



Steiner Education Diploma

L1) Introduction to Steiner / Waldorf Education as a Global Phenomenon – the need for a Creative Research Approach.

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As you will see from this power point as well as the Waldorf World Report, the Waldorf World list and the Waldorf 100 interview and videos, Steiner / Waldorf Education is truly a global phenomenon. One of the aims of this module is to introduce this and the deep underlying educational philosophy as a reason for this global expansion. We also want to give some indications as to why a creative research approach is necessary in both **understanding** Steiner Education as well as **practicing** it.

Importantly, one of the most fundamental facts about Steiner's philosophy of education is that there is no fixed curriculum, no set content of what should be taught. When a curriculum is spoken of, it is in terms of general principles and ideas about how children develop and the best ways of adapting the content of what can be taught to the child at the appropriate stage of development as well as to their communal global context. In this sense, Steiner Education strives to find the balance between **teacher autonomy and knowledge of human nature**:

“You would never find uniformity of teaching in Classes A, B, and C. The same things are taught but in completely different ways, for a **free creative imagination** pervades the class. There are **no prescribed rules** for teaching in the Waldorf School, but only one unifying spirit that permeates the whole. It is very important that you understand this. **Teachers are autonomous**. Within this one unifying spirit they can do entirely what they think is right for themselves... you will see that you have the greatest liberty, and yet the teaching in each class is what is right for that age... They do not find it at all unreasonable. They find it excellent in its very freedom because it is based upon real **true human knowledge**. And the freedom that must prevail in the school can be seen in just such things as creating teaching matter out of imagination.” Steiner, R (1924): The Kingdom of Childhood, Anthroposophic Press, p. 29.

This means that teachers in Steiner / Waldorf Schools find themselves in a continuous process of finding the balance between:

Creative Autonomy



Human Knowledge

As we will see, this “balance” is a kind of creative adaptation to the development of the children through the different phases of life.

This puts a Steiner teacher into what is essentially a research position. But it is a form of research that is creative and practical. It is this “creative research” that is the core of teaching practice in Steiner /Waldorf Schools. In this sense, this is a creative research perspective to the nature and practice of the Education.

At the same time, this very thing can be a source of great confusion to parents. There are a good number of these who send their children to Steiner schools as they are looking for a softer, slower, more kindly and creative approach to education and indeed they do find this. But often there is an expectation that the same content is delivered as in a mainstream school, but with perhaps a more artistic approach. This is a mistaken view of what the essence of what Steiner Education is. Hence parents are in a similar position to teachers in a Steiner School in the sense that a research position is needed, perhaps not at the same level, but at least to the degree that they can make decisions with confidence. **Perhaps more importantly, convergence of “Ideas, Empathy and Action” between parents and teachers can only lead to a more healthy and successful education for the children.**

The first two modules here, then, consider how this creative research can be done. This first power point “lecture” gives an overview of the aims and global outreach of the education.

Steiner / Waldorf Education as a Global Phenomenon – the need for a Creative Research approach

Clearly, Steiner or Waldorf Education is a global phenomenon. With around 1200 schools and schooling initiatives, as well as about 2000 kindergarten settings, it is the largest independent schools movement in the World.

Steiner / Waldorf Education strives to:

- 1) Encourage an extended ***scientific*** and ***artistic*** approach to education in terms of the ***content*** of the curriculum as well as the ***educational method*** it uses. This is derived from a holistic understanding of human development or ***ontogeny***.
- 2) Cultivate ***Diversity*** and ***Unity*** in its relationship to global cultures.
- 3) Emphasise ***Understanding*** and ***Empathy*** between the peoples of the world. (See references at end of this power point)

The World centre of Steiner / Waldorf Education is the Goetheanum. This education is one aspect to Steiner's ideas on human beings and the natural life generally, an initiative which is called anthroposophy. Steiner considered anthroposophy as an expanded form of science. The Goetheanum is the international centre of the anthroposophical movement. It is located in Dornach near Basel in Switzerland.

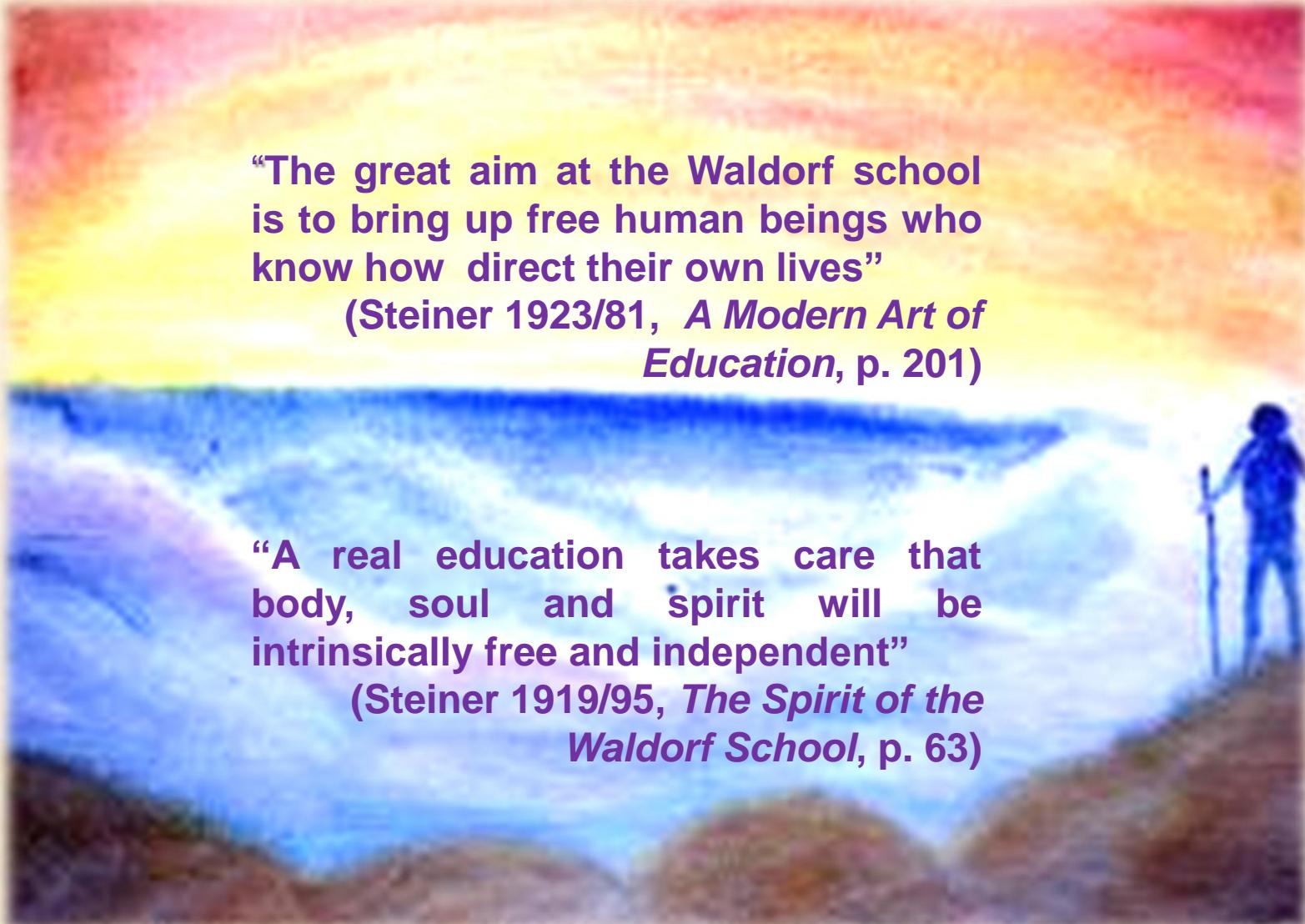
To understand the nature of the education, there is a need to understand and research its fundamental educational philosophy.

