



Associative Financial Literacy

Accompanying the journey of life

Published on behalf of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum as a contribution to understanding and teaching financial literacy.
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Publication No. 8/ December 2022

Update on Financial Literacy Teaching in the UK.

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Over the past 15 years I have given a number of courses in economics and financial literacy at various schools around the South West of England. Normally the invitation has come through some personal connection or recommendation, though earlier on I did engage in promotion. Mainly, the courses are given to class 11 or class 12 Waldorf Students and are non-elective. What I do exactly will depend on the mix and the makeup of the class. As a rule, the groups are small so that gives plenty of scope for tailoring content.

The basic elements include financial record keeping, exercises in double-entry bookkeeping, looking at the history and evolution of money, some key aspects of economic history. In essence, much of the content of the *Colours of Money* seminar is included in slightly modified form within the lessons. Whenever possible, I invite a local entrepreneur to come to speak to the class. Ideally this would be a younger person who had themselves graduated from the school, and who had taken the course and put it into action. Unfortunately this ideal person has yet to be found, but it is always one of the most profitable parts of the course which gives the students the opportunity to take some of what they have learned and ask questions to someone who is standing in the middle of a business.

Another less formal element of the benefit is what happens in a soul sense when a young person is able to reach with their imagination into the path of another person who is a little older. In this way, they begin to kindle thoughts and images of what might be possible in the future that they may not previously have entertained.

The culmination of the course is an opportunity for the pupils to present their own business plans, these range from the very basic to the ambitious. I encourage students to keep their projects as real, in the sense of realisable, as possible, and therefore to keep what they envision true to their own circumstances. In some occasions it has been possible to make an event of the presentations by inviting other teachers.

In the new year, I will be teaching a course at the Acorn school in Gloucestershire, where I first gave a main lesson almost 15 years ago. The school has recently adopted a certification process using the New Zealand Steiner certificate¹ which involves identifying learning outcomes, creating a study guide and formalising the marking criteria. All of this is written up and sent to New Zealand for pre-moderation. Afterwards, the work is handed in and assessed by the school, then looked at again by the New Zealand board.

While I have not looked at what lies behind the thinking and the practice of the New Zealand Steiner certificate, perhaps this might provide an avenue by which the bookkeeping approach to financial literacy can become more widely established in the Waldorf movement, but also in secondary or high schools more generally.

¹ See <https://nzcse.co.uk>