

## **What is a Main Lesson Teacher? How does it differ from a traditional public school teacher?**

At The Lighthouse School, we believe learning should be inter-active, and that teaching should address the entire student; head, heart, and hands. Therefore, we use techniques that engage the child's intellectual capacity, as well as keeping them active physically and promote the desire of wanting to learn. One of the many things that makes us unique from other Public Schools is that we integrate the arts into all lessons and all grades, Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>.

A typical school day is divided up into three main parts: head, heart, and hands. The Head lesson is also referred to as the Main Lesson. Heart subjects include Art in the form of drawing and painting, drama, foreign language, and music. Hands is reserved for PE, dance, handwork (knitting, woodworking, etc.), gardening, and other types of gross motor skill activities.

To truly acquire knowledge, and not simply memorize it for an upcoming test, a student of any age needs time for that seed of knowledge to take root and grow. Although we are not a Waldorf school, our practices and teaching strategies are Waldorf inspired. Waldorf education uses the block structure of learning to make sure that students have the time they need to experience true learning and find relevancy and interest in the topic at hand. They call this academic learning block Main Lesson.

The main lesson block, allows teachers to cover the curriculum intensively and economically, and provides the students with the fullest possible immersion in a subject. The main lesson block assures that students have sufficient time to experience a living process of learning. Main Lesson, is a 45-90-minute learning period, where subjects like reading, math, history and science are taught in a block method.

This method helps teachers use a multi-sensory and multi-activity learning approach because the time allotted allows them to engage the children with a wide variety of activities to help increase student motivation and interest in the topic at hand.

Teachers typically present new concepts in three or four week blocks to provide an in-depth learning experience of a single subject. In a block system, students are immersed in one subject at a time in order to fully focus on the content area and gain a complete understanding before moving on to the next course of study. Thus, intellectual learning is always combined with artistic, rhythmical and practical work.

Every Main Lesson features work in the Main Lesson book which is created by the student. The student writes and illustrates the lesson's content into their books. This content consists of relevant illustrations, stories, notes, and summaries all written by hand. In the early grades, the students imitate the teacher in the creation of their main lesson book. In grades 3-5, the students help create the content of the main lesson book, as a class, with the teacher's guidance. In middle school, or grades 6-8, the students take notes while the teacher lectures and they go over these notes individually with the teacher.

When the content has been checked by the teacher, the students are given more freedom within the creation of their books because the writing is their own along with the illustrations. This makes both the book and the content of the lesson their own. This brings personalization, beauty, joy, and relevancy to lessons.

This method makes little use of worksheets and there are no textbooks to be read. The teacher reads the source material and presents it to students in an engaging and relevant way. Skill practice comes in the form of hands-on, project and process-based learning versus memorization and mimicry. In the course of each block, students gain practice in handwriting, grammar, art and composition. Creating one's own book anchors knowledge more solidly than simply reading a textbook; the enthusiastic pride children take in creating their books demonstrates a true joy in learning. Main Lesson, and the block style of learning, is a process-based learning method, and a meaningful alternative to results-based teaching that focuses solely on test results.

Rudolf Steiner was an early adopter of the block and process method and believed this style of teaching gave students the time and space they needed to find meaning and purpose in their education. He also wanted to be sure each teacher had the time to engage a student's head, heart, and hands, so that they could learn, and be inspired by the material for a lifetime.

With courage and joy, we strive to develop each child's full potential –head, heart, and hands. *The Lighthouse School Mission Statement*

**So are you ready to be a Main Lesson Teacher? Apply now!!**