The Aims of Steiner Education

There are a number of aims to Steiner education which you will find in the following slides and which appear in different forms throughout the literature on the education. These aims are integrated not only into the **content** of what is taught, in an age related way, but also into the **method** or way of teaching. These aims relate to:

- **Human Freedom**
- **Democracy**
- **Sociality**
- **Race, Nation and Class**

The next few slides provides some insight into these:



“The great aim at the Waldorf school
is to bring up free human beings who
know how direct their own lives”

(Steiner 1923/81, *A Modern Art of
Education*, p. 201)

“A real education takes care that
body, soul and spirit will be
intrinsically free and independent”

(Steiner 1919/95, *The Spirit of the
Waldorf School*, p. 63)

Speaking in the context of the chaos within Europe just under a year after the 1918 war armistice, Steiner said:

“That is, in truth, the only salvation for humanity... Adults need to live in a society that is **economically social, governmentally democratic, and culturally free**... **The main question for the future is how will we conduct ourselves with children if we want to raise them to be, in the broadest sense of the words, social, democratic and free adults.** One of the most prominent problems of the future, a problem already confronting us, is the question of **education**... You need only look at my book *The Education of the Child in the light of Anthroposophy*. There I have brought one of the most important problems of modern society to the surface, namely, social education. An understanding of the **three periods of child development** as presented by spiritual science needs to be more widespread”. Steiner, R (1919/97): Education as a Force for Social Change, Anthroposophic Press, p. 10. (My Bold)

The International Nature of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education

Rudolf Steiner saw his educational philosophy as being valid across the globe as well as being sensitive to world cultures. This is partly due to his conviction that there is something universally true for all human beings as well as the cultural background or geographic place:

“Furthermore, the Waldorf School is for all types of children... Children from all social classes have been accepted there, because the pedagogical and practical impulses based on real knowledge of the human being are universally human; they are international in character and relevant for all classes and races of humanity”. From: Rudolf Steiner (1924/96): *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2* (p. 132), Anthroposophic Press.

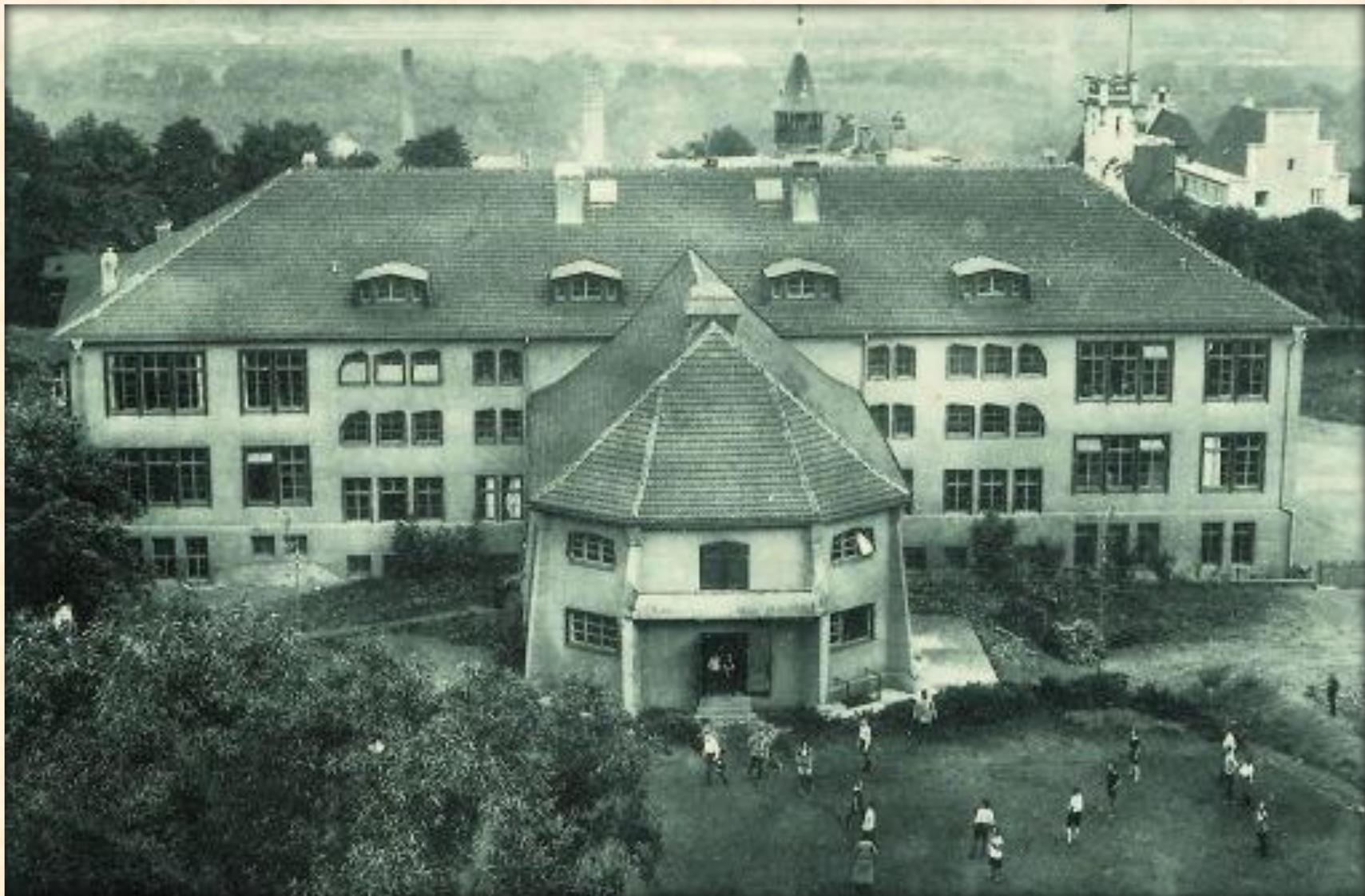
“But the anthroposophic view of the world engenders a strong desire to build bridges across all divisions into nationalities, races, and so on. In its inmost being anthroposophy feels compelled to speak with a voice that is supranational, or international... The anthroposophic worldview itself is intended to help people, wherever they live on earth, toward knowledge that is beyond all limits of race or national language. Consequently, spiritual science tries to speak a supranational language (not in any physical sense, of course), a language that can be understood throughout modern civilization. For now, we can realize these goals only to a limited extent. But even these initial steps will enable us to appreciate wider issues as well. Once we have a better understanding of what was just said, we will see how little can be accomplished in moral and religious education as long as we introduce religious dogmas and fixed moral concepts to children. At best we can teach them to become Christians, Jews, Roman Catholics, or Protestants, according to their own religious beliefs. But we must eradicate from a true art of education any attempt to indoctrinate young people into our own particular ideology.”, Steiner, R (1921/2): Soul Economy, Anthroposophic Press, pp. 270-2

