshorn we use Lernwegportfolios), in which students record their experiences with learning. <u>Portfolios</u> are ideal (and been adequately described elsewhere, e.g. (Koch, 2010)). <u>Learning narratives</u> is a learning story that documents a complex situation (a class play or social practical) in which the learner then shows what the challenges were, what skills, knowledge and attitudes she brought to the task, how she developed these through the activity, what obstacles occurred and how these were overcome, what her role was and what others contributed. These can be illustrated with photos, eyewitness accounts, feedback from others and so on.

The competence portfolio can be a tool that can be used to document competencies by combining the elements just listed. It is important that these are well-scaffolded, that is introduced in small steps from class 9 onwards so that the students understand and value their use. Then they can take responsibility for their competence portfolio in class 11 or 12, when they really need it. If they are not introduced early in simplified form, the task of introducing them can swamp the teachers and students at a time when they should be using the portfolio to draw out make conscious their learning process, rather than devoting their time and energy to learning how to use a portfolio!

One of the most interesting forms of assessment is what is known as naturally occurring evidence. This is evidence derived from activities in a range of real contexts and in everyday life over a period of time (Hipkins 2012). That means that evidence should not be derived from contrived assessment events. Evidence can be collected in any form that occurs that appears to the competence in question in use. In other words, pupils's work that is produced in the normal course of lesson can be used. The examples can be copied and collated over time. This easiest with written work, or with products that can be photographed, recorded or filmed, but the same principle applies with oral work (a presentation or participation in discussion, responding to or giving feedback, asking questions and sustaining dialogue) performance. The important thing here is that the teacher documents the occurrence

using criteria. Here having colleagues collaborating and mutually confirming judgements is important.

Hipkins (Hipkins 2012), 106) makes the point that naturally occurring does not mean spontaneously occurring. Teachers need to design meaningful tasks that create opportunities for students to demonstrate their competence, without creating artificial or contrived situations. And they must be able and willing to document these occurrences.

What are the dangers of assessment?

There are Waldorf teachers who think that all forms of assessment are undesirable. I have a theory why many Waldorf teachers are resistant to assessment. It has, I believe, to do with a fear of control and of categorizing of people. Assessment has been presented in this paper as a benign, pedagogically meaningful activity but it can be and frequently is used as an instrument of control. It can dominate teaching and learning. These dangers are mostly associated with the neoliberal culture of control (in the name of quality but meaning efficiency of delivery) that influences education policies.

Most education regimes around the world over the past twenty years have moved towards a culture of standardization, testing, managerialism and performativity.

Performativity is the essence of a performance-orientated culture. Performance in itself is not problematic. It simply means that somebody enacts something, like performing a play or performing in a concert. However, performance has come to mean attaining set goals, achieving targets, and ultimately attaining higher, better, more productive performance.

Performance is usually rewarded, just as failure to perform is punished in one way or another. Educational performance is rewarded by grades, notes, qualifications and higher ranking positions, thus making education a competition rather than an empowering, enabling activity of human emancipation and social justice.

Professor Stephen Ball of the London Institute of Education calls performativity in education, "a culture or system of terror. It is a regime of accountability that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change. The performances of individual subjects or organizations serve as measures of productivity or output, displays of quality, or moments of promotion or inspection "(Ball, 2008), 49). The state determines the criteria by which these judgement on the 'quality' or value of the performance. These criteria are usually in the form of standards, norms, benchmarks, targets or learning outcomes. They are enforced and controlled usually by procedures to monitor, test

and assess performance. And the state implements management system in schools to ensure that performance is delivered and measured.

It is in the nature of performance that it is inflationary. Good performance can always be better, targets are moved upwards, standards get higher. However, performance inflation leads to an inevitable reduction of quality since endless improvement is only possible by saving somewhere. In education this saving is usually in teacher time (i.e. years at school) and therefore of reducing costs. By standardizing methods, by reducing 'inessential' activities at school (music, the arts, social learning) and material in the interests of efficiency and putting learners under pressure, education is streamlined, made more efficient and allegedly more effective in delivering the prescribed targets. These targets are generally levels of literacy, numeracy and other competences on the basis of testing.

Above all performativity turns education into a culture of competition. Pupils compete with each other, though not on level playing field. Pupils with educated middle class parents who belong to the dominant (white) culture have a big head start. One of the useful things the OECD does is to point out regularly how unfair the German education system is (OECD, 2012).

Paul Verhaeghe is a senior professor of psychotherapy in Ghent in Belgium. His recent book (Verhaeghe 2013) highlights the effects of this trend in education. He describes the impact of neo-liberal, individualistic and consumerist values on processes of identity among young people, in a society in which the economy is focused on short-term profit. In particular he suggests that an education system that is competitive rather than cooperative and that encourages pupils to see the accumulation of credits, grades and qualifications as cultural capital, as its primary aim, is likely to generate, on the one hand, a lot of people who experience themselves as failures. On the other hand material and consumerist success becomes a dominant factor in the identity of those who are successful in the competition for resources. There are sets of attitudes that belong together; sharing, cooperation, interest in others with difference, social and ecological responsibility, open-minded spirituality, concern for holistic health and well-being belong as one set. Greed, competition, egotism, hedonism, xenophobia, protectionism and the belief that people misfortune (unemployment, sickness, burn-out, lack of health insurance, refugee status etc.) is their own fault.

Verhaeghe already sees the trend to the second set of dispositions in children whose response to their parents' requests that they do some house work, or help others is along the lines of, "what's it worth for me? What benefits will I get from doing it?"

