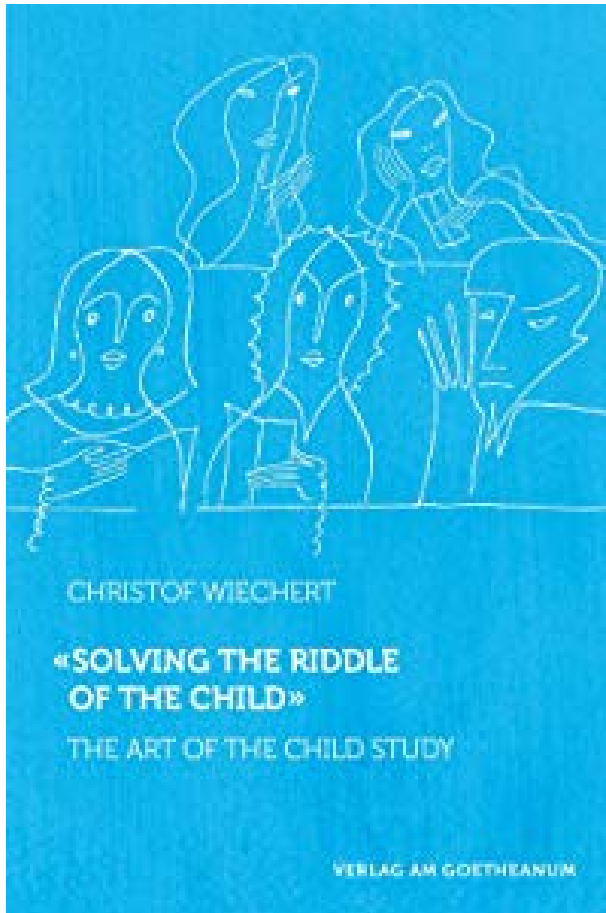


Solving the Riddle of the Child: The Art of the Child Study



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It may be a truism to say that every teacher should make efforts to understand his pupils. Our real understanding, after all, can be a sure foundation and support for children's whole development; and without this our work will be a random undertaking that connects with our pupils, at best, in a superficial way only. A skilled teacher seeks to understand his pupils so that he can raise learning beyond mere compulsion or drill. It was Rudolf Steiner's ideal that the weekly pedagogical meetings in Waldorf schools should support teachers' continually developing insight into their pupils.

He exhorted them to 'become psychologists' but did not mean this in the commonly understood sense. He himself demonstrated this 'art of evolving insight' in the faculty meetings in which he participated on many occasions. One can say that it is an essential part of the quality of our work as teachers for us to develop these skills of perception, reflection and insight. Christof Wiechert here picks up these suggestions of Steiner's anew. He elaborates from them the art of the child study as a key tool in nurturing pupils development and, at the same time, teachers' own growing powers of insight. In short the approach described here can enliven the educational and social dimensions of a whole school community.