“Question: Would it be possible to implement the Waldorf way of teaching in other countries, in Czechoslovakia, for example?

RUDOLF STEINER: In principle it is possible to introduce Waldorf education anywhere, because it is based purely on pedagogy. This is the significant difference between Waldorf pedagogy and other educational movements... Waldorf education focuses entirely on the pedagogical aspect, **it can be adapted to any outer conditions**, whether a city school, a country school or whatever.”
Steiner, R (1923): *The Child’s Changing Consciousness*”, Anthroposophic Press, P. 188/9. (My bold)

The first Steiner / Waldorf School was founded in 1919, in Stuttgart, Germany, an image of which is the next slide.

The First Waldorf School, Stuttgart, Germany (1919).



The Anthroposophy as the Root of Waldorf Education

The root of Steiner/Waldorf education is in anthroposophy, a new kind of knowledge, or form of science, aimed at understanding the World and Humanity in their wholeness of body, soul and spirit. It is this “threefoldness” that is essential to the many dimensions of Steiner Education. To some, these latter two terms “soul and spirit” may seem a little strange, let alone be at the centre of an educational philosophy, but through the course of this Diploma, we gradually come to an understanding of them and discover that they can be expressed in more familiar terms and which can be readily assessed by anyone.

The World centre for research into anthroposophy and its initiatives is the Goetheanum in Dornach, nr Basel, Switzerland, and is named after the famous German dramatist and scientist Wolfgang Johann Goethe (1749-1832):

The Goetheanum







Inside the Main Hall





There are many Research Sections and areas of work at the Goetheanum which are aimed at making positive contributions to all of human life and World health. The aim of these sections is to research and educate about the different fields of life and existence on the basis of anthroposophy and relate this to other modern research. In this way, a fruitful interaction can arise between the modern world and anthroposophy.

All of these Sections of Research play into Steiner/Waldorf Education:

Sections at the Goetheanum

General Philosophical / Anthroposophical Section

(University level education and research centre and schools of:-)

Natural Science & Agriculture

Mathematics & Astronomy

Performing Arts

Medicine

Humanities

Social Science

Art & Architecture

All these feed into:

The Section for Waldorf Education

Education and Knowledge

Steiner thought that being a teacher in a Waldorf School required many layers of understanding of the World and the place of the human being in it:

“The art of education (about which we will say a great deal during this course of lectures) is based entirely on **knowledge of the human being**. If such knowledge is to have a deep foundation, however, **it must be based on knowledge of the entire universe**, because human beings, with all their inherent abilities and powers, are rooted in the universe. Therefore true knowledge of the human being can spring only from knowing the world in its entirety. On the other hand, one can say that the educational attitudes and ideas of any age reflect the general worldview of that age. Consequently, to correctly assess current views on education, we must examine them within the context of the general worldview of our time.” Steiner, R (1921): *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*, Anthroposophic Press, (p. 14) (my emphasis)

There are many fields of research occurring in these sections and they also have branches throughout most countries of the World and within each school in so far as it affects the education:

Fields of Interaction in the Education

Due to this, there are many areas where a fruitful research interaction can take place in the context of a Steiner/Waldorf School:

