

Teacher Education Institute (TEI)

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3 An Introduction to the Temperaments

Five videos describe various areas of pedagogy that we recommend. Our approach is eclectic in nature; partly based on over forty years of experience by its author who has worked in education on three continents; partly based on a Waldorf-inspired curriculum relevant to the state sector; partly based on content and methodology used in Finland and New Zealand (students in both these countries outperform UK and USA students); and partly based on current research.

Video 3 An Introduction to the Temperaments was created many years ago when Dr. David Mollet was involved with Waldorf Education in New Zealand. Because of his considerable reservations with private Waldorf education he now has no contact with any Waldorf institution or person. For descriptions of his experience with Waldorf/Steiner people please visit <http://members.cox.net/tei/SomeExperience!.htm>. After such experiences covering forty years it is understandable that David no longer wishes to have such contact.

However, he does believe that many aspects of the Waldorf approach are relevant and appropriate for any education process and indeed Steiner himself explicitly stated that this was the case, "Moreover, I should like to point out to you that the real aim and object of our Anthroposophical education is not to found as many Anthroposophical schools as possible. It is, of course, necessary that there should be certain model schools where the methods are carried out in detail. It is a crying need of our days that there should be such schools. But our education concerns itself with the methods of teaching, and is essentially a new way and art of education, so every teacher can bring it into this work, in whatever kind of school he/she happens to be. There can be no question of creating revolutions in existing institutions. Our task is rather to give indications of a way of teaching arising out of our anthroposophical knowledge of man."

As his followers, in many cases, are implementing the opposite to what Steiner recommends, David authors his own approach and gives reference to sources where relevant. As stated above, David has over forty years experience on three continents and the approach he recommends includes content and methodology from such involvement and the results of his considerable research and his experience with education in New Zealand where he was able to make a significant contribution.

The video covers The Main and Subsidiary Temperaments, Christine the Choleric, Dealing with Choleric, Mark the Melancholic, Dealing with Melancholics, Philip the Phlegmatic, Dealing with Phlegmatics, Sarah the Sanguine, Dealing with Sanguines.

It is obvious that the best results of any teaching process will occur when a good relationship has been established between teacher and child. Teachers who use our methodology consider that a great deal of knowledge on the ways in which teacher and child relate is available, and that the teaching process should be based on this knowledge. Once teachers appreciate how children of different temperaments will respond, they can perceive "needs and interests" according to that knowledge.

In our methodology the development of awareness by teachers of the temperament that each child possesses is crucial to the teaching process. It is this awareness and knowledge of temperament that is one of the influences on a) the preparation of lessons; b) how teachers respond to the actions and behaviour of children in the classroom; c) classroom organization; d) the approach to discipline.

The Main and Subsidiary Temperaments - Certain temperaments are described (choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic and sanguine). What we are advocating is that the teacher dons the hat of the artist in developing a greater awareness of children. It is the eye of the artist, and not that of the scientist, that will recognize the main temperament and work with it thus creating a positive classroom atmosphere. We present archetypal images and descriptions of each temperament. Once teachers appreciate how children of different temperaments will respond in the teaching process they can perceive "needs and interests" according to that knowledge. The practice of teaching is thus an art and each day should bring many opportunities for developing the strengths and thus the confidence of children of each temperament.