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This article offers a general concept for building team meetings. The term team can include a department, a branch and all the employees of a large organization, for example up to 60-70 participants.

The example and inspiration are based on the Waldorf School staff meeting, i.e. the Collegium, but I think these ideas can be used for any team meeting in any organization.

In 2006, I participated in the Kolisco conference in Sweden, which dealt with Waldorf education. At this conference, a workshop was held that lasted all week and dealt with Collegium. There were about 40 participants from the Waldorf schools around the world. The workshop was conducted by Christoph Weichert.¹ This article is based on the fruits of that workshop and my experience in the various Waldorf schools in Israel since then.

Collegium is the weekly meeting of all school staff: teachers, therapists and administrators. The aspiration is that this meeting will give vitality and freshness to all participants. They do not always meet this requirement, and sometimes team members complain about exhausting or boring meetings, and sometimes "vote with their feet" and are absent from these meetings.

The starting point in the article is Rudolf Steiner's statement that the Collegium meeting is the heart of the school.

*"Thus the heart of the Waldorf School, if I speak of its organization, is the teachers' staff meeting... Thus these constant staff meetings tend to make the school into an organism in the same way as the human body is an organism by virtue of its heart."*²

This image, a weekly meeting of teachers as "heart" is not taken for granted. So, what did Steiner mean? Why did he choose the image of the heart?

Heart action in the body

The heart is a body organ, its size is like a fist. The blood circulation in the body contains, in very general terms, the following stages:

1. Blood poor in oxygen comes from the whole body into the heart
2. Blood poor in oxygen undergoes processing, gets a boost, out of the heart going out towards the lungs
3. Blood poor in oxygen reaches the lungs, "meets the world" and returns oxygen-rich towards the heart
4. Blood rich in oxygen reaches the heart, undergoes processing, and goes out to the whole body

¹ Christof Wiechert has served as the head of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland

² R. Steiner, THE ORGANISATION OF THE WALDORF SCHOOL, August 23, 1922

In describing the structure of a team meeting, we refer to the four stages, to four special qualities of the heart. As for the Collegium: The intention is that at each team meeting these four parts (qualities) will be held. Also, the idea I propose is that for each part, there will be a member of the team that is responsible for it throughout the year.

First quality: sensing

This quality is connected to the blood poor in oxygen that comes from every point in the body to the heart. With every beat comes blood from every point, from the tip of the little finger or the heel of the foot. All blood that reaches the heart "senses" what happens in the body.

The heart in Anthroposophical vision is not a pump³, but the heart is an organ of sensing. The heart is the place where the living relationship between the periphery and the center is created.

The team meeting in this section will be about the "sensing" of the school - that is what the situation in the school. Different senses can be interpreted in different ways. For example, every teacher tells what happened to him in the classroom, or every teacher tells what changed this week (for example: more violence during breaks). One can do what is called "sharing" in which each person tells what he chooses on himself. There are places that do this in a circle. My recommendation is to do this part in small groups, couples up to four, each talking for a significant amount of time, a colleague who listens attentively to him and responds to him empathically. Such a dialogue can be very meaningful to any team member.

In my opinion, there is no need to return to the wider circle and tell what was "so that everyone will hear and know." The quality of sensing will also be realized in small groups.

Second quality: mission

This part refers to the action that takes blood from the heart to the lungs to freshen up and get oxygen. This part refers to the school's vision: Who are we? What is our vision? What should we do? What is our task? What is our mission?

The intention is that every meeting, every week, will have a period of time devoted to these questions. The intention is to choose a specific topic to refresh the mission and to give it direction.

In the case of a school it may be a pedagogical question, such as teaching discipline or how and when it is the right way to teach it. A mandate can be discussed, for example, recruitment of personnel: Which teachers we would like, which teachers have the right qualities to recruit now? It is possible to discuss aspects of an organizational structure: Is it right to establish a new body and so forth? In any case, there is no intention here to make decisions but to talk. These conversations are expressed in the "spirit of the Collegium" which inspires decision-making bodies. In these conversations comes the individual voice of each teacher and miraculously, a common identity of the school entity is created. In many institutions, the organization's discussions on the "vision" are carried out by management or by a board of directors.

³ See article: [:http://www.rsarchive.org/RelArtic/Marinelli/](http://www.rsarchive.org/RelArtic/Marinelli/)

Third quality: The daily management while meeting the world

This quality refers to oxygen-saturated blood that reaches from the world to the lungs and to the heart, a "world experience" that comes from the lungs to the body. Every moment the body receives air from the world with breath, the whole body is in every moment "in dialogue" with the world. There is no life without breath and dialogue with the world is essential to my body's existence. In terms of the organization, the message is a weekly activity relating to the connection of world – organization.

In the case of the Waldorf School, my recommendation is to deal with a different aspect of the "school-world" relationship every week. For example, the connection with the closest Waldorf School, the connection with other non-Waldorf schools in the city where the school is located, the connection with the authorities, the connection with the municipality and the Ministry of Education, a nationwide occurrence in the field of education...

Fourth quality: incessant learning

This part of the session relates to the new blood, rich in oxygen, which is transmitted to every part of the body. The aspiration is that every teacher who comes to the Collegium meeting comes out of the meeting renewed and refreshed. The recommended way to realize this idea is through joint learning. The school is a learning organization. At each meeting, we will learn something together. Here, too, there is a person or a team responsible for the fact that each meeting will have learning related to the organization's field. In the Waldorf schools around the world it is customary to study together the 14 lectures called "human knowledge". These lectures can be learned, other Steiner's lectures or any other educational chapter related.

What will give the quality of renewal and freshness is not only content but also form. Here, too, it is recommended to study in different ways in small groups, in such a way as to give all participants appropriate expression. In elder Waldorf schools, there can be teachers with huge gaps in knowledge and experience. The team in charge of the study is challenged to hear about this part that is alive and beating for the whole quantity and variety of all members.

Meeting structure

As stated, there is a proposal for four parts of a weekly session. It is valuable in my eyes that these parts will be realized at every meeting. Another part that can be integrated into other parts is artistic activity. It is important to think that each part will have a person or team that is responsible for it. In addition, there is a person who is responsible for the whole collegium. At the beginning of the year, and perhaps even in the middle of the year and at its end, the Collegium's leader will stop the process for a moment and allow the participants to respond to the Collegium meetings, to allow it to make corrections and improvements during the year.

Additional suggestions: Reduce "updates". The situation in which one person (manager?) reads a long list of updates and messages is often ineffective and "lowers" the quality of the collegium. Email updates can be sent.

My recommendation is to create a timespan for the Collegium and each part has a fixed time. It is important for everyone to be aware of and maintain the rhythm of the encounter.

Like the heart that miraculously works diligently and meticulously and performs such complex actions, the weekly encounter is also required to move from "sensing" to "learning" and so on in a short period of time.

As for the order of the meeting, each meeting coordinator will find the correct one.

In conclusion - the weekly meeting is an opportunity to realize important qualities, develop responsibility and leadership in each of the team members, engage in the essence and connect the entire team to the vision and the organization. As I emphasized at the opening, this structure can be used as the basis for a weekly meeting in every organization.

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