Philosophical

Natural Science &
Agriculture

Mathematics

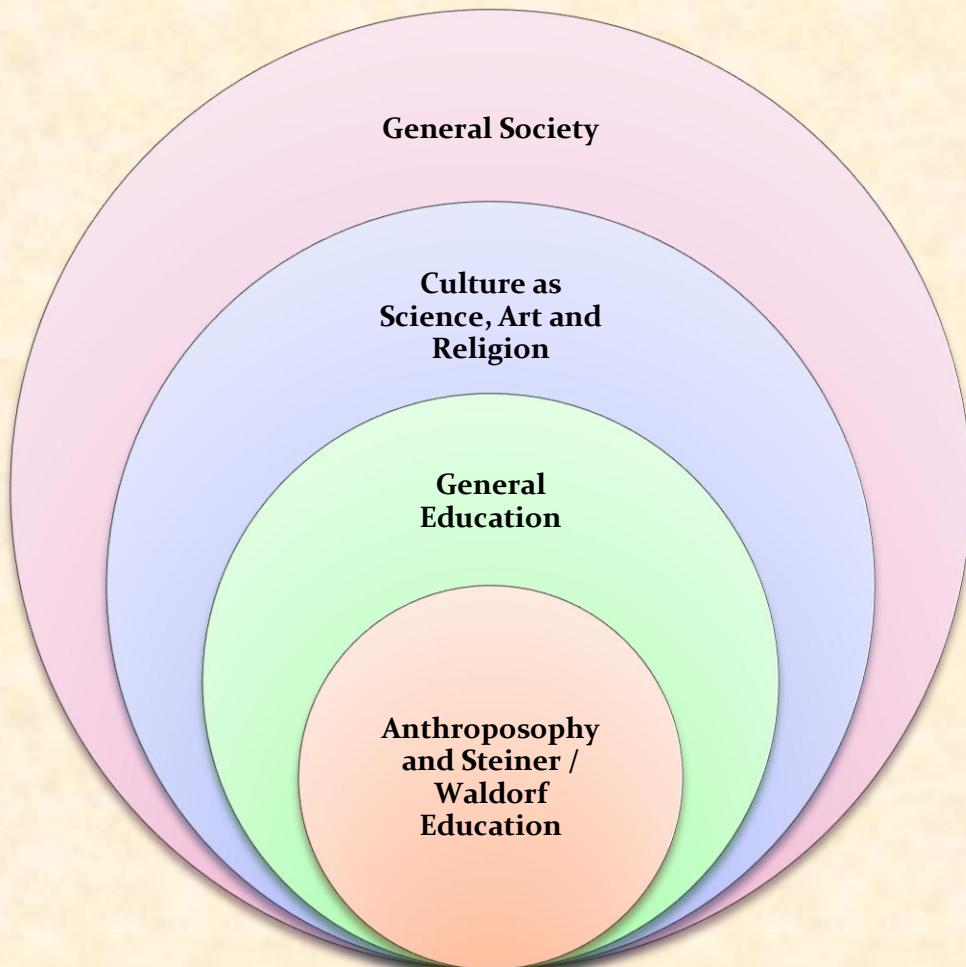
Performing Arts

Medicine

Humanities

Social Science

Art & Architecture



In light of this, schools are encouraged to participate in an ongoing research dialogue between teachers, parents, the local community and, indeed the students. This is aimed to occur in each of these areas outlined in the previous slide and in so far as it is possible in a given context.

A Virtual Tour of the Schools World Wide:

The following is a series of slides from Steiner/Waldorf Schools and initiatives from around the world. Just browse through them and jot down any thoughts you have.

The first slide gives a brief indication of the global reach of the Schools:

See “Waldorf World List 2019”



South Devon Steiner School



Michael Hall, Forest Row, England



Brighton Steiner School



Toronto Steiner School, Canada.



Kindergarten in Kenya



Nairobi, Kenya



Hungary



Alice Springs, Australia



Munich, Germany



Stavanger, Norway



Los Angeles, USA



Sekem, Egypt



Sekem, Egypt



Orana, Canberra, Australia



Washington DC, USA, class 2



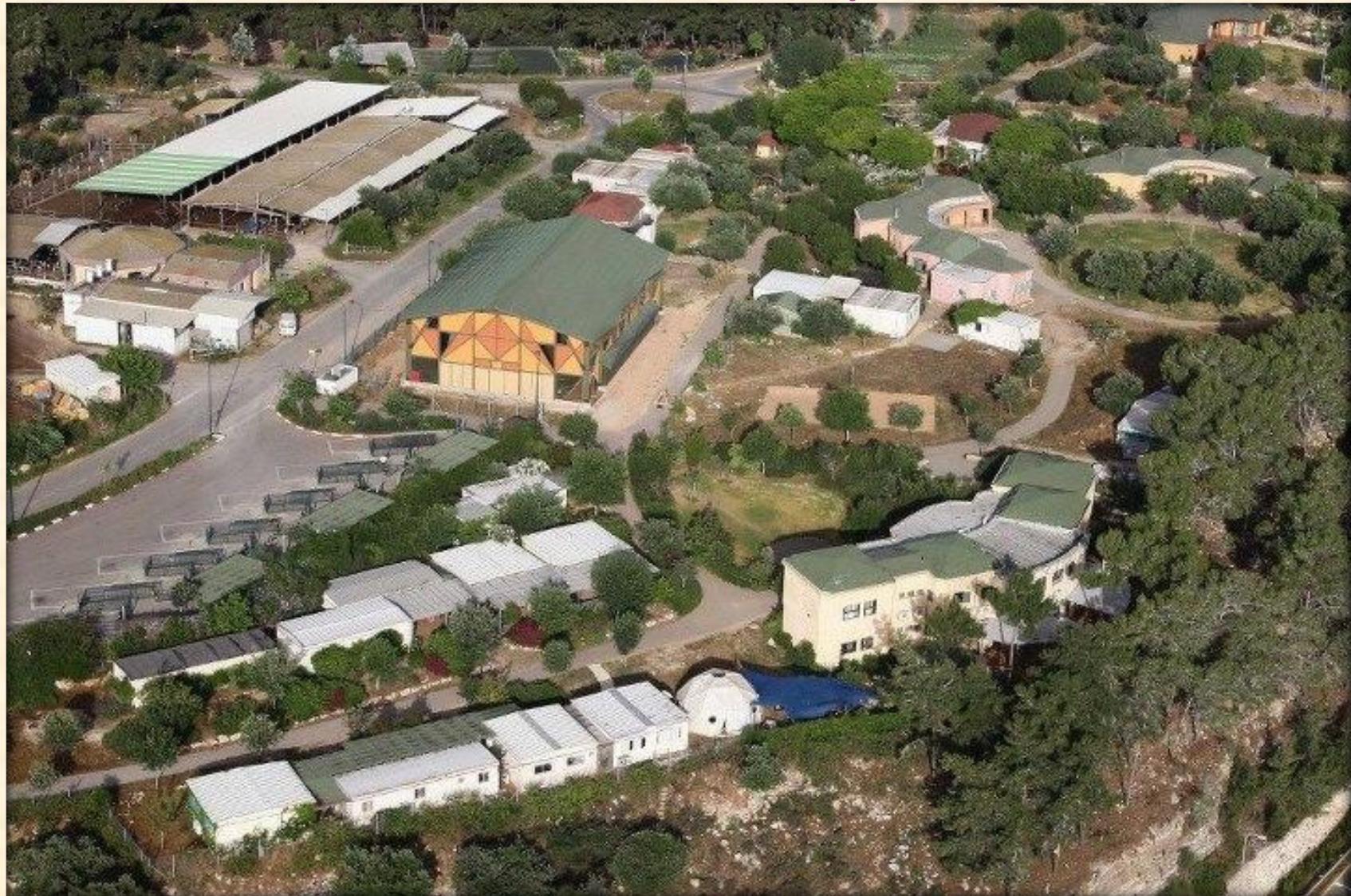
Sloka School, Hyderabad, India



Sloka



Harduf Centre, Israel





Bellingen, NSW, Aus



A class 1, nr Cape Cod, USA



Images of the Education: Curriculum and Method

The Following is a series of slides of different aspects of the Steiner / Waldorf Curriculum. They just give a picture of the kinds of things that are done in schools around the World. In the course of this power point we want to present a kind of picture, without going into details, in so far as that is possible. From your studies and school experience these images will take on more life. Again, as you look at the pictures make a note of any thoughts and questions you may have:

Subject Lessons

Languages

Class 1-3: Purely oral - songs, games, poems, stories

Class 4 onwards: Gradual introduction to formal structure of language, grammar, written language
Poems, stories, songs in keeping with Main Lesson themes of the year.