Verhaeghe's conclusion is that it is not surprising that young people adopt an egotistical consumerist, me-first attitude, since this is the dominant message of a society that valorizes greed and allows 1% of the population to own 50% of the wealth, when tax avoidance is a way of life and the state bails out the bankers when they lose our money playing the markets like casino gamblers. Education policies and the government may espouse social justice, fairness, tolerance and solidarity but the embodied, lived message is the opposite. As Verhaeghe puts it, unfortunately there is no such thing as competitive solidarity.

That is certainly the main reason why many Waldorf teachers shy away from forms of assessment. They do not want to contribute to a competitive society. However, I believe that there are other reasons. A second reason may be that they themselves have suffered the effects of being assessed in their own education career- indeed it is not possible to become a teacher without having passed tests and exams more or less since childhood. A third reason, and this is the only one we may be able to do anything about, is a lack of understanding of what assessment as a support for learning can be.

Waldorf education is well-known for not giving grades or notes, but rather for providing written annual reports. My experience has been that many teachers neither fully understand why grades are not given (until sometime in the Upper School), nor do they strictly speaking stick to this unwritten but widely repeated 'rule.' It is very common for teachers right down into the Middle School to give written tests in which the outcome is reduced to points (e.g. 15 out of 20), which the children 'translate' into grades. Usually this number is complemented by a comment such as quite good, good, very good and even well-done! Such teachers will say, when asked what this information is supposed to communicate, "it tells the pupil how many answers she got right or wrong and then they can see how well they did". However, it tells them nothing about learning or what they can do. It simply labels them. If you regularly get top grade, what incentive is there to do more? If you continuously get a low grade, getting better seems impossible. If you continuously get a middle grade, then you are mediocre.

One of the common concerns that parents have is that Waldorf education does not prepare the children for the harsh competitive conditions in the world. Obviously those most concerned with this don't even choose Waldorf in the first place. However, those who do soon begin to worry and teachers have to have very convincing arguments against grades and notes and tests to withstand this pressure. I suggest that getting the highest possible grades

and passing the exams is uppermost in the minds of most upper school students. I say that as an upper school teacher and parent. I don't like it but I have to acknowledge it.

None of this however, should blind us from the real relevance of assessment in pedagogical practice. It is indicative that there are so few publications on assessment in Waldorf education. Either it has no priority, is not considered important or it ignored for other reasons. As I have pointed out previously in an article on pedagogical evaluation (Rawson 2005), this problem is partly one of terminology in the English-speaking and German speaking worlds. In German Waldorf discourse, many aspects that are part of assessment, such as, assessing school readiness, observing pupils, pupil studies, written reports and report verses are not considered part of assessment, which is generally understood as evaluation, which is seen as a form of categorizing and establishing or worth (value has positive and negative connotations). Generally Waldorf teachers dislike and avoid labeling children and treat one as an individual case. This is a laudable attitude and pedagogically meaningful. However, this does not prevent the widespread use of tests and grading. There is something ambivalent in this attitude.

Instead of being ambivalent about assessment, we should be clear and proactive. Done in the right way and for the right reasons, assessment is an essential part of Waldorf education. People have always attached signs and symbols to the things they consider important, that the express the values they align themselves with. In the Middle Ages the Guilds guaranteed the quality of the work of their members through a system of apprenticeship and evaluation by a master. The origins of bachelors and masters degrees like in these traditional qualifications or forms of certification, applied in the fields of medicine, law, the arts and crafts.

Our fear of assessment is a fear of failure and of the failure of others to recognize us and our qualities. Assessment is a way of recognizing people and enabling them to be better at what they do. It can be about, sitting beside the learner.

Theme: Shakespeare's times, drama and theatre

We will learn about the historical times Shakespeare lived in and about the theatres in London during his life time. We will also work on scenes from Shakespeare's play Hamlet. We will recite some Shakespeare texts together.

Learning outcomes:

To know about the historical background of Shakespeare's life.

To understand how the theatre developed during his life time.

To be able to speak some Shakespearean language.

To be able to perform a scene from Hamlet

To be able to describe why Shakespeare's plays are still being performed today all over the world.

Assessment criteria

You have to:

- Describe the historical background of Shakespeare's life in the form of an essay or illustration. This can take the form of a letter, information leaflet or eye witness account.
- Explain some of the main features of Elizabethan theatre using text and illustrations.
- · Rehearse and perform a scene from Hamlet with a written reflection.
- Give your interpretation why Shakespeare's plays are still performed today in the form of a newspaper article.
- · Actively participate in the lessons and group work, speaking English.
- · Submit of a competed portfolio on time.

Documentation

 The block will be documented in a portfolio of your own design. It should include a self-evaluation of your participation in the lessons and in working on the scene. Compile a portfolio over the block. This will be viewed each week and handed-in on the <u>last day of the block</u>.

Checklist at the end of the block: Are these documents in my portfolio?

Historical background essay/illustration	
Shakespeare's theatre text and images	
Newspaper article on Shakespeare's continuing popularity	
Copies of scene performed	
Reflection on acting the scene	
Portfolio completed and handed in on time	

Christiane Niemeyer Martyn Rawson

Feedback to Shakespeare Block November 2015

Name

	In folder	- +
	Yes/no	Level of attainment from weak to strong
Description of the historical background essay/illustration/eye-witness account/letter		
Presentation of Shakespeare's theatre in text and images		
Newspaper article on Shakespeare's continuing popularity		
Active participation in lessons and working on the scenes		
Reflection on acting the scene		
Portfolio completed		
Self-assessment		Included not included
Overall grade at Realschulniveau		

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