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what makes montessor  work?



Those Graduation Speeches!

Issue #2, Fall 2019

I recently read a powerful graduation speech by a Montessori student. This experience reminded me to stay connected to the words of the children themselves. Kaitlyn, a 14 year old graduate of Marin Montessori School in California, expressed what was unique about her education better than any adult observer could have. She wrote, "I believe in the importance of "why"." Her speech was about how curiosity – a natural trait in every young child – was fostered as the force driving in her education and self-formation. Her Montessori teachers encouraged her to ask, "why" about everything. As an example, she was encouraged to search for the deeper meanings behind and beneath every math process, instead of just accepting facts and moving on. She never lost her curiosity, she said, because of attending a Montessori school. When we hear these kinds of acknowledgments, it gives Montessori educators inspiration and stamina to continue serving children and their families; I encourage everyone to share such stories!

The Newsstand

For those who enjoy YouTube videos, check out "[I Sued the School System](#)" by [Prince Ea](#). He mentions Montessori education as an alternative to our conventional school model, and makes the case that the conventional school model is not working.

A traveling film, "*Most Likely to Succeed*" introduces efforts to create a progressive high school that prepares children for the future. When I saw this, I couldn't help but think that while the narrators have many good points about providing more freedom of choice, hands-on and group project-based learning, the absence of a comprehensive curricular plan, (which AMI Montessori is structured upon), can thin the crowd of who will succeed, and quickly! To become innovative thinkers, problem solvers, true collaborators, and productive workers, our children must also be introduced to logical systems, a cohesive network of presentations on the earth's history, the evolution of life on earth, and human history, from which further study follows in sequences and with interconnectivity. A useful education helps children *create inner organization* in their minds so that they can think clearly, create productively, and realistically contribute. Montessori education proposes an alternative, organized model that *actually works*, where so many others fail.

[Watch it here.](#)

Our Forest Bluff School teachers read *The 1913 Rome Lectures* as a book group and discussed a chapter each week. Translated and edited by Dr. Susan Feez, Carolina Montessori, Joke Verheul and Larry Quade, this collection offers terrific topics to discuss: Intelligence, Nature in Education, and Spiritual Development being a few. (We skipped the chapters on some anatomical information that has since fallen out of vogue, and stuck with what is more pertinent today.) Some quotes from this book:

"Only when we drag them from this natural road, and wish to make them follow another, rewards and punishments are necessary. On the natural road, the act of self-development is the child's prize...because their work is essential to their life...Children do not instinctively flee from work, but rather hasten to it, for work is food to their inner life." p. 135, *The 1913 Rome Lectures*

[Order the book here.](#)

Words for Thought

"I hope my great-grandmother's teachings will find their way into every family's home through this inspirational, practical, and beautiful book." —Carolina Montessori

THE MONTESSORI TODDLER

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO RAISING
A CURIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE HUMAN BEING



SIMONE DAVIES

The Montessori Toddler is a delightful, useful new book for parents interested in bringing Montessori practices into their homes for their very young children. AMI-trained teacher and author, Simone Davies, does a wonderful job of explaining everything from how to set up a shelf of activities to providing boundaries for young children. Montessori educators will find this to be a supportive resource for their families to get started off in the early years. I highly recommend it!

[Find it here.](#)

DIVERSE FAMILIES, DESIRABLE SCHOOLS

PUBLIC MONTESSORI IN
THE ERA OF SCHOOL CHOICE



Diverse Families, Desirable Schools- Public School Montessori in the Era of School Choice, just published by Harvard Education Press, 2019, is well-researched and clearly written. Researcher and author, Mira Debs, illuminates important issues parents and schools face in providing Montessori programs in public schools. We can all learn a lot, whether in private or public settings, by reviewing the arguments and observations Debs points to. I enjoyed this book and recommend it for Montessori educators, admissions directors, school leaders, and anyone concerned with communicating how Montessori education is described or portrayed.

Events

Training for School Administrators

For school administrators and leaders who wish to gain a solid understanding of the Montessori approach, a Montessori Core Principles training is available in the summers at MINT, The Montessori Institute of North Texas. In this two-week course with AMI trainers, participants will learn the most important facets of Montessori. Becoming familiar with terms and able to communicate what Montessori is and means for children is one goal; to know what support Montessori programs and teachers need in order to make a school succeed is another. Two weeks seems a small commitment for such a valuable education. Let's encourage all school leaders who can benefit, to take advantage of this fantastic offering!

[Find more information here.](#)

New Discussion Guide

There is a new, free discussion guide to accompany *Montessori From the Start*, by Paula Polk Lillard and Lynn Lillard Jessen. The 25-page guide can be downloaded for free from forestbluffschool.org. The questions, written by AMI-trained Margaret Jessen Kelley, encourage parents to discuss topics ranging from bedtimes to the ways they interpret the Montessori approach at home. Using this guide, teachers and parents can get together in groups and get to know one another better, further their understanding of their children and themselves as parents, and begin to see how the Montessori perspective can inform and empower them to help their infants and youngest children at home. It's an invaluable tool for schools to implement!

[Find the guide here.](#)

I also encourage you to check out the [full library of blog articles](#) about the Montessori approach, which is useful to teachers, parents and administrators when issues arise that need explaining. Please use this resource and let me know if there's a topic you'd like to see more about!