Practice Lesson

In each case, the examples given begin at the lower end of the school and progress upwards with age.

Maths: Four operations

Fractions
Decimals
Percentages
Simple/compound interest
Positive/negative numbers
Powers/roots
Algebra
Curve Mathematics

English: Mood of Language
Grammar
Scientific and business styles and conventions
Essay writing

Games

Finger games
Imaginative games
Tumbling and circus skills
Sports preparation games
Handball
Basketball
Volleyball
Botherer Gymnastics
Athletics
(Rugby and soccer are taught in occasional blocks)

Art

Pure colour painting
Wax crayoning
Clay modelling
Water Colour painting
Shaded Drawing
Pastel Drawing
Charcoal Drawing
Lino Printing
History of Art
Picture Observation

Crafts

Feltmaking
Basketweaving
Tie-dye
Woodcarving & turning
Joinery
Metalwork
Marbling
Puppetmaking
Maskmaking

Handwork

Knitting
Crochet
Sewing
Embroidery
Clothes Design

Eurythmy

Gardening

Religion

Subject Lessons

Class 8

Understanding of Prose & Poetry

History to Present Day

World Geography
Economic Conditions

Chemistry

Physics

Human Biology

Arithmetic & Algebra

Plane & Solid Geometry

Pythagoras

Square & cube roots
equations
Negative Numbers

Class 7 Style

Renaissance Discoverers

Astronomy

Chemistry

Physics

Nutrition

Class 6

Conditional Development of Style

Medieval History
Roman History

Geography of Europe

Physics
Mineral Realm

Freehand Geometry

Percentages
Simple Interest
Formulae

Class 5

Active & Passive Moods

Indian & Persian & Egyptian Myths

Geography of Britain

Botany

Fractions & Decimals

Formdrawing

Class 4

Tenses
Punctuation

Norse Myths

Local history
Local geography

Fractions

Formdrawing

Class 3

Grammar
Nouns, verbs
adjectives

