

Montessori Congress

Dublin, 2019

YOUR PAIN, MY PAIN; YOUR WELL-BEING, MY WELL-BEING THE FABRIC OF SOCIAL LIFE

Carla Foster



Montessori believed that the task of the elementary child was to construct him or herself as an aware and participating member of a society, not just absorb the norms of culture and become an obedient servant. In order to do that, children needed to understand the principles of the organization and evolution of the natural world, and to understand their heritage as human beings by:

- Looking for the truth not just facts
- Searching beyond the surface of things
- Building friendships and learning to cooperate
- Traveling in space with their imagination

JUSTICE and Fairness

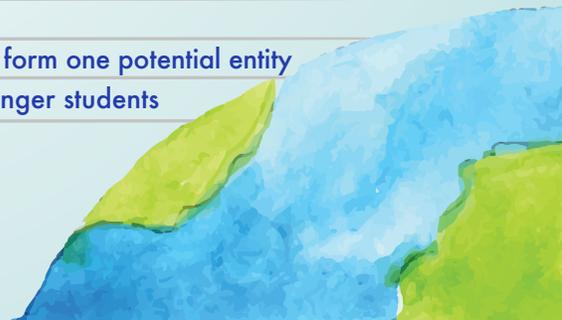
*Fairness, in all its forms, is part of this fabric, as well as compassion, forgiveness and mercy.
A sense of justice is essential in managing collaborations.*

1. Evolution has built us to be able to work cooperatively
2. Children between the age of 6-9 actually had a deep understanding of the cliché to pay it forward. Younger children (3-6) might not understand the concept of fairness due to their lack of understanding of linear time
3. The classroom serves as a space for children to experiment and learn to collaborate
4. Being willing to have those conversations, rather than just creating rules, is the important first step
5. Discuss the different between equal and fair with children.
6. Incorporate discussion of tolerance, respect, and different types of justice such as retributive, procedural and restorative justice

The Environment

Inherent fairness in Montessori environment:

1. Cooperative work is the norm
2. Collective responsibility of the environment
3. Sharing knowledge with classmates
4. Simple rules that children can follow
5. Helps the children place their individual strands parallel to each other, to form one potential entity
6. The mixed age group allows for older children act as models for the younger students

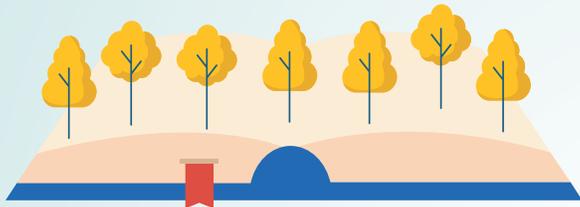


In the first plane of development the child adapts to time and place.

In the second plane the child is open to suggestion from friends and heroes and influences beyond family and immediate environment. In this period then, it is essential to help the children actively engage in many types of collaboration and expose them to many types of heroes.

Cosmic Education for the 6-12 year old emphasizes a world view that involves the following principles:

- There are laws of existence that all things, living and non-living follow
- When anything follows its laws of being, it acts upon the environment-this is called work. There is great work being done everywhere in the Universe at all times



- The work that impacts the environment creates bonds of interdependency between all things, living and non-living.
- Because of this work, there will be constant change, while the principle of interdependency forms this change into a kind of harmony
- Humans are a different kind of energy in the universe, because we can consciously choose what kind of work we will do, what kind of effect we will have. With this great freedom comes great responsibility

Once we are awakened to the true needs of development, we can experience as Montessori teachers the greater satisfaction of providing that which allows the children to fully express their love of environment and find social cohesion, rather than just an environment of compliance.

Empowering Young People to be Agents of Change

Scilla Elworthy

Some children and young people are showing signs of distress as the media insists on presenting a world of chaos and violence...

Yet in fact, more local people are taking action to prevent war than ever before.

350 in 1999... over 1780 in 2019!

What can we do?

We can assist children with skills that effectively defuse anger and aggression in school, skills that they can even teach to their parents and their communities.

1. Nonviolent Communication NVC

2. The Power of Listening

3. Daily Quietness

4. Animal on the tummy...

5. Early teenage idealism

"I will listen, for as long as it takes."

