

Blaker Foundation - Moving into the Future

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The Blaker Foundation has now been in existence for nearly 12 months. There has not been the uptake on the short course programme that was hoped. However, there has been a consistent interest in the philosophy and principles that the Foundation represents, with a considerable number of people becoming involved in its development. This has resulted in a vision statement, aims, and a decision to focus on three specific projects, which are outlined below.

Vision:

Transforming the world through transforming the individual

Aims

1. To provide educational programmes.
2. To reflect contemporary thinking in science, health, the arts, and spirituality.
3. To integrate the rational and intellectual with the experiential and expressive.
4. To take a holistic approach to learning, acknowledging physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual dimensions.
5. To be an 'organisation in evolution', with its development informed by a conscious process of action and reflection.
6. To offer learning experiences that reflect a felt connection with each other and the wider universe.

Project development

1. *Action Research Enquiry into transformative living:*
The development of an Action Research Enquiry into exploring the question: 'What would engaging in a more transformative way of living actually mean in practice?'
2. *Project with mainstream schools:*
Establishing links with a number of mainstream schools, and developing workshops and programmes that reflect Blaker philosophy, principles and methodology.
3. *Education conference:*
Holding a conference that establishes a dialogue between new paradigms in education and mainstream practice.

The thinking behind these proposals is expanded as follows:

1. Action Research Enquiry into transformative living:

The intention is to establish an Action Research inquiry into how we progress with realising the Blaker vision of 'transforming the world through transforming the individual', with a specific focus (at least initially) on what is involved in 'transforming the individual'.

Ultimately, the only person I am able to transform is myself - and consequently, the only way the world will be transformed is by a critical mass of people taking responsibility for their own personal transformation.

So what would engaging in a more transformative way of living actually mean? In exploring this question within an action research process, (which in itself had the aim of facilitating the transformation of those involved in the process), themes that have been encountered by those involved in the Blaker Foundation would undoubtedly arise- e.g. the nature of, and relationship between, personal growth and therapy; how we move forward in exploring our practice and ideas about spirituality; and the value and significance (if any) of the concept of 'shadow'. However, there would presumably be an opening out into a wider dialogue. The learning that was gained from this process could then inform both the aims, content and methodology of programmes that were developed from within Blaker.

2. Project with mainstream schools:

Most schools have a strong preoccupation with the National Curriculum, with the imperative being that pupils attain certain standards and targets. However, many teachers are conscious that this emphasis on outcomes can lead to a narrow and fragmented approach to education. There is awareness that young people need a strong qualitative component to their school experience, which includes a development of their emotional abilities, an opportunity to explore and express the creative and spiritual aspects of their experience, and to develop a value base that supports these. A number of educators and teachers, both within and without the system are both looking for ways to enrich and expand the curriculum, and are developing ideas and projects that enable this to happen.

In addition, people participating in the development of the Blaker Foundation have begun to develop ideas for workshops and courses that could be relevant within the school setting.

For example, the principles behind the multi-modal telling of the Faust story in Wales could easily be applied to stories and myths appropriate for school children of all ages.

It is intended to bring together a group of people wishing to develop this initiative, to look at creating a comprehensive and coherent range of programmes and opportunities that could be offered; and in the meantime, to seek out schools that might be interested in engaging with this as part of a pilot project.

3. Conference on Education:

Provisional plans have been made for a conference entitled "New Paradigms: Values, Relationships, Transformation" to take place at the Beeches Management Centre in Selly Park, Birmingham, on 5th - 7th May 1999 (for further information, see enclosed flier). The intention is to make this a truly participatory event, where people have the opportunity to hear about and experience ideas concerning education that reflect post Newtonian thinking. This would be followed by the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about these ideas with people representing current educational practice, with a view to exploring if and what is the meeting ground.

Conclusion

Focusing on the above projects does not mean that there will be not be other programmes. For example, Chris Clarke writes about 'The Implications of Modern Science for a New World View' on page (?) of this journal. However, there will not be such a wide range as originally planned.

If anyone is interested in any or all of the above, and would like further information, please contact Joan Walton at the Blaker Foundation, Bordesley Hall, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, B48 7QB, (phone: 01527 61919; email blakerf@compuserve.com).