Old Testament

Farming
Building

Weighing
Measuring

Formdrawing

Class 2

Writing
Reading

Fables
Saints' Stories

Home Environment

Sums
Hundreds
tens and units

Formdrawing

Class 1

Writing
Reading

Fairy Stories

Home Environment

Numbers
Processes

Form drawing

Kindergarten & Nursery

The Seasons

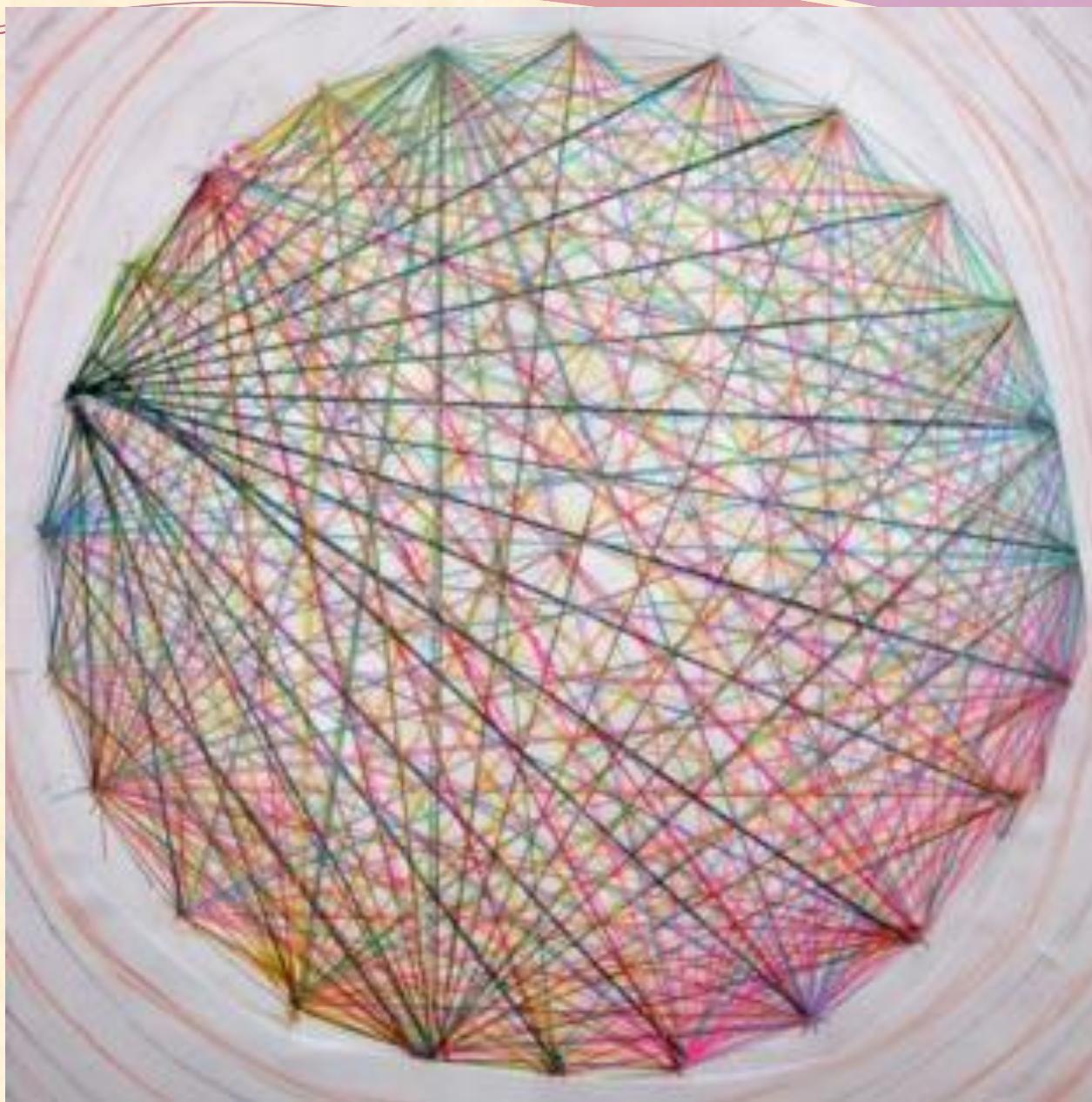


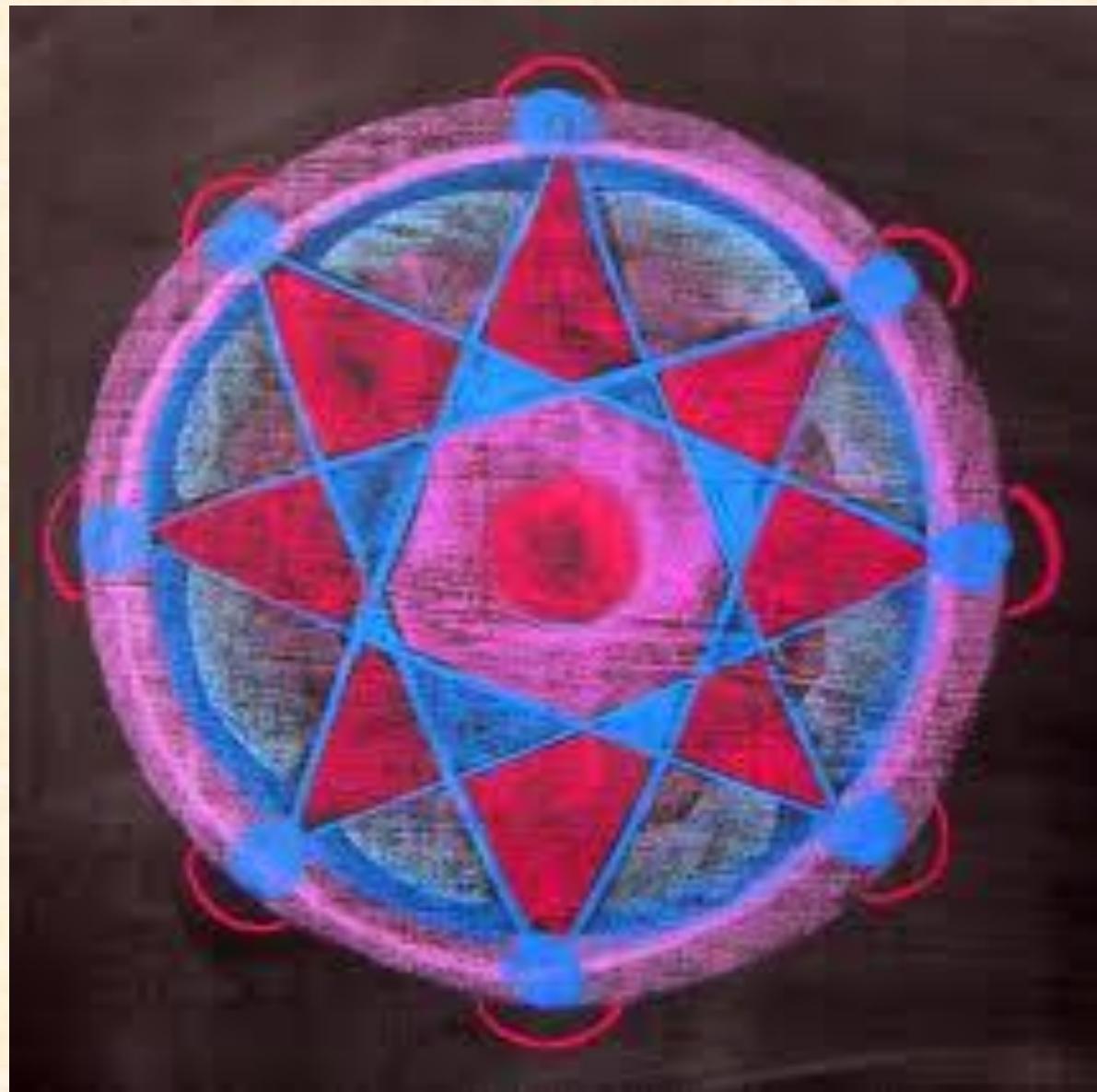
Blackboard Drawing



Steiner School Maths





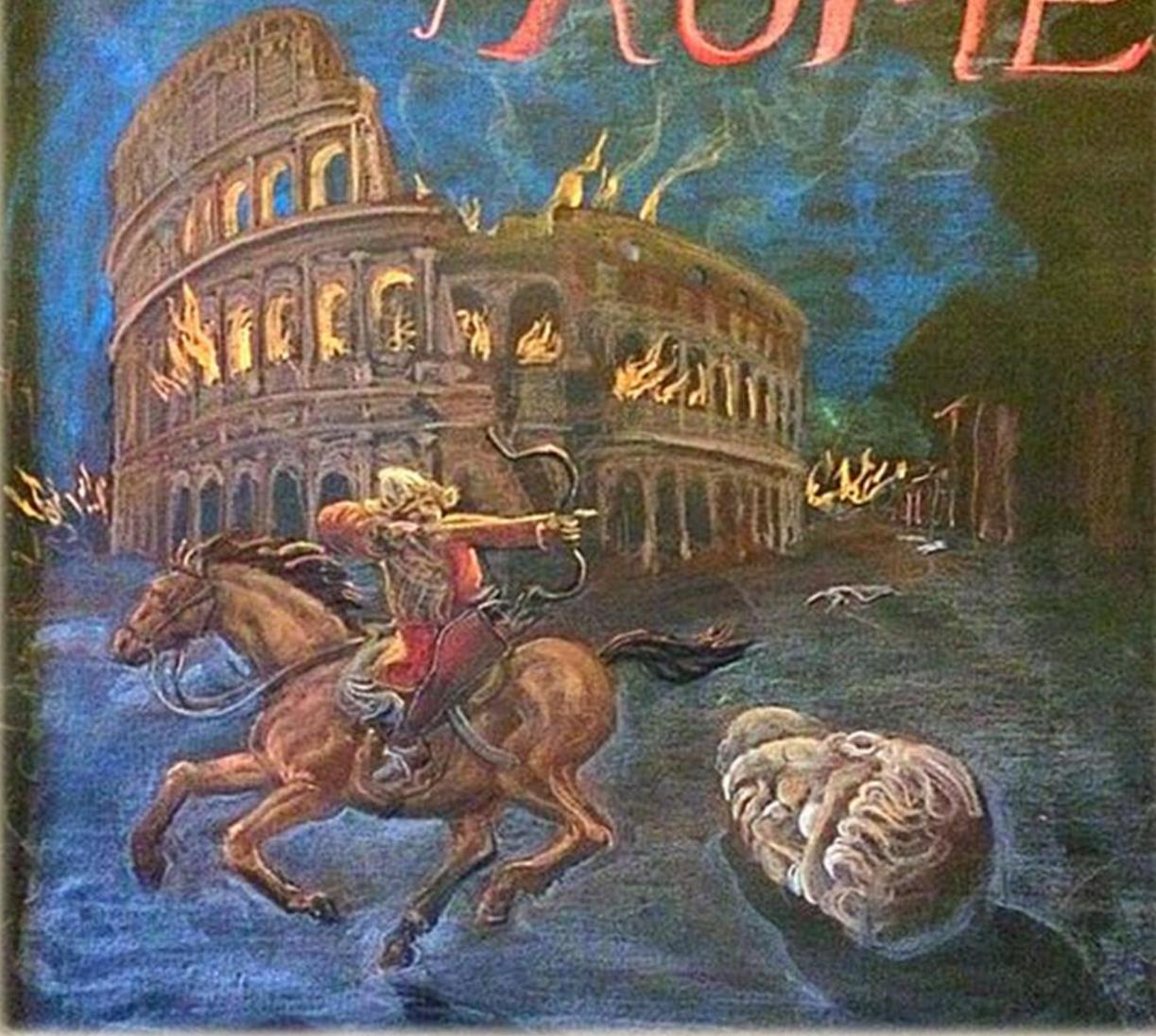




ICT in Bochum Steiner School, Germany



The Fall of ROME



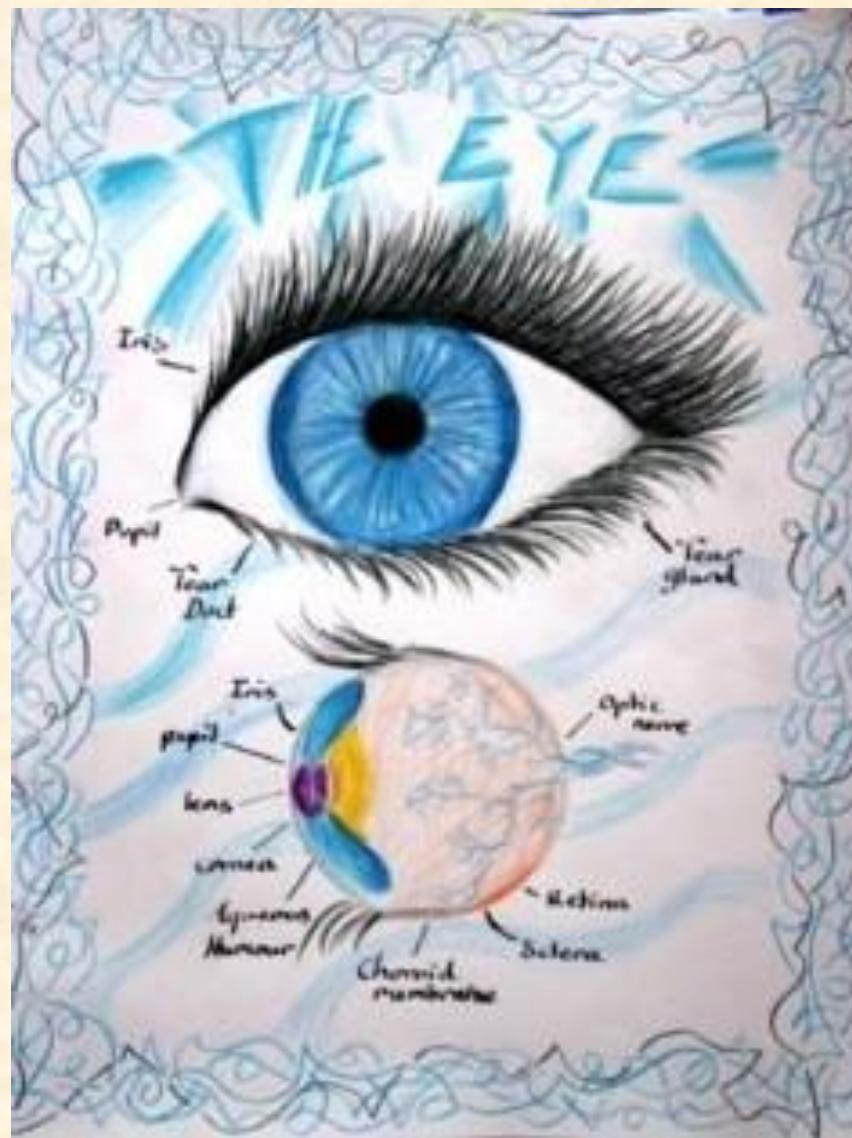
Renaissance Art and Science



The Beginnings of the Industrial Revolution



Biology



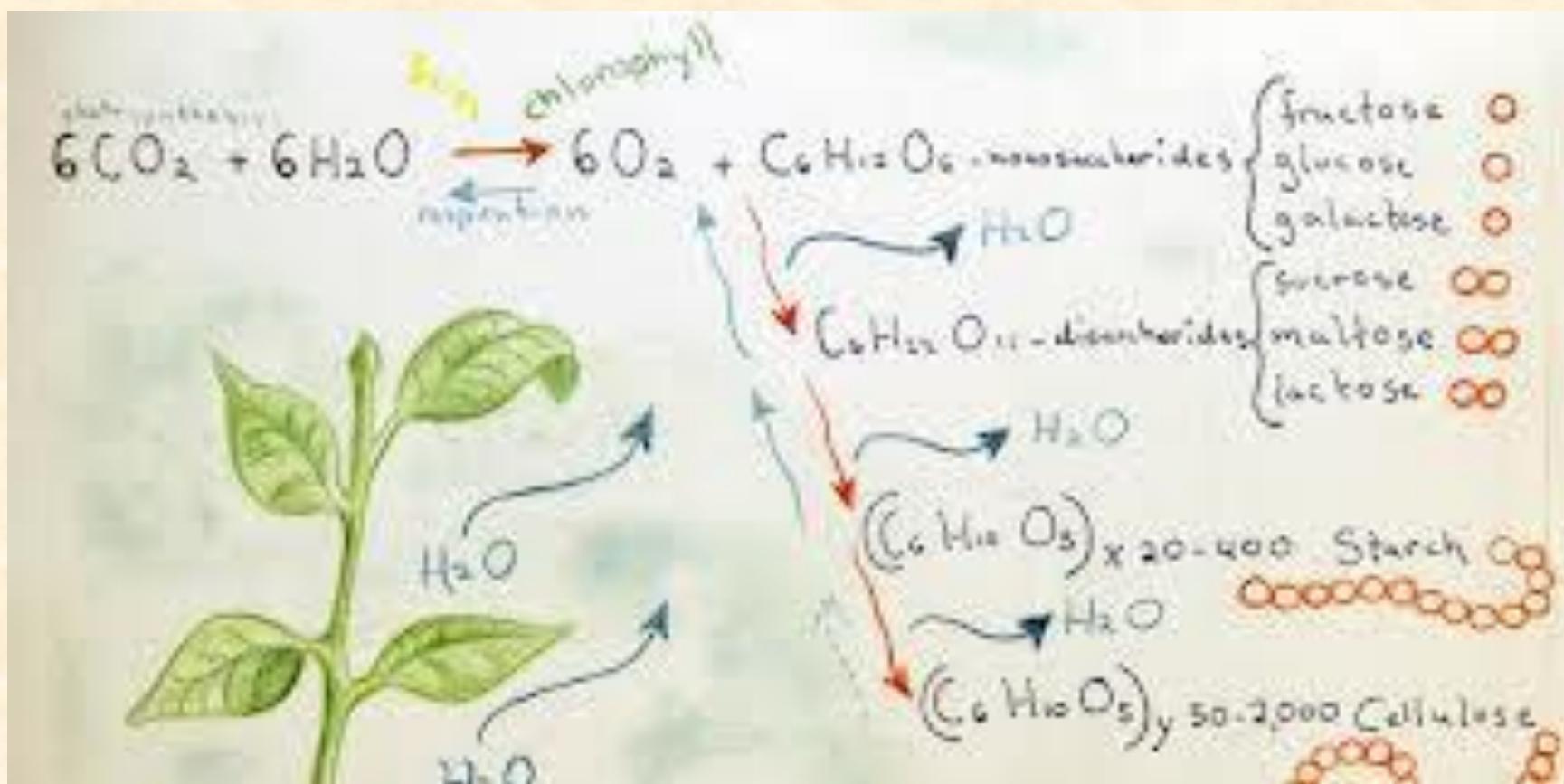








Living Chemistry



They have microscopes too



A Steiner/Waldorf Painting



What then is Steiner/Waldorf Education – a Question of Research? Here are some possibilities:

1) Anthroposophy and Steiner education promote science and art in practice . Steiner education has its roots in anthroposophy. This fosters an extended scientific approach to knowledge that is at the basis of education in its methods of teaching and the contents of its curriculum. It is open to the positive knowledge and practices in society as well as making its own distinctive contribution.

2) Anthroposophy and Steiner education are pro-internationalism. It is an international movement which encourages respect and recognition between all nations, races, groups and individuals as well as recognising the universal dimension to all human beings.

Reading

If you want an overview of all the years in a Waldorf School, read:

Clouder, C & Rawson, M (2003): *Waldorf Education*, Floris Books, Edinburgh.

It gives an excellent introduction in a concise manner covering, kindergarten, lower school and upper school. More indications for reading will be given throughout the Diploma.

For a more extensive approach for the duration of the Diploma:

Avison, K & Rawson, M (2014): *The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum*, Floris Press.

Exercise

Write down your most prominent questions from these slides and think about how you would answer them from your current knowledge.

By the end of the course, review your knowledge and how you would answer the questions by then.

If you are planning on becoming a Steiner / Waldorf Educator, if you have not done so already, it would now be good to read attachment 7: “ASWTE & Diploma Teacher Benchmarks”, in the File: “Basic Reading 1”

References

Steiner R (1919/95): *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*, Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner R (1923/81): *A Modern Art of Education*, Rudolf Steiner Press.

Some Relevant Quotes:

“Internationalism is rather comparable to the feeling we acquire when we contemplate the beauties of nature; through this contemplation we are impelled to love, to reverence, to understanding, because it has become a reality to us, because it impresses itself on us, because we give ourselves up to it freely. Whereas we grow into our own nation because we are, so to speak, members of it, we learn to know other nations. They work on us indirectly through our knowledge of them, our understanding of them. We learn little by little to love them with understanding, and in proportion to our learning to love and understand mankind in its different peoples in their various countries, does our feeling grow for internationalism”.

Steiner (1919/1972) : *The Social Future*, Anthroposophic Press, p. 132

“It is the striving of a true cosmopolitanism which, by assimilating all that can be acquired from a love extended to other races, ennobles and uplifts the individual people; knowledge of one's own race is sought by assimilating all that is idealistic, great and beautiful in other peoples of the Earth... True internationalism... springs from a love which goes out to all peoples and races in order that the light received from them may be kindled in the deeds, concepts and creations of one's own people. Each individual race must so find its place in the great chorus of the peoples on the Earth that it contributes to the full understanding which can alone unite them all in real and mutual knowledge....

“This lecture should show you that the hatred and antipathy in the world today can indeed be followed by international love with healing in its wings. This is indeed possible. But we are living in an age when all that is *possible* must be consciously, deliberately and freely striven for by humanity. There must be knowledge of the conditions requisite for uniting the peoples of the Earth, in order that, as a result of this knowledge, each individual people may help to make the waves of love follow those of hatred... This quest for loving unification, for unifying love is not merely a vague feeling. To those who understand the conditions of life today, it is the very highest duty of humanity.” *The Peoples of the Earth in the Light of Anthroposophy*. A Lecture given by Rudolf Steiner Stuttgart, March 10th, 1920, from: *Die Krisis der Gegenwart und der Weg zu gesundem Denken*, chapter 3, GA 335, paragraphs 29-34. From rsarchive.org