US Senator George Mitchell, who helped build peace in Northern Ireland, 1988

Have children engage in breathing exercises by pretending they have an animal on their tummy. On the in-breath, the animal rises. On the out-breath, the animal gently sinks

We can help young people use their upsurge of idealism to identify what they care most about, and learn how to use their skills and those of their friends to help make a difference in the world.

Three simple questions that can help youth channel their talents toward change:



1. What breaks your heart?

2. What are your skills?

3. Combine your passion with your skills. Apply what you love to do, with what you most care about

Those who offer themselves most whole-heartedly into service for humanity, those who take risks, those who act from pure love are those who have a lot of joy in their lives.

We can help children develop the habit of spending a few minutes each day concentrating on something that was **joyful** or went well to build their confidence in the **positive!**

Teachers and parents can ask them at the end of the day:

"What was your **WOW**? What made you happy?"

Maria Montessori and her influence on education in Ireland by Mark Hederman, OSB

Madame Montessori (August 31, 1870 – May 6, 1952) is rightly regarded as a great icon of the women's and children's liberation movements.

- ✓ Championed the rights of women
- ✓ Refused to get married
- ✓ Graduated with honors from the University of Rome's medical
- ✓ First recognize that children should learn through their own experience and at their own pace
- ✓ Pioneer of the Childrens' Liberation Movement

Montessori has had an impact on the educational systems of many European countries.

Two people from Waterford, here in **Ireland**, attended the first seminar in **1919**.

Eleanora Gibbon and **Gertrude Allman**, a Sister of Mercy from Waterford. The first of these, Eleanora Gibbon, founded the Montessori programme in the Junior Section of St Otteran's School, Philip Street in Waterford in 1920. St Otteran's became something of a flagship for the movement, and the school was visited by Madame Montessori herself on two occasions, in 1927 and again in 1937. Sr Gertrude Allman [who had attended the London Training Course with Eleanora Gibbon in 1919] was director of the Mercy School in Waterford. She was the first Montessori teacher to adapt the material to the teaching of Irish, which was a compulsory subject under the Department of Education's rules.

In 1924 the Montessori System was discussed at the Annual Congress of the Irish National Teachers Organisation. Eleanora Gibbon and Edward P. Culverwell, Professor of Education at Trinity College Dublin hoped that the government would adopt the system. However, they were unsuccessful.

Enter William Butler Yeats (13 June 1865 – 28 January 1939), one of the great poets of the Twentieth Century took a great interest in the Montessori method of education. His brief in the Senate was to advise the government on educational matters. He made an official visit to the Montessori school at St Otteran's, Waterford, in February 1926. He wrote one of his most famous poems about the visit. In one of his Senate speeches, Yeats asks the government in Ireland to consider the Italian system, which at the time included the Montessori ideals about the importance of an education that is centered around the child.

Both Madame Montessori and W.B. Yeats refused to accept that our children should be sacrificed to the ideologies of their parents, their governments or their nations.



Children should be free to grow up and become the reality of who they really are.

Over the last 200 years since the concept of compulsory schooling for all children took root, **capitalism has driven children to be COMPETITIVE, INDIVIDUALIST.**

Education leaders are being short-sighted in their efforts to stay economically competitive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements.

Need to shift the educational culture:

1. Deeper learning
2. Spark the humanity of every child
3. Allow the flourishing of their unique personhood
4. A child should learn at their own tempo and to its own capacity

We should to try to copy the content or design of a Montessori classroom from 100 years ago; we should be searching for the dynamic equivalent of the Montessori spirit which can best incarnate itself in our times and circumstances.

How should we do this?

1. Certainly memory will not be enough; imagination and creativity will be their most important helpmates.
2. Teaching them what we learned, in the way we learnt it, will be as useful to them as sword play and musketry in a world of nuclear warfare.
3. Stop imposing outdated methodologies and ideas to prepare them for the future.
4. Allow for children with certain abilities or needs to flourish and learn.
5. We must recognize the different forms of intelligence and talents that exist.



The educational system is trying to force children into one-dimensional form of learning instead of releasing their potential. We must recognize the TALENTS of each child to ensure